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**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA**

**PROCEEDING OF THE CONFERENCE
ON BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

**MALAYSIA MADANI:
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND
CHALLENGES**

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(CBM 2023)**

**Malaysia Madani:
Business Opportunities & Challenges**

5 DECEMBER 2023

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School of Business Management
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Preface

The Conference on Business Management (CBM 2023): Malaysia Madani: Business Opportunities & Challenges is organized by the Seminar Committee, School of Business Management, Universiti Utara Malaysia. The conference's theme covers the area of business management, entrepreneurship, marketing, and human resource management. The conference's main objective is to provide a platform for knowledge sharing among faculty members and students.

The conference received 42 empirical and conceptual papers from the authors. Various topics covering the conference's theme were presented during the conference day. In the Q&A session, the presenters and participants exchanged ideas and opinions that contributed to the prospect of future research among them. We believe that the conference contributes a significant impact on all.

The Seminar Committee acknowledge the invaluable commitment of the organizing committee members. A list of organizing committee members can be found on the next page. We hope the conference can be arranged on an annual basis.

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**DEVELOPING INTENTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS AMONG E-COMMERCE
STUDENTS - ACTION RESEARCH IN METACOGNITION THROUGH REFLECTIVE
LEARNING LOG**

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Abstract

Intentional learners are self-directed people who take charge of their education, whether in a setting or an informal setting. Learners who practice intentional learning skills choose their learning methodologies and organize their studies in accordance with their interests, preferences, and speed. This study embarks on the following objectives: (i) To look into ways how to scaffold intentional learning experiences among the student and ritualize the intentional learner's mindsets and best practice skills, (ii) To investigate the effects (through a reflective learning log) of intentional learning skill of student on their study habits and attitudes toward learning, and, (iii) To examine their critical reflection log while they are studying E-commerce module which is underpinned by the intentional learning paradigm and Hatton and Smith's framework. In this qualitative study, data from 140 students in three classes of E-Commerce were required to write reflections that would be used to determine final grades using the reflective learning log. In order to support students' purposeful learning development as they join the job market, the study's findings strongly imply that they urgently need to strengthen their reflective writing skills while enrolled in higher education. The undergraduate must also be given the fundamental tools necessary to shape them into purposeful learners through exercises in reflective learning. The Hatton and Smith reflective framework worked well for categorizing written reflections and making the reflective learning log evaluation less subjective. This study brought to light the fact that many business students were unfamiliar with the genre of reflective writing and that this genre needed to be explicitly taught in the relevant course. Hence, to support students' purposeful learning development as they join the job market, the study's findings strongly imply that they urgently need to strengthen their reflective writing skills while enrolled in higher education.

Keywords: Intentional learning skills, reflective learning log, metacognition, E-Commerce, UUM.

Introduction

Learning is a skill in and of itself, and mastering it is essential for long-term professional success. People who have mastered the attitudes and techniques of successful learning can advance professionally more quickly than their colleagues and reap the rewards of all learning opportunities that come their way (Christensen, Gittleson & Smith, 2020). Thus, to put things into perspective, the World Economic Forum has proclaimed a reskilling emergency as the world faces more than one billion employments being revolutionized by technology as a result of the development of social media, e-commerce, and Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Christensen et al., 2020). This development highlighted the significance and insistence on University Utara Malaysia (UUM) students to become intentional learners and each of them can become an intentional learner if timely intervention is carried out, and this is the sole purpose of this study. Moreover, the teaching philosophies at UUM are based on student-centered learning and outcome-based education, and the attributes of an ideal learner are developed through intentional learning, which is a process that is required for student-centered pedagogies (Cholbi, 2007).

In UUM, the learning outcome of the e-commerce module is to prepare students to deploy the Internet and intranets effectively for their company objectives and to become more competitive by utilizing all aspects of e-commerce knowledge. Students in this program learn how to develop sales websites, and business websites, and sell electronic goods and services for the B2B & B2C domain. In addition, they learn how to sell online using a platform such as Shopee, Alibaba, and Lazada. As a result, graduates who successfully completed this module will be prepared to handle a variety of e-commerce needs and electronic business scenarios. With the help of this curriculum, our business graduates will be extremely productive in the online environment right away. They will also advance professionally if they have a solid grasp of the financial effects of e-commerce decisions. Successful managers in this era of electronic and network businesses are those who understand that things must change and prepare themselves by consciously adopting new mindsets, new ideas, and new abilities to take advantage of these changes. These managers are our future graduates.

There are two critical mindsets and five core practices for a person to become an intentional learner. Mindsets have a big impact on how we act, sometimes deliberately and sometimes unintentionally. Two mindsets—a growth mindset and a curiosity mindset—serve as particularly potent fuel for deliberate learners when built on a foundation of self-efficacy, the conviction that your activities can help you reach desired goals (Bandura, 1977). The crucial thing to remember is that these attitudes are neither fixed nor immovable, even though some people may have a natural tendency toward them. The fact that they can be produced is an element of their strength. Intentional learning skills consist of five key practices to assist intentional learners to maximize their learning opportunities: (i) Setting objectives, (ii) conserving learning time, (iii) actively seeking feedback, (iv) engaging in the intentional practice, and (v) reflecting one's performance as a benchmark for further progress (Christensen, Gittleson & Smith, 2021). Due to the time constraint and the nature of Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL), this study intends to conduct action research on the fifth best-practice behavior, namely, reflecting to evaluate oneself and determine their progress on intentional learning through reflective (metacognition) learning log.

Research Objectives

This study embarks on the following objectives:

1. To investigate ways how to scaffold intentional learning experiences among the student and ritualize the intentional learner's mindsets and best practice skills, and,
2. To investigate the effects (through reflective learning log) of intentional learning skills of students on their study habits and attitudes toward learning, and,
3. To examine their critical reflection log while they are studying the E-commerce module which is underpinned by the intentional learning paradigm and Hatton and Smith's framework.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the mindsets and best practices involved to become an intentional learner?
2. To what extent are the effects (through reflective learning log) of intentional learning skills of students on their study habits and attitudes toward learning? And
3. To what extent their critical reflection is characterized by the intentional learning paradigm and Hatton and Smith's framework while they are studying the E-commerce module?

Literature Review

Intentional Learning

Intentional learning has been defined as "*effort invested in learning, over and above the effort devoted to achieving other goals of an activity,*" with the specific goal of developing independence in learners (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987b, p. 19). It represents an instructional process whereby teachers help students, on their own initiative, "*to activate prior knowledge, relate old knowledge to new in systematic and reflective ways, organize disparate pieces of information, and reach conclusions and assess those conclusions before settling on them*" (Hawley, 1990, p. 228). In contrast, learning that is not intentional occurs as a by-product-intended by the instructor but which is unintentional as far as students are concerned. Although students do learn, "*very little of it is intentional*"; most is either spontaneous or else it is incidental to achieving some other goal such as getting a grade on an assignment (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987a, 1987b). The key to fostering intentional learning in students is to create appropriate learning situations-in this instance through reflective learning log.

A person can become an independent, lifelong learner by choosing to learn and then selecting what and how to learn (Francis et al., 1995). It is believed that learners can develop their attitudes and skills through intentional learning. Depending on the learning setting, this process is ongoing and circular and requires students to organize, connect, question, and adjust their information (Francis et al., 1995). Intentional learners are portrayed by Cholbi (2007) as highly self-aware people who want to live up to high standards and gain self-esteem from achieving learning objectives after persistent effort. When faced with academic challenges, intentional learners build learning strategies and exhibit high degrees of accountability and control over their learning processes (Mollman & Candela, 2018). For intentional learners who enjoy solving problems and are driven to develop the expertise, they can impart to others, a loosely structured learning environment with a wealth of content is appropriate (Cholbi, 2007). Intentional learners acquire knowledge that is richer, more integrated, and appreciated by them. This knowledge may also be used to solve new problems with ease (Cholbi, 2007).

Intentional learners are self-directed people who take charge of their education, whether in a formal setting or not, according to Valjataga & Laanpere (2010). Learners that exercise learner control choose their learning methodologies and organize their studies in accordance with their interests, preferences, and speed (Valjataga & Laanpere, 2010). The goals chosen by the students serve as the direction for the cognitive process of intentional learning (Chee, 2014). Self-confident and mastery-oriented, intentional learners use the mastery approach to achieve their learning objectives (Hanham et al., 2014). Additionally, independent, self-initiated, self-regulated, and taking charge of their learning are all characteristics of intentional learners (Hanham et al., 2014; Hung, 2014). Learning is a deliberate, free choice made by students in purposeful learning who are aware of the goal of the learning process and self-monitor their learning (Hung, 2014). Simply put, intentional learners are aware of their learning objectives and actively decide how to achieve them (Spector & Kim, 2014). To learn intentionally, one needs to have the desire, comprehension, and conviction that learning is necessary, as well as the knowledge of what and how to learn. Those who are learning are very actively involved in this process, which extends beyond their participation in classroom activities. By putting learners in cognitively demanding learning settings that go beyond their initial knowledge of the topic, the intentional learning process promotes deep learning (Lee, Rooney & Parada, 2014). These definitions of intentional learning point to the learner who directs their own learning from the start through goal mastery. These learners have faith in their capacity to learn and assess it throughout the entire cognitive process to ascertain they are on track to meet their objectives (Mollman & Candela, 2018).

Metacognition through reflective learning log

All cognitive tasks, including the capacity to consider and draw lessons from experiences, depend on metacognition, self-reflection, and self-direction (Moon, 1999). Reflection is a diagnostic skill that enables a person to assess their learning demands and compare them to those of acknowledged experts, as well as to their past performance (Murray & Kujundzic, 2005). Individuals who reflect on their actions are better able to break down their actions into various parts, refine those parts, and then reassemble those parts in a way that enhances their performance (Milligan, Bingley & Gatrell, 2005). Before, during, and after an activity is the three main times when reflection that fosters learning occurs. A cognitive task can be forecasted by just looking forward. These are the times when we are planning how we will handle a task, how we will solve an issue, or what we will say in a challenging conversation. We are considering what is to come. We are prepared to learn through this process of anticipating or planning. We can change our direction and make modifications when we reflect while an event is happening (Moon, 1999). Even though we are "in the arena," we are aware of what is going on and are able to experiment and learn right away. Finally, retrospective reflection enables us to take stock of our performance in the past and predict how we might respond to a similar circumstance in the future (Murray & Kujundzic, 2005).

Among the various advantages of reflection, the two emerged. The relationship between introspection and self-efficacy comes first. Individual self-belief in one's ability to learn, progress, and take the necessary actions to reach desired performance levels is at the heart of learning (Moon, 1999). Reflection starts a positive cycle of confidence-building that strengthens our sense of competence and competence (Murray & Kujundzic, 2005). Having the courage to take on more difficult problems leads to the development of both new abilities and stronger ones that already exist. Thinking back on those difficulties generates more confidence, and so forth. Reflection also lessens a person's resistance to change, which is crucial (Moon, 1999). The best issue solvers experiment with new approaches when their previous ones fail. Because of the speed at which our job is done, being unfamiliar with something might be a big challenge. Cognitive acquaintance with novel procedures is increased by reflection (Milligan, Bingley & Gatrell, 2005). Concerns about adjusting become less potent because one has thought about something before and is constantly considering how to improve and develop it.

Methodology

This study used classroom-based educational action research as its research approach (Angelo, 1991; Elliott, 1991). Reflecting on what is happening in the classroom and seeing any discrepancies between what was intended and what happened are key components of good teaching. The teacher gains a deeper grasp of his or her practice by engaging in "systematic, intentional inquiry" inside the confines of his or her classroom (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). All students registered in University Utara Malaysia's BPME 3033 E-Commerce module had been introduced to the idea of reflection writing through the reflective learning log (Moon, 1999), which would be graded as a part of their coursework, beginning with the academic year 2021-2022. The goal of including the reflective learning log as part of the coursework mark contribution is to incentivize students to participate in the activity given that they naturally tend to act strategically when it comes to their class participation.

In this qualitative study, data from 140 students in three classes who were required to write reflections that would be used to determine final grades were collected using the reflective learning log (which could only account for a maximum of 10% of the coursework marks). Students have also been informed that they would only receive a maximum of 5% of the possible marks if they write their reflection in a very in-depth or journalistic style. As a result, the researcher found that students were able to achieve the formative assessment's learning outcome if they were able to acquire a score of more than 5% on the reflective log exercise. The careful adherence to ethical standards includes obtaining their agreement and keeping their name a secret so they could speak freely (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Finally, we describe our findings using pseudonyms rather than real identities to preserve the students' privacy.

Findings and Discussions

The following Table 1 tabulates the frequency of score percentage for the graded reflective learning log.

Table 1
Frequency of Score Percentage for Graded Reflective Learning Log & Four Level Reflections

Score Percentage	Frequency
1% - 5%	75 (Level 1)
6%	35 (Level 2)
7%	17 (Level 3)
8%	7 (Level 4)
9%	2 (Level 4)
10%	0

The students that received a score of 6 to 9 percentage points out of a possible 10 percentage points were all the ones who provided reflections for the results section. A total of 75 (or around 55%) of the reflective logs were classified as level 1 (from 1% to 5%), in which there were no reflections on the weekly lessons and the reflections were only descriptively written. 61 learning logs in total were used for additional analysis as a result of these learning logs being removed from the analysis. A large number of learning logs (75 logs in total) that were discarded for further analysis (about 55%) could be seen as a significant indicator that the task of doing reflection can be difficult due to a lack of ability in reflective thinking or it could also be a sign that the students were simply not interested in completing the assessment. Using a theme approach, the reflections from the 61 reflective learning logs were presented (anonymously), and all data was verbatim recorded. The data were analyzed using open coding (based on constant comparative techniques) (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) to identify themes that represented recurrent thoughts that showed up in reflections

about participants' experiences with the E-Commerce module. In order to identify trends in the students' reflection themes and discussions, labels were assigned to the reflective learning logs, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Reflection topics and respondents

No	Reflection Topics	Number of Respondents
1	E-Commerce website & user experience	136
2	Selling online	136
3	E-Commerce ecosystem	112
4	Blockchain	45
5	Dynamic Pricing	67
6	5G Connectivity	34
7	Cyber Security & Fraud	48

Technical reflections

Technical reflections are expected, and a sizable portion of the reflective learning log in this study may be categorized as "technical rationality" because "time and opportunity for development" are necessary for truly "successful reflection" (Hatton & Smith 1999). This kind of self-and-task-centered reflection is typical for my students in this e-commerce course. Additionally, many of them were unfamiliar with reflective techniques in the courses they registered for, making it likely that their reflections would center on "technical decision-making concerning imminent actions or skills;" (Hatton & Smith 1995). A total of 75 reflective learning pieces, or roughly 55% of them, fell into this category (ranging from 1% to 5%), where the reflections were merely written descriptively without reflections on the reflected topics. 166 views on the topics of e-commerce websites and selling online were distinguished as "technical reflections," which predominated all issue areas. Technical thoughts were prevalent in the topics of selling online and e-commerce websites (106 out of 140). This may be due to the courses' emphasis on the student's personal project (creating their website and selling online) and the skills they were learning, rather than on the consequences of the fundamentals of e-commerce. At this early level of the reflective practice process, the students were considering their use of "essential abilities or generic competencies" as "applied in [a] controlled, small scale context," even if they did so with the assistance of peers (Hatton & Smith 1995).

However, it is interesting to note that only a tiny portion of the reflections (30 out of 140) transitioned from "technical rationality" to the "descriptive reflections" level of "reflection on action" (Hatton & Smith 1995). Five out of the seven subjects share this momentum, including the blockchain, dynamic pricing, 5G connection, cyber security, and fraud as well as the e-commerce ecosystem. This is most likely because most of the students are beginning to address both "task" and "effect concerns" associated with their project, although they are still very early in their purposeful learning growth.

The technical writings can be seen as the following extracts:

“The first step in creating an eCommerce site is to get a great domain name. The domain name is our business’s online identity. It is the address my customers will use to get to my website and make a purchase and help me build my business. So, how do we go about it?” [sic]

“A good domain name must check the following boxes: It should be short, It should be meaningful, It should be relevant to your industry, It should be brandable, It should be keyword rich” [sic]

“eCommerce is pretty much like physical retail. We buy and sell. The difference is that eCommerce operates digitally. It is simple: one of the parties pays money, and the other provides goods or services. Almost everything we can find in a brick-and-mortar store we can buy online now: books, apparel, gadgets, and food. Building an E-Commerce site has a lot of moving pieces we need to consider before jumping in headfirst. We can miss a lot of important things that we need to make our site function the way you want it to if we do not take a moment to plan” [sic].

“When I adopt a drop-shipping-based business model, I simply need to contact the manufacturer or vendor I can link with. I can get my website designed in a manner that every order reaches the vendor automatically. My partner company will pick, pack, and ship the product on my behalf. In the drop-shipping model, I do not have to worry much about inventory management. I simply must choose the products that I am selling across your portal” [sic].

Descriptive reflections

Several reflections may be classified as "descriptive solely," in addition to reflective learning logs that switch between "technical" and "descriptive" categories (35 out of 140). The fact that the activities being reflected on are still fresh in the students' minds and that deeper reflection-on-action takes more time for contemplation and the scaffolding of deeper reflective processes is likely one factor contributing to the high percentage of descriptive reflections. The emphasis in these reflective learning logs is on the individual, as indicated by the following passages, but the concentration is on "best practice" as a basis for an analysis of one's practice and processes as below:

“From my personal experience, my first eCommerce drop shipping business was an utter disaster. In fact, it did not even make even a single cent. But in the process, I learned how to develop and market an eCommerce website, which looking back was way more profitable than any amount of money that store could have produced” [sic].

“I started my first e-commerce back in December. It is not even a month but now I feel that there is a lot to learn which I initially thought I know it all. Digital marketing and specially SEO is very tough. Content is the king and photography would be a queen. It takes a lot of patience to make your initial sales. The feeling of what am I doing wrong will always stays with me. I need some motivation and some honest reviews from my friends as well. I can think of lot of strategies on daily basis. The tough part is trying all of them and then see which one works the best for me. It is hard but it is worth the risk” [sic].

Dialogic reflections

According to Hatton and Smith (1995) “dialogic reflections” are more “*deliberative, cognitive, and narrative*”, with the student practitioner “*weighing competing claims and viewpoints, and then exploring alternative solutions*”. The following extract on user experience in using the E-Commerce website characterized the dialogic reflections:

“In order to improve e-commerce customer experience, it is imperative that I speak to my customers. When I talk to my customers, I can get direct feedback on what they liked, didn't like, what they were frustrated by and wished they saw but didn't see. Customers research is the process of understanding customer's behaviors, thoughts, and opinions on our product or service and analyzing their feedback to improve their experience and increase our revenue. There is a ton of data I can get from things like Google Analytics about what actions customers are making on my website. However, these actions do not tell me “Why” the customers are taking those actions. Therefore, I need to conduct customers' research” [sic].

“There are two barriers stand in the way of global ecommerce growth, namely, cyber security and fraud are the biggest challenges to e-commerce growth. They are not only hampered the growth of e-commerce, but they have also resulted in significant losses. E-commerce fraud is not going

away any time soon; in fact, the risk of online fraud is increasing. Beyond the financial costs, theft erodes buyers' trust in online merchants, possibly taking even more money from e-commerce businesses. While fast delivery and a fun user experience can be enticing for customers, one data breach could destroy e-commerce business and scare loyal customers (and potential new customers) from shopping online at the store ever again. Thus, security is a business enabler and worthwhile investment now and for the foreseeable future” [sic].

Critical reflections

In our study, "critical reflections," as they are described in the literature, were the least common, with only a small number (nine out of 140 thoughts) falling into this category. In critical reflections, responders are "thinking about the impact upon others of their actions, taking account of social, political and/or cultural issues," and applying these to the broader profession, claim Hatton and Smith (1995). We speculate that perhaps the E-Commerce themes' nature prevented them from being applied to larger challenges and tended to encourage the respondents to concentrate on their unique E-Commerce topics. The few responders who did, however, discuss more general social, political, or cultural themes did so about their E-commerce topics. The extracts as below:

“Ecosystems are built around consumer needs; they go beyond simple partnerships across industry boundaries to bring together digitally accessible services or products, providing consumers with seamless experience and more choices. Ping An of China is an illustrious example of an ecosystem builder in the insurance industry. The organization goes beyond selling insurance products, offering its customers myriad services such as Ping An’s Good Doctor, PingAnfang, and Autohome. To ensure scalability, an ecosystem is often built by amalgamating the service offerings of a range of independent companies. For instance, Autohome, Ping An’s online car-purchasing platform, attracts more than 29 million unique visitors each day, generating one-third of customer leads for the Ping An’s insurance products and financial services. Customers also can derive many benefits from the ecosystems such as lower insurance premiums, convenience, and better health. Ping An’s self-build ecosystem through its many independent subsidiaries generates many new customers and increases loyalty among its present customer due to the assortment of products and services available in the ecosystem” [sic].

“Blockchain and e-commerce are creating a sustainable economic ecosystem for both consumers and online retailers. As more online retailers incorporate distributed ledger technology into their business processes, they discover new ways to serve their customers. Blockchains provide them with an efficient means to improve their customer experience. First, smart contracts are computer programs that automate tasks based on predefined rules. Smart contracts can be used to create jobs that can be automated by computer systems. They can expand an e-commerce business by reducing the cost of hiring employees. Inventory management can also be made easier with smart contracts as they make it easier to keep track of products. Second, supply chain monitoring can help online shops accomplish their targeted business goals. This is due to supply chains, which allow store owners to know what products are on the way and when they will arrive. Third, warranties and receipts are easily accessible. Consumers and businesses can save receipts and warranties of products using blockchain technology. Buyers and sellers will be able to conveniently obtain receipts and warranty data, as well as validate proof of ownership. One of the issues that purchasers experience while making online transactions is the loss of paper receipts” [sic]

“Price is a pivotal element in affecting consumer purchase behavior, and it has the significant decisive effect on whether, when and which product the consumer wants to buy, as well as the purchase quantity and other purchase-related decisions. In the highly competitive e-commerce, where customers have more choice than ever before, price can be a deal-breaker. In the realm of e-commerce, dynamic pricing playing a crucial role in promoting online products. Meaning which by successfully integrating the pricing and promotions through advanced analytics engagement.

By doing so, one can understand the price elasticity of each item and then, the price elasticity curve can then be utilized to elicit the desired behavior. Generally, this is carried out to enhance sales, but it may also imply tempering client demand in order to avoid scarcity'[sic]

“One of the critical leverage points in the growth e-commerce is secure remittance/payment solution. This is not a new issue, but an issue besieged e-commerce since it started. Custom e-commerce software development with 5G can assist e-commerce entity in improving payment choices for merchants and customers. Most consumers check the security level before making a purchase. Sometimes if they find it satisfactory and simple, they will continue the entire payment process. But if they feel secure, they will exit the website and abandon the payment process. It is because there are many users who become a victim to fraud or scam during their financial transactions. Sometimes the system keeps deducting the money from the consumer account. Such fraudulent activities and security issues are the primary impediments to online purchase and online payment. However, customer can entirely protect the payment procedure on the e-commerce web business by employing 5G technology” [sic]

Implications of the Study

This study brought to light the fact that many business students were unfamiliar with the genre of reflective writing and that this genre needed to be explicitly taught in the relevant course. In order to support students' purposeful learning development as they join the job market, the study's findings strongly imply that they urgently need to strengthen their reflective writing skills while enrolled in higher education. The undergraduate must also be given the fundamental tools necessary to shape them into purposeful learners through exercises in reflective learning. The Hatton and Smith (1995) reflective framework worked well for categorizing written reflections and making the reflective learning log evaluation less subjective. This graded evaluation was assigned a 10% weight and is regarded as significant in grade. Although the study's findings may not be conclusive regarding the students' capacity for intentional learning through reflective writing, it would be odd if this were the case and they were unwilling to write reflectively, a dilemma that might call for more research. It is advised that the university might think about delivering coursework that includes a component of reflective writing as part of the evaluation based on the results of the 61 students who had shown proficiency in reflective writing. Therefore, if this were done, students with the same level of ability as those in this sample group would have benefited from assessments that focus on reflective ability and that allow students to create a wider perspective on the module they are studying. This will encourage the development of introspective ability, which is acknowledged as a taught behavior (Gustafson & Bennett, 1999).

The study also recommended that we should encourage our students to engage in conversation with, confront, or challenge another student (such as a close friend). Placing the learner in a safe setting where self-revelation can take place, would facilitate the reflective process. By submitting them to scrutiny in front of a peer they feel comfortable taking such risks with, students were also able to distance themselves from their thoughts, beliefs, and actions (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Even though the researcher discovered that more than half of the students were only able to complete Level 1 of reflection, as recommended by Hatton and Smith (1995), the idea of providing additional detailed instructions will likely lead the students to certain preconceived notions about how to write reflective learning logs (Stamper, 1996), which could be detrimental. As such Holland (2013) suggested that *“it is only necessary for reflective writing skills being developed with the reflective thinking skills so as to assist in the ability of the students to write a good reflection and in the process, develop their intentional learning faculty.”*

Limitations of the Study

During their academic journey at the university, it is important to not downplay the difficulties of getting used to a grading system that most of them are not used to. Students who are telling personal experiences or writing about delicate or private subjects want guidance, assurance, and confidence. The results of this study show that most students are afraid to even attempt writing in the first person, with just a tiny fraction of them showing interest in doing so. To determine if the findings of this study solely relate to this group of students or this field of study, more research in this area needs to be done across the university. The researchers also urge additional research in the form of a comparative longitudinal study on the issues and difficulties associated with encouraging learning reflection at the undergraduate level.

Conclusions

Students can record and remark on E-Commerce teachings in a meaningful way by keeping a reflective learning log in the module. They can self-monitor their viewpoints in this module's first class and keep track of how their understanding of E-Commerce has changed as the lectures go on until the end of the semester. They engage in self-discovery in the world of e-commerce while also tracking their own cognitive and personal progress. Students may identify their thinking about e-commerce, the risks involved, and the myths associated with being an aspiring online entrepreneur by keeping a reflective learning journal. Reflection can aid in a person's ability to change, according to research. Even though most of the students registering for this module are undergraduate students who have little experience to draw from when considering specific issues (this is the findings from this study). As reflection becomes ingrained in students' daily lives, it gives them a deep understanding of their academic and, ideally, future professional development.

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QUALITATIVE BASED FINDING OF MENTAL AND SOCIAL WELLBEING AMONG ASNAF STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Issue related to the well-being of youth, whether from the aspect of mental and social well-being among students in Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTA) and Private Higher Education Institutions (IPTS) have received attention from several previous researchers. However, there is a question about mental and social well-being of asnaf students in IPTA/IPTS because studies related to their mental and social well-being still receive little attention. Data reported by the UUM Career Counseling and Development Center found that a total of 3220 counseling sessions related to mental health issues were conducted in 2022. In this study, a total of 30 asnaf students at UUM were interviewed as respondents. Qualitative analysis of their mental and social well-being found that the majority of students have a good level of mental and social well-being. However, there are a small number of students who have a less encouraging perception of mental and social well-being. Several related domains such as self-confidence, problem-solving ability, and trust in individuals and society need to be given attention to help asnaf students improve their mental and social wellbeing.

Keywords: Mental well-being, social well-being, family relationships, family conflict, asnaf students

Introduction

Nowadays, the issue of the well-being of life is often discussed as a result of various issues and problems that occur in the community. Living well-being is a dynamic process of life and every phase it goes through will always change and develop continuously. Basically, the well-being of life includes aspects such as personal, family, community, economic, social and educational well-being (Rugggeri et al., 2020; Keyes, 1998). These changes are linked to several factors such as environmental influences, family relationships, technological advances and online education have changed the lifestyle, attitudes and behavior of the community. For example, the instability of family relationships; mistrust in the neighborhood, use of social media, online substance abuse, community crime and poverty are among the catalysts for the decline in the quality of the community's mental and social well-being.

Problems related to the well-being of youth, whether from the aspect of mental or social well-being, have been widely discussed, especially in relation to the quality index of their well-being. Issues related to the well-being of youth, especially among students at Public Higher Education Institutions (IPTA) and Private Higher Education Institutions (IPTS) have been extensively studied by several previous researchers, especially those related to the index of well-being of life, moral values, life satisfaction and psychological well-being (Nordin & Talib, 2009; Jauhari et al., 2022; Salleh Amat & Zuria Mahmud, 2009; Ummi Munirah et al., 2016). In the same development, the findings of the study by Jauhari et al., (2022) show that 15% of the respondents who are students at a public university have low mental well-being, 70.8% have moderate mental well-being and 14.2% have high mental well-being.

At the same time, not many statistics are reported about the quality and level of mental and social well-being of asnaf students, especially at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Looking at the phase of life of asnaf students at IPT, living life as a student at UUM certainly has twists and turns that need to be overcome by them. Financial problems, incomplete study facilities, cost of living and social hardship are definitely the essence of the uncertainty of the quality of their mental and social well-being. According to UUM's Counseling and Career Development Center, a total of 3220 counseling sessions related to mental health issues were conducted in 2022. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the mental and social well-being problems among asnaf students at UUM and identify any issues or problems related to this matter.

Mental and Social Wellbeing

The concept of well-being is generally defined as an individual's internal (psychological) perception (something that happens within an individual) which is measured from the point of view of happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, self-efficacy, family life, physical health, the world of work, quality of education and financial ability (Keyes, 2006; Rugggeri et al., 2020). This concept is abstract or subjective. Referring to Keyes (2006), well-being is also known as subjective well-being, which is an individual's perception and evaluation of their life. Some past researchers have classified the concept of well-being into seven aspects, namely mental well-being, social

well-being, intellectual well-being, physical well-being, spiritual well-being, occupational well-being and environmental well-being (Ruggeri et al., 2020; Tang et al 2016).

In this study, the main focus is on two aspects of well-being, namely mental well-being and social well-being. Mental well-being is defined as the ability to self-manage stress by avoiding conflict, increasing calmness, stimulating motivation and increasing self-confidence (Abu Bakar, Safie & Suhaimi, 2022). This concept is also used to take into account aspects of positive mental health (positive mental health) (Jnaneswar & Sulphrey, 2021). Meanwhile, social well-being is the ability to interact with the community and fulfill the responsibility as a community in accepting the diversity of race, culture, beliefs, customs and gender (Abu Bakar et al., 2022; Lages et al., 2018). Meanwhile, social well-being is defined by Keyes (1998) as an individual's assessment of a situation and function or role in society. He explained that life has a social nature and structure.

Research Method

Qualitative method is used to help researchers interpret, describe and explain a phenomenon in detail without relying on numerical measurements. As explained by Zikmund et al., (2010), the main focus of qualitative research is to gain true meaning and new insights. In this study, a qualitative method, namely face-to-face interview was used. The researchers have selected 30 asnaf students at UUM who voluntarily participated in the interview session. Referring to the rule of thumb for qualitative data collection through interviews, the required sample size is at least 30 people (Cresswell, 1998). Although there are no specific rules or guidelines for determining the number of samples in a qualitative study, most researchers set the number between 15-30 respondents as sufficient (Connaway & Powell 2010).

Finding and Discussion

Respondents' profile

Qualitative data collection was done through face-to-face interviews with 30 respondents. In terms of age, 60% of respondents are between 21 and 22 years old, 70% are female students, 63.33% are studying in the 4th semester, 63.33% have between 2 and 4 siblings, and the majority of them are students in the Program Human Resource Management (36.67%) followed by Economic Science Program (13.33%), Business Administration (13.33%) and Marketing (10%).

Mental and Social Wellbeing

Respondents were asked to give their views on three (3) open-ended questions prepared related to Mental and Social Well-being, namely (i) satisfaction with the current level of Mental and Social Well-being, (ii) the importance of social and mental well-being in studies and life, and (iii) suggestions to achieve healthy Mental and Social Well-being.

For question 1, findings show that more than 75% of respondents were satisfied their mental and social wellbeing, meanwhile 25% were not satisfied. As shared by interviewees,

“My mental health can probably be improved if I can be active in class without feeling shy because I am m the type who likes to talk and answer questions. But I feel insecure in class to

be active because there are more smart and beautiful students. I am also not good at making friends. I do not know how to make friends” and;

“Family conflict cannot be avoided and is a major contributing factor to declining social and mental well-being. This is said because, family conflict will disturb a person's emotions, mental and morals. So, someone who has a family conflict will lead to social problems”

In addition, the majority of respondents (between 65% - 70%) are believed that their satisfaction with social well-being is greatly influenced by a person's relationship with friends (peers), family and society. While mental well-being is associated with the emotional level (happy or sad) which requires the ability to manage oneself maturely. Physical and mental health contributes positively to a person's life. On the other hand, a low level of social and mental well-being can lead to stress, depression or anxiety and interfere with daily life. Taking a few examples of opinion from interviewee, for instance, according to interviewee A,

“Social well-being is related to a person's relationship with friends, society and even family. This is because social well-being is an aspect seen in a person from psychological, spiritual, and physical”

Interviewee B and F also share similar concern, saying,

“In my view it is about a person living a daily life with the influence of the life of the environment. Social well-being is how a person gets along with the community and friends around him and a person's ability to function effectively in daily life”

“Family relationships can help improve my social and mental well-being by caring for each other. For example, often have a 'gathering' with family members by eating together, going on vacation together. This can improve my social and mental health”

Their opinion on mental and social wellbeing strongly indicated that social and mental welfare is a very important thing in everyday life. This is because, in everyday life will require social actions with other people, while mental well-being also needs to be taken care of because the health of an individual depends on mental health. So social and mental well-being is something that needs to be taken care of.

In a related matter, the 2nd question focuses on the importance of mental and social well-being. In the context of HEI students, one of the respondents stated that social and mental well-being is very important because it is closely related to their learning. Being socially and mentally healthy will lead to balance in their lives to become excellent students (focus on studies) and be able to play an effective role in various capacities in dealing with any challenges and issues related to studies or life. An interviewee C highlighted the importance of mental and social wellbeing:

“Social and mental well-being is a very important aspect for a person because it affects a person's attitude. A person who is good mentally and socially will be happier in life and able to go through life's tests with a positive outlook”

In a similar vein, an interviewee D explained,

“It is very important because it will affect every action that we as students will take. Even our quality as students is also affected by social and mental well-being. If our mental state is unstable, our daily life will also be disrupted, the quality of study will also be affected”

Meanwhile, the 3rd question is related to suggestions and recommendations to achieve the importance of Mental and Social Well-Being. Most of the respondents share similar views and recommendations which are: increase self-involvement with social welfare programs; avoid being silent for a long time with negative thoughts; strengthen relationships with family members, friends and acquaintances; do not burden yourself; always thinking positively; organize and divide time wisely; manage yourself in the right way and control emotions. As pointed out by interviewees:

“mental and social wellbeing can be developed and sustained by getting more involved with social welfare programs. Always avoid being silent for a long time with negative thoughts. Do not isolate yourself from friends and family” and;

“Mental health can be maintained by always being open, exercising, and having close friends to talk to. Social care can be taken care of by just getting along with everyone but with limits, do not get too close to people if you do not want to be disappointed”, and

“each of student needs to be brave enough to speak up in solving problems. It is also necessary to get help from mother or siblings, and friends”.

In a nutshell, all inputs obtained through interview with asnaf students about their mental and social wellbeing shows that majority of them have good mental and social wellbeing. This is supported by almost 75% of them satisfied with their mental and social wellbeing. In addition, they also aware and concern about the importance of mental and social wellbeing in their life. Eventhough only 25% of them not satisfied, all parties such as parents, lecturers, university and authority bodies need to be prepared with proactive strategy for securing good level of mental and social wellbeing among asnaf students. For example, trying to help students to solve problems in the right way, getting guidance from lecturers, surrounded by good friends and a healthy environment, and receiving the support of family, and friends to make a positive impact.

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THE RISE OF TIKTOK AS A SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING MEDIUM

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Abstract

Fast-paced communication technologies like social media have changed the way people interact. It has made the communication becomes much easier and limitless. So do the business activities. The presence of social media has changed the way people do their business. Deemed as an essential medium for buying and selling activities, social media has become an indispensable tool in the business world. Among many social media marketing platforms, a new emerging social media marketing platform known as TikTok has risen to be accepted and acknowledged by both sellers and consumers for selling and buying activities nowadays. With the various benefits offered by TikTok, it is no wonder that all businesses worldwide have shifted their attention to utilizing this rising platform. Due to that reason, it is essential, mainly for sellers, to understand the reasons that lure consumers intention to buy online, specifically within the TikTok platform. Therefore, this conceptual paper is designed to identify which factors consumers are influenced by to make their online purchasing intention using the TikTok platform. Three main variables will be tested in this study: product quality, live streaming, and influencer factors toward the dependent variable of consumer buying intention. The researchers plan to use purposive sampling to conduct this study, focusing on TikTok users. Moreover, the data will be collected using an online questionnaire via Google Forms to investigate the reason behind consumer's online purchasing intentions. The study's findings are expected to help identify factors that influence the consumer online purchasing intention, which later would assist sellers in generating strategies as it provides valuable information tailored to consumer needs, providing excellent value.

Keywords: Social media marketing, TikTok, consumer, buying intention, product quality, live streaming, influencer factor.

Introduction

Nowadays, technology like social media has shrunk the boundaries of communication for people worldwide to interact. Regardless of where they are, people can still connect without trouble. It has become common for individuals to use social media efficiently and it is accessible through their devices (Akbari et al., 2022). The same goes for shopping events; social media usage has significantly transformed business applications such as buying and selling activities (Akbari et al., 2022; Al-Dhuhli & Ismael, 2013). It centralizes communication and involves entertainment, interaction, word-of-mouth, and customization (Meliawati et al., 2023; Kim Ko, 2012). More importantly, professionals verified that social media plays a significant role in two-way consumer communication (Appel et al., 2020). In the fast-changing business world, social media is deemed one of the essential channels for sellers to market their products to consumers. Without mortar shops, sellers can easily set up and sell their products. Besides, the progressive acts of today's consumers in utilizing social media technology make the online shopping process indispensable.

Among many social media marketing, an emerging platform known as TikTok has become a popular channel for sellers (to promote and sell their products) and consumers (to purchase) worldwide. Full features with a broad range of unique effects (e.g., short content video, fun, trendy, creative, innovative and highly interactive) are offered; there is no doubt that the TikTok application is widely used as a free marketing tool without the need to waste money (Akbari et al., 2022; Yosep et al., 2021). Due to these unique and exciting effects, TikTok can quickly grab the consumer's attention and target the right users precisely (Balkhi, 2019). Seeing the potential brought by TikTok as a social media marketing tool, more and more businesses shifted to apply it. The same goes for the literature world, gaining popularity as beneficial for digital marketing purposes; many researchers have explored its effectiveness in digital marketing (Peng, 2021; Haenlein et al., 2020; Li et al., 2021).

Similarly, the number of Malaysian users who downloaded and used TikTok was estimated to reach around 14 million and is forecast to continuously increase between 2023 and 2027 (Statista Research Department, Apr 28, 2023). Such a significant number shows that the TikTok platform can attract and grab many Malaysian people's attention. Due to that reason, sellers need to understand the reasons that tempt consumers' intention to buy online, specifically through the TikTok platform, so they can strategies marketing planning effectively to meet consumer needs. Accordingly, this paper aims to identify factors influencing consumers' intention to purchase online, mainly using TikTok.

Literature Review

Product Quality

Product quality can be defined in several terms. According to Juju et al. (2023), Sudaryanto et al. (2022), and Harris et al. (2020), product quality is a dynamic condition of products or services that have benefits for consumers and meet the consumer's needs and expectations. Like Sanjwani and Suasana (2019) postulate, product quality is the characteristics a product uses to place the product in a particular class according to price and specifications. Product quality is considered one of the essential criteria that helps consumers determine whether to buy or not. If the quality of the product is good and according to consumer needs and expectations, then it will influence the consumer

buying intention (Simbolan et al., 2020). They are supported by previous studies (Aeni, 2020; Sudaryanto et al., 2022; Chaerudin & Syafarudin, 2021), which also found the significant influence of product quality on purchase intention. More importantly, if the competing business can develop and offer better products, it will increase the consumer's intention to purchase (Sudaryanto et al., 2022). Hence, a good product quality presented by the business or sellers via the TikTok platform will easily attract consumer attention to buy it and value as worth spending their money.

Live streaming

The non-physical buying process will be more meaningful for consumers if they can see and watch it with their eyes. Something that is agreed by Sun et al. (2019) said that consumers' propensity to purchase resulted from guided shopping experiences between seller and consumer and the immediate visibility and availability of live shopping. According to Li et al. (2022), buying based on a product's visualization, like live streaming appeal, is experiencing unprecedented expansion. They are made available to online shoppers and are known to increase sales (Akram et al., 2023). Live streaming is a method of online business for a marketing and sales method (Qing & Jin, 2022). Live streaming allows real-time broadcasting to facilitate instantaneous interaction between sellers and customers. Liu et al. (2022) also mentioned that live-streaming established a positive and effective interaction as a critical purchase intention driver. If customers have any questions regarding a product, they can have them answered on the spot. Customers are more likely to buy a product if they can see and easily picture themselves using it. Aside from positively influencing clients' perceptions of the products, participation in live product presentations also gives a strong incentive to purchase the showcased items. By live streaming, consumers can enjoy an immersive experience by watching streamers' product presentations, interacting with streamers, reading consumer discussions, and enjoying platform discounts. This immersive experience increases the influence of consumers' social presence on purchase intention (Botha & Reyneke, 2016; Lu et al., 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Mou et al., 2017).

Influencer

According to Apasrawirote and Yawised (2022), online influencer marketing can be considered a form of online advertising. The influencer serves as the supporter of an advertisement that helps a product being advertised become more attractive and trustworthy from the context of the consumer perspective (Sudaryanto et al., 2022). A live video streaming broadcasting event involves influencers and sometimes celebrities to promote the products or services and speeches intended for the buyers. Studies suggest that when a well-known individual recommends a product or service, customers get more enthusiastic about it. How a consumer feels about an online influencer impacts whether or not they will buy a product endorsed by that celebrity (Pahasing et al., 2022). Consumers value endorsements highly and deem influencers as role models who naturally evoke feelings to represent the values of product and brand indicators (Chan et al., 2021). Therefore, having a famous person back a product can increase its appeal to the public. Specifically, influencing consumers' online purchasing decisions and positive attitudes towards brands leads to a higher online purchase intention (Lim et al., 2017).

Consumer Buying Intention

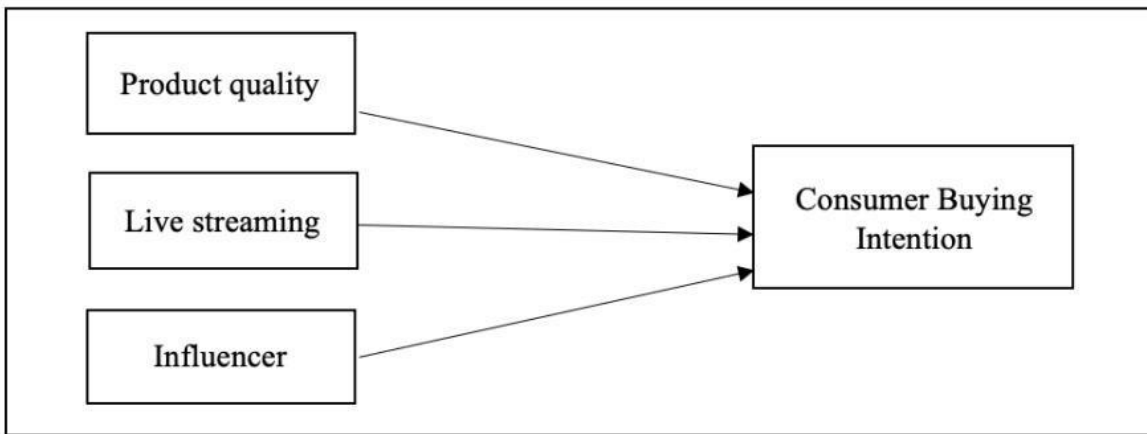
According to Sudaryanto et al. (2022), Wandebori and Wijaya (2017), Nurhayati and Hendar (2020), and Riptiono (2020), purchase intention reflects the consumer's short-term behaviour

towards future purchase decisions. It arises after receiving a stimulus from the product a customer sees; from there arises interest in trying the product until finally, the desire to buy it arises (Kotler & Keller, 2016). They are also a combination of consumer interest and the possibility of purchasing a product (Yadav and Rahman, 2017; Kim & Ko, 2012). Meanwhile, Choedon and Lee (2020) assert that purchase intention could be interpreted as the possibility and desire of consumers to buy recommended products after using social media. In research conducted by Fannani and Najib (2020), it is explained that social media has a significant and positive effect on consumers' attention, interest, and search factors. The influence given by the testimonials of influencers is considered the most effective in attracting other consumers' buying interest. Aside from that, live-streaming broadcasting also changed the way businesses and consumers communicate by triggering a shift in power from business to consumers. It has a positive impact and is used as a conspicuous consumption channel influencing purchase intention (Efendioğlu, 2019). This aligns with Laksamana's (2018) study, which found that social media marketing significantly affects purchase intention and brand loyalty.

Based on the following discussion, the researchers develop three hypotheses that will be tested in this study. The hypotheses are:

- H1: Product quality has a significant influence on TikTok consumer buying intention.
- H2: Live streaming has a significant influence on TikTok consumer buying intention.
- H3: Influencer has a significant influence on TikTok consumer buying intention.

Conceptual Framework



The proposed research framework that will be tested in this study is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology:

This study will be undertaken by using a quantitative method. The study will employ a cross-sectional time frame and a purposive sampling technique focusing on TikTok users only. The study's independent variables are consumer buying intention, product quality, live streaming, influencer, and online review. Meanwhile, the dependent variable analyzed in the present study is consumer purchasing intention. Questionnaires will be used as the instrument to collect data, and

the distribution will be implemented via the Google Forms platform. The TikTok users will be given a URL link to Google Forms to answer the survey questionnaire. Once all the data have been collected, SPSS software is used to analyze the collected data. Several analyses include Descriptive analysis, Mean and Standard Deviation, Reliability Test, Pearson Correlation analysis and Multiple Linear Regression analysis. There are two parts to the questionnaire instrument in this study. Part A contains the demographic data of the respondents. Part B is based on factors influencing consumers' buying intention via the TikTok platform using a Likert scale ranging from 1, 'strongly disagree,' to 7, 'strongly agree'. The unit of analysis in the study will be individual, as each of the TikTok users is considered as one individual.

Discussion, Limitations and Recommendations

The motivation drive for this study is to identify the contributing factors influencing consumer buying intention, specifically via the TikTok platform. The result findings from this study are expected to tailor businesses and sellers to understand what makes consumers influenced and attracted to buy within the TikTok platform. The findings will generally explain which aspects contribute to consumer's intention to buy through the TikTok platform. Referring to these findings will also ease the business and sellers in planning their strategies and which factor to focus more on attracting new and existing consumers to buy their products and services. In addition, the findings will also be fruitful to the body of knowledge, especially in the literature, by focusing on the TikTok platform as the new rising social media marketing medium.

Same as other studies, this study does have limitations. One of them is the independent variables used, which only involve three variables: product quality, live streaming and influencer, which is not extensive. Hence, this study will only generate findings based on limited variables, which lead to a narrow discussion and debates. Next, the study will be conducted using one type of method, which is quantitative, via an online survey questionnaire. Thus, it limits the findings gained from this method, which will only reveal the result on the surface —primarily, no in-depth information.

Consequently, further research is recommended to widen the investigation by looking into other variables or factors influencing buying intention besides product quality, live streaming and influencers. For example, adding the brand image, trust, security, payment, or demographic segmentation factors like gender, age, income, occupation, etc., to understand better each prospective buyer's needs so all planned strategies accurately match consumer preferences. Lastly, it is recommended that future studies use qualitative methods as it helps the researchers to have a deeper understanding of what influences consumer buying intention through the TikTok platform.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study helps enrich the literature field, primarily in understanding the factors behind consumer's purchasing intention, mainly involving the rising social media marketing platform TikTok. Knowing the decisive role of the TikTok platform nowadays, businesses and sellers must understand which aspects drive the consumer's intention to buy. Besides, the ability of sellers to meet consumer expectations is the most crucial part that triggers their initial intention

to purchase or not. Besides, it is vital for businesses and sellers to fully utilize the famous stream of marketing tools like the TikTok platform, as it has proven to attract and grab the attention of most consumers regardless of their age. Thus, the findings from this study will help provide a better comprehension to those sellers and serve as the base for them to strategize how to increase their sales revenue.

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KAJIAN TAHAP KESEDARAN KESELAMATAN BERASASKAN TINGKAHLAKU TERHADAP KEMALANGAN DI INDUSTRI PEMBINAAN

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Abstrak

Kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji tahap kesedaran majikan dan pekerja berhubung Keselamatan Berasaskan Tingkahlaku (Behaviour Based Safety atau BBS) dalam mengurangkan kemalangan di sektor pembinaan. BBS adalah salah satu pendekatan untuk mengurangkan insiden di tempat kerja dengan mengubah tingkahlaku berisiko kepada tingkahlaku berasaskan keselamatan. Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti faktor-faktor utama yang mempengaruhi BBS yang menyumbang kepada kemalangan di tapak pembinaan, menilai pengaruh faktor-faktor dalam BBS (pengurusan, tingkahlaku, & persekitaran) terhadap kemalangan di tapak pembinaan dan mencadangkan faktor BBS yang perlu diberi penekanan bagi mengelak kemalangan di tapak pembinaan. Borang soal selidik digunakan dalam kajian ini dan diagihkan kepada responden yang terdiri daripada majikan dan pekerja di syarikat pembinaan. Data dianalisis menggunakan perisian Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) versi 26 dan tahap kesedaran responden berhubung BBS ditafsir menggunakan 6-tahap skala skor Likert. Penemuan daripada kajian ini menunjukkan terdapat faktor yang mempengaruhi pelaksanaan BBS iaitu faktor persekitaran, pengurusan syarikat dan tingkahlaku pekerja. Langkah kawalan secara pentadbiran bagi faktor pengurusan perlu dipertingkatkan supaya risiko kemalangan dapat dihindarkan atau dikurang. Walau bagaimanapun, tahap amalan BBS perlulah selari dengan tahap kesedaran berhubung BBS bagi mengurangkan kemalangan di tempat kerja. Oleh itu, kajian lanjut berhubung tahap amalan BBS dalam kalangan majikan dan pekerja perlu dilakukan pada masa akan datang dengan syarat setiap syarikat pembinaan terbabit telah melaksanakan program BBS terlebih dahulu.

Kata kunci : BBS, tingkahlaku, persekitaran, kemalangan, keselamatan

Pengenalan

Sektor pembinaan adalah antara penyumbang tertinggi kepada pembangunan ekonomi di Malaysia. Hampir semua sektor ekonomi akan melibatkan pembinaan contohnya pembinaan kediaman, kilang-kilang, jalanraya dan sebagainya. Sektor pembinaan juga mewujudkan peluang pekerjaan yang tinggi, bukan sahaja kepada warganegara Malaysia, malahan juga kepada warga asing yang bekerja di negara ini. Berdasarkan laporan Bahagian Dasar Antarabangsa dan Pembangunan Penyelidikan, Jabatan Keselamatan dan Kesihatan Pekerjaan (JKKP) Malaysia (2021), dalam Laporan Tapak Selamat Bil 03/2020, jumlah semasa pekerja di sektor pembinaan adalah sebanyak 1,276,400 orang. Sektor pembinaan juga dikenali umum sebagai sektor 3D, iaitu *dirty*, *difficult* dan *dangerous* (Ghosh, 2011).

Sektor pembinaan merupakan sektor yang mempunyai risiko yang tinggi dan mendedahkan pelbagai kemungkinan bahaya yang boleh menyebabkan kemalangan kepada pekerja. Mengikut kamus Dewan Edisi Keempat (2005), bahaya bermaksud sesuatu yang mendatangkan bencana, kecelakaan, kematian, kerugian dan pendedahan kepada risiko seperti keadaan atau peralatan kerja yang tidak selamat yang boleh membawa bahaya yang tidak dijangka kepada pekerja, seperti kecederaan akibat jatuh dari tempat tinggi, kecederaan akibat jatuh objek, kecederaan akibat perlanggaran dengan halangan, dan bahaya bawah sedar seperti keracunan akibat pendedahan kepada bahan kimia.

Terdapat banyak kemalangan berkaitan kerja di tapak pembinaan sering kita lihat dan baca di akhbar serta media-media elektronik. Kebanyakan kemalangan ini melibatkan peristiwa tragis dan mengerikan sehingga ada yang menyebabkan kematian pekerja dan orang awam akibat aktiviti kerja di tapak pembinaan. Berdasar laporan Sinar Harian bertarikh 11 Jun 2021, dua orang warga asing yang merupakan pekerja telah mati akibat terjatuh daripada ketinggian 40 meter, ini adalah kerana jentera *gantry launcher* yang sedang diselenggara terjatuh di tapak kerja bina Lebuhraya Bertingkat Sungai Besi-Ulu Kelang (SUKE), Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur (WPKL), manakala seorang warga asing yang juga merupakan pekerja pula mati kerana mangsa tersepit akibat dihempap oleh jentera *gantry launcher* yang telah jatuh dari tempat kerja tersebut.

Kejadian kemalangan yang berlaku dalam kalangan pekerja boleh memberi kesan serius, seperti kematian dan kecacatan, yang menyebabkan kenaikan kos operasi seperti kos untuk membayar pampasan kepada pekerja yang terlibat. Menurut laporan tahunan PERKESO 2018, perbelanjaan pampasan yang dibayar oleh PERKESO bagi tahun 2018 akibat kemalangan adalah berjumlah RM3,706.27 juta. Statistik mengenai kemalangan pekerjaan pada tahun 2018 menunjukkan bahawa jumlah kemalangan telah meningkat berbanding dengan RM3.27177 juta pada tahun 2017 (PERKESO, 2018). Malahan, sektor pembinaan merupakan antara sektor yang mencatatkan rekod tertinggi bagi kes kemalangan iaitu daripada 4,266 pada tahun 2017 kepada 4,863 pada tahun 2019 (JKKP, 2021).

Pelbagai usaha telah dibangunkan dan dilaksanakan untuk menjadikan tempat kerja yang selamat, kondusif dan sihat. Langkah - langkah kawalan risiko yang digariskan oleh Jabatan Keselamatan dan Kesihatan Pekerjaan (JKKP) untuk mengawal risiko di tempat kerja seperti kawalan pada punca (penghapusan, penggantian), kawalan secara kejuruteraan, kawalan

pentadbiran dan kawalan dari segi penggunaan peralatan perlindungan diri (PPD) (Garis panduan bagi Pengenalpastian Hazad, Penaksiran Risiko dan Kawalan Risiko (HIRARC), 2008). Walau bagaimanapun kawalan pada punca iaitu melalui cara penghapusan atau pun penggantian dan secara kejuruteraan selalunya tidak dapat dilaksanakan secara praktik di tempat kerja kerana ianya akan melibatkan kos yang terlampau tinggi. Justeru, kebanyakan majikan akan memilih kawalan secara pentadbiran dan penggunaan PPD dalam usaha untuk mengurangkan risiko di tapak- tapak pembinaan. Salah satu kawalan pentadbiran yang dicadangkan dan boleh dilaksanakan adalah Keselamatan Berasaskan Tingkahlaku (*Behaviour Based Safety* atau *BBS*).

BBS adalah proses dan pendekatan untuk meningkatkan tahap keselamatan dan prestasi kesihatan di tempat kerja melalui pemerhatian dan maklum balas daripada pengurusan (majikan / pekerja) untuk mengubah tingkahlaku mereka (Geller, 1994). *BBS* telah menjadi trend masa kini untuk meningkatkan prestasi keselamatan (Al- Hemoud et al., 2006). Pendekatan konsep *BBS* merupakan salah satu kaedah yang efektif dan telah diguna pakai secara menyeluruh di negara-negara di Eropah dan Amerika semenjak dari tahun 1980 lagi untuk mencegah kemalangan dengan menyasarkan indeks prestasi keselamatan, kadar kemalangan dan kadar kecederaan (Gui, 2005). Tujuan utama *BBS* adalah untuk mengubah tingkahlaku tidak selamat kepada tingkahlaku selamat dan seterusnya mencegah kejadian kemalangan daripada berlaku di tapak pembinaan.

Jadual 1 menunjukkan tindakan punitif hasil operasi tapak pembinaan dari tahun 2017 hingga 2019, berdasarkan Laporan Tahunan JKKP 2019 (JKKP, 2021). Melalui Laporan tersebut, dapat dilihat dengan jelas bahawa tindakan punitif yang dikenakan ke atas tapak bina tidak menunjukkan perbezaan yang ketara, dengan ini ianya memberi gambaran bahawa tahap pematuhan dan kesedaran di sektor pembinaan masih rendah.

Jadual 1
Tindakan Punitif Operasi Tapak Pembinaan 2017 - 2019

Bil.	Tindakan	2017	2018	2019
1.	Notis Larangan	1322	2140	2188
2.	Notis Pembaikan	1213	1395	3528
3.	Kompaun	580	743	1668
4.	Pendakwaan	96	247	266
5.	Sita	122	1025	2512
	Jumlah	3,333	5,550	10,162

Sumber: Laporan Tahunan JKKP Malaysia 2019 (JKKP, 2021)

Berdasarkan scenario di atas, dapat dirumuskan bahawa penyumbang kepada kemalangan adalah terdiri daripada tiga faktor iaitu faktor pengurusan, faktor tingkahlaku dan juga faktor persekitaran. Justeru, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menilai pengaruh faktor-faktor dalam *BBS* (pengurusan, tingkahlaku, dan persekitaran) terhadap kemalangan di tapak pembinaan.

Tinjauan karya

Kemalangan

Definisi kemalangan yang diberikan oleh Heinrich pada tahun 1930-an sering disebut di dalam penulisan atau jurnal berkaitan keselamatan. Heinrich menyatakan kemalangan adalah peristiwa yang tidak dirancang dan tidak terkawal di mana tindakan atau reaksi objek, bahan, atau sinaran mengakibatkan kecederaan diri (Heinrich, 1931). Variasi bagi definisi ini dapat dijumpai melalui beberapa lagi literatur keselamatan, contohnya melalui kajian Bird & Germain. (Bird & Germain, 1966) yang mendefinisikan kemalangan sebagai kejadian yang tidak disengajakan atau tidak dirancang yang mungkin tidak mengakibatkan kerosakan harta benda, kecederaan peribadi, tahap proses kerja atau gangguan, atau gabungan syarat-syarat ini dalam keadaan sedemikian yang mungkin mengakibatkan kecederaan peribadi. Kejadian kemalangan juga dapat didefinisikan sebagai kejadian tidak terancang yang timbul dari proses pembuatan seperti tumpahan bahan kimia, kebakaran, letupan, atau kecederaan (American Chemistry Council, 2017).

Justeru, kemalangan adalah suatu peristiwa yang berlaku secara tidak sengaja dan tidak dirancang, sering kali terjadi tanpa sengaja. Biasanya berlaku melalui gabungan beberapa sebab, iaitu perbuatan tidak selamat atau keadaan tidak selamat dan mungkin mengakibatkan kesan buruk seperti kecederaan badan, kerosakan harta benda, kejadian nyaris dan kerugian (Niza et al., 2008).

Peningkatan dalam peruntukan perundangan berkaitan keselamatan dan kesihatan pekerjaan telah diperkenalkan di banyak negara, kekerapan kemalangan dalam projek pembinaan masih berada pada tahap tinggi (Wu et al., 2017). Oleh yang demikian, analisis punca utama kemalangan atau kemalangan nyaris biasanya dijalankan selepas berlakunya kemalangan ataupun insiden. Analisis tersebut sebenarnya bertujuan untuk mencari dan mengenalpasti punca-punca yang mengakibatkan kejadian tersebut. Ini mungkin termasuk kegagalan peralatan, kejadian persekitaran seperti cuaca buruk, atau penyimpangan proses kerja di dalam atau merentasi fungsi (Ludwig, 2017).

Pengurusan dan Kemalangan

Faktor pengurusan merangkumi kewajipan dan tanggungjawab untuk memastikan keselamatan dan kesihatan pekerja dan orang lain ketika berada di tapak pembinaan. Akta Keselamatan dan Kesihatan Pekerjaan (AKKP) 1994 telah menegaskan tentang kewajipan majikan dalam pengurusan di sesebuah organisasi untuk menentukan kejayaan pelaksanaan keselamatan dan kesihatan pekerjaan (KKP) di tempat kerja. Kewajipan ini merangkumi pelaksanaan, penyenggaraan, polisi, prosedur, maklumat, latihan, pengadaan dan penyenggaraan persekitaran pekerjaan bagi pekerja-pekerjanya (AKKP 1994). Oleh itu, sistem pengurusan keselamatan yang berkesan sangat penting sebagai usaha berterusan untuk meningkatkan keselamatan di tapak pembinaan. Definisi sistem pengurusan keselamatan yang sesuai perlu dinyatakan dengan jelas dan elemen-elemen dalam sistem pengurusan keselamatan harus dikenalpasti untuk digunakan oleh pemain industri bagi meningkatkan keselamatan. Pelbagai sistem pengurusan keselamatan telah diperkenalkan oleh penyelidik. Sebilangan besar telah dibangunkan berdasarkan punca-punca kecederaan dan kematian dalam organisasi (Jazayeri & Dadi, 2017).

Walaupun beberapa usaha penyelidikan dilakukan, peranan pengurusan dalam keselamatan pembinaan masih kurang diambil perhatian. (Liu et al., 2017). Sikap yang tidak mengambil perhatian oleh pihak pengurusan adalah satu faktor yang menyebabkan kejadian kemalangan masih berlaku di tapak pembinaan. Salah satu faktor yang utama ialah kurangnya sikap kepimpinan dalam pengurusan (Tam et al., 2004; Wu et al., 2017). yang telah terbukti mampu menegakkan peraturan dan undang- undang, dan mengurangkan ketidakseimbangan antara komitmen pengurusan dan pekerja dalam persekitaran kerja yang sangat berbahaya dan kompleks (Martin & Lewis, 2014; Tyssen et al., 2014).

Untuk mengurangkan dan mencegah kemalangan di sektor pembinaan, pelbagai penyelidik telah meneroka pelbagai teknik untuk dilaksanakan oleh pihak pengurusan bagi merealisasikan objektif kecederaan sifar (Huang & Hinze, 2006). Dapat dilihat dari hasil penyelidikan terdahulu bahawa pengurusan di dalam memastikan KKP telah diabaikan pada masa lalu, dan ini telah memberi kesan yang besar terhadap pengurusan keselamatan dalam konteks operasi dan prestasi pembinaan.

Lancaster et al., (2003) menjalankan kajian untuk menilai adakah kos pematuhan terhadap peraturan KKP tidak berpadanan mengikut pelbagai saiz organisasi, apa perbelanjaannya yang perlu ditanggung, dan berapa keberkesanan aktiviti dalam meningkatkan prestasi keselamatan dan kesihatan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan kontraktor besar, dengan lebih daripada 250 pekerja, melaporkan perbelanjaan yang jauh lebih sedikit untuk kemalangan berbanding dengan organisasi kecil dan sederhana yang jumlah pekerja kurang daripada 250 pekerja.

Salah satu penyebab utama pengurusan gagal dalam pembangunan sistem keselamatan dan kesihatan di tapak-tapak pembinaan adalah kurangnya kesedaran terhadap pematuhan kepada keselamatan berasaskan tingkah laku, undang-undang, kekangan masa, kos, kekurangan maklumat, dan kemahiran (Lancaster et al., 2003).

Kepemimpinan keselamatan yang kuat secara beransur-ansur dianggap sebagai kunci peningkatan prestasi keselamatan projek pembinaan, terutama bagi negara-negara di mana industri pembinaan menghadapi cabaran keselamatan yang besar dan memerlukan pembangunan transformasi (Wu et al., 2017). Teknik *BBS* dapat dilaksanakan dan akan efektif hanya apabila organisasi sudah memiliki sistem pengurusan keselamatan yang memadai sesuai dengan berbagai standard nasional dan internasional.

Tingkah laku dan Kemalangan

Faktor tingkahlaku merupakan tahap pematuhan terhadap elemen – elemen keselamatan dan kesihatan yang telah ditetapkan oleh pihak pengurusan. Tingkah laku didefinisikan sebagai ragam, olah, canda atau karenah (Kamus Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka Edisi Keempat, 2005). Jika dikembangkan definisi tersebut ia bermaksud tindakan atau tindak balas seseorang terhadap persekitaran sama ada secara sedar atau separa sedar, nyata atau terlindung dan juga secara rela ataupun terpaksa. Tingkahlaku juga merujuk kepada pematuhan, latihan, pengiktirafan, komunikasi dan tindakan. Faktor-faktor tingkahlaku kebanyakannya dipengaruhi oleh budaya dan amalan yang digunakan dalam kehidupan seharian (Geller, 1994; Faridah Ismail, 2012).

Tixier et al. (2014) mendapati bahawa tingkah laku untuk mengambil risiko oleh pekerja adalah berdasarkan tanggapan dan bukan berdasarkan pengetahuan kepada risiko sebenar, kerana pekerja tidak mempunyai pemahaman yang jelas mengenai risiko keselamatan atau kemungkinan-kemungkinan berlakunya kemalangan.

Pekerja-pekerja menganggarkan risiko dengan pelbagai cara, sebilangan pekerja mungkin membuat penilaian risiko berdasarkan firasat ataupun gerak hati, mungkin juga berdasarkan pengalaman yang pernah dilalui, atau berdasarkan khabar angin dan terdapat juga kemungkinan dalam kalangan pekerja yang dapat membuat penilaian tingkah laku yang lebih sistematik.

Justeru, budaya pencegahan kemalangan dapat diaplikasikan di tapak pembinaan seterusnya prestasi keselamatan dapat ditingkatkan. Kajian yang pernah dijalankan menunjukkan bahawa 90 peratus kemalangan berlaku disebabkan oleh tindakan atau tingkah laku manusia yang tidak selamat dan pada bila-bila masa, 50 peratus tindakan di tempat kerja dapat dilihat sebagai tindakan yang tidak selamat. Pemerhatian juga mendapati 30 peratus pekerja tidak mempunyai kesedaran keselamatan dan mengamalkan tingkah laku tidak selamat (Aliyachen, 2018).

Tingkah laku yang tidak selamat adalah penyebab kecederaan atau kemalangan. Sekiranya kita mampu untuk mengawal tingkah laku yang tidak selamat, kita mungkin mampu mencegah kemalangan di tempat kerja. Contohnya, penilaian terhadap inisiatif pencegahan kemalangan berdasarkan tingkah laku ke atas pekerja telah dilakukandan mendapati data kecederaan bagi tempoh 5 tahun daripada 73 syarikat, menunjukkan bahawa purata pengurangan insiden dari peringkat awal adalah berjumlah 26 peratus pada tahun pertama dan meningkat kepada 69 peratus pada tahun kelima (Gravina et al. 2019). Melalui data tersebut dapat dicadangkan bahawa *BBS* berkesan untuk mengurangkan kadar kemalangan di tapak-tapak pembinaan.

Persekitaran dan Kemalangan

Persekitaran merujuk kepada peralatan, jentera, pengemasan, cuaca, perubahan suhu dan sebagainya. Kegagalan untuk menguruskan dan mematuhi ketiga-tiga faktor tersebut boleh mengakibatkan kemalangan. Persekitaran pekerjaan adalah salah satu elemen yang menyebabkan tekanan kepada pekerja dan menyebabkan tingkah laku tidak selamat. Pekerja yang dapat menguruskan tekanan ialah pekerja yang dapat menyesuaikan diri dalam persekitaran pekerjaan yang berubah dan tidak menentu (Gui, 2005).

Berdasarkan kajian lepas, satu pengembangan asas teori telah dibangunkan yang disebut *behaviorisme Skinnerian*. Teori tersebut mengambil pendekatan luaran terhadap tingkah laku manusia, tetapi ia telah memperlihatkan persekitaran sebagai sumber rangsangan sebelum dan selepas tingkah laku diambil oleh pekerja (Drew, 2023). Ini bermaksud jika persekitaran kerja tidak selamat di tapak pembinaan ianya akan mencetuskan tingkah laku tidak selamat dalam kalangan pekerja yang seterusnya boleh menyebabkan kemalangan.

BBS didasarkan pada tanggapan bahawa semua tingkah laku dipengaruhi oleh pemboleh ubah persekitaran termasuk persekitaran fizikal dan persekitaran sosial. Persekitaran fizikal meliputi keadaan seperti suhu di tempat kerja, tahap kebisingan, kekemasan dan ruangan, pencahayaan, ergonomik, bau dan lain-lain. (Gravina et al., 2019; Sulzer-Azaroff & Austin, 2000).

Kegagalan pengurusan dalam menyediakan persekitaran kerja yang selamat akan menjadi faktor penyebab kepada berlakunya kemalangan.

Metodologi kajian

Hipotesis kajian ini adalah seperti berikut:

- i. Hipotesis 1: Pengurusan, tingkah laku dan persekitaran boleh mencegah kemalangan di tempat kerja.

Populasi dan Persampelan

Kajian ini merangkumi lima syarikat pembinaan di Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur (CIDB, 2021). Responden diambil daripada kontraktor utama dari kalangan majikan dan pekerja. Persampelan dibuat secara rawak mudah. Populasi adalah 280 pekerja dan saiz sampel adalah 162 pekerja mengikut Jadual Krejcie dan Morgan (1970). Soal selidik telah diedarkan kepada 250 orang (kaedah persampelan berlebihan). Sebanyak 193 soal selidik telah dikembalikan (77.2%).

Soal selidik

Soal selidik yang digunakan adalah berlandaskan *Occupational Safety and Health - Master Plan (OSH-MP) 15* (DOSH, 2016). Soal selidik ini telah diubahsuai bagi menilai tahap kesedaran *BBS* di sektor pembinaan. Soal selidik meliputi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pelaksanaan *BBS* yang merangkumi pengurusan, tingkah laku, persekitaran dan kemalangan. Skala Likert 6 mata iaitu amat tidak bersetuju kepada amat bersetuju telah digunakan.

Kaedah analisis data

Data yang diperoleh dianalisa menggunakan perisian SPSS. Data dianalisa menggunakan teknik korelasi dan regresi berganda.

Keputusan Kajian

Latar belakang responden

Kajian yang melibatkan 193 responden terdiri daripada peringkat pengurusan (20.72%), manakala peringkat pertengahan adalah sebanyak 31.08% dan peringkat pelaksana adalah sebanyak 48.19%. Bagi kategori gender, didapati 18.13% responden adalah perempuan dan responden lelaki adalah sebanyak 81.87%. Bagi kategori umur responden, sebanyak 6.22% (berumur kurang dari 25 tahun), 13.47% yang berumur antara 26 hingga 30 tahun, 25.39% yang berumur antara 31 hingga 35 tahun, 18.65% yang berumur antara 36 hingga 40 tahun, 16.58% responden berumur antara 41 hingga 45 tahun, 11.40% yang berumur antara 46 hingga 50 tahun, dan 8.29% (berumur melebihi 51 tahun).

Dari segi tahap pendidikan, sebanyak 42.49% responden mempunyai tahap pendidikan peringkat SPM / SPVM / STPM, 31.61% mempunyai tahap pendidikan peringkat diploma, manakala sebanyak 18.13% responden mempunyai tahap pendidikan di peringkat ijazah sarjana muda dan sebanyak 7.77% responden mempunyai lain-lain tahap pendidikan.

Pengalaman kerja menunjukkan 4.15% responden mempunyai pengalaman bekerja kurang dari 2 tahun, 7.25% responden mempunyai pengalaman bekerja di antara 2 hingga 4 tahun, manakala 31.61% responden mempunyai pengalaman bekerja di antara 4 hingga 6 tahun dan 56.99% responden mempunyai pengalaman bekerja yang melebihi 6 tahun.

Majoriti responden memberi maklumbalas bahawa kemalangan pernah direkodkan berlaku di tempat kerja mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, hanya 53.88% responden dari lima syarikat pembinaan yang dipilih menyatakan tempat kerja mereka melaksanakan program *BBS* dan selebihnya sebanyak 46.11% lagi tidak melaksanakan program *BBS* di tempat kerja. Oleh itu, terdapat syarikat pembinaan masih lagi belum melaksanakan program *BBS* di tempat kerja mereka secara holistik. Dengan ini menunjukkan bahawa pekerja di syarikat pembinaan tidak sepenuhnya didedahkan dengan *BBS*.

Analisis Korelasi Pearson

Analisa Kolerasi Pearson adalah untuk menganalisa hubungkait antara pemboleh ubah iaitu faktor-faktor *BBS*. Berdasarkan Jadual 2, keempat-empat faktor *BBS* mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan antara satu sama lain. Keputusan menunjukkan faktor kemalangan mempunyai hubungan yang kuat dengan faktor tingkahlaku iaitu 0.78, diikuti faktor pengurusan iaitu 0.55 dan faktor persekitaran 0.34. Ini membuktikan bahawa kemalangan akan berlaku melalui tiga faktor ini iaitu didahului dengan faktor tingkahlaku serta disusuli dengan faktor pengurusan dan faktor persekitaran.

Jadual 2
Korelasi (n = 193)

	Pengurusan	Tingkahlaku	Persekitaran	Kemalangan
Pengurusan	1			
Tingkahlaku	.52	1		
Persekitaran	.59	.46	1	
Kemalangan	.55	.78	.34	1

$p < .00$

Analisis regrasi berganda

Berdasarkan Jadual 3, nilai r^2 adalah 0.649 menunjukkan bahagian varians dalam pemboleh ubah bersandar yang dapat dijelaskan oleh pemboleh ubah bebas yang menjelaskan 64.9% kebolehubahan pemboleh ubah bersandar.

Pada statistik signifikan nisbah F dalam ujian ANOVA menunjukkan pemboleh ubah bebas secara statistik meramalkan pemboleh ubah bersandar dengan $F = 116.46$, $p < 0.05$, $r^2 = 0.649$ yang bermaksud bahawa model regresi adalah data yang sesuai. Ketiga-tiga pemboleh ubah ditambahkan secara signifikan pada ramalan, $p < .05$ dan dapat menjelaskan perubahan dalam pemboleh ubah bersandar.

Jadual 3
Coefficient

		<i>Coefficients^a</i>				
		<i>Unstandardized Coefficients</i>		<i>Standardized Coefficients</i>		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
1	(Constant)	.243	.350		.694	.489
	Pengurusan	.392	.083	.269	4.736	.000
	Tingkah laku	.786	.057	.708	13.670	.000
	Persekitaran	-.259	.094	-.150	-2.740	.007

a. *Dependent Variable: Kemalangan*
F = 116.46, p < 0.05, r² = 0.649

Perbincangan

Faktor pengurusan dan kemalangan

Hasil kajian menunjukkan faktor pengurusan dapat meramal secara signifikan tentang kemalangan dan ini menunjukkan faktor pengurusan memainkan peranan yang penting dalam mencegah kemalangan di tapak pembinaan. Responden bersetuju bahawa pihak pengurusan perlu menjalankan tanggungjawab dan komitmen dalam memastikan keselamatan dan kesihatan di tapak pembinaan.

Kajian lepas mengesahkan bahawa penglibatan pengurusan dalam keselamatan pembinaan memainkan peranan penting dalam peningkatan prestasi keselamatan (Liu et al., 2017). Sikap yang tidak mengambil perhatian oleh pihak pengurusan adalah salah satu faktor yang menyebabkan kejadian kemalangan masih berlaku di tapak pembinaan dan faktor utama yang dimaksudkan ialah kurangnya sikap kepimpinan dalam pengurusan (Tam et al., 2004; Wu et al., 201). Faktor ini telah terbukti mampu menegakkan peraturan dan undang-undang, dan mengurangkan ketidakseimbangan antara komitmen pengurusan dan pekerja dalam persekitaran kerja yang sangat berbahaya dan kompleks (Martin & Lewis, 2014; Tyssen et al., 2014).

Faktor tingkahlaku dan kemalangan

Hasil kajian menunjukkan faktor tingkahlaku memberi keputusan secara signifikan berhubung kemalangan dan ini menunjukkan faktor tingkahlaku juga memainkan peranan yang penting dalam mencegah kemalangan di tapak pembinaan.

Kajian Aliyachen et al. (2018) mendapati bahawa 90 peratus kemalangan berlaku disebabkan oleh tindakan atau tingkahlaku manusia yang tidak selamat, dan 30 peratus pekerja tidak mempunyai kesedaran keselamatan dan mengamalkan tingkahlaku tidak selamat. Penilaian terhadap inisiatif pencegahan kemalangan berdasarkan tingkahlaku ke atas pekerja telah dilakukan dan mendapati data kecederaan bagi tempoh lima tahun daripada 73 syarikat, menunjukkan bahawa purata pengurangan insiden dari peringkat awal adalah berjumlah 26 peratus pada tahun pertama dan meningkat kepada 69 peratus pada tahun kelima (Gravina et al., 2019).

Faktor persekitaran dan kemalangan

Hasil kajian mendapati faktor persekitaran telah meramal secara signifikan tentang kemalangan dan ini menunjukkan faktor persekitaran adalah salah satu faktor yang penting dalam mencegah kemalangan di tapak pembinaan.

Kajian Gravina et al. (2019) mengukuhkan lagi dapatan kajian yang didasarkan pada tanggapan bahawa semua tingkah laku dipengaruhi oleh pemboleh ubah persekitaran termasuk persekitaran fizikal dan persekitaran sosial. Persekitaran fizikal meliputi keadaan seperti suhu di tempat kerja, tahap kebisingan, kekemasan dan ruangan, pencahayaan, ergonomik, bau dan lain-lain. Kegagalan pengurusan dalam menyediakan persekitaran kerja yang selamat akan menjadi faktor penyebab kepada berlakunya kemalangan.

Implikasi kajian

Penemuan kajian ini memberi peluang syarikat pembinaan untuk mempraktikkan pendekatan *BBS* kepada pekerja. Hasil kajian yang dianalisa menunjukkan bahawa faktor pengurusan, faktor tingkahlaku dan faktor persekitaran adalah elemen yang memberi kesan utama kepada sesuatu kemalangan di tapak pembinaan.

Langkah-langkah awal boleh diambil dengan memastikan setiap faktor diberikan pengawalan dan penekanan secara komprehensif bagi memastikan keselamatan dan kesihatan adalah terjamin. Pekerja akan terasa yakin untuk menjalankan aktiviti kerja dan akan berkurangan kes ketidakhadiran ke tempat kerja, pengambilan cuti sakit dan lain-lain. dan mengurangkan juga kos-kos tersembunyi jika berlaku sesuatu kemalangan di tapak pembinaan.

Penglibatan pekerja di dalam isu *BBS* secara langsung juga amat penting kerana ia akan melahirkan rasa dihargai dan dipercayai oleh pihak pengurusan. Seterusnya ia akan mendorong tingkahlaku yang positif dalam kalangan pekerja dan akhirnya para pekerja akan lebih berhati-hati dan kadar kemalangan dapat dikurangkan.

Kesimpulan

Hasil daripada penyelidikan ini menunjukkan persoalan dan objektif yang telah dibincangkan di awal penyelidikan telah berjaya dijawab. Hasil kajian ini diharapkan dapat membantu syarikat pembinaan bagi mengenalpasti tahap kesedaran *BBS* di dalam organisasi mereka berkaitan faktor-faktor seperti pengurusan, tingkahlaku, persekitaran dan kemalangan.

Secara keseluruhannya, didapati tahap kesedaran responden di syarikat pembinaan berkenaan *BBS* adalah baik walaupun program berkaitan *BBS* tidak dijalankan secara khususnya oleh syarikat pembinaan terbabit. Dengan ini menunjukkan bahawa syarikat pembinaan tidak mempunyai kekangan untuk melaksanakan program *BBS* bagi mengurangkan kejadian kemalangan di tapak pembinaan. Ini kerana secara tidak langsung memberi faedah kepada organisasi dalam bentuk penjimatan kos, produktiviti pekerja, kualiti kerja meningkat serta meningkatkan daya saing syarikat. Sebagai kesimpulan, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pelaksanaan *BBS* dalam mengurang atau mengelak risiko kemalangan di syarikat pembinaan telah dikenalpasti iaitu faktor persekitaran, pengurusan syarikat dan tingkahlaku pekerja.

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THE READINESS OF SMES IN PURSUING LOW CARBON ECONOMY

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Abstract

From climate change to the pandemic, sustainability has become business-critical for every company including Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to explore new approaches to stay resilient in the market. Adopting sustainability shall bring some challenges to the company, however, it brings an opportunity that a company could explore and exploit. To sustain itself in this ever-challenging business environment, a company needs to know how to manage its carbon footprint, and thus carbon management is crucial for SMEs to be sustainable financially and non-financially. Managing carbon emissions will affect the firm's profitability in the long run, thus, this paper highlights the readiness of SMEs to adopt carbon management in their daily business operation and the relationship between carbon management and the performance of SMEs.

Keywords: Sustainability; carbon management; SME performance

Introduction

Recently, there has been an emergent theme of SMEs in sustainability, especially encouraging SMEs to exercise sustainability or ESG (environment, social, and governance) in their business practices. In Rancangan Malaysia Ke-12 (RMK12), Malaysia has set to transform the SMEs to integrate and adopt the elements of sustainability in Sustainability Development Goals (SDG) and the principle of ESG while in the same time setting an insight into achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 (Unit Perancang Ekonomi, 2021). However, what does it really mean to achieve carbon neutrality?

Carbon neutrality refers to net-zero carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by everyone in order to stop the increasing phenomenon of global warming (Chen, 2021). On the other hand, Grainger & Smith (2021) asserted that carbon neutrality can be achieved when emissions of CO₂ into the atmosphere are offset by the CO₂ removed from the atmosphere. According to BP Global (2021) in Statistical Review of World Energy 2021, Malaysia's CO₂ emission stood at 256 million tons per year, contributing 0.8% per share of global emissions for the year 2020. The main sources of the emission were energy consumption, mobility, and waste. Thus, achieving carbon neutrality comes hand in hand with the responsibility of all people and entities to ensure the world that we are living in shall be sustained for the next generations.

From the business perspective, SMEs have become the major player in the business industry especially in Malaysia as for the year 2022 there were 97.4% of SMEs with a total amount of 1,173,601. Given this situation, SMEs are by virtue playing their important role in local communities, key in the transition of a low carbon economy through employee engagement, business practices, and their role in the supply chain (Baranova et al., 2017). To ensure SMEs are able to integrate their business in a low-carbon economy, SMEs must first be able to manage their carbon footprints. In general, carbon management is to understand how and where organization's activities generate their CO₂ emission and then develop a strategy to minimize the emissions in a sustainable financial.

The adoption of carbon management was not only entitled to monitoring, controlling, and reducing carbon emissions but it also being influenced by the pressure of various stakeholders (investors, government, customers etc.) that will affect the company practices (Yunus et al., 2020). According to (Corbett, 2013) when an organisation implements carbon management practices, it shall be able to support individual use as well as it can foster more environmentally responsible behaviours by the employee. Therefore, carbon management shall become an instrument of persuasion while conducting the business and eventually increase the company's performance.

However, there have been limited studies on carbon management practices especially among SMEs, and the practices, especially in terms of training in carbon management are usually available only to top managers and multi-national companies (Hendrichs & Busch, 2012; Tang & Luo, 2014). Besides that, Doda et al., (2016) mentioned that most companies do not place sufficient emphasis on practicing their carbon management initiatives and found that the relationship between carbon management practices has not been clearly drawn out with the performance of the company.

Therefore, this study aims to know the readiness of SMEs to adopt carbon management in their daily business operation and to find the relationship between carbon management and the performance of SMEs. The article is structured in the following way. First, we shall discuss the research review on carbon management focusing on SMEs and their performance. Then, follow the methodological approach that will be used in the study.

Research Review

Carbon Management and SME Performance

Moving towards a low low-carbon economy requires a lot of understanding and knowledge from the implementers, especially from the perspective of SMEs. Most research on business engagement in the low-carbon economy has centered on large companies that have enough resources to practice their corporate social responsibility and maintain good governance in their sustainability practice (Conway, 2015). A low carbon economy is essential for the sustainability of the company and even the earth as it is the activity that generates products or services that deliver low carbon emissions. In general, developing countries contribute less carbon emission compared to developed countries, however, developing countries basically are more energy-intensive compared to developed countries (Sengupta et al., 2020). This shows there is an urgent need to address this issue, particularly in Malaysia as it could have an impact on society.

Nowadays, the challenges to maintain the cost of operation have forced most of the companies to find other alternatives and they looked over how to manage their operating consumption either in reducing its energy consumption, waste management, and access to mobility. However, transitioning the existing practice to low low-carbon economy too suddenly could create distress within the management operation. Therefore, carbon management is a part of the strategies that can be implemented for companies, especially for the SMEs to plan their agenda ahead.

Carbon management is basically involved the strategy of reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to the atmosphere (Howell, 2018) and Malaysia has taken a serious approach in dealing with environmental issues such as carbon management in order to establish a low-carbon economy that will benefit society. Realizing this issue, Malaysia started working on its national carbon disclosure program in 2012, establishing the National GHG Centre, National Green Technology Master Plan etc. (Shamsul Azlan et al., 2023). Implementation is crucial in the next phase with the introduction of all those programs, initiatives, and policies where every stakeholder must be involved during the process.

Moreover, Doda et al., (2016) highlighted the relationship between carbon management practices, actions, and performance has not been drawn clearly by the majority of companies as most companies did not have sufficient emphasis on the outcomes of the initiatives taken by them. Besides that, SMEs were known to adopt few environmental practices and it did not contribute much to the reduction in carbon emissions (Quintás et al., 2018). A study conducted by Hayati et al., (2021) found that SMEs in Malaysia practiced carbon-related waste management, but they were not given an awareness to implement carbon management accounting practices, thus, it was difficult to evaluate how does carbon management was giving a financial impact to the SMEs performance.

SMEs numbers are growing year by year and their contribution to a country is undeniable. Therefore, they play an important role in managing and reducing their carbon emissions from their business operation as they have indirect influence from their suppliers, customers, and other organizations' (Blundel & Hampton, 2021). A study conducted by Groschopf et al., (2019) found that increased voluntary environmental initiatives such as carbon tracking provide an opportunity for SMEs to enhance environmental and economic performance. This was supported by a study conducted by Tuesta et al., (2020) as there was a relationship between carbon management and performance of the company as the increase in CO₂ will negatively affecting the firm's profitability.

For SMEs in Europe, the relationship between energy and the economy is fundamental however, it will hardly be complicated to integrate with one another as the company having difficulty in estimating the CO₂ emissions and finding the best solutions for the CO₂ emissions (Giama & Papadopoulos, 2018). On the other hand, Dhanda & Malik (2020) asserted that these days the need for efficient carbon management is driven by employee and customer expectations, the risks from the physical impacts of climate change, competitive positioning, and investor pressure. Therefore, this study proposes the following framework.



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Most of the studies conducted by previous research (Hayati et al., 2021; Hendrichs & Busch, 2012; Lewis-Brown et al., 2023) were done in qualitative methods. This study shall use the quantitative approach to obtain data from the respondents. The unit of analysis for this study will be SMEs in Malaysia, especially those located in Klang Valley area and the selection of SMEs for this study will be based on SME definition which based on SME Corp (2016), defined SME companies by their sales turnover which not exceeding RM 20 million or composing of not more than 75 workers full-time employees and this criteria has been applied to all entrepreneurial financial institutions in Malaysia. A set of questionnaires consisting of items for carbon management and SME performance will be adopted from Chow & Chen (2012) and Kiyabo & Isaga (2020). The questionnaire will be distributed to the SME manager or entrepreneur via online form, email, and mail. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 26 will be deployed to analyze the data input received later.

Conclusion

The growing in population and urbanization in Malaysia will continue increasing the carbon emission and awareness among Malaysia stakeholders about committing to low carbon economy

becoming much essential. Employing carbon management is the very first step that SMEs in Malaysia can take to have a greener approach in conducting their business. Being one of the organizations that are very close to society, SMEs play a crucial role in ensuring their supply chain and logistics are well monitored through the implementation and good governance of carbon management strategies. Besides that, the government needs to enable the initiatives and programs introduced is reach to the community within the SMEs. Steps to encourage innovation on products and services, managing the industrial structure, calculating their carbon footprint and participating in in carbon offset programs (Dhanda & Malik, 2020; Shamsul Azlan et al., 2023) shall enable SMEs to understand more on how managing their carbon benefit their company in terms of finance and non-financial such as branding, customer loyalty etc.

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POLICE OFFICERS' INTENTIONS FOR EARLY RETIREMENT IN KEDAH CONTINGENT

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Abstract

This study aimed to examine the organizational predictors of early retirement intentions among police officers in the Kedah Contingent. The research involved 278 police officers from various positions within the RMP team, covering 10 departments. Data was collected through descriptive and factual analysis, with descriptive analysis focusing on the response rate of the respondents and organizational factors influencing the intention to retire early. Factual analysis used correlation analysis to examine the relationship between police officers' intentions to retire early and predictor factors, while regression analysis examined the impact of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The data showed that police officers' intentions to retire early at the Kedah Contingent were positively correlated with workload, leader perception, and career growth. The findings suggest that RMP management can review human resource management to enhance workplace efficiency and strengthen employee relationships, as early retirement intentions can negatively impact the organization's performance. The study's findings can help RMP management improve human resource management and enhance workplace relationships.

Keywords: Retirement Intention, Workload, Perception of leader, Career Development

Introduction

The Royal Malaysian Police Force (RMP) celebrated its 214 anniversaries on 25th March 2021, reflecting its history from the colonial era to the digital age. As the country's main enforcement body, RMP aims to maintain the law, detect, arrest, and prosecute criminals, and ensure peace and prosperity. It is also responsible for maintaining peace and public order, including human-related order and natural disasters. With a total membership of 130,815 personnel stationed throughout Malaysia, RMP is an important individual for the team and the country. The RMP is expected to be a good example, model, and community belief in enforcing the law and maintaining harmony in community life. The police force's role and responsibility have resulted in a total membership of 130,815 personnel stationed throughout the country. Police officers' responsibilities require them to remain in the organization despite career challenges, as RMP demands high commitment. A study on early retirement intentions among officers aims to improve RMP's performance and efficiency in community services. However, the alarming trend of early retirement is concerning, as their skills and experience are crucial for national security and peace (Tan Sri Mohamad Fuzi Harun, 2018).

Police officers in Malaysia face numerous challenges and high risks, including job boredom, lack of community respect, documentation issues, violence exposure, and bureaucratic structure. In 2020, 2,646 officers and members chose to retire early, with nearly 2,500 to 3,000 retiring compulsorily after reaching the age of 60 each year. Most officers aged 50 to 55 choose to retire early each year, according to statistics from the Pension Unit, Bukit Aman Services Division. The policing profession is a demanding and demanding one, with over 5,000 officers and members retiring annually in Malaysia. The statistics highlight the high level of stress and risk faced by police officers in the country.

This study examines the factors contributing to police officers' desire to retire early and the shared responsibility to improve their ability to cope with stress, emotional, and mental stress. Although many officers have fulfilled their duties with a sense of responsibility, their wants and needs are often ignored, leading to early retirement. The trend of early retirement is a concern and can be controlled by organizations. However, the long-term effects should be considered, as it could lead to financial issues such as increased expenditure and costs for recruiting, selecting, and training new members. This could affect the capability and efficiency of Regional Police Management (RMP) services, ultimately affecting public safety.

This study aims to identify factors influencing police officers' intention to retire early, aligning with previous research by Mathis and Jackson (2007) and Kurniawaty (2019). Factors such as job satisfaction, career development, attractive compensation packages, poor management, spouse difficulties, continuing education, retirement, job security, poor relationships, childcare facilities, discrimination, and health problems may contribute to early retirement. The study suggests that moderators influencing initial intentions should be addressed to fulfill the top leadership's vision of "Towards a Distinguished Police Force" by providing appropriate solutions.

Problem Statement

The Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) is a discipline-based organization that requires officers to be diligent in fulfilling their duties, ensuring they do not cause negative self-conflict or rebellion. High discipline and integrity are essential for the RMP team's performance. However, the increasing demands of modern work demands, such as investigations, intelligence, operations, arrests, prosecutions, patrols, control, and administration, can lead to stress and increased intention to retire early. Excessive workload, perceptions of leadership, and career development opportunities are factors that influence the desire to retire early among police officers. Police officers are often burdened with duties outside their proper realm, which creates internal conflict and pressure, ultimately impacting their desire to retire earlier. Leadership weaknesses in the RMP organization, such as failure to control relationships with subordinates, complex task structures, positions of power, and welfare needs, contribute to ethical misconduct, corruption, absenteeism, and unwillingness to continue working until conflicts cannot be addressed by supervisors. Career development is another issue that needs to be addressed in the RMP organization to prevent the desire to retire early. Career development helps individuals gain skills and experience, and it is crucial for organizations to achieve organizational goals without highly qualified employees. The aim of this study is to identify organizational factors influencing the pattern of desire to retire early among members of the RMP and investigate efforts to improve and enhance the ability of police officers to cope with stress, emotional, and mental in facing job challenges. This study investigates early retirement intentions among police officers in the Kedah Contingent, focusing on factors such as excessive workload, chief perception, and career development. The research aims to identify steps to overcome these issues and prevent losses to the Royal Malaysia Police force.

Literature Review

Previous studies on early retirement intentions in organizations are limited, especially in the police service. This study aims to examine broader theoretical dimensions of variables to test their relationship with early retirement intentions among police officers. The study considers dependent variables (DV) such as intention to retire early, independent variables (IV) such as workload, leader perception, and career development, and uses past studies as a reference source to discuss organizational factors contributing to early retirement intentions.

Perspective of Early Retirement Intention

Resignation intention refers to the desire of employees to leave their jobs, often due to job dissatisfaction (Saeed et. al., 2014) This can lead to increased resignation intentions through early retirement options, resulting in shorter employment periods and reduced organizational effectiveness (Pfeffer, 2007). Mathis and Jackson (2007) argue that the intention to quit work occurs when the workforce leaves the organization, leading to the need for replacement methods. Susan and Bryan (2019) highlight the significant impact on organizations, particularly police careers, in maintaining careers in the increasingly challenging field of law enforcement. To reduce turnover rates in these careers, management efficiency through organizational support in creating career and life balance is necessary. David and Venatus (2019) found that factors such as compensation package, workload, promotion, and career advancement influence employee intention to leave the organization high. Mathis and Jackson (2007) suggest that organizational policies, work rules, career opportunities elsewhere, attractive salary compensation packages, poor

management, personal or family reasons, continuing education, job security, relationships lacking well-being with coworkers, childcare facilities, discrimination, and health problems are potential contributing factors to why individuals shift away from the organization. These dimensions are organizational factors that are the root cause of the desire to leave the organization today, including early retirement. In Malaysia, police officers face high stress and job dissatisfaction compared to other jobs (Baker, R & Hazril, I. B., 2017). The increasingly complex and challenging role of assignments in the rapid development of the country has made the situation more acute, and increased public awareness due to education level, political behavior, increasing criminal cases, and other environmental factors affect police pressure in carrying out duties. Nursyazlin and Noraini (2017) identified several factors that influence work stress among Police personnel at the 9th Battalion Camp of the General Operations Force, Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu. Therefore, the quality of RMP services is crucial as it is one of the careers with a high level of stress.

Retirement Intention Study Model

This section discusses factors influencing employees' intention to leave an organization early, including stress due to excessive workload, supervisor perceptions, leadership, and career development. It defines the decision to quit as an employee's last action, while Michael A. Abelson (1986) views it as an impulsive action. Factors such as demographics, organizational capability, recruitment, relationships, appreciation, career development, leadership, technology, and policy also influence the initial intention process. Environmental factors like competition and geography also play a role in determining employee intention to leave employment.

Workload refers to activities that require mental processes to complete within a set period (Dhanial, 2010). Excessive workload can lead to restlessness, anxiety, and stress among employees, causing them to leave the organization early (Jimmy & Riana, 2015). In large organizations like the Police, irregular workload and overtime work can increase stress and pressure. To maintain service and organizational integrity, top management should consider psychological techniques to reduce work stress and reduce the tendency to retire early. Remedial measures should be taken to address these issues and maintain the loyalty of RMP personnel. Next is the workplace relationships. Workplace relationships, particularly between employees and supervisors, can significantly impact job satisfaction, commitment, and achievement (Kaur et. al., 2013). Leadership styles, such as communication skills, problem-solving, and listening, can influence employees' ability to achieve organizational goals. A positive supervisory relationship can lead to increased job satisfaction and reduced employee turnover (Loganathan, 2012). However, leadership in the police service is often seen as unsatisfactory, with autocratic leadership patterns limiting employee involvement. The Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) has been criticized for its close command and control style, leading to dissatisfaction among subordinate officers. Supervisors must be courageous, maintain a culture of prudent reprimands, and set a good example to ensure discipline and integrity among officers. Maintaining a positive perception of leadership is crucial for promoting a harmonious work environment and ensuring effective supervision among employees. Whilst, career development is a continuous process involving individuals moving through various life stages, identifying interests and skills, and assisting in employee retention strategies to achieve organizational goals. It is crucial for organizations like the Malaysian Army (TDM) to have dynamic and comprehensive career development programs. These include job selection, task execution, personality, length of service, career counseling, head support, and training programs.

Effective career development strategies can increase employee satisfaction, reduce the gap of intention to retire early, and improve knowledge, abilities, and skills.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between workload, supervisor perceptions, and career opportunities, with the intention to quit work. Three hypotheses were tested: H1 - workload is significantly related to quit work intention; H2 - supervisor perceptions significantly influence quit work intention; and H3 - career opportunities significantly influence quit work intention. These hypotheses are based on the research objectives and expected relationships between variables.

Research Methodology

The research method is a systematic and appropriate process for data collection, measurement, and analysis (Joned R., 2002; Cooper, 2006). This study uses a quantitative method recommended by Hopkin (2000) to interpret data from the field study, which is an appropriate methodology for making distinctions and relationships between independent variables and dependent variables in a study population. Quantitative research studies are used descriptively to address research questions covering research study design, random sampling methods in populations, data collection methods, data formation, and methods used to analyze study data (Mahdzir A., Mariyati, M. N., Raihana, M., A., 1992). Action plans for data collection, measurement, and analysis were used to determine the achievement of the objectives of the study to identify dimensions of workload, perceptions of the leader, and career development related to the intention to retire early. Research design is an important factor to consider in the action plan before the data collection process and other processes to achieve the objectives of the study (Hua, A. K, 2016). In this study, a quantitative research design was used to study the relationship between the dimensions of workload, perceptions of the leader, and career development related to the intention to retire early as an independent variable. Random sampling through a selected population data from respondents can be collected through the display of the report as a whole, but it is directly incapable of providing a simpler and more accurate final result in making an assessment based on the analysis of the study. The analysis of the study was done through the distribution of questionnaires to police officers serving in the Kedah Contingent, which aligns with the main focus of the study in identifying the dimensions of independent variables on the intention to retire early in the RMP service.

A population is a group of individuals, objects, or things that share the same elements that researchers want to study (Arikunto, 2006). Research is often conducted based on the characteristics found in the population to produce more accurate results without errors. A sample is a part of a population as representative of that population, selected based on variables with similar characteristics in the same population. Sampling is a method used to investigate the population identified in a study, which is done based on the relatively large population size that contributes to the difficulty for researchers to conduct the study. This indirectly reduces the member relationship gap in the population and has the effect of a significant increase in research costs. The population of this study was conducted on the strength of police officers working at the Kedah Contingent, consisting of police officers from various levels of positions covering several departments. The total number of RMP personnel for the Kedah Police Contingent (IPK) until September 2021 is 961 people. The breakdown of RMP personnel in uniform at the Kedah Police Contingent (IPK) by rank is 187 people (20%) senior officers with the rank of Inspector to Police

Commissioner, 695 people (72% low rank members and constables), and 79 people (8%) support members various ranks. This study employed the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formulation in determined its sampling.

Results

This section presents the results of a study analyzing data obtained from respondents' questionnaires using SPSS 26.0 software. The study aimed to determine the relationship between dependent variables such as excessive workload, perceptions of leaders, career development, and the desire for early retirement as independent variables. Data was analyzed using descriptive analysis methods, factor analysis, reliability analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The descriptive analysis was conducted on 278 selected respondents, focusing on demographics, background, and income. The Likert scale was used to measure respondents' responses, with the mean value obtained by dividing the total value by the number of questions found in the questionnaire. The study found that respondents were mostly male, under 20 years old, married, single, and of Malay, Chinese, Indian, or other races. The study focuses on the intention to retire early from service in a Malaysian military service. The majority of respondents are female (54.8%), aged between 31-40 years, married (84.9%), Malay (9.39%), and have a Certificate and SPM education (43.9%). The majority of respondents served between 6-10 years (32.7%), followed by those serving from 11-15 years (27.3%), 1-5 years (17.3%), 16-20 years (12.65), and more than 20 years (10.5%). In terms of income, the majority of respondents earn between RM1,501 to RM2,500 (38.8%), followed by a total of RM2,501 to RM3,500 (30.9%), and RM3,501 to RM4,500 (16.9%). The income exceeding RM4,500 was the highest at 12.6%. Factor analysis was conducted to determine the level of construct validity in the questionnaire and the relationship between variables. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measurement Test (KMO) was performed, considering the statistical assumptions of Barlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO test showed a sampling scale of 0.90, indicating that each variable is almost perfectly predictable without error by other variables. In total, four factor analyses were conducted, three for the dependent variable dimension and one for the independent variable dimension. The results showed that the intention to retire early from service is influenced by various factors, including age, education level, and service period.

The Pearson correlation analysis was used in this study to measure the relationship between overwork, supervisor perceptions, and career development with intention of early retirement from RMP service. The results showed a significant positive correlation between workload, perceptions of tasks, and career development, with a 0.494 correlation coefficient. The study suggests that early retirement intention is positively correlated with workload, perceptions of tasks, and career development.

The study used multiple regression analysis to test hypotheses on the relationship between initial intention, workload, leader perception, and career development in RMP organizations. The results showed that career development had the highest standard coefficient (Beta) effect, with a value of 0.533 ($p > 0.01$), strongly influencing initial intention. The perception of supervisors had a standard coefficient (Beta) effect of 0.187, and career opportunities and enabler workload had the lowest effect of 0.109. Therefore, hypotheses H1, H2, and H3 were accepted based on the standard coefficient (Beta) value of $p > 0.01$, and the Durbin-Watson value of 1.858 (range of 1.50 to 2.50)

indicated no autocorrelation. The results of the study provide valuable insights into the factors influencing early retirement intentions in RMP organizations.

Table 1
Multiple Regression Analysis Result

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson	F	Sig.
1	.494 ^a	.244	.241	.627		39.759	.000 ^d
2	.541 ^b	.293	.288	.607			
3	.551 ^c	.303	.296	.604	1.858		

a. Predictors: (Constant), Career development

b. Predictors: (Constant), Career development, Perception on supervisor

c. Predictors: (Constant), Career development, Perception on supervisor, Workload

d. Dependent Variable: Intention to early retirement

	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)		3.963	.000
Career Development	.533	10.409	.000
Perceptions of Supervisors	.187	3.487	.001
Workload	.109	2.017	.045

a. Dependent Variable: Intention to early retirement

Table 2
Summary of all Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Hypothesis statements	Remarks
H ₁	There is a positive relationship between workload and early retirement intention	Supported
H ₂	There is a positive relationship between perception of supervisors and early retirement intention.	Supported
H ₃	There is a positive relationship between career development and early retirement intention.	Supported

Conclusion

This study analyzed organizational factors influencing initial intentions in RMP services in the Kedah Contingent. It involved 278 police officers with a majority serving between 06 to 10 years. Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between workload, leader perception, and career development. Multiple regression analysis identified supervisor perception overload and career development factors as the most influential factors. The findings are relevant to understanding organizational factors influencing initial intentions.

The study analyzed the relationship between workload, perception of the leader, and career development with the intention to retire early among police officers in the Kedah Contingent. It was found that excessive workload has a positive significance towards early retirement intention, as officers who face work stress due to being overburdened with excessive duties will have a desire to retire earlier. This is in line with previous studies that suggest employment causes stress and job dissatisfaction compared to other jobs. The study also found that the role and responsibilities of RMP in enforcing national laws should be studied according to the terms of reference of the Royal Commission for the Improvement of Conduct and Management of RMP. The perception of the chief's leadership also had a significant relationship with the intention to retire early among police officers in the Kedah Contingent. The success of an organization depends on effective and excellent leadership, as a leader should be able to plan, manage, direct, and control all the course of work in the organization. The impact of career development on early retirement intentions among police officers in the Kedah Contingent was also identified. Career development within the RMP organization has a significant relationship with early retirement intentions, as it is an ongoing process for individuals who have a career. Poor career development is seen as one of the factors influencing the intention for workers to retire early from service. To overcome this weakness, continuous training programs can improve job performance by providing employees with a high level of skills, knowledge, and commitment to the organization. In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of addressing the dimensions of workload, perception of the leader, and career development in ensuring the retention of police officers in the Kedah Contingent to achieve the vision and mission of the RMP team.

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FIRE EMERGENCY SAFETY PREPAREDNESS IN A MALAYSIA PUBLIC SCHOOL

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Abstract

Fire emergency safety preparedness in school is one of the crucial aspects to ensure a safe study environment for students and staffs. Previously several fire incidents have been reported in Malaysia education institutions which involved fatalities and loss of properties. Thus, this paper is designed to investigate the relationship between knowledge, attitudes and training toward the fire emergency safety preparedness involving the academic and support staffs at a public school in Malaysia. This study was undertaken using the quantitative research method and the data were gathered using the online and printed questionnaires. A total of 124 respondents involved in this study with majority of 80.6 percent are the academic staffs. The result of this study shows that there is a little correction between knowledge and fire emergency safety preparedness and low positive correction between attitude and training toward the fire emergency safety preparedness. Out of these three variables, only training was reported to has a significant relationship with fire emergency safety preparedness, whereas the remaining variables were insignificant. The findings of this study show the important of attending the appropriate training to ensure that all related staffs have the right skill on the fire emergency safety preparedness in order to encounter any unfortunate incidents. The ministry of education through the school management is expected to provide the necessary training to all staff in relation to the fire emergency safety preparedness.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Training, Fire Emergency Safety Preparedness

Introduction

Fire emergency safety preparedness is one of the important safety precautions especially in a public places like education institution. Fire emergency safety preparedness can be defined as series of measures that need to be taken in order to prevent or control the destruction that caused by fires (Shokoushi et al., 2019). These fire safety measure include the prevention of fire from the beginning and the measures involves in stopping the fire from spreading and causing damages or destruction. For example, in school there are various standard operating procedure (SOP) that need to be followed by students and staffs when handling with the flammable and explosive materials which could triggered sparks and cause fire (Shokoushi et al., 2019).

Data from the Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia reported that there are a total of 95 fire incidents happened in school in 2020 followed by 71 fire incidents in 2021. Further report by the Fire and Rescue Department highlighted that most of the fire cases in school are caused by the failure electrical system involving stand fan, air condition, computer, printer, additional building renovation, pantry room appliances like microwave oven, water boiler, wiring electrical cords, plugs as well as experiment accidents in science labs (Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia, 2021).

One of the shocking fire incidents happened at the Tahfiz Darul Quran Ittifaqiya School on 14 September 2017 morning around 5.10 am which cause the deaths of 21 students and two teachers (Karim, 2020). Upon investigation, it is reported that all victims faced difficulties to escape the fire due to the sealed off emergency exit path and blocked pathways (Noor et al., 2022; Runefors et al., 2021). The iron fence made the rescuing process difficult and has become the primary reasons why all victims were trapped in the fire. Further report by the local authority reported that the school building also has been remodeled without the authority permission (Noor et al., 2022; Runefors et al., 2021).

The most recent fire incident happened in Sekolah Kebangsaan Permatang To' Kandu on 22 September 2023. The incident had destroyed five classes on the third floor of the school building. No fatality was reported during the incident; however, the value of properties loss is significant (Dermawan, 2023). Based on following fire incidents, it can be summarized that the fire safety emergency preparedness in school should become a part of the compulsory skill that all students and staffs should have. Such preparedness can help to save life and property loss. As a result, this study is undertaken in order to investigate the relationship between knowledge, attitudes and training toward the fire emergency safety preparedness among the academic and support staffs at a public school in Malaysia.

Literature Review

i) Relationship between Knowledge and Fire Emergency Safety Preparedness

Knowledge on the fire emergency safety readiness include the knowledge on identifying the environment that can endanger the people toward fire hazard, the knowledge toward the use of fire extinguisher and other materials that can be used to put out the fire. With these knowledge, students and staffs are more prepared to encounter any fire emergency scenario. Study by Wulandari et al.,

(2023) reported that most of the educational institutions are located in areas which could be considered as high risk, thus being knowledgeable and well prepared for any fire emergency is required.

Study by Shanableh et al., (2023) reported that there is a negative relationship between knowledge and fire emergency safety preparedness among the nurses in hospital. Nurses who received average score on the disaster knowledge display lack of preparedness in the fire emergency safety (Shanableh et al., 2023). Besides that, in a control group study by Li et al., (2022) summarized that intervention group who being exposed to the fire emergency safety preparedness knowledge demonstrated a significant increase in their knowledge and understanding on the fire safety and evacuation process. In contrast, the control group is reported to have a poor knowledge on the fire safety and evacuation process in case there is a fire emergency (Li et al., 2022).

Nevertheless, study by Salmawati et al., (2022) reported contradict findings where there is no significant relationship between knowledge and fire prevention preparation among the healthcare staffs in Palu Health Centre. The finding of this study suggests that there are other factors that could influence the healthcare staffs' fire emergency safety preparedness. Based on the following discussion, the first hypothesis that going to be tested in this study is: -

H1: There is a significant relationship between knowledge and fire emergency safety preparedness among the public-school staff.

ii) Relationship between Attitude and Fire Emergency Safety Preparedness

Attitude is an individual formation of perspective or view on something which also being influence based on the individual past experience or the upbringing (Sujarwo et al., 2018). A person response and behaviour toward something also being affected by his/her attitude. Study by Retnowati et al., (2020) reported that there is a strong relationship between attitude and disaster preparedness among the Indonesian students. As a country with alarming nature disaster such as volcanic eruption, tsunami, earthquake and many more. Thus, students in Indonesia are ought to be prepared for any kind of emergency and having the right attitude to encounter such disaster is the key toward their safety (Retnowati et al., 2020).

Further study by Janizadeh et al., (2023) reported that hospital staffs with high level of attitude shows a strong disaster preparedness which significantly help to prevent any unwanted incident. The researchers further explain that after the occurrence of any nature disaster, hospitals and clinics will be flooded with patients who are in need with medical attention. Therefore, staffs are highly required to be ready and prepared for any unwanted circumstances and having the right attitude is a crucial part of it (Janizadeh et al., 2023).

Study by Sujarwo et al., (2018) reported that readiness in disaster risk reduction can only be achieved when the person has the right attitude to encounter such disaster. The scholars further emphasized students with good attitude can significantly help themselves to prepared for any tragedy and disaster. As a result, the Indonesia government has established School-Based Disaster Readiness in the Sunda Megathrust zone's Mentawai Island which is well known for active earthquake and high risk of tsunami (Sujarwo et al., 2018). Such initiative help influence the

students' attitude and prepare themselves for any disaster. Based on the following discussion, the second hypothesis that going to be tested in this study is: -

H2: There is a significant relationship between attitude and fire emergency safety preparedness among the public school staffs.

iii) Relationship between Training and Fire Emergency Safety Preparedness

Training is defined as a process of getting new skills, information and ways of doing things accordingly (Kim et al., 2019). Training really helpful in preparing a person with the necessary skills required to encounter any unwanted circumstances. A person ability can be groomed through the structured activities that been organized in a training program. Fire emergency safety preparedness training is one of the necessary trainings that need to be organized by all employers in order to equip their staffs with the necessary information.

Training fire emergency safety preparedness, staffs will be able to recognize any potential incident that could cause fire hazards, measure to put fire down and how to prevent the occurrence of fire tragedy (Li et al., 2022). Study by Nyankuru et al., (2017) reported that there is a significant relationship between fire safety training and the Nairobi residents' fire response. The residents gain advantages through the fire training program which help them to always be prepare in the case of fire.

In another study by Li et al., (2022) reported that an experimental group comprising of nursing home employees who underwent rudimentary fire safety training demonstrated high fire emergency safety preparedness compared to the controlled group. The training materials which exposed themselves with the necessary fire hazard identification, prevention and defence has significantly reporting an encouraging result (Li et al., 2022).

Study by Saghafian et al., (2020) highlighted that the virtual reality fire training application really helpful in preparing the users to be prepared when encounter the real incident. The fire training application offer the repetition training mode which really helpful for the user to understand the surrounding environment and plan for the next move to stop the fire from spreading (Saghafian et al., 2020). The researchers also reveals that the virtual fire training users really satisfied with the training content and agreed that they gain more information and skills to prepare themselves with any fire emergency case (Saghafian et al., 2020). Based on the following discussion, the last hypothesis that going to be tested in this study is: -

H3: There is a significant relationship between training and fire emergency safety preparedness among the public-school staffs.

The proposed research framework that going to be tested in this study is shown in Figure 1.

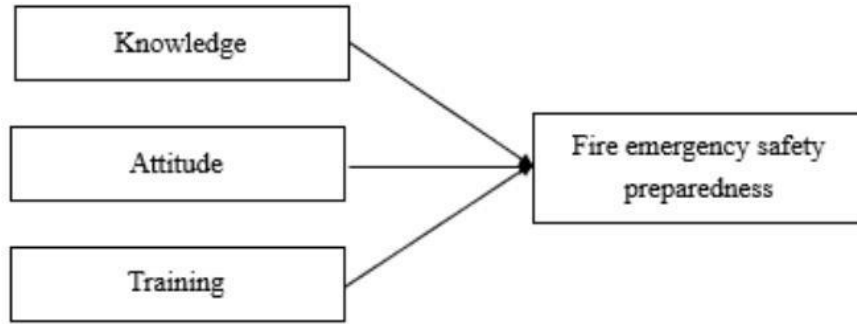


Figure 1. Research Framework

Methodology

This study is undertaken using the quantitative method through the distribution of printed and online questionnaire via the platform of Google Form. The data is collected from the sample of 124 staffs from a public school in Kedah, Malaysia. The unit of analysis for this study is individual where one staff answering the questionnaire is consider as one respondent. The questionnaires are conveniently distributed to the staffs through the convenience sampling method and this study is categorized as cross-sectional study.

A total of 21 questionnaire items were used to collect data in this study. Specifically, four questionnaire items for the dependent variable of fire emergency safety preparedness, four questionnaire items for independent variable of knowledge, seven questionnaire items for independent variable of attitude and six questionnaire items for independent variable of training. All questionnaire items were adapted from previous scholars with reliability of more than cut off point 0.70. The detail of the questionnaire items is as shown in Table 1 below: -

Table 1

Questionnaire items

Variables	Item
Fire emergency safety preparedness	All items of portable electrical equipment are periodically inspected according to the schedule and labelled
	All staffs receive appropriate fire safety training.
	All escape routes are displayed clearly and completely
	The fire alarm system does work well.

Cont: Table 1

Knowledge	I am aware of any international or national or state or local body or private body recommending fire prevention and control guidelines or regulations
	I learned about the fire triangle and its components (i.e., oxygen, heat, fuel)
	I do know about different types of fire extinguishers.
	I memorized the emergency contact number in case of fire occurrence
Attitude	Most fires are caused by human negligence.
	Teaching teacher and staff about fire safety at school is a waste of time.
	All fires that occur are reported to the fire and rescue department.
	Usually, fire victims will panic in the case of fire.
	I can do my best to prevent fires at my workplace.
	My mind will be disturbed if I am involved in fire incident.
Training	Fires incidents are so rare that one does not need to worry about fire prevention At my workplace, there is skilled personnel trained to handle fire emergencies.
	I am always ready to handle any fire related incident at my workplace.
	There are up-to-date courses and training offered at my workplace to enable me to handle any fire emergency.
	My workplace does carry out emergency evacuation drills.
	I have participated in emergency evacuation drills.
	I have indeed been trained to act in emergency situations in the event of a fire.

Result

To further analyzed the collected data, the researchers used the Pearson Correlation analysis and Regression analysis in order to answer the objectives of this study which are whether there is significant relationship between the independent variable of knowledge, attitude and training toward the fire emergency safety preparedness.

Table 2
Summary results of Pearson Correlation results

Variables	Fire emergency safety preparedness	Interpretation of Pearson Correlation
Knowledge	.092	Little if any Correlation
Attitude	.323**	Low Positive Correlation
Training	.403**	Low Positive Correlation

Table 2 shows the summary of the Pearson Correlation analysis result. The result shows that there is little correlation between the knowledge and fire emergency safety preparedness indicating at 0.092, or 9.2% (Akoglu, 2018). Meanwhile, the correlation between attitude and fire emergency safety preparedness is categorized as low positive correlation, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.323, indicating a relationship of approximately 32.2% (Akoglu, 2018). Finally, the correlation between training and fire emergency safety preparedness is reported as low positive correlation, with correlation coefficient of 0.403 or 40.3% (Akoglu, 2018).

The regression analysis conducted in this study yielded the model summary results of coefficient determination (R^2) of 0.173. Thus, it can be summarized that the combined influence of the three independent variables of knowledge, attitude, and training, contributes to 17.3% of the observed dependent variable of fire emergency safety preparedness. Whereas, the remaining 82.7% remains unexplained.

Table 3
The result of Multiple Regression Analysis

Independent Factors:	Beta (B)	t	Significant
Knowledge	-.078	-.867	.388
Attitude	.121	1.076	.284
Training	.351	3.143	.002

*Dependent variable: Fire emergency safety preparedness

Table 3 shows the result of the multiple regression analysis between the independent variables and dependent variable. Based on the Table 3 result, it can be summarized that only independent variable of training and dependent variable of fire emergency safety preparedness has the significant relationship with p-value of less than 0.05 and standardized coefficients Beta value of 0.351 and t-value of 3.143. Whereas, the relationship between independent variables of knowledge and attitude toward fire emergency safety preparedness proven insignificant with p-value of more than 0.05 and standardized coefficients (BETA) of -0.078 (t-value of -0.867) and 0.121 (t-value of 1.076) respectively. Table 4 shows the summary of hypothesis tested in this study.

Table 4

Hypothesis summary

Hypothesis	Std. Beta	t-value	p-value	Decision
H ₁ There is significant relationship between knowledge and fire emergency safety preparedness	-.078	-.867	.388	Not supported
H ₂ There is significant relationship between attitude and fire emergency safety preparedness	.121	1.076	.284	Not supported
H ₃ There is significant relationship between training and fire emergency safety preparedness	.351	3.143	.002	Supported

Conclusion

The result of this study shows that only training proven to significantly influence the public school staffs' fire emergency safety preparedness. The staff believe that training is ultimately important in help them to be prepared especially when encounter with the emergency of fire incident. This finding also consistent with other past studies which suggest that fire training program help staffs to be able to recognize the potential of fire hazards, measures of putting fire down, fire protection and prevention strategies which enabling them to maintain the safe working environment (Li et al., 2022; Kaseem et al., 2021).

In addition, it is also been stated under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994 Malaysia where it is the responsibility of the employer to provide the safe working environment to the employees. In addition, employers also need to ensure that the employees received proper information and training in pertaining the workplace safety and health (Mohd Esa & Majahar, 2021).

This study consists several limitations. Firstly, the number of respondents involved in this study is small which also become one of the reasons why the other independent variables of knowledge and attitude are insignificant in influencing the fire emergency safety preparedness. The respondents involved in this study is only from one public school in Kedah, Malaysia. So, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the other public school in Malaysia.

Besides that, the research framework tested in this study also limited to three independent variables of knowledge, attitude and training. The result also yielded that less than 20% of the independent variables explain the effect of the dependent variable of fire emergency safety preparedness. Through this, it can be summarized that there are other unexplained factors that could become the reason to influence the staffs' fire emergency safety preparedness.

Therefore, it is suggested for the future study to consider on investigating other variables such as safety motivation and safety management toward the fire emergency safety preparedness. Apart from that, it is suggested for future study to consider on using a bigger samples like staffs from various public school in Malaysia or even using a different sample such as the students. Moreover, the similar study can be tested toward sample from different industry such as the employees from manufacturing industry or even the healthcare workers.

In conclusion, it can be summarized that training is one of the pertinent factors that could help the public school staffs' preparation toward the fire emergency. The staffs also have a significant responsibility to ensure the safety of the students at school. Thus, it is important for the related party which is the Ministry of Education through the school management to provide the appropriate fire safety training to the staffs to ensure that they are well prepared to encounter any cases of fire emergency and any similar emergency.

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THE ROLE OF HUMAN CAPITAL, STRUCTURAL CAPITAL, AND RELATIONAL CAPITAL IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

Universities are the center of knowledge generation; hence they are completely dependent on their intellectual resources. This puts Pakistan's private sector institutions in a difficult position at the moment. They lack all the intangible resources required for more efficient operation of schools; these resources often depend on intellectual capital, widely acknowledged as an intangible capital of higher learning. Pakistan's higher education system is ranked 150th out of 189 countries, and it lags far behind its neighbours in terms of research output. As a result, the main focus of this research will be intellectual capital as a crucial component influencing Pakistani institutions' success. The most recent assessment identified significant shortcomings in Pakistan's higher education system and offered potential remedies, including the addition of intellectual capital to improve HEI performance. The current study adopts a positivist viewpoint and a logical methodology. Primary data will be gathered using surveys, with the target demographic being directors, HoD's, and deans of Pakistani universities.

Keywords: Higher Education Institutions, Intellectual Capital, Head of Department, Universities

Introduction

Higher education plays a vital role in the industry's growth and development. It gives people the chance to use their educational talents to take part in the process of growth (Nisar, 2019). Unfortunately, there are several shortcomings in Pakistan's education system, especially in higher education, which has led to a number of issues. Since the nation's founding, the Pakistani government has underinvested in education, which has led to a number of obstacles to the advancement and growth of the nation (Akbar & Khan, 2020). Higher education, on the other hand, is the most important source of in-depth knowledge in a variety of life domains from a broader perspective in today's advanced society. As the world community expands, so do the opportunities and demands for higher education, as every citizen has a fundamental right to an education. The only way to achieve this is to hold HEIs to high standards (Iacoviello et al., 2019).

But as the demand for higher education rises, a variety of problems are having an impact on HEIs' performance, either directly or indirectly. The quality of instruction, which includes all facets of academic activity such as teaching, students, administration, and learning materials, is the primary problem facing Pakistan's higher education establishments (Urighuen Aguirre & Avolio Alecchi, 2023). A monitoring system, effective feedback, research skills, infrastructure, a supportive learning environment, and teaching standards are just a few of the elements that influence education quality (Murtaza & Hui, 2021). Most importantly, the quality of higher education is often regarded as a gauge of the prosperity of a country. Countries with sufficient information might realize this and try to improve educational standards to improve university performance (Weqar et al., 2021). Unfortunately, there are a number of problems with Pakistan's higher education system's quality (Ali et al., 2022).

The main causes of low educational quality include outmoded and inadequate teaching strategies as well as political influence in the selection of educators (Murtaza & Hui, 2021). However, Pakistan's higher education institutions are also having problems with global university rankings as a result of the country's low educational standards. While rankings are a well-known phenomenon that aids the public in choosing the best universities for higher education, most developing nations, including Pakistan, have only recently begun to use them (Awan, 2020).

While the HEC of Pakistan was established in 2000 and was the first organization in Pakistan to use a ranking system for evaluating university performance, these rankings provide the public with easily understandable information, highlight competition amongst institutions, and provide a broad picture of the overall condition of the institutions (Ali et al., 2022). The capacity of higher education institutions to progress is demonstrated by its growth, but regrettably, Pakistan's higher education environment is steadily deteriorating. One of the most important factors in improving the state of higher education institutions is the availability of resources, which can be crucial in boosting productivity and minimizing disadvantages in the global market (Malik et al., 2021). The current study will help close the gaps that impede the effectiveness of higher education institutions and offer suitable ideas that will support the institutions in finding practical answers to their issues.

Literature review

Higher Education Institutions Performance

Based on worldwide accomplishments in academic excellence, the perception of performance at HEIs is assessed. In contrast, higher education institutions' performance is defined by Rabbi & Zandi, (2015) as a multifaceted notion built on both subjective and objective performance. Subjective performance is determined by factors such as academic success, staff and teacher satisfaction, research and publication activities, and quality of instruction, whereas objective performance is determined by all financial metrics. Similar to this, Awan, (2015) defined the success of higher education institutions as knowledge development, utilization, and application, with graduates having high employability, productivity, and other outcomes in the form of goods and services.

While according to Wang, (2010) noted that research and education aspects of higher education institutions' performance could be used to gauge their effectiveness and how well they align with universities' roles and functions, higher education institutions must constantly improve their performance in order to serve as a platform for meeting the socioeconomic demands of society. In a similar line, publications, graduation rates, and average study duration can all be used to evaluate the efficacy of higher education institutions (Barbosa, 2016). Higher education performance is determined by combining different performance metrics to determine how well higher education is performing (Thakkar, 2016). Prior research employed diverse performance metrics to gauge performance, which is inherently subjective and can be evaluated by examining the efficiency and efficacy of tertiary education (Albekov et al., 2017). Furthermore, as centres of knowledge creation, universities employ an input, processing, and output model in which academic staff and teachers serve as the system's inputs, students' performance serves as the process's output, and higher education institutions themselves are the product (Ali et al., 2022).

The performance of higher education institutions is a complex endeavour that calls for all staff members' and students' complete participation in order to improve performance (Matos et al., 2020). Pakistan's higher education institutions are now dealing with a variety of issues. These issues include a lack of funding, inadequate facilities, a shortage of qualified personnel, inconsistent policies, ineffective management, an antiquated educational system, ineffective teaching methods, subpar research, and a dearth of research opportunities. As a result, these issues directly impede academic effectiveness, which is why there are currently significant gaps between higher education institutions and their ability to produce quality instruction (Nisar, 2019).

These issues with academic efficacy are the result of an ineffective governance structure; the administration is not trying to improve the educational system, which will result in poor performance in Pakistan's higher education institutions (Muhammad et al., 2011). As a result, at the academic level, research and teaching must be properly balanced because research is essential to faculty growth and academic performance (Murtaza & Hui, 2021).

As in most other developing nations, university-industry partnership has expanded slowly in Pakistan. This has happened in the past in many industrialized economies when businesses have been slow to see the potential benefits of collaborating with universities to acquire new scientific ideas and competences for industry R&D (Malik et al., 2021). The disheartening aspect of

Pakistan's industrial university networking situation is that major players are taking distinctly diverse routes. The primary obstacle is the dearth of significant industry activity aimed at collaborating with universities and the institutions' disinterest in fostering cooperation (Raza, 2021).

Knowledge-intensive companies can use the framework provided by the resource basis view (RBV) and knowledge base view (KBV) theories to address challenges by employing the appropriate intangible resources. Universities are knowledge-intensive businesses that mostly rely on intangible resources to boost productivity (Barney, 1991). Intellectual capital, which combines human, relational, structural and capital, is the most significant intangible resource for enhancing institutional performance (Curado, 2007). Scholars and practitioners have been looking more and more at the intellectual capital component as knowledge-based economies have risen quickly. They see it as a more significant determinant in determining improved institutional performance than traditional material resources (Wang et al., 2021).

However, a number of scholars have developed the theoretical framework around intellectual capital and have generated evidence showing that intellectual capital and its components increase the functioning of the institution. As an intangible knowledge resource, intellectual capital, for example, offers a competitive advantage in terms of performance improvement, according to a prior theoretical analysis of intellectual capital (Mumtaz, 2014). Similar to this, Chatterji et al., (2017) pointed out that intellectual capital is a crucial component that would support the growth and efficacy of higher education institutions.

Performance of Higher Education Institutions and Intellectual Capital

A behavior that requires mental activity is known as intellectual capital. When it comes to improving organizational performance, knowledge-based activities are crucial. Tangible assets are easily copied and are not firm-specific, whereas intangible assets are difficult to copy, have a limited lifespan, and are firm-specific. Intellectual capital causes manufacturing economies to transform into knowledge economies, as illustrated by the idea further expounded by Bisogno et al., (2018) in terms of intangible assets.

According to (Iacoviello et al., 2019), on the other hand, defined the notion in different kinds of knowledge, capacities, tangibles, and employee relationships at the organizational level. These can be categorized as relational, structural, and human capital. Because universities are knowledge-creating platforms that primarily rely on intellectual aptitude, the value of intellectual capital in the education industry is critical (Zhang & Phromphitakkul, 2021). When universities use their intellectual capital effectively to improve performance and gain a competitive edge, they are able to work efficiently and without any kind of pressure (Bellucci et al., 2020).

The relationship between intellectual capital (IC) and academic success has been studied in the past. For example, Bratianu, (2015) highlighted the value of IC in the knowledge economy as a means of addressing the problems and difficulties faced by higher education. The relationship between intellectual capital and university performance is also examined in another study by Anggraini, (2018), which makes clear that performance is significantly improved by intellectual capital and its constituent parts. Conversely, acquiring a meaningful competitive advantage requires intellectual capital.

According to Sharafi & Abbaspour, (2013), intelligence plays a significant role in improving academic achievement. Additionally, Barbosa, (2016) examined the relationship between intellectual capital and performance in HEIs, finding that there was an empirical relationship between the perceived performance of these organizations and intellectual capital that gave them a competitive edge and helped them perform better.

Although intellectual capital is becoming more and more essential in research institutes and universities, there is little discussion of its significance in educational literature when it comes to enhancing performance (Chatterji et al., 2017). However, because there aren't enough studies on the connection between HEI success and intellectual capital, the findings are contradictory.

Performance of Higher Education Institutions and Human Capital

Human capital includes several resource factors like attitude, intellectual agility, tacit knowledge, people's skills, and employee knowledge, competence, skill, capability, and inventiveness (Kousar et al., 2019). The ability of an organization to create value in the modern period is primarily dependent on the knowledge, abilities, and training of its personnel. The information that researchers, PhD applicants, academic staff members, would take with them if they were to leave the university is known as human capital (Ali et al., 2022).

Prior research has demonstrated the connection between the success of higher education institutions and human capital. It has been discovered that human capital is a basic component of intellectual capital, which encompasses all employee-based endeavours. The results of the study by Fivi et al., (2018) showed that there was a significant relationship between human capital (HC) and university performance. Since effective use of human resources can eventually improve performance, the relationship between HC and university performance was found to be significant. In a similar vein, research done by (Iacoviello et al., 2019) similarly suggests that human capital is the most important factor in improving the performance of higher education institutions. The study's findings showed that human capital significantly impacted university performance. In the meantime, a study by Haris et al., (2019) found that human capital has a substantial impact on the performance of higher education institutions. The findings of this study likewise showed a positive and significant association between higher education performance and human capital. A major factor in success and a strong predictor of improved performance in higher education was human capital, according to Sharafi & Abbaspour, (2013) analysis of the relationship between human capital and university performance. Human capital is the wellspring of innovation and strategy renewal, and it encompasses all the necessary components that aid institutions in improving performance (Mumtaz, 2014). Based on previous study, it can be concluded that human capital plays a major role in elevating higher education performance and has a favourable relationship with higher education institutions.

Performance of Higher Education Institutions and Structural Capital

The term "structural capital" describes all knowledge sources that are not created by humans, such as organizational charts, databases, process manuals, strategies, and regulations (Bontis, 2000). According to Secundo et al., (2016), it encompasses all of the organization's collected intellectual resources, including internal procedures, technological elements, organizational practices, and capacities.

While structural capital is always present in institutions and can be shared and altered, human capital does not remain within them (Khalique et al., 2011). Structural capital of the institution is seen to be one of the main factors that improves performance within the company. Structural capital is created from human capital and consists of knowledge and intangible assets acquired from the organization's activities. Among its components are information accessibility, procedural innovation, and efficiency for knowledge codification (Edvinsson & Sullivan, 1996). The phrase "structural capital refers to an organization's system and structure that lead to generate value added products and gain a competitive advantage for the organization," however, was stated by Ramezan, (2011). Todericiu & Stanit, (2016) emphasized the importance of structural capital in the context of universities. They defined structural capital as knowledge that is incorporated into the procedures, institutional culture, and professional relationships within and outside of the university.

In previous research, a number of studies have interpreted the relationship between structural capital and improving institutional performance. For example, Pulungan et al., (2017) found that higher education institutions have a positive and significant relationship with structural capital, indicating that an institution's strong structural capital can aid in improving performance. In a similar vein, in a study of Fivi et al., (2018) investigated the function of structural capital in the performance of higher education institutions; the study's findings demonstrated a substantial correlation between SC and HEIs. According to a related study by Matos et al., (2020), structural capital played a key role in improving the performance of educational institutions.

Pedro et al., (2019) study offered more proof that an organization's structural capital is crucial for improving its performance. The study's findings also showed a significant positive correlation between structural capital and higher education institutions' performance. An institution's structural capital is essential since an organization cannot grow and function without a well-organized structure.

A statistically significant positive link between university performance and structural capital was found by Kousar et al., (2019) through empirical testing. It has been determined by prior studies that structural capital helps higher education institutions function better. The bulk of research in the literature have identified positive connections between structural capital and HEIs, however a small number have found negligible or negative relationships (Fivi et al., 2018).

Performance of Higher Education Institutions and Relational Capital

The relationships that a firm has with its suppliers, customers, partners, and other stakeholders are strengthened by relational capital, the third important component of intellectual capital. In order to achieve their objectives, businesses and their stakeholders create capital through the development, maintenance, and investment of relationships (Edvinsson & Sullivan, 1996). Organizational relational capital is the term used to describe the integration and connections both inside and outside the organization (Shehzad et al., 2014). Canibano, (2002) defines the idea of relational capital as "all resources tied to the firm's external relationships, such as customers, suppliers, or R&D partners." Examples of this group include image, customer satisfaction and loyalty, ties with suppliers, commercial power, ability to negotiate with financial institutions, environmental actions, and so forth."

Relational capital in the context of universities is defined by Leitner, (2004) as the exchanges and partnerships between academic institutions and non-academic partners, including businesses, government agencies, municipal governments, non-profit groups, and the general public. The relationship between higher education and business has been deemed to be crucial for assessing how research and outside actors interact, as well as being the main measure of relational capital (Alvino et al., 2021).

A large body of previous research has shown how relational capital improves organizational effectiveness. In contrast, a study by Gaur & Gupta, (2023) looked at the contribution that relational capital the third element of intellectual capital makes to enhancing institutional performance. The study's conclusions also provide empirical proof of the important connection between higher education institutions and relational capital.

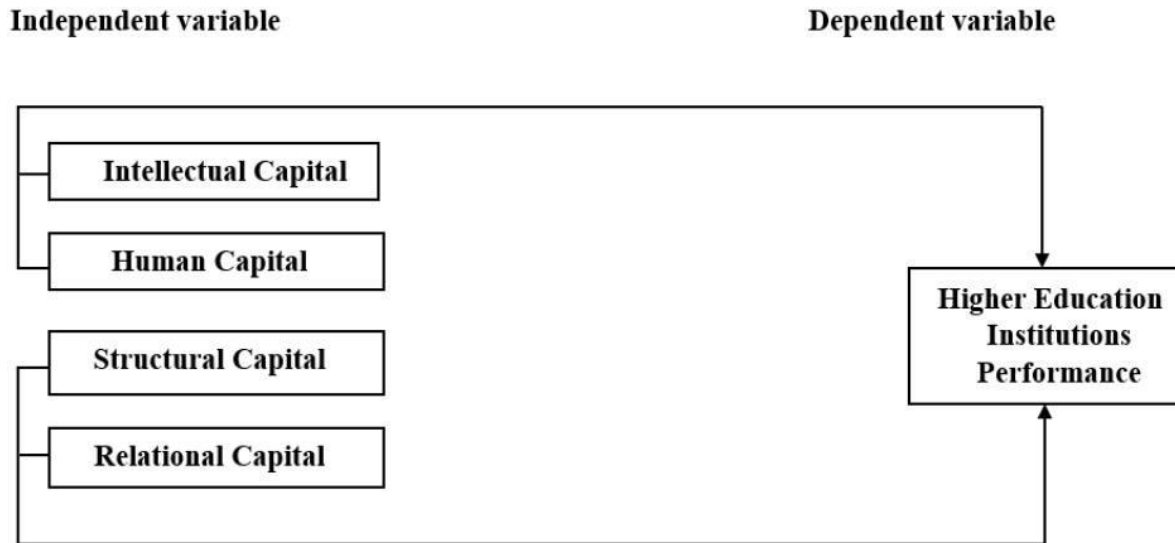
Comparably, a study carried out by Ali et al., (2022) also showed that relational capital was a crucial part of intellectual capital and that it had a significant but less significant association with the performance of higher education institutions. The findings of this study demonstrated that relational capital had a favourable association between higher education institutions. Similarly, strong institutional external and internal relationships aid stakeholders for future prospects.

In summary, relational capital refers to all the resources connected to an organization's external partners, including the government, suppliers (teachers), clients (students), and partners in research and development. It also refers to the relationship between relational capital and the performance of higher education institutions (Sánchez & Paloma, 2006). According to Chatterji et al., (2017), universities should have tight relationships with government agencies in order to strengthen their relational capital. This is in keeping with the relationship between relational capital and higher education institutions.

Research Framework

Conceptual Framework Based on a review of the literature and previous research, the conceptual framework that follows is suggested for the current study.

Figure 1
Conceptual Framework



To strengthen the importance and influence of intellectual capital on the long-term success of higher education institutions, a conceptual framework grounded in prior research is created. The performance of these institutions is improved through the mediating effect of innovation.

Hypothesis Development

The following are the hypotheses derived from previous studies:

H1a: There is a positive relationship between intellectual capital and Higher Education Institutions performance.

H1b: There is a positive relationship between human capital and Higher Education Institutions performance.

H1c: There is a positive relationship between structural capital and Higher Education Institutions performance.

H1d: There is a positive relationship between relational capital and Higher Education Institutions performance.

Methodology

Three variables are integrated in this study: The variable of intellectual capital is independent, higher education institutions are a dependent variable, and the framework was developed based on earlier research. The difficulty that Pakistan's higher education institutions are facing serves as the basis for this study, which also draws from a review of the literature and earlier research. The current investigation should follow the positivist paradigm and the deductive technique in order to examine the hypothesis. The unit of analysis should be "universities" or other organizational levels, and the major data gathering method will be utilized. The target group for the study would therefore be the department heads, deans, and directors of Pakistani institutions. Since the target

population is specific, stratified proportionate random sampling is implied by the probability sampling approach, which will be used for this investigation. The most recent version of smart PLS would be utilized for additional analysis. The data would be cross-sectional in nature and gathered through survey questionnaires.

Discussion, Implications and Conclusion

The current study highlights the serious problems that Pakistani higher education institutions are facing and suggests possible solutions, such as increased performance through innovation and intellectual capital. Universities are the hubs of knowledge creation, and because most of their resources are intangible, they can use intellectual capital another intangible resource to boost the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations. The literature study featured a number of studies on the effects of intellectual capital on higher education institutions, and these studies demonstrate how intellectual capital can provide HEIs with a competitive advantage in their day-to-day operations.

In a similar spirit, the present study emphasizes how innovation's mediating function contributes to the enhancement of institutional performance. Gaining a competitive edge and enhancing performance can be achieved by using innovation speed, which refers to the pace at which new technologies and instructional strategies are embraced. On the other hand, innovation quality describes an organization's ability to implement cutting-edge teaching techniques that differentiate it from competitors. The results of the new study will help university administration since they provide vital information on the role that intellectual capital and innovation play in improving academic achievement. This study will also look at how well intellectual capital and its three constituent's human, structural, and relational capital help organizations obtain a competitive edge. Furthermore, innovation can serve as a mediating variable in the form of speed and quality, propelling universities to the forefront of their respective fields and providing them with a competitive edge over their competitors.

The key conclusion drawn from the literature is that intellectual capital, which has three basic dimensions: relational, structural, and human capital, has a considerable impact on the performance of higher education institutions. Each dimension significantly affected performance, but research shows that intellectual capital is the main tool used by institutions to improve performance over time. Structural capital and relational capital rank second and third, respectively, in terms of contributing to improved performance; overall, research shows that human capital is the main tool used by institutions to improve performance. As per the findings of the literature review, innovation functions as a mediator and enhances the performance of postsecondary educational establishments. It also enhances the performance of institutions that are in the middle of intellectual capital and higher education establishments. As a result, the main indicators of higher education institutions' long-term performance are mediator innovation and intellectual capital.

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SMART RETAILING: PUSHING RETAILING INTO THE FUTURE

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Abstract

This paper review delves into the burgeoning realm of smart retailing, synthesizing knowledge, ideas, and findings from academically oriented literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of smart retailing. The paper also carefully draws upon the past studies in smart retail, and presents a novel perspective that addresses the unique dynamics of the Malaysian retail market. Emphasizing the contextual nuances, the paper formulates emerging key issues in smart retailing specific to Malaysia, shedding light on the intricacies that define the industry in this region.

Keywords: Smart retailing, E-commerce, Industrial Revolution

Introduction

With the expansion of Industry Revolution 4.0 (IR 4.0), many industries are experiencing ‘smart’ transformations and the advanced technologies namely, artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, digital currency and others, are disrupting the existing business landscape and the Malaysian economy (Horizon, 2022). The value restructuring, personalized and customized services and the emergence of new products and services change customer behaviours (MITI, 2018). As a subset of Internet of Things, smart retailing is a new and multiple retail format, revolutionize the existing shopping experience to achieve more efficient and effective when the customers enjoy speedy, convenient and controllable transactions (Mosquera et al., 2017; Collier et al, 2015). This, especially, benefiting to contactless convenience shopping for routine supplies (The Edge Market, 2021). This signifies the customers can enjoy the effectiveness when using smart technologies in retailing.

SRT in Retailing

In the current retail industry, ‘smart’ has become a new buzzword to strengthen the rapid advancement of communication and interaction technologies seamlessly connecting customers in real-time (Roy et al., 2017). Smart retail technology is a general word across many types of technologies that exist in the physical retail stores (Roy et al., 2017). By 2028, the market of smart retail technologies can reach 134347.9 million USD as increasing adoption of the latest but growing technologies such as artificial reality, virtual reality, artificial intelligent and Internet of Things to enhance in-store shopping experience (Business Wire, 2021). From the perspective of shopping progress, SRTs could exist in pre-purchase, purchase and post-purchase stages providing customers with seamless smart shopping experience. The research expert has disclosed two key factors, the increasing use of data analytics and the explosion of convenience shopping, that could boost the market value in smart retail technologies (Markets and Markets, 2019).

The retail industry structure and operation are ever changing and become more connected through systems, processes, information and communication technologies (Daunt and Harris, 2017; Ferracuti et al., 2019). Recent advances in AI development not only provide a quick and accurate personalized suggestions to enhance customer-retailer interaction, but also enhance several advantages in retail management. The use of AI tools such as smart retail technologies provide more consistent and timelier and customized services due to the advanced data storage capabilities empowered by AI technologies (West et al, 2018). Smart retail technology (SRT) vibes the smart use of technologies for retailing purposes and further creates a smart partnership between retailer and consumer. The smart retail market expected to reach \$59 billion by 2025 (Business Wire, 2021). Where a set of smart technologies which are intended to give the consumer a safer, faster, greater, and smarter experience when shopping. As such, retailers are constantly look for ways to employ smart retail technologies (SRT) in order to offer superior buying process and shopping experience value to their customers.

What is Smart Retailing?

Smart retailing is a new retail format that emerged from the vision of smart city (Roy et al. 2017; Harrison et al., 2010). Three fundamental subsets of smart city explicitly implanted into the smart retailing operations. The first characteristic of smart retailing is ‘instrumented.’ Many physical and

virtual sensors are established to collect real-world human and environmental data. Second, ‘interconnected’, standing for the ‘co-operation’ between front-end and back-end technologies to provide seamless services. This requires a group of technologies to send real time data to a central computing platform and to communicate information among the networked technologies from different places. Third, smart retailing should be more ‘intelligent’ than previous retailing in brick-and-mortar stores. Therefore, it solves complex analytical tasks during the business hours and help retailers making better operational decisions (Harrison et al., 2010).

In addition, some scholars contended that smart retailing can be considered as an extension of e-tailing (Roy et al., 2010). In smart retailing, retailers applied similar features of e-tailing and added some new extensions which may provide retailers with new capabilities to serve customers seamlessly, in on-site and off-site platforms. Therefore, smart retailing is a new solution of the pain point of the physical platform. There are five differences (e.g.: space, core technology, nature of interactivity, nature of experience and service provision) were pointed out by previous scholars to distinct smart retailing from the e-tailing, the retail platform that originated online (Roy et al., 2017). The value propositions are formulated through the synchronization and connection between the back-end network and front-end objects that allow technologies to sense the environment, responsive delivering services and even consumers self-servicing with less or without the employee’s support (Roy et al., 2017)

Phygital,’ a new form of retail store newly exists as the adoption of internet-based features by existing retail stores to serve consumers in an agile manner (Singh, 2019). This is inseparable with the underpinning of interactive and smart retail technologies because the “Phygital” stores involving one or more interactive smart technologies and consumers attain seamless shopping experiences through removing the boundary between online and offline retail services (Boudkous and Djelassi, 2021; Vojvodić, 2019; Singh et al, 2019; Moravcikova and Kliestikova, 2017).

Past studies review on SRT

There are several studies to be conducted to examine the influences of customer perceptions towards smart retail technology as a whole. As per Balaji and Roy, the physical retailing is a forefront of Internet of Things (IoT) to bond digital world and offline retail platform. They suggested that the firms are not able to determine the value attained by customers. Instead, value propositions should be perceived as value-in-use which include collaborative and interactive efforts paid by various parties (Balaji and Roy, 2017). The results they found indicated that perceived value co-creation significant influence technology continued usage but unsupported spreading positive word-of mouth. Nevertheless, continued usage has bonded between perceived value co-creation and positive word-of-mouth. This imply the initial step that need to be taken by retailers is to offer customer experience shopping. Once customer trust and connection have been fostered, they are probably to engage themselves in the company goals and objectives such as fostering the group of SRT user (Balaji and Roy, 2017).

Of the empirical research by Roy et al., (2017), studying smart customer experience as a unidimensional construct (composed several experiences) to play its role to the customer evaluation and several responses toward smart retail technology in general. Two selected mediators, namely satisfaction and perceived risk, suggested facilitating and impeding three levels of positive outcomes (e.g.: SRT-level, Customer-level and Retailer-level), respectively. The

general study of smart retailing had also been conducted in Australia, to examine the predictors of and resistance to smart retailing among shoppers through an online survey approach as smart technologies have not been widely reaching shoppers in physical retail stores (Roy et al., 2018). Besides, the preceding study also posited perceived shopping value as a mediator between the antecedents, especially technological antecedents, and two personal level (e.g.: store loyalty and SRT adoption) of consequences in an empirical study of general smart retail technology (Adapa et al., 2020).

Moreover, one comprehensive study had been conducted to examine the influence of shopper-facing technologies on shoppers and consider its also further impact on the retailer side. In this study, they focused on six types of shopper-facing technologies (e.g.: mobile app, proximity marketing, Que vision, scan and go, self-checkout and smart self-technology), to examine how were the introduction of new innovative retail technologies shaping the customer perceptions and prompting customer loyalty towards retailers such as patronage behaviour and spread positive word-of-mouth (Inman and Nikolova, 2017). Consumers responded slightly different among the selected shopper-facing retail technologies. The result also pointed out that mutual benefits created by any business practice is imperative to achieve sustainable competitive advantage to retailers. The following table 1, summarise past studies in term types of study, country and key findings.

Table 1: Empirical studies of SRT

Author(s), (Year)	Type of study	Country	Respondents	Key Findings
Balaji and Roy, (2017)	Quantitative study	Australia	289 young users of IoT retail technologies	The value of using smart retail technologies derived from co-creation among various stakeholders.
Roy et al., (2017)	Quantitative study	Australia	348 young users with prior SRT experiences	Smart customer experience impacts user evaluation and further derive multiple level of behaviours.
Inman and Nikolova, (2017)	Quantitative study	United States	302 online panel participants.	The findings have affirmed the new and innovative retail technologies affect shopper perceptions and consumers positive behavioural responses which in turn impact on retailers' gains.
Roy et al., (2018)	Quantitative study	Australia	361 young users of SRT	Five perceived innovation characteristics have determined acceptance of and resistance to SRT.

Continue: Table 1

Ng et al., (2019)	Quantitative study	Malaysia	220 Gen-Z SRT respondents	S-O-R paradigm reflect the user evaluation of SRT.
Rese et al., (2019)	Qualitative study	German	225 Gen-Y fast fashion shoppers	Diverse customer groups result differs technology evaluations and dimensions they focus.
Vojvodić, (2019)	Mixed study			The key of retailers' success is introducing the emerging SRT to consumers and increasing their digital engagement.
Fan et al., (2020)	Quantitative study	China	321 smart retail shoppers	The quality of human-machine interactions, smart system and product content significantly impact on customer engagement.
Pillai et al., (2020)	Quantitative study	India	1250 consumer respondents	The extended TAM model with three enablers (perceived enjoyment, customization and interactivity) were significantly influence patronage intentions.
Brengman et al., (2021)	Quantitative study	Belgium	Respondents were observed in the process of point-of-sale conversion funnel.	The smarter and more interactive retail technology is more effective in converting passerby into real buyer.
Ghazwani et al., (2022)	Quantitative study	Saudi Arabia	328 consumer respondents either assigned to traditional or AI-enabled checkouts	The relationship between smart technology, financial anxiety and purchase intent were affirmed as the more convenience provided by the smart checkouts.

Malaysian scenario and SRT

Taking to the real scenario, the smart stores installing AI-powered cameras inside, with the combination of surrounded sensors, computer vision and deep-learning algorithm, customers' in-site behaviours can be monitored. The employees, now, are required to upskill and the low-value task such as stock management and being cashiers are removed (The Edge Markets, 2021). Recently, the shopper tracking system was introduced in Sunway Mall to customize the shopping information for every shopper (OpenGov Asia, 2019). This implies the companies which adopt smart retail technologies increase efficiency in waste management, saving costs, upskilling manpower and operation management.

Malaysia has a great potential in the smart retail technology adoption. In line with the ASEAN step, after a little push by the government during Covid 19, Malaysians have a high rate to accept a new payment method or contactless payment in offline transaction (New Straits Times, 2021a, Mastercard, 2020). Also, the nation has launched DuitNow QR to unifies the national QR standard. The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) aimed to expand such payment method in 15,000 small and micro traders by 2022 (New Straits Times, 2021b). This means that not only retailers should accustom the rapid advancement under Industry Revolution 4.0, the customers also be acquainted with the new technologies

The trending retail format also supported by private sectors. Smart retail technologies are the solutions that can be scaled to fit everything (The Edge Markets, 2021). Smart retail technologies not only equipped in large retailing store but also can be simplified to fit the requirement of a single technology such as self-service kiosks with transactional ability. Recently, FamilyMart has launched FamilyMart mini for selling processed foods and beverages. The smart kiosk is featured with the high shopping flexibility system. The customers can pick their own items and check-out by cashless methods (Malay Mail, 2021). Therefore, smart retail technologies might be the trending solution that provide 'hassle-less' shopping experience.

The mall culture is still strong even though they face the stiff competition from online shopping. Many businesses still rely on physical aspects (The Star, 2021). For this reason, the physical aspects of economic have a high potential to sustain as the increasing online shopping threaten offline economy. Therefore, integrating digital world into the physical retailing is trendy for the industry. Instead of just physical buildings for shopping, high experiential shopping is the new trend and preference of consumers, said Mark Saw, Penang branch executive director of Knight Frank (The Star, 2021). smart retailing is the rising shopping format and the retailers are urged to launch the technologies that can increase shopping effectiveness among the Malaysian shoppers through smart retailing experience. Thus future study looking to understand the acceptance of the Malaysian shoppers in using smart retail technologies from their SRT usage experience and technology attributes. Therefore, the convenience is important to allow customers pay focusing on the necessary and the technologies will help them to solve the rest burden.

In Malaysia, in line with country's rapid digital transformation journey, such as the launch of E-Wallet recently, provide a platform for Malaysian business and citizen engage in the new business digital paradigm. Furthermore, local retailers and mall operators are adopting innovative technologies to enhance customer shopping experience and to boost retail sales (Sharon, 2019). Malaysian Retail Chain Association (MRCA) via its training arm has been on move to promote digital transformation and acceptance of smart technologies among its members to increase efficiency and maintain a competitive advantage (Sharon, 2019). Among Asean counterparts, Malaysia's retail industry has a bright spot and expected to see retail eCommerce sales grow by more than 15% year during the period of 2016-2021, and due to increased internet penetration, improved connectivity and changing behavior (refer Figure 1) (Asia IoT Business Platform, 2019). Dato Joyce Yap, CEO of KL Pavilion, stated that In Malaysia, we cannot ignore the power of e-commerce but the mall culture is still strong in Malaysia, where malls are advancing and incorporating technology to provide shopping convenience and innovation to consumers (The Peak, 2017). Recently, the physical business aspect is still strong in Malaysia and the existing

format is urged to revolutionize that can keep their competitive ability in the industry (The Star, 2021).

Key Suggestions for SRT research in Malaysia

Ignoring the calls for research, may result not really understanding customers' decision whether in acceptance of SRT (Claudy et al, 2015). Furthermore, recent study by Roy et al. (2018) suggested that further studies related to SRT should extend to developing countries such as Malaysia to generalized and enhance the SRT adopting model and its impact on consumer's shopping effectiveness. Among the key suggestions are as follows:

1. **Growing Retail Industry:** Malaysia has a rapidly growing retail industry. The retail sector is a significant contributor to the country's economy. Researching smart retailing can help understand how technology can be effectively integrated into this growing sector to enhance its performance and sustainability.
2. **Consumer Preferences:** Malaysian consumers are increasingly tech-savvy and have changing preferences. Understanding how smart retail technologies align with these changing preferences is crucial for retailers to stay competitive and meet customer expectations. Smart retail technologies have the potential to significantly enhance the customer experience. Researching how these technologies can be used to create better in-store and online experiences can lead to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.
3. **Global Retail Trends:** Many global retail trends involve the adoption of smart retail technologies, such as cashierless stores, IoT-enabled inventory management, and personalized shopping experiences. Researching these trends in a Malaysian context can help retailers in the country stay up to date and competitive on the global stage.
4. **Competitive Advantage:** As the retail industry in Malaysia becomes more competitive, smart retail technologies can provide a competitive advantage. Understanding which technologies work best in the Malaysian market can help retailers stand out from the competition.
5. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Smart retail technologies generate vast amounts of data. Analyzing this data can provide valuable insights into customer behavior and preferences. This, in turn, can inform marketing and business strategies, helping retailers make data-driven decisions.
6. **Government Initiatives:** The Malaysian government has shown interest in promoting technology adoption in various sectors, including retail. Researching smart retailing aligns with these government initiatives, and it can potentially lead to support and funding opportunities.
- 7.

Research on smart retailing in the Malaysian retail context is justified due to its potential to enhance the retail industry's efficiency, sustainability, and competitiveness. It aligns with consumer preferences, global trends, and government initiatives while offering opportunities for better customer experiences and job creation.

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**EXPLORING STRESS INFLUENCES ON OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY
RISK ASSESSMENT IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY:
CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

This is a conceptual paper to study the factors that affects the industrial practitioner's perception towards occupational stress risk in oil and gas industry. Retrospective data were obtained and analyzed. Factors identified were both confusion on hazard description and interpretation of risk assessment matrix. This paper is to identify and comprehend the elements that influence the risk management process within the oil and gas industry, with the aim of addressing any existing gaps in knowledge as well as will examine those factors and make recommendations for future research in Malaysia. Method: Cross-sectional study was chosen at the East Coast Oil and Gas Organization in Terengganu. Based on these requirements, 80 respondents were recruited: they had to be between the ages of 19 and 60 and have worked as radiation testers for at least one year. A standard questionnaire called the Job Content Questionnaire was used, and it was accepted in Bahasa Malaysia with accepted reliability test value and analyzed using SPSS software. Result: Indicates that adherence to hazard standards and comprehensive hazard descriptions significantly influence safety practitioners' perception of risk. Diverse perspectives among safety practitioners often lead to varying interpretations and misconceptions about risk assessment accuracy. Conclusion: this study highlights critical factors affecting risk assessment in the oil and gas industry. To make informed decisions and effectively employ the HIRARC framework, upper management must comprehend specific criteria for evaluating workplace hazards.

Keywords: Occupational Stress, Risk Assessment, Oil and Gas Industry

Introduction

The oil and gas industries have made significant contributions to Malaysia's development and continue to be a major source of revenue for the government. Malaysia's oil and gas industry created opportunities and ultimately offered significant employment prospects and skill (Doraisami, 2015; Lee, 2013). A significant concern for employers, regulators, trade associations, industry groups, and local communities is ensuring the health and safety of the workers employed in the oil and gas sector (MacEachen et al, 2016; Arntz-Gray, 2016). The industry encompasses tasks that need physical exertion, round-the-clock operations, utilization of heavy equipment, exposure to potentially hazardous substances, frequent work in remote locations, and the ability to cope with various weather conditions (Waqar et al, 2023; Ajaml et al, 2022).

The Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1994 was enacted to provide further guidelines for protecting employees' health, safety, and welfare while workers at work and to shield others from health or safety concerns related to workers' activities (DOSH, 1994; Hassan et al, 2021). The first schedule specifies the industries includes petrochemical manufacturing sector of the oil and gas industry which the Act is applicable throughout Malaysia. The effect association of numerous hazardous exposures that have the potential to result in catastrophic events and workplace incidents (Waqar et al, 2023; Ajaml et al, 2022; Naji et al, 2016).

A risk is an unexpected event that has the potential to have either a positive or negative consequence. It is generally perceived by individuals as a threat. Injuries and hazards in the workplace would be affect the integrity of employees (Shaleh et al, 2016; Mustafa et al, 2021). The oil and gas industry is susceptible to psychosocial hazards that can greatly influence health and safety results. Therefore, it is critical to approach these risks with the same level of attention and precaution as other operational concerns. It has been widely reported that psychosocial risks significantly affect the health and safety of workers, including those in the oil and gas industry. The situation linked to the experience of occupational stress. However, despite growing awareness of the impact of occupational stress and related issues in the oil and gas industry, actions taken to manage this concerns at the company level are limited.

A significant correlation exists between the industry and occupational stress because to its unique combination of high-risk and high-repercussion operations, strict regulatory oversight, and the potential for severely effects. This emphasizes the need for the industry's personnel to be supported and stress management strategies to be implemented (& Rahman et al, 2019).

Problem Statement

The oil and gas sector has a high-risk working environment in the context of occupational safety and health (Guzman, J. et al, 2022). The majority of existing approaches for estimating Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) risks in the oil and gas sector are linear and cannot handle system complexity (Quaigrain, R. A et al, 2022). Some study of occupational stress has been conducted in other industry in many ways (Chen, M., 2019; Brunner, B., 2019; Bahkia, A. S, 2019; Alias, N. E., 2018). Reliance on the common risk assessment as a sole tool in assessing the risk level is exaggerated. It is due to the tendency usage of common assessment to produce inconsistent risk assessment results that can trigger inaccuracies during risk management actions (Bao, C.,

2017). Significant changes that have taken place in the working world, in recent years the psychosocial risks have emerged, with negative consequences for organization, management, and employees (Seilerová, M., 2019; Knani, M., 2018). Psychosocial risks derive from deficiencies in work design, organization, and management, as well as from a problematic social working context and may have psychological, physical, and social effects such as work-related stress. In Malaysian, risk assessment matrix used risk matrix provided by Department Occupational Safety and Health and no specific risk matrix focus on psychosocial factors.

There is a significant gap between the theory and practise of OSH risk assessment in the oil and gas sector, particularly in Malaysia. As mentioned in ISO 45001:2018, Clause 6 stated assessment of occupational health and safety risk, and ISO 45003:2021 mentioned about Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks (Brocal, F., 2018; Clayman, K., 2021). Hence, a new OHS risk assessment will implemented in an effort to close the gap and to guarantee that the risk assessment process yields credible and accurate results while undertaking a risk analysis (Darabont et al, 2017; Peckham, 2017).

Occupational stress risk is commonly studied in the workplace in Western countries, but it's seldom discovered in Asia, particularly in Malaysia. In order to enhance stress management within Malaysian enterprises, it is important to possess a comprehensive perception and awareness of the factors that contribute to this issue (Abdul Hamid, 2022). According to Jamadin, Mohamad, Syarkawi, and Noordin (2015), the primary concern to be examined in this research pertains to the tendency of many industrial practitioners to commit errors in the domain of risk assessment, specifically in the context of Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, and Risk Control (HIRARC). In addition to the primary issue, it is noteworthy that all industries indicated in the First Schedule of Act 514 adhere to an identical strategy in conducting risk assessments. However, it is observed that these assessments do not adequately account for the probable operational definition inside the risk matrix. However, there is a lack of knowledge and standardization among industrial practitioners regarding the accurate assessment of occupational stress levels.

Purpose and Significant Study

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to identify and comprehend the elements that influence the risk management process within oil and gas industry, with the aim of addressing any existing gaps in knowledge. Hence, the research queries for this study are as follows: 1. What are the factors of occupational stress that industrial practitioners evaluate when engaging in the risk assessment process? 2. To what extent do the perspectives of industry practitioners impact the accuracy level of risks in oil and gas industry? The determination of the answers to the inquiry questions is predicated upon a comprehensive examination of pertinent documents, as well as the utilization of observational techniques and interviews. This conceptual work holds significance as it aims to explore many aspects and rationales that influence the perception of risk assessment among industrial practitioners. Therefore, this study will analyze those elements and provide suggestions for further investigation in the context of Malaysia.

This conceptual paper aims to combine workplace safety and health assessment data with risk assessment matrices. In doing so, it is imperative to provide a theoretical framework that explores the perception of risk assessment among industrial practitioners in the oil and gas industry. The

risk formula is widely regarded as the most suitable theoretical framework for understanding the formation of perceptions. According to the ISO 2018 standard, risk is characterized as the impact of uncertainty on objectives. Risk can be defined as the amalgamation of the probability of a hazardous event occurring and the extent of harm or damage to health that may result (DOSH, 2008). This will address the existing gap in the field of risk assessment.

Literature Review

Occupational stress issues

Occupational stress is a phenomenon that induces psychological and physical loads onto an individual in a condition of equilibrium, resulting in strain. Occupational stress can be defined as the detrimental psychological and physical reactions that occur when an individual's skills and resources are not aligned with the demands of their job. Occupational stress, also known as work-related stress, arises from the interplay between workers and their jobs or job conditions. It is influenced not only by the personal characteristics of the worker, such as their level of competence, but also by the characteristics of the work itself, such as the amount of information required, the volume of tasks for which the worker is responsible, and the conditions under which work performance takes place. Occupational stress in the oil and gas industry is linked to a numerous of factors that interact in a complex manner.

The identification of potential occupational health and safety risks in the working environment is the responsibility of the employers. At any time, if the dangers cannot be avoided, they are required to do an assessment of the potential OH&S consequences and implement the necessary control measures to prevent the likelihood of accidents and illnesses occurring (DOSH, 1994; DOSH 2008). The oil and gas sector's total output is derived from a variety of operations that can run from a few weeks to several years. The duration of work activity should also be considered when organizing the risk assessment and should always be performed initially during the planning phase, because it is possible to identify potential occupational safety and health hazards and take preventive measures at that time (Dahl & Kongsvik, 2018; Hale, & Borys, 2013).

The understanding of these issues as global concerns by workers and organizations worldwide has been acknowledged. According to a study conducted by the Institute (2016), it was found that 53% of employees experience an increasing degree of occupational stress, while 59% of workers reported that the nature of their job is the primary cause of occupational stress. The primary factors contributing to occupational stress are high work intensity, shift work, an unfavourable working environment, limited opportunities for professional development, inadequate support from supervisors and colleagues, conflicts in job expectations, and an ineffective organizational structure.

Work stressors are demands that employees perceive as threatening such as certain tasks and role requirements, conflict, some management actions whereas strains are negative responses that result when such demands are in excess of the managing resources of employees (Tuckey et al. 2015). This is connection between work stressors and employee stress. The result of empirical evidence of the health effects of work related psychosocial hazards was accumulating and worried stage (Sonnetag & Frese, 2013).

Exposure to work related psychosocial hazards is escalating in 24-hour at workplace. It is important to consider how the psychosocial risk factors can be represented in order to be easily understood by industries and practitioners. Risk assessment is one of the most vital elements in addressing hazard and risk in all OHS field inclusive occupational stress. In this case, internal predictors could have a direct influence on the implementation of risk assessment (Kashwani & Nielsen, 2017). Possible occupational stress elements include responsibilities in the organisation, organisational structure and atmosphere, relationships at work, career growth, environment, intrinsic job irregular work, workload, and task (Kakemam, 2019; Prasad, 2018).

Previous study more focusing on high-risk occupations specifically for physical, chemical hazards with using construction risk assessment (CRA) in order to ensure that all possible hazards and outcomes are identified, considered, and reduced when necessary (Haas & Yorio, 2016). Apparently, it seems lack of systematic guidance on how psychosocial hazards can be adequately evaluated as risks and prioritized (Baua, 2014).

Factors related occupational stress

Oil and gas industry occupational stressors vary in their effect on workers. Due to the industry's strict safety regulations and the significance of an established safety culture, the environment is extremely hazardous and catastrophic consequences are likely. Safety workers in the oil and gas industry experience high levels of occupational stress due to their heavy workloads. The sector's highly complex and high-pressure activities strain staff, requiring accurate and perfect processes to avoid accidents. The challenging elements of shift work, which include irregular schedules and changes to circadian rhythms, contribute to increased levels of stress. Employees experience the subsequent fatigue, which has consequences for their entire well-being. The increasing significance of job security concerns within the oil and gas industry can be linked to its vulnerability to changes in government policies and variations in public perception.

Risk Management

Risk management is widely recognized as the main approach or methodology for guiding decision-making on occupational safety and health across various types of hazards. The creation of effective controls to manage occupational risk factors is a crucial strategy (Haas & Yorio, 2016). According to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO 3100, 2010), the management of risk involves a series of five sequential processes.

Step 1: Identify the risks

Step 2: Ranking or evaluation risks

Step 3: Responding to significant risk such as tolerate, treat, transfer or terminate

Step 4: Resourcing control and reaction planning

Step 5: Monitoring risk performance and review risk management framework

Hazard and Risk

Risk is the effect of uncertainty on impacts, and a hazard is something that could hurt someone or have bad effects (ISO, 2009). A usual mistake is mixing up the words "hazard," "risk," and "danger." When the hazard terminology used is misunderstood, it creates harder to handle hazards effectively at work.

From this point of view, industrial practitioners who work in industry need to think about these groups of risks. There are three types of hazards in the first group: safety hazards, health hazards, and environmental hazards. The second group is how dangerous something is. Risk can be placed into five groups: physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, and psychological. The third group is made up of hazards. Risk can be classified into four groups: obvious, emerging, temporary, and hidden. Numerous industry practitioners showed inaccurate identification of risk and a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the primary characteristics of each group, hence resulting in consequential issues. Fundamentally, this inquiry challenges the existing understanding of cause and effect.

Risk Assessment Matrix

Risk assessment methodologies impose structures on the underlying causes of accidents, hence influencing the data collection process and altering the identified causative factors (Pinto, 2014). Risk assessment grids are used to evaluate the likelihood and severity of possible occurrences. The risk evaluation matrix is an adaptable instrument that may be applied to assess risks across several domains. The methodology can facilitate discussion regarding the classification of high-risk and low-risk assessment matrices. Three different kinds of risk assessments can be executed, including qualitative, quantitative, and semi-quantitative (Yakub et al, 2019; Alias et al, 2022).

According to Act 514, employers are required to ensure the provision of a safe place to work for employees and other individuals associated with the workplace. Furthermore, the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) in 2008 developed the Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, and Risk Control Guideline with the aim of facilitating the procedure of conducting risk assessments and implementing appropriate measures to address identified issues. The risk matrix presented has dimensions of 5x5, with likelihood ratings categorized as impossible, very unlikely, possible, and most likely. The severity scores encompass a range of values from insignificance to catastrophic levels (Yakub et al, 2019; Yakub & Sherina, 2014). The risk matrix, which has been widely used in several industries, needs the development of specific practical and conceptual terminologies for assessing likelihood and severity specifically tailored to the oil and gas industry.

Methodology

The simple random selection method was used to do this cross-sectional study at the East Coast Oil and Gas Organization in Terengganu. Based on these requirements, 80 respondents were recruited: they had to be between the ages of 19 and 60 and have worked as oil and gas workers for at least one year. All respondents were given an informed consent form to fill out and sign voluntarily while the data was being collected.

A standard questionnaire called the Job Content Questionnaire was used, and it was accepted in Bahasa Malaysia (Karasek et al, 1981). The questionnaire has three parts: Section A is about sociodemographic information; Section B is about occupational stress based on present job activity; and Section C is about experiencing occupational stress in the past year. Rusli (2006) checked the Malay version and found that it was reliable for choice latitude (0.75), psychological job demand (0.61), and social support (0.84). The data collection and analysis will be conducted

using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. To investigate potential job-related stress and other contributing factors.

Findings

Inquiry question 1.

Which occupational stressors do industrial practitioners primarily take into account when conducting risk assessments?

There are two main factors affect the safety practitioner's perception on describing the correct hazards.

Hazard definition

Various interpretations of the term 'hazard' are presented in OHSAS 18001:2007 and MS 1722:2011. According to OHSAS 18001, a hazard is characterized as a "source, situation, or act that possesses the capacity to cause harm in the form of human injury or illness, or a combination thereof." In contrast, according to the MS 1722:2011 standard, a hazard is characterized as a 'source, condition, or act that possesses the capacity to cause harm in relation to human injury or illness, as well as property damage.' The presence of these discrete criteria has significant consequences for the evaluation of the level of risk.

Hazard description

The holistic description of hazards at work encompasses several facets pertaining to activities, classification, results, and adverse attributes of things or circumstances. Safety professionals frequently encounter challenges when it comes to accurately defining and categorizing hazard and risk present in the workplace. This raises inquiries on the appropriate characterization of hazards during the execution of tasks such as welding, fabrication, blasting and painting activity at workplace. Some instances that can be cited as examples are 'psychological risks,' 'chemical hazards in a onshore environment,' and 'inadequate utilization of specialized personal protective equipment designed for oil and gas settings.' Ensuring a precise and accurate depiction of hazards is of utmost importance in facilitating a comprehensive evaluation of potential risks.

Inquiry question 2.

To what extent do the perspectives of professionals in the industrial field influence the precision of risk evaluation?

Regarding the context of safety practice, the existence of diverse viewpoints among safety practitioners often gives reason for different interpretations and misunderstandings regarding the accuracy of risk assessment. An often observed concern is to the comprehension of likelihood levels, and challenges arise when selecting the most suitable risk matrix for a specific occupational context.

Conclusion

The study outcomes have enabled to draw a conclusion regarding the elements that influence risk assessment within the oil and gas industry. Gaining a comprehensive understanding of the precise criteria involved in evaluating workplace hazards is a crucial consideration for upper management in order to effectively utilize the Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment, and Risk Control

(HIRARC) framework when making informed decisions. When conducting risk assessments, should prioritize their hazards in order to effectively develop suitable control measures.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the preliminary findings, the following recommendations for future research are

Recommendation 1: Further research should be conducted to other different types of industries as listed in the First Schedule of OSHA 1994; and

Recommendation 2: Further research should be conducted the effectiveness of control measures. An appropriate risk matrix for control measures needs to be developed.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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THE DETERMINANTS OF RISKY CYBERSECURITY BEHAVIOUR: A CASE STUDY AMONG EMPLOYEES IN WATER SECTOR IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Cybersecurity threats are a growing concern around the world. The global spending on cybersecurity and losses due to cyber incidents is worrying. Research found that the weakest element in the cybersecurity chain is that of the human. The use of security technologies failed to address the problem in instances where employees engage in activities that place themselves and the company at risk. Hence, the role human factors play in cybersecurity is crucial. In Malaysia, little is known about the behavioural aspects of cybersecurity in water sector which is known vulnerable to cyber-attacks. The present study aims to examine the effects of information security issues awareness, top management support, leadership, information security policy and cybersecurity awareness training on risky cybersecurity behaviour. The data were collected from 425 respondents from four water companies located in northern states of Malaysia. The respondents are selected using disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. The survey was conducted using questionnaire. PLS-SEM was used to test the proposed hypotheses. The results shows that security issues awareness and top management support are negatively related to risky cybersecurity behaviour. Contrary to the prediction, cybersecurity awareness training was found to be positively related with risky cybersecurity behaviour. The findings has several theoretical and practical implications. By ensuring cybersecurity, water security is stored hence the well-being of people is taken care since water is a fundamental need of human lives. The stability and security of the country also can be maintained with secure and sustainable water resiliency. Finally, the economic losses due to cyber-attacks can be reduced.

Keywords: Cybersecurity, water sector, risky cybersecurity behaviour, employees

Introduction

With the rapid pace of globalisation, digitalisation, and smart technologies, cyber threat is becoming a daily struggle for businesses and government agencies. Cyber vulnerabilities pose significant corporate risks, such as downtime, data breaches, and financial losses (Sheehan et al., 2019). Annual global cybersecurity spending is approaching \$100 billion, while global business losses due to cyber incidents are approaching \$1 trillion (Wirth, 2017). In 2020, it is estimated that inadequate cybersecurity will cost the global economy USD 945 billion (Smith et al., 2020). By 2025, cyberattacks are expected to cause damages of about \$USD \$10.5 trillion annually, a 300 per cent increase from 2015 (Morgan, 2022).

Cyberattacks on a country's critical infrastructure can seriously damage the country's security and stability (Francis, 2018; Frank, 2022). National Cyber Security Policies (NCSP) were developed in Malaysia specifically to address cyber risks to Critical National Information Infrastructure (CNII) (Malaysia Cybersecurity Strategy 2020-2024). CNII refers to assets (both physical and virtual), systems, and operations that are so critical to a nation's economic strength, national image, national defence and security, government capability to function, and public health and safety that their incapacity or destruction would be disastrous (NASCA, 2022). National defence and security, banking and finance, information and communications, energy, transportation, water, health services, government, emergency services, and food and agriculture are among the ten critical sectors that have been identified as CNII (NASCA, 2022).

Water sector, as one of the country's critical infrastructures, plays an important role in national development and people's well-being around the world. Water operators all over the world have switched to smart water management systems to ensure sustainable water supply management. According to Technavio analysts, the global smart water management market was worth around \$7 billion in 2015 and is expected to reach \$16.73 billion by 2020 (Lee & Gourbesville, 2018). Smart water management have been adopted by utilities around the world, including Thames Water in the United Kingdom, which launched a 15-year programme to deploy smart metres across 3.3 million properties, and Manila Water in the Philippines, which used data-driven pressure optimization to improve services for over 6.2 million people (Rasekh et al., 2016). Germany is leading the way in the digitization of metrology, taking the lead in the drinking water sector. It is estimated that there are at least 48 million water meters in municipal water networks in Germany (Gelsenwasser, 2021).

However, because of the use of automated monitoring and control systems which are connected to internet, such as the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition System (SCADA), the water sector has become increasingly vulnerable to cyber-attacks. As most network devices in the infrastructure are frequently accessible to the public and lack sophisticated security features, it is thus an easy target for attackers (Fiza, 2022). Among the 16 lifeline infrastructure sectors, the water and wastewater sectors (WWS) were identified as one of the primary targets for cyberattacks by the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) (White House, 2013). According to the Industrial Control Systems Cyber Emergency Response Teams (ICS-CERT), 25 water utilities reported cybersecurity incidents in 2015, placing WWS as the third most targeted industry in the United States (Matthew & Gloria, 2018).

In Malaysia, the water industry has gone through the restructuring exercise, under the Water Policy Reform that has been introduced in Peninsular Malaysia and the Regions Labuan Federation since 2008. It aims to improve operational performance and water operator finances (Laporan Tahunan SPAN, 2020). As part of the restructuring exercise, water operators have invested in upgrading their services and facilities. Currently, water industry in Malaysia is set to migrate into smart water management. States like Selangor and Penang is leading the initiative. Selangor for example used various IoT technologies and has set up the Intelligent Command Centre and Data Analytics Centre. They also had installed Smart Meter, Automatic Chlorination Secondary System, Unit Catchment and Waterway (Air Selangor, 2021). Although there are no incidents of cyber-attacks reported in water sector in Malaysia, however, given the current development in water sector which has taken initiatives to migrate to smart water management, Malaysia too exposed to cyber-attacks. As the country embarking on the smart water management, it is imperative to remain vigilant toward possible cyber-attacks in this sector.

Several academics have commented that, for the most part, human is the weakest link in the cybersecurity chain (Anwar et al., 2016; De Bruijn & Janssen, 2017). Human mistake is responsible for 99% of successful assaults (Othman, 2018). Security technology that has been installed has failed to solve the issue when workers fail to follow cybersecurity standards or participate in actions that endanger themselves and the firm. The increasing complexity of cyberinfrastructure, the interdependence of its components, and human behaviour has escalated the cybersecurity threats (Lange et al., 2016; Hadlington, 2018). However, research focusing on human elements has concentrated on the human-factor vulnerabilities connected to technical vulnerabilities such as lack of knowledge and skill capabilities (e.g., Asgharpour et al., 2007; Goodall et al., 2009; Wang, 2013; Ani et al., 2019).

Since most cyber incidents are human-enabled, there is a dire need to expand existing research to underexplored areas such as behavioural aspects of cybersecurity (Lahcen et al., 2020). Risky cybersecurity behaviours has been identified as actions that are widely known to increase the susceptibility of personal or organizational information assets to harm. According to Aivazpour and Rao (2018), risky cybersecurity behaviours refer to engagement in behaviours that are generally known to increase the vulnerability of personal or organizational information assets. They further explained that the risky cybersecurity behaviours correspond to those acts that are listed as unsafe in compliance guidelines of organizations. Mustafo et al. (2021) argued that behavioural sciences focused on user behaviour can provide key techniques to help increase cyber security. In their study, they have identified current research on psychological factors and individual differences among computer system users that explain vulnerabilities to cyber security attacks and crimes. A deeper understanding of factors contributing to risky cybersecurity behaviours could be the key to managing an effective cybersecurity posture within an organisation in critical sectors. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the factors that could have effect on risky cybersecurity behaviour among the employees in the water sector in Malaysia.

Theoretical foundation and hypotheses development

Risky cybersecurity behaviour

Human behaviour associated with cybersecurity threats and incidents is termed risky cybersecurity behaviour in the literature (Schaik et al., 2017). Risky cybersecurity behaviour can be described as actions that increase the vulnerability of personal or organizational information assets (Aivazpour & Rao, 2018). Such behaviour includes clicking on a phishing link (Butavicius et al., 2016) or sharing passwords with unauthorized individuals (Aivazpour & Rao, 2018). These actions can put people at risk online and increase the likelihood of a cybersecurity breach or malicious attack (Milne et al., 2009; Hadlington, 2018). Risky cybersecurity behaviours can lead to cybercrime, which costs billions of dollars globally and is not limited by physical borders between nations. Various individual, organisational, and contextual factors have been linked to risky cybersecurity behaviour. According to Herath and Rao (2009b), corporate (organization), contextual, and individual factors influence employees' adherence to cyber security practices. Information security awareness has been identified as an important individual factor that will help individuals to remain vigilant about cyber threats and refrain from engaging in risky cybersecurity behaviour (Kayworth & Whitten, 2010; Werlinger et al., 2009; Flores & Ekstedt, 2016).

Organisational factors such as top management support posited to influence information security perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes (Hu, Hart, & Cooke, 2007). This contention is supported by Cuganesan, Steele, and Hart (2018) in their study on the influence of top management and workplace norms on information security attitudes and self-efficacy. According to Von Solms and Von Solms (2004), leadership plays a vital role in information security within organizations, and leadership must take on the responsibility of governing information security in organizations. Providing information security training and awareness to employees should help equip them with necessary information security skills and knowledge, and therefore, improve information security compliance behaviour (Siponen, Adam Mahmood, & Pahlila, 2014). Additionally, a clear information security policy at organization can also help to address the cybersecurity issue. Information security policy is a statement of intentions and directions from management to employees to prevent or mitigate risks or threats to information confidentiality, integrity, and availability (Wood, 1995).

Information security issues awareness and risky cybersecurity behaviour

The term information security awareness refers to being mindful of and aware of information security procedures, risks, and threats (Siponen, 2000). Furthermore, information security issues awareness refers to users' understanding of the importance of information security and their responsibilities, as well as their actions to maintain adequate levels of information security control (Shaw et al., 2009). Although the importance of employee information security awareness has been widely recognised, studies show that it remains a difficult topic because most employees are unaware of security issues, policies, and procedures (Pahlila et al., 2007). Besnard and Arief (2004) define information security awareness as users' or employees' awareness of an organization's security mission. When defining the concept of information security awareness, most authors use at least one of these dimensions: knowledge, attitude, and behaviour (Olivos, 2018).

AlMindeel and Martins (2020) suggested that organisations' information security awareness endeavours attribute their positive impact on individual information security behaviour. Information security awareness often employed as a preventive approach which will reduce the risk of employee negligence that mitigates risks originating both internally and externally (D'Arcy et al., 2009; Bulgurcu et al., 2010; Haeussinger & Kranz, 2013). Furthermore, for an organization's information security strategy to be effective, it must be successfully implemented (Siponen, 2000; Dinev & Hu, 2007). The findings of the study proposed the need to increase the security awareness of the corporate organisation, particularly because of the vulnerabilities they are exposed to (Adu & Ajei, 2018). On one hand, increased awareness of information security issues can lead to individuals taking more proactive steps to protect their sensitive information and avoid engaging in risky behaviour. For example, if someone is aware of the dangers of phishing emails, they may be less likely to click on a suspicious link or enter personal information into a fake website. Drawing on the above arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a negative relationship between information security issues awareness and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Top management support and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Top-level management must support the development of organisational structure that prioritise cybersecurity (Hu et al., 2012). Many studies in the field of knowledge management have attempted to explain the role of top management support (Abbaszadeh et al., 2010; Ghasemi & Valmohammadi, 2018; Lee et al., 2012; Lin, 2011; Lin, 2014; Migdadi, 2009; Yip & Ng, 2019). The degree to which top management understands the importance of the information security function and is personally involved in information security activities can be defined as top management support (Thompson, 1967). Raghunathan and Raghunathan (1988) verified the importance of top management support as a critical ingredient in the success of information system planning. For managerial implications, a supportive managerial attitude and environmental nourishment would provide information system personnel with an encouraging environment in which they believe that their work will be recognized and appreciated.

Considering information security as a management and business issue, top management can be better aware of the importance of the development and implementation of information security controls. Security control implementation can be a very complicated and resource-intensive process that requires resources and expertise (Chang & Ho, 2006). Top management can be convinced of the value of information security and the role that information security management processes play in the context of the company (Smith & Jamieson, 2006; Werlinger et al., 2009). The top management has a direct corporate governance responsibility for ensuring that all the information assets of the company are secure (Von Solms & Von Solms, 2004). The relationship between top management support and risky cybersecurity behaviour is often a negative one. When top management prioritizes and supports information security within an organization, employees are more likely to take cybersecurity seriously and adopt safe practices. This can help to reduce the risk of cyberattacks and minimize the impact of any incidents that do occur. Drawing on the above arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: There is a negative relationship top management support and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Leadership and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Leadership is critical to information security within organisations, and leadership must assume responsibility for governing information security within organisations (Von Solms & Von Solms, 2004). Solms and Von Solms (2004) asserted that leadership plays a vital role in information security within organizations and that leadership must take the responsibility of governing information security in organizations. Leadership refers articulating a clear vision about the Information Security Policy (ISP), formulate a clear strategy for achieving effective ISP, establishing clear goals/objectives for attaining effective ISP to protect the organization's assets against threats (Hu et al., 2012; Paliszkievicz, 2019). Tubbs and Schulz (2006) define leadership as the individuals that influence others in order to achieve the goals of the organization. Hu et al. (2012) found that leadership significantly influenced employees' behaviour and their intention to comply with information security policies.

According to Triplett (2022), one way of creating accountability is by creating a cybersecurity charter, signed by cybersecurity leadership and other members of the company's executive leadership, in which all leaders agree to not expose the organization to risk. Furthermore, organizations need to implement leadership development programs to better prepare their cybersecurity leaders to work with other employees. Developing cybersecurity leaders is an investment, and the return on this investment will take the form of reduced cybersecurity risk (Rotherberger, 2016). Leadership can play a crucial role in setting the tone for information security within an organization. Leaders who prioritize information security and emphasize its importance to the success of the business can encourage employees to take their cybersecurity responsibilities seriously and adopt safe practices. Leaders who provide the resources and support necessary for information security, such as training, technology, and a secure work environment, can also help to reduce the risk of cyberattacks. Drawing on the above arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a negative relationship leadership and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Cybersecurity awareness training and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Cybersecurity awareness training is a formal programme that teaches users about potential threats to an organization's information and how to avoid situations that could jeopardise the organization's data (Gardner, 2014). Cybersecurity training is both formal and informal education about the risks associated with information technology. It is formal in the sense that people must attend specific training sessions (Sullivan, 2019). It is also informal because, in addition to these mandatory training sessions, there is a constant emphasis on cybersecurity at senior staff meetings, through the employee review process, and through frequent reminders about the daily responsibilities associated with cybersecurity vigilance (Sullivan, 2019). Cybersecurity training can also help information system users gain a better understanding of security and data protection methods, resources, and policies. Cybersecurity training can also help users of information system deepen their understanding of security and data protection methods, resources, and processes for using computers, software, and online applications (Indeed Editorial Team, 2021).

Disparte and Furlow (2017) suggest that the best cybersecurity investment that an organization can make is stronger security training for its employees. That is why organizations must invest in cybersecurity awareness training (CSAT) to increase their employees' awareness and readiness

(Schmidt et al., 2008; He et al., 2019). Zhang et al. (2021) explored different types of CSAT programs and their impact and implementation. By weighing the trade-offs between their desired level of security and the overall cost of achieving it, businesses can create their ideal cybersecurity strategy (Pigni, 2019). Through training, employees can learn about the latest information security threats, such as phishing scams, malware, and data breaches. They can also learn about best practices for protecting sensitive information and reducing the risk of cyberattacks. When employees receive regular and effective cybersecurity awareness training, they are more likely to take their information security responsibilities seriously and adopt safe practices. Drawing on the above arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

H4: There is a negative relationship between cybersecurity awareness training and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Information security policy and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Information security policy (ISP) is a set of instructions that define what users should do and should not do, pointing out reasonable behaviour to secure the information and information assets (Hone & Eloff, 2002). To achieve ISP objectives, a robust security framework must ensure the confidentiality, integrity, availability, authenticity, authority, verifiability, and nonrepudiation of critical information assets (Alhanahnah et al., 2016). ISP is a governing document that defines the overall boundaries of information security in an organisation (Sohrabi et al., 2016; Lucila, 2016). It also demonstrates management's commitment to and support for information security in an organisation and the role it plays in achieving and supporting the organisation's vision and purpose (Sohrabi et al., 2016; Knapp et al., 2009; Kadam, 2007; Lucila, 2016).

According to Li et al. (2014) employees in an organization that has an explicit security policy in place tend to be more worried about security breaches if they don't adhere to the company's information security policy and are more responsible for taking appropriate measures to protect cybersecurity of their organization. Information security policies are significant for consideration in different organizations since they help businesses to identify best practices and methods for use to be equipped against cyber threats and the loss of valuable data (Taherdoost et al., 2015; Taherdoost et al., 2020). The main aim of information security policy is to prevent or mitigate cyberattacks and reduce the risk of cyber threats (Purser, 2014). When an organization implements a comprehensive information security policy, it sets clear expectations for employees regarding their responsibilities for protecting sensitive information. An information security policy should outline the specific practices and procedures that employees are expected to follow, such as using strong passwords, regularly updating software, and reporting any suspicious activity. When employees are aware of these policies and understand the consequences of not following them, they are less likely to engage in risky behavior. Drawing on the above arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: There is a negative relationship between information security policy and risky cybersecurity behaviour

Research model

Figure I present the proposed model for the current study with the main objective to examine the factors that could influence risky cybersecurity behaviour. The dependent variable of this study is risky cybersecurity behaviour while the independent variables consist of information security issues awareness, top management support, leadership, cybersecurity awareness training, and information security policy.

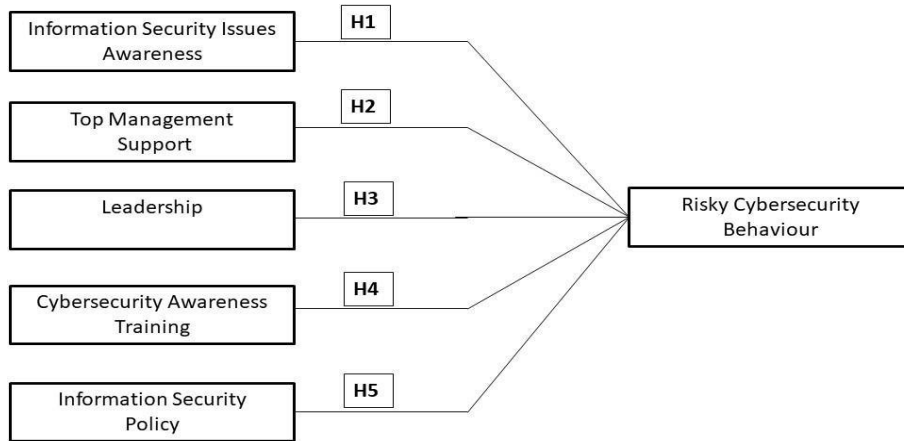


Figure I: Research model

Methodology

Population, sample and sampling technique

In this study, the total population is 4,154 employees working in water companies in northern states of Malaysia consist of Perlis, Kedah, Penang, and Perak. This study, however surveyed 425 respondents selected using disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. Disproportionate stratified random sampling is deemed appropriate option since the number of members (employees) in each stratum (states) is not balance. The respondents come from a variety of departments, ages, and positions, among other things as long as they fit the inclusion criteria set for the research.

Data collection procedures

Suruhanjaya Pengurusan Air Negara (SPAN), who is the water regulator in the country was first contacted to obtain the letter of recommendation before the water companies are approached. The letter of support from the above central agencies was very helpful to get positive response and cooperation from the participating companies. Secondly, the researchers contacted the corporate communication or human resources department of the water companies to obtain the data about the total number of employees and permission to conduct the survey. Thirdly, once all parties have agreed, the researchers visited each water industry company and hand out the questionnaires based

on the number of respondents identified for each company. Fourthly, during the given time frame, the researcher did the follow up with the person in charge at respective participating companies. Lastly, the researchers return to each company to collect the questionnaires that have been answered.

Questionnaire translation and pre-test

Although the original instrument is in the English language, the questionnaire was prepared in the Malay language to allow respondents to answer in the language that they are familiar with. Back translation was employed in that the original instrument was translated into the Malay language by academic experts in both languages. The translated version was later back translated into the English language to confirm the match between the original and the English translated version by a different group of academics. This back translation process followed the procedure suggested by Brislin (1970). A pre-test was conducted to assess the face validity, and very minor changes were incorporated into the final questionnaire.

Measures

Information security issue awareness refers to users' understanding of the importance of information security and their responsibilities and actions to maintain adequate levels of information security control (Shaw et al., 2009). The information security issues awareness consist of three questions adapted from Koohang et al. (2019). A sample item is, "Overall, I am aware of potential security threats and their negative consequences". The internal consistencies (Cronbach's alpha) of the scale was 0.925 in a previous study conducted by Koohang et al. (2019).

Top management support was measured with the 6-item adapted from Knapp et al. (2006). Top management support defined as the degree to which top management understands the importance of the IS function and is personally involved in IS activities (Thompson, 1967). Respondents were asked to use a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) to rate the items. A sample item is, "Senior management considers information security an important organizational priority". The scale was reported to have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.944 in a study conducted by Tenzin (2021).

Leadership refers to articulating a clear vision about the Information Security Policy (ISP), formulate a clear strategy for achieving effective ISP, establishing clear goals/objectives for attaining effective ISP to protect the organization's assets against threats (Hu et al., 2012; Paliszkievicz, 2019). The construct was measured with the 3-item adapted from Hu et al. (2012) and modified from Paliszkievicz (2019). A sample item is, "Leadership in my organization has articulated a clear vision about ISP to protect organization's assets against threats". Respondents were asked to use a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) to rate the items. The scale was reported to have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.900 in a study conducted by Bagozzi and Yi (1988).

Three items was used to measure information security policy and the scale was adapted from D'Arcy, Hovav, and Galletta (2009). The construct is to a declaration of intentions and orders from management to employees to prevent or reduce risks or threats to information confidentiality, integrity, and availability (Tenzin et al., 2021). A seven-point Likert-type scale with rating options from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) was used to measure the construct. A sample item

is, “My organization has established rules of behaviour for use of computer resources”. The items reported to have Cronbach’s alpha ranging from 0.872 in previous studies (Tenzin, 2021).

Cybersecurity awareness training was measured using six items cybersecurity awareness training instrument adapted from Knapp (2005). The construct is known as a formal program with the goal of training users of the potential threats to an organization's information and how to avoid situations that might put the organization's data at risk (Gardner, 2014). Respondents were asked to use a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) to rate the items. A sample item is, “Necessary efforts are made to educate employees about new security policies”. Tenzin (2021) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.902 for the scale in their study.

Results

Demographic profile of the respondents

The distribution of respondents location reveals that that majority of the respondents are from Perak state consist of 42.6%. This is followed by those from Kedah with 39.8%. Respondents from Penang is the third largest with 15.8%, and the least is from Perlis that comprise of 1.9%. Male respondents has more response rate with 56.7% while female are 43.3%. Majority of the respondents are in the age range between 41-50 (61.0 %). Second highest are those in range 31-40 years (44.7%), while 28.2% are within the age of 21-30 years. 10.6% includes in the age more than 50 years and 0.5% are belonging to the age range of 21 years below. Those with SPM/SPTM constituted 89 respondents which represent 20.9% of the total respondents, while, BSc degree education constituted 148 responses, representing 34.8% of the responses, Master degree education constituted 13 responses, representing 3.1% of the respondents and finally followed by professional certificates with 175 responses, representing 41.2%. The majority of respondents are Malays, consist of 396 employees or 93.2%. Indians are second largest comprises of 4.2% workers, while Chinese represented by 1.4%. Majority of the respondents worked more than 10 years (42.1%), followed by 5-10 years range (34.8%). Respondents with less than 5 years’ experience consist of 23.1%. The result also shows that 7.0% of the respondents are engineers, machine operators (0.5%), managers (4.0%), supervisors (12.0%), technicians (20.5%) and other job categories are 56.0%.

Hypothesis testing

PLS-SEM was used to test the proposed hypotheses in this study. The causal predictive-based PLS-SEM was preferred over the confirmatory-based (CB)-SEM because of its relevancy to address the objective of this study, i.e., to examine the proposed hypotheses that are grounded in causal explanations (Jöreskog & Wold, 1982). Subsequently, SmartPLS 3.3.2 (Ringle et al., 2015) was used to estimate the model parameters (Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019).

Measurement model assessment

The measurement model assesses the relationship between the observed variables (indicators) and the latent variables (constructs) (Ramayah et al., 2018). In a reflective measurement model, three criteria of reliability and validity are assessed, namely internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Cheah et al., 2018). As shown in Table II, the observed variables demonstrate good internal consistency and convergent validity on its respective latent variable.

The internal consistency, measured by the composite reliability, is above the threshold value of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017), and the loadings of each indicator as well as the average variance extracted (AVE) which denotes the convergent validity, are within the acceptable threshold. The AVE value of more than 0.5 suggest that convergent validity has been established (Hair et al., 2017).

Table II: Assessment of internal consistency and convergent validity

Constructs	Items	Factor Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE	R²	R² Adj	
Leadership	LE 1	0.971	0.956	0.97	0.915			
	LE 2	0.956						
	LE 3	0.943						
Top Management Support	MS 1	0.913	0.967	0.973	0.858			
	MS 2	0.932						
	MS 3	0.937						
	MS 4	0.935						
	MS 5	0.924						
	MS 6	0.915						
Info security Issues awareness	SA 1	0.928	0.851	0.905	0.761			
	SA 2	0.757						
	SA 3	0.921						
Risky Behaviours	Cybersecurity	RB 1	0.714	0.924	0.935	0.55	0.123	0.112
		RB12	0.769					
		RB13	0.709					
		RB15	0.874					
		RB16	0.812					
		RB19	0.807					
		RB 2	0.502					
		RB 5	0.787					
		RB 6	0.57					
		RB 7	0.661					
		RB 8	0.798					
		RB 9	0.807					
		Information Security Policy	SP 1					
SP 2	0.948							
SP 3	0.908							
Training and Awareness Campaign	TA 1	0.72	0.956	0.95	0.763			

TA 2	0.743
TA 3	0.905
TA 4	0.955
TA 5	0.963
TA 6	0.922

(Source: Author's Own Findings)

As described by Hair et al. (2016), discriminant validity is an indication of how much a variable is distinct from others. Moreover, as mentioned in Duarte and Raposo (2010), higher discriminant validity indicates that the variable differs from others and that a distinct variable can measure a phenomenon that could not be measured by other variables. As a result, the model's external consistency was examined in relation to its discriminant validity. In this regard, the square root of AVE was used to calculate the discriminant validity for this investigation. To establish the discriminant validity, a variable's square root of AVE should be higher than the correlations between the latent variables. Table III shows the square root of AVE for each variable and illustrates a comparison between the correlation between the latent variables, information security issues awareness (SA) = 0.872; information security policy (SP) = 0.902; leadership (LE) = 0.957; top management support (MS) = 0.926; training & awareness campaign (TA) = 0.874; and Risky cybersecurity behaviours (RB) = 0.742.

Table III: Discriminant Validity Matrix

Fornell-Larcker Criterion	SA	SP	LE	RB	MS	TA
Info Security Issues Awareness	0.872					
Info Security Policy	0.389	0.902				
Leadership	0.52	0.583	0.957			
Risky Cybersecurity Behaviours	-0.266	-0.095	-0.117	0.742		
Top Mgt Support	0.476	0.59	0.829	-0.16	0.926	
Training & Awareness Campaign	0.195	0.521	0.527	0.113	0.53	0.874

(Source: Author's Own Findings)

Note: The bolded numbers shown in Table III represent the square route of average while others represent latent variable correlations.

Table III demonstrates that for all variables, the AVE square roots are higher compared to the correlation between the latent variables. Hence, the model's discriminant validity is at an acceptable level (Aremu et al., 2018). Initially, the hypothesised relationships between variables in the framework were projected based on past studies. As recommended by Hair et al. (2016), variables containing at least two items should be retained; hence the confirmatory factor analysis result led to the retention of all variables because they all have at least two items.

Structural model assessment

The structural model (inner model) assesses the relationship between the latent variables in the hypothesized model (Ramayah et al., 2018). The proposed hypotheses were assessed by means of bootstrap re-sample technique using an iteration of 1,000 sub-samples. Table IV represents the corresponding results. Table IV shows that 2 out of 5 hypotheses (H1 and H4) were supported as

predicted with a p-value less than 0.05. As stipulated in H1, information security issues awareness has a significant negative impact on risky cybersecurity behaviours ($\beta = -0.231$; $t = 3.665$; $p < 0.000$). Similarly, H4 was also supported, indicating that training & awareness campaign negatively impacts risky cybersecurity behaviours, and the relationship is significant ($\beta = -0.225$; $T = 2.535$; $p < 0.012$). Contrary to the prediction, training and awareness training H5 was found to have a positive significant relationship with cybersecurity behaviour ($\beta = 0.263$; $t = 2.691$; $p < 0.000$). On the contrary, hypothesis (H2 and H3) was not supported with ($\beta = -0.06$; $t = 0.627$; $p > 0.05$) and ($\beta = 0.086$; $t = 0.989$; $p > 0.05$) which reflects that top management support and the leadership does not directly affect risky cybersecurity behaviours.

Table IV: Results of hypothesis testing

Path Coefficient	Beta	Standard error	t value	p value
Info Security Issues Awareness -> Risky Cybersecurity Behaviours	-0.231	0.063	3.665	0.000
Info Security Policy -> Risky Cybersecurity Behaviours	-0.06	0.095	0.627	0.531
Leadership -> Risky Cybersecurity Behaviours	0.086	0.087	0.989	0.323
Top Mgt Support -> Risky Cybersecurity Behaviours	-0.225	0.089	2.535	0.012
Training & Awareness Campaign -> Risky Cybersecurity Behaviours	0.263	0.098	2.691	0.007

(Source: Author's Own Findings)

Discussion

Hypothesis 1 which postulates that there is a negative relationship between information security issues awareness and risky cybersecurity behaviour is supported in this study. The finding is consistent with past study that found individuals who have a high level of information security awareness are less likely to engage in risky online behaviour (Hammarstrand & Fu, 2015), such as sharing personal information, using weak passwords, and clicking on suspicious links. Similarly, another study found that individuals who are more knowledgeable about information security issues are more likely to take steps to protect their personal information online and are less likely to fall victim to cybercrime (Deora & Chudasma, 2021). Overall, individuals who are more aware of the risks associated with online activities and are better informed about how to protect themselves are less likely to engage in risky behaviour that could compromise their personal information or lead to a cyberattack.

Hypothesis 2 that suggests there is a negative relationship between top management support and risky cybersecurity behaviour is supported in this study. Top management support is essential for creating a culture of cybersecurity within an organization. When top management prioritizes cybersecurity and provides the necessary resources, employees are more likely to take cybersecurity seriously and follow security policies and best practices. Top management support can also help to ensure that cybersecurity is integrated into business processes and decision-making, which can help to prevent cybersecurity incidents. Furthermore, top management provide support to employees based on current policies, objectives and needs. Thus, employees are more receptive to instructions and the problems of cyber security risks can be overcome immediately.

Hypothesis 3 which postulates negative relationship between leadership and risky cybersecurity behaviour is not supported in this study. Relationship between leadership and cybersecurity behaviour is complex and multifaceted, and there are many factors that contribute to effective leadership in the context of cybersecurity. Unlike top management, leadership can be provided by anyone at any level in the organization. The leaders who are not well trained usually lacks overall mastery of knowledge, strategic, reading of the current situation and analysis of possible cyber security risks compared to top management. Wherein, top management can look broadly from various angles and levels compared to the head who is in the middle only more focused on his own unit and division. This explains why there is no relationship between leadership and risky cybersecurity behavior.

Hypothesis 4 predicts that there is a negative relationship between cybersecurity awareness training and risky cybersecurity behaviour. Contrary to the prediction, the study found a positive relationship between cybersecurity awareness training and risky cybersecurity behaviour. This suggests that the greater training provided the higher the tendency to engage in cybersecurity behaviour. This could be due to overconfidence among the user. Employees who receive extensive cybersecurity awareness training may develop overconfidence in their ability to identify and respond to security threats. This can lead to complacency and a false sense of security, which can lead to risky behaviour. Furthermore, this newfound awareness can spark their curiosity and motivate them to learn more about cybersecurity. Employees will be able to get caught up in cybercrime. Thus, curiosity can be a valuable trait in the context of cybersecurity because it drives individuals to seek out new information and to ask questions.

Hypothesis 5 that suggests that there is a negative relationship between information security policy and risky cybersecurity behaviour is not supported in this research. In fact, some studies have found that the existence of an information security policy alone may not be enough to reduce risky behaviour among employees. It is possible that the existence of an information security policy can lead to a false sense of security among individuals or organizations. They may assume that because there is a policy in place, they are protected from all cybersecurity risks and may therefore engage in riskier behaviour than they would otherwise. Additionally, if the policy is too restrictive or difficult to follow, individuals may find ways to circumvent it, leading to risky behaviour. In other words, the relationship between information security policy and risky cybersecurity behaviour is complex and can depend on a variety of factors such as the effectiveness of the policy, the level of awareness and education about the policy among users, and the motivations of individuals or organizations.

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study further enhance our understanding about the human vulnerabilities related to risky cybersecurity behaviour that can lead to cyber-attack. While past studies focused on technical aspects of cybersecurity to deter users from engage in cyber related incidents, this study adds to body of knowledge by suggesting that soft approaches are also can help to address risk to cybersecurity. Secondly, this study has focused on the key organizational factors that often neglected in past studies specially the role of top management support, leadership, information security policy and availability of training and awareness campaign related to cybersecurity that can help to address cybersecurity threats in the organization. Finally, this study has addressed the sectoral and contextual gap by conducting the study in the water sector. Past studies often concentrate in sectors that has heavily invested in advance cybersecurity technology such financial, manufacturing and telecommunication. The study in water sector, specifically in Malaysian context would add new knowledge in research related to human-aspects of cybersecurity.

Practical implications

The outcomes of this research will have few implications. By understanding factors contribute to the risky cybersecurity behaviour among employees in CNII sectors like water services industry, it can facilitate the relevant stakeholders such as water operators to successfully mitigate the cyber threats. As a result of this, first, it will help to ensure water security in the country by mitigating possible cyber-attacks in the water services industry. Hence, the well-being of people is taken care since water is fundamental human need of human lives. Secondly, the stability and security of the country can be maintained with secure and sustainable water resiliency. Thirdly, issues such as high non-revenue water (NRW) losses due to leaks, water theft, and payment defaulters can be addressed. Fourth, the economic losses due to cyber-attacks can be reduced. Fifth, with water security (SDG 6) in place, the country is committed in supporting UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Limitations And Future Research Recommendations

There are several limitations in terms generalizability of research findings. Firstly, by studying factors contributing to risky cybersecurity behaviour, this study focused on the soft approaches to mitigate cybersecurity risk. The research did not include the technical (hard) aspects that can effect risky cybersecurity. Future research should be comprehensive and incorporate both the soft and hard approach in the study. Secondly, the sample limited to water industry in northern states of Malaysia, hence the findings are not generalizable to settings outside the scope of this study. Future research should conduct a study with a more extensive sample involving other states as well to have a complete understanding about the phenomenon. Finally, this study proposed a direct relationship between various factors on risky cybersecurity behavior and did not include other enabler factors. Future research may include other mediator or moderator variables to have better understanding about the factors influence risky cybersecurity.

Conclusion

In summary, the influence of individual and organizational factors on risky cybersecurity behaviour in the water industry is a complex issue that requires a multi-faceted approach to address. By prioritizing cybersecurity and using theoretical frameworks to design interventions, organizations can promote safe and secure behaviour and protect critical water infrastructure from

harm. Organizations in the water industry should prioritize cybersecurity and invest in training, resources, and policies that promote safe and secure behaviour.

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A CONCEPTUAL PAPER THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENTREPRENEURIAL ORIENTATION, MARKET ORIENTATION AND SMEs PERFORMANCE : THE MEDIATING ROLE OF THE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

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Abstract

The present study provides valuable insights into the improvement of performance in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). For instance, it is necessary for managers or owners of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to understand the correlation between the performance of SMEs and the strategy of the organisation. The main aim of this study is to examine the impact of entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation on the performance of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in South Sumatra, Indonesia. This research also investigates the role of management skills as a mediator in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation, market orientation, and the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Partial least square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is a modern strategy for data analysis that overcomes the limitations of earlier methods. The PLS technique enables the researcher to simultaneously modify the number of interdependent relationships. The study's findings have provided validation for the anticipated results. This study aims to provide policymakers and academics with a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in South Sumatra, Indonesia.

Keywords: Entrepreneurial Orientation, Market Orientation, Management Skills, and SMEs Performance

Introduction

In the early years of the twenty-first century, small and medium-sized enterprises have faced challenging market conditions. Despite facing challenges in a highly competitive global market, small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) remain a crucial pillar of various nations (Wymenga et al., 2012). The SME sector can make a valuable contribution to a country's gross domestic product (GDP) by providing foreign currency as well. Currently, the Indonesian government has prioritised the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises. The Ministry of Finance has indicated that the government's policies have prioritised the importance of small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) growth in order to accomplish the stated purpose. The administration aims to enhance the international productivity and competitiveness of the population and promote economic self-reliance through key domestic economic sectors (Taufiq & Jatmika, 2017). Anggraeni et al. (2017) conducted a new study which suggests that the government's approach to increasing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) should be tailored to the specific conditions of the local area. Establish government-led strategic initiatives that must be mandated as official government policy to facilitate the growth of small firms. The community and government can collaborate to establish small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) with the aim of mutually enhancing the local and state economies. Every municipality has the potential to foster innovation as a means to generate revenue for government growth (Anggraeni et al., 2017).

Problem Statement

Between 2010 and 2020, the proportion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is expected to reach its lowest level at 3.73% in 2020. This occurred as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic that rapidly spread to nearly every country worldwide (Kementrian Koperasi dengan Usaha Kecil dan Menengah Republik Indonesia, 2020). Considering this, the Indonesian government established a target of achieving a 62.36% increase in 2021. However, statistics from 2021 indicate that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) only accounted for 61.7% of the contribution. This suggests that the objective would not be achieved (Rudya, 2022). The export industry has not yet achieved adequate outcomes from the contribution of exports by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to the country.

The proportion of SMEs to exports in 2021 remains relatively low, reaching only 15.69% compared to other ASEAN countries. Thailand and Malaysia, for instance, reached export contributions of 41% and 29.2%, respectively. According to the Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2022), Indonesia was defeated by Singapore with a margin of 41% and by China with a margin of 60%. Teten Masduki, the Minister of Cooperatives and SMEs, stated that the COVID-19 pandemic and its spread had a detrimental impact on the sustainability of the economy, leading to a decline in the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) throughout various regions in Indonesia (Audah, 2022). Mawardi Yahya, the Vice Governor of South Sumatra, has stated that there will be a 30% reduction in the number of small and medium-sized firms in South Sumatra from 2020 to 2022, further supporting this claim. This assertion is further supported by additional evidence, as articulated by Herman Deru, the Governor of South Sumatra. According to Deru, it is crucial for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the region to comprehend the importance of acquiring

specialised knowledge and skills, as well as to recognise the significance of creativity and innovation in order to enhance their performance and gain public recognition. The primary challenge faced by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Sumatra is the need to enhance their performance in order to foster growth and make a more significant contribution to the region's development.

Furthermore, Kuncoro (2010) corroborates this viewpoint, highlighting that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) frequently encounter many typical challenges. However, the primary focus lies in enhancing the performance of SMEs to foster further growth. Performance is a crucial metric for evaluating the operations of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Sharma et al., 2005). Entrepreneurial orientation is one of the characteristics that might impact the performance of small and medium firms, as highlighted by Dewi (2013), Mustikowati, and Tysari (2015). Entrepreneurial orientation (EO) has the potential to rejuvenate established organisations by embracing risk-taking, fostering innovation, and displaying assertive competitive conduct (William D & Ginsberg, 1990; Zahra & Covin, 1995). Based on the research conducted by Wiklund and Shepherd (2005), Rauch et al. (2009), and Mustikowati and Tysari (2015), it has been found that as the entrepreneurial orientation of a business owner improves, characterised by traits such as innovation, proactivity, and willingness to take risks, the business performance also tends to increase. It would possess the capacity to identify and exploit opportunities among competing business obstacles. According to Tjiptono (2008), market orientation (MO) has the capacity to enhance business performance. In addition, market orientation is also thought to offer psychological and social advantages to employees by fostering a stronger sense of belonging and increased organisational commitment. Market orientation plays a crucial and beneficial function in enhancing the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (Mokhtar et al., 2014). The impact of management skills (MS) on the productivity and performance of small manufacturing organisations has been extensively studied by Sirat (2002), Nurhayati (2004), and Muryati (2004). These studies have consistently found a strong and significant relationship between management skills and organisational outcomes. The study conducted by Suci (2009) found that management skills had a substantial impact on the entrepreneurial orientation and performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the industries of East Java, Indonesia. Pasaribu (2017) discovered that the management skills of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Medan, North Sumatra can act as a mediator between market oriented characteristics and company performance.

Research Questions

The objective of this study is to establish the correlations among entrepreneurial orientation, market orientation, and the performance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with management skills acting as a mediator in South Sumatra, Indonesia. The forthcoming research will address the following inquiries:

- I. Does entrepreneurial approach have a substantial impact on the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)?
- II. Does market orientation have a substantial impact on the performance of SMEs?

- III. Does the presence of managerial skills act as a mediator in the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation and the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)?
- IV. Does the presence of managerial skills act as a mediator in the relationship between market orientation and the success of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)?

Literature Review

This section elucidates the definition of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia, with SMEs Performance as the variable that is influenced by entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation, which are considered independent variables.

SMES in Indonesia

Tambunan's (2008) prior study reveals that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia, characterised by having less than 100 employees, have consistently played a crucial role in the country's domestic economy. Particularly, they have been significant contributors to employment generation. Consequently, numerous households rely on it as their primary or supplementary means of financial support. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia dominate the non-agricultural sector, accounting for over 90% of all firms. These SMEs play a crucial role in the country's economy by employing more than 90% of its workforce, primarily consisting of women and young individuals. The majority of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), particularly micro-enterprises (MIEs), are located in rural areas. According to Tambunan (2008), they can serve as a crucial foundation for improving the entrepreneurial skills of rural communities, particularly women.

SMEs Performance

There is a lack of consensus on the precise definition of performance (Andersén, 2010), and there is also a lack of agreement on the exact measures that should be used to measure performance goals for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Sobri Minai & Lucky, 2011; Wiklund, 2006). The act of connecting transformation processes from input to output in order to accomplish specific objectives is known as "performance". From an economic perspective, the term "performance" pertains to a company's ability to efficiently and effectively manage its expenses and outputs (Abu Jarad et al., 2010). Organisational performance refers to the capacity of an organisation to utilise its available resources in a productive and efficient manner in order to accomplish its goals (Abu Jarad et al., 2010).

According to Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986), the overall performance of organisations is determined by business performance, with financial performance being an internal aspect of the organisation. The performance of a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) depends not only on its efficiency but also on its ability to function effectively in the financial sector, commonly referred to as financial stability. Venkatraman and Ramanujam (1986) argue that entire business performance is built upon the pillars of financial and operational success. The assessment of organisational performance is based on the organization's ability to efficiently and effectively utilise resources to generate economic results.

Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation is not only congruent with long-term management, but it can also have a significant impact on long-term management practises (Rauch et al., 2009). Entrepreneurial orientation is a strategic approach that has historically been shown to have a significant impact on various aspects of construction, including analysis, information gathering and acquisition, improved organisation structure, and empowering front-line employees to make strategic changes and influence product development activities (Morgan et al., 2016). Sanger et al. (2019) argue that in the era of globalisation, organisations and business people must compete and sustain their presence in order to achieve global commercial development. Unregulated competition frequently detrimentally impacts the commercial sphere. An organisation requires vital resources that serve as essential components, strengths, and even a constant competitive edge. Hence, the imperative for entrepreneurial orientation within the organisation compels it to strategize in order to effectively compete and achieve its goals by gaining a competitive edge. The source cited is Rauch et al. (2009).

Entrepreneurial orientation is a metric used to assess the structure of a system, and it has been extensively studied and shown to have a significant impact on performance (Covin & Wales, 2012; S. M. Miller, 2011). The experts in entrepreneurship have been examining and elucidating performance by experimenting with entrepreneurial orientation (Wiklund & Shepherd, 2003). Thus, researching the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and performance becomes the primary objective (Covin et al., 2006). Thus far, it has been established that there is a favourable correlation between entrepreneurial approach and performance, whether it is direct or indirect (Krauss et al., 2005; Li et al., 2009; Wiklund & Shepherd, 2005). It suggests that organisations that prioritise performance are superior to other organisations that do not. The association maintains communication with events that can increase susceptibility and shorten product life cycles (Rauch et al., 2009).

Market Orientation

Pertiwi and Siswoyo (2016) argue that adopting a market-oriented approach is crucial for survival in the market. Market orientation is an organisational approach that prioritises meeting the needs and wants of consumers. Market orientation is a strategic approach that involves aiming and constructing an organisation that prioritises customer service, emphasises competition, produces services that meet consumer expectations, and achieves success in a competitive environment (Cravens et al., 1994). Market orientation refers to the organisational activity that involves identifying consumer requirements and competitive behaviour, disseminating market knowledge throughout the organisation, and effectively responding to them (Silviasih et al., 2016).

Organisations that fail to deliver customer pleasure will encounter significant challenges. The issue is in the organization's disregard for the complaints of these clients, resulting in a lack of response. This in turn leads to customer dissatisfaction and their subsequent migration to alternative products. On average, content customers would inform three individuals about their positive product encounter, but discontented customers will relay their negative experience to other customers. Market orientation (MO) refers to the systematic process of generating and delivering market knowledge with the aim of creating value for consumers (Silviasih et al., 2016). This is further corroborated in other studies conducted by Jebna and Baharudin (2014), wherein they

elucidate that with the use of MO, internal company entities can effectively scrutinise client preferences and competitor strategies to get a competitive edge.

Management Skills

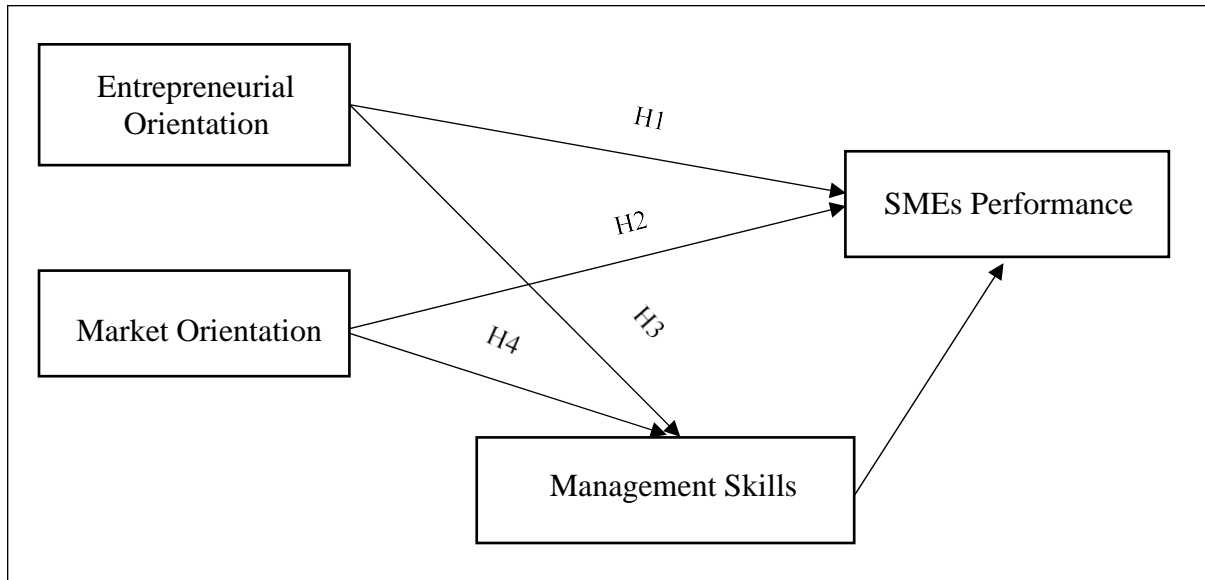
Management skills in organisations encompass effective communication, strategy implementation, building and maintaining positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders, and contributing to the allocation and distribution of organisational resources. This includes aspects such as organisational culture, learning systems, innovation and entrepreneurial systems, and incentive systems. According to some authors, managers require organization-specific information in order to efficiently fulfil their managing responsibilities. This information is obtained by hands-on experience, sometimes known as "learning by doing" (Barney, 1991; Reed & DeFillippi, 1990). Management talents are cultivated through collaborative team situations rather than individual endeavours. To thrive in competitive marketplaces, management teams need a varied set of complimentary abilities, encompassing both technical and human capabilities (Barney, 1991; Mahoney, 1995).

Proficient managerial skills are essential in every business undertaking, as highlighted by Robbins and Coulter (2005). The efficacy of a manager can be measured by the performance of their organisation. Hence, it is imperative for a manager to acquire and implement three crucial components: 1) managerial functions, 2) managerial principles, and 3) managerial competencies. Suci (2009) conducted a study in East Java that investigated the performance of Small and Medium-Enterprise Embroidery. The conclusions of the study were established. The study indicated management abilities as a mediator in the research.

Research Hypotheses Dan Framework

The independent variables that are to be tested in this study are entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation. The dependent variable is the SMEs performance in South Sumatra, Indonesia. The hypotheses of this study are as follows:

- H1 : Entrepreneurial Orientation (EO) is positively related to SMEs performance (SP).
- H2 : Market orientation (MO) is positively related to SMEs performance (SP).
- H3 : Management Skills (MS) mediate the relationship between entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and SMEs performance (SP).
- H4 : Management Skills (MS) mediate the relationship between market orientation (MO) and SMEs performance (SP).



Methodology

This study employed a quantitative methodology. Quantitative research approaches employ statistical, quantifiable, and quantitative procedures to generate solutions or answers. One viable research methodology is the dissemination of questionnaires. The verification approach is employed to assess hypotheses derived from statistical analysis (Nazir, 1998) and ascertain the extent of the impact of entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation on the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in South Sumatra. The process of gathering data involved the distribution of questionnaires in certain regions of South Sumatra, using a method called simple random sampling. A cohort of 109 persons were chosen as respondents, occupying diverse roles including founder, co-founder, inheritor, purchaser, and employee or appointee of the organisation. The questionnaire utilised a five-point Likert scale, which was derived from the following sources: SP 5 items (Suliyanto & Rahab, 2012), EO 22 items (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996; D. Miller, 1983), MO 14 items (Slater & Narver, 2000), and MS 8 items (Latif, 2002; Suci, 2009). In order to assess the accuracy of statistical findings, the data obtained from self-administered questionnaires were analysed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method, as proposed by Cook and Campbell in 1979. The researchers utilised SmartPLS, a widely utilised software programme, because of its favourable terms, methodological capabilities, and user-friendly interface (Ringle et al., 2005).

Conclusions

This study aims to examine the performance of small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in South Sumatra by assessing the influence of entrepreneurial orientation and market orientation as independent variables, with management skills acting as a mediating variable. This specific conceptual paper is the earliest publication grounded in research. The text highlights the issue statements that serve as the driving force behind the research. It outlines the research questions and hypotheses that will be examined, and offers a comprehensive evaluation of the relevant

literature in the primary topic. Subsequent articles derived from this research will provide a more detailed analysis of the experimental technique used, the survey and administrative tools, the descriptive and inferential findings, and the practical implications for management. This study's discoveries will assist small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in Indonesia, namely in the South Sumatra region, in improving their competitiveness in the global market and increasing GDP.

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EXAMINING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING INDIVIDUALS' DECISIONS TO ADOPT OR RESIST CASHLESS PAYMENT SYSTEMS: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY

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Abstract.

As users around the world transition towards cashless transactions, understanding the factors behind users' choices to accept or reject cashless payment approaches is critical for policymakers, industry players, and researchers. This conceptual study utilised the Value Adoption Model (VAM) as a theoretical model to explore the complex factors shaping users' decisions in the context of cashless transactions. The study will explore into the perceived value obtained from adopting cashless payment approaches, contemplating 2 main factors which are perceived benefits and sacrifice. Perceived sacrifices are classified into two constructs; technicality and perceived fee, whereas perceived benefits classified into enjoyment and usefulness. Drawing on the VAM, the study seeks to explain how users evaluate the perceived sacrifices (technicality and perceived fee) of cashless transactions, as well as the impact of perceived benefits, including enjoyment and usefulness. By investigating these factors within the VAM framework, the study aims to explain the complex interaction between perceived sacrifices and perceived benefits on perceived value in shaping users' intentions to adopt cashless payment. The proposed study contributes to the existing literature by offering a comprehensive conceptual insight of the factors influencing cashless payment adoption, offering understanding that can enlighten the development of targeted interventions to encourage acceptance while addressing fears and uncertainties. This study is projected to inform policymakers, industry players, and scholars regarding strategies to foster the acceptance of cashless payment systems in a fast growing and dynamic economic landscape.

Keywords: Cashless Transaction, Perceived Benefits, Perceived Sacrifices, Perceived Value, Value Adoption Model

Introduction

In an era affected by the global change towards cashless transactions, the decision individuals make pertaining to the acceptance or rejection of cashless payment methods hold deep implications for government as policymakers, industry players, and scholars. Understanding the critical significance of exploring and explaining the underlying factors leading users in this decision-making process, this study focusses on a conceptual investigation guided by the Value Adoption Model (VAM). As cashless payment methods become progressively more prevalent, understanding the primary factors influencing users to adopt the system becomes vital for the effective formulation of policies, designing strategic industry initiatives, and scholarly progressions (Ong & Chong, 2023).

This research utilizes the Value Adoption Model (VAM) as a framework to navigate the complex nature of users' decisions within the context of cashless transactions. Concentrating on the perceived value derived from the adoption of cashless payment methods, the study examines two primary factors which are perceived benefits and perceived sacrifices. The perceived sacrifices are characterised into two separate constructs, namely technicality and perceived fees, while perceived benefits also encompass two separate constructs call as enjoyment and usefulness. Stranded in the Value Adoption Model (VAM), the research attempt to explain how users assess the perceived sacrifices, encompassing technical aspects and perceived fees, in conjunction with the impact of perceived benefits, including the encompassing of enjoyment and usefulness on his or her attention to adopt the cashless payment methods.

Cashless transactions are considered unsafe for many people due to security reasons (Namahoot & Jantasri, 2023). Namahoot and Jantasri (2023) in their study stated that the advancement of technology over the years has altered the financial system that we used today. This phenomenon has also transformed global financial system including Malaysia, where many countries swiftly moving towards a cashless society hence demonstrates that e-wallet services are growing rapidly. According to Ng et al. (2021), many financial services providers and large corporations are promoting and pushing the society to adopt a cash-free lifestyle.

Malaysia aims towards becoming a cash-free society and financially stable high-income economy. As part of its plan to achieve this objective, the country is actively embracing electronic payments. The Malaysia Central Bank (Bank Negara Malaysia) play a major role in driving this national agenda to improve the efficiency of the payment system (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2023). With a focus on utilising digital-technology in finance, the Malaysian government is heavily promoting the use of electronic-wallets (e-wallet). Based on the national budget 2024, there are many cash-aid initiatives introduced by Malaysia government utilising e-wallet platform such as e-BeliaRahmah (eBR) programme and Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) programme with increase allocation from RM8 billion in 2023 to RM10 billion in 2024 aim to stimulate cashless transactions in the market and to promote the use of the digital technologies (Official Portal of Ministry of Finance, 2023).

According to Rahman et al. (2020), even with various services available in Malaysia pertaining to cashless methods, e-wallets are not the chosen payment method for most Malaysians. In developing countries like Malaysia, the concept of cashless payment practices is not fully

achieving maturity stage among Malaysian consumers (Rahman et al., 2020). Although there are barriers and challenges in the adoption of cashless system (The Malaysian Reserve, 2019), these systems are expected to keep growing in the future, according to Jingnan et al. (2023). The Payments Network Malaysia Sdn Bhd (PayNet) group CEO acknowledged the increasing trend of cashless transactions but also highlighted the challenges associated with it (Rahman et al., 2020). This suggests a significant gap in the need to confederate the e-wallet system in Malaysia and this also reflects the significant variation in the adoption of e-wallets practices in Malaysia. To promote and foster cashless payments, the Malaysian government is cooperating with the Ministry of Finance on various strategies. For instance, they established partnership with three major e-wallet operators in Malaysia which are Touch' n Go e-wallet, Grab Pay, and Boost (Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2020).

Thus, it is vital to explore and to examine e-wallets technologies and ecosystems in the Malaysian context. As emphasised by Malaysia's Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim during the launch of the "Ekonomi Madani: Memperkasa Rakyat" (Madani Economy: Empowering the People) framework in Kuala Lumpur July 27, 2023, Malaysia is on route to becoming a cashless society (Malaymail, 2023). Malaysia's financial and payment ecosystems are consistently developing and improving from time to time, demonstrating the government's obligation and effort to shift to a digital economy and cashless society. In Malaysia, the biggest group of e-wallet users comprises of millennials population aged 27 to 40 years old. This phenomenon is expected since this generational cohort, along with Gen Z users, are the most familiar with digital ecosystems (Munikrishnan et al., 2022). This supports the e-wallet inclination for cashless transactions in this age group. Munikrishnan et al. (2022) stated that the younger generations in general are more open to accepting new technology and embracing innovation.

This article seeks to reveal important aspects of consumer behaviour on e-wallets acceptance in Malaysia that have been limitedly explored in previous studies. The study addresses crucial concern regarding the factors influencing e-wallet adoption and how these factors relate to young Malaysians' use of cashless technologies and systems. The discussion in this article contribute to a better insights of how perceived value influences users' intentions to use e-wallets as cashless methods. Given the relevancy of this topic and the significance of this issue in Malaysia context, hence this study is important. Additionally, with social media and news emphasizing issues related to the future of cashless technologies and ecosystems, e-wallet technologies are gaining increased public awareness.

Literature Review and Proposition Development

E-wallet is an electronic card used for online transactions via a mobile device such as laptop, tablets, or smartphone. It functions similarly to a credit or debit card and requires a link to the individual's bank account for making payments (The Economics Times, 2023). Alam et al. (2021) describes e-wallet as a type of transaction system that permits users to manage their information in one central place via the internet. This includes information related to purchases, memberships, loyalty programs, and financial information. It is a process where a transaction requires using a mobile device, such as smartphone or tablets that capable of securely handling financial transactions over a mobile network or using wireless technologies such as Bluetooth and Radio-frequency identification (RFID). E-wallet is an alternative approach of money transaction (Alam

et al., 2021). A number of different studies emphasize that e-wallets have a different structure compared to e-banking, although some scholars stated that mobile banking and mobile payments has the same structure (Jingnan et al., 2023). Generally, e-wallet involves several parties which are the bank (provider), consumer (user usually the one who pay), and merchant (user usually the one who receive the payment from consumer). On the other hand, e-banking usually only involves engagement between customer and the bank.

The Value Adoption Model (VAM) utilise perceived sacrifice and perceived benefits as vital factors in determining whether to use a technology, product or service (Kim et al., 2007). VAM make the prediction of e-wallet adoption easier by only focusing on two constructs which are perceived benefits and perceived sacrifice. Perceived sacrifices are separated into two classifications, technicality, and perceived fees, while perceived benefits are divided into two forms, enjoyment and usefulness. The Value Adoption Model (VAM) has been broadly identified in the literature as an effective framework to explain technology adoption and acceptance behaviour. Previous research has utilised the VAM in several contexts, which includes e-commerce, mobile applications, and digital services. For instance, Yu et al. (2019) used the VAM to study the acceptance of self-customisation service, highlighting the role of perceived benefits and sacrifices. The relationship between perceived sacrifices and benefits on perceived value is a focal attention in the proposed conceptual study. The literature has stressed the complex relationship between perceived value and technology adoption, highlighting its role in shaping users' intentions.

Perceived Sacrifice (PS)

Zeithaml (1988) divided perceived sacrifice into two types which are known as monetary and non-monetary. Monetary costs involve the money paid for a product, whereas non-monetary costs include factors such as time, dissatisfaction, frustration, risk, effort, and the overall consumption or price of the product (Kim et al., 2007). Vishwakarma et al. (2020) study on the intention to adopt virtual reality (VR) for assessing various tourist destinations indicates that perceived sacrifice may lead to a less positive or even negative evaluation of such services (virtual reality (VR)). However, the effect of perceived sacrifice on perceived value is still ambiguous and requires further investigation. Yu et al. (2019) research on vital factors influencing the adoption of a self-customisation service, assessed four constructs of perceived sacrifice. They are technicality, perceived service fee, innovation resistance and anxiety. Their findings suggested that technicality and perceived service fees significantly influence individuals' intentions to accept self-customisation service.

In this conceptual study, perceived sacrifice is categorized into four constructs which are privacy risk, monetary risk, innovation resistance, and technicality. Privacy risk refers to the likelihood that personal information may be leaked during a transaction (Hampshire, 2017). Hsu and Lin (2018) describe that monetary risks involve the actual and total expenses associated with a product, encompassing the basic charge and any extra costs for additional services. In the context of digital payment technologies, consumers need to pay the actual costs which includes costs of mobile equipment, access cost, and transaction fees charged (monetary expenses) related with the acceptance of mobile payment services and facilities (Munikrishnan et al., 2022). Oreg (2006) define innovative resistance as individuals' negative attitude as a result of changes cause by adoption new technology products. Customers who perceived difficulty, challenges and resist

these changes brought upon the acceptance of new technology will seek more information that will create a new standard of resistance or refusal to accept the new technology. Lin et al. (2012) defined technicality as how individuals perceive a new technology in terms of technical excellence in the process of the technology provides a service. It involves assessing how easy it is to use, its reliability, connectivity, and efficiency. Hence, based on the previous findings and discussion of the literature, the following relationship is proposed:

Proposition 1 (P1): Perceived risk has a significant negative relationship with perceived value.

Perceived Benefits (PB)

Schwartz et al. (2012) explained that the fundamental notion in consumer decision-making is to maximize value, where value represents benefits and losses. Jingnan et al. (2023) research on the use of cashless technologies such as e-wallet found that perceived benefits strongly and positively influence perceived value. Likewise, Yu et al. (2019) study about the intention to adopt self-customisation service showed that perceived benefits have a positive effect on perceived value. Based on the Cognitive Evaluation Theory, motivations can be classified into two types which are known as extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Kim et al., 2007). Intrinsic motivation can be defined as doing an activity for the enjoyment of the activity itself, in contrast, extrinsic motivation involves doing an activity to achieve a specific goal even without the element of enjoyment. In other words, intrinsic motivation focuses on enjoyment while extrinsic motivation focuses on performance. (Kim et al., 2007) learned that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence perceived value and intention to adopt. This finding is aligned with a finding by Moore and Benbasat (1991) in their study on the intention to adopt Information Technology Innovation (ITI).

Consumers value products or services based on cognitive and affective factors, leading Kim et al. (2007) to include enjoyment and usefulness as elements of perceived benefits. This concept aligns with a number of scholars in the literature, as seen in studies by Jingnan et al. (2023) on cashless (e-wallet), Yu et al. (2019) on self-customisation service, Vishwakarma et al. (2020) on virtual reality, and Qian et al. (2023) research on the adoption intention of autonomous vehicle hailing services. Taking into account the discussion above, perceived benefits are divided into two main constructs in this study, they are perceived usefulness (represent performance/extrinsic motivation) and enjoyment (reflects the element of intrinsic motivation). Based on the previous findings and discussion of the literature, the following relationship is proposed:

Proposition 2 (P2): Perceived benefits have a significant positive relationship with perceived value.

Perceived Value (PV)

The definition of perceived value developed by Zeithaml (1988) has broadly used in marketing literature. Zeithaml (1988) defines perceived value as individual's overall assessment, evaluation or judgement of the quality of a product or service based on the perception of what is being given and received. Recent studies suggest that perceived value might plays a more critical role in affecting actual behavioural intention compared to attitudes on adopting technology (Cha, 2020; Woo & Kim, 2019). Cha (2020) and Woo and Kim (2019) stated that, although consumers' attitudes and intentions are important factors predicting individuals' intention to adopt products or services, these predictors may not always reflect their real actions as people might depend on other important factors such as value.

Therefore, future studies should explore consumers' actual purchasing behaviours through other relevant factor such as perceived value. Users' intentions are notably influenced by perceived value in several studies (e.g., Jingnan et al., 2023; Vishwakarma et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2019). The findings from Jingnan et al. (2023) study on e-wallet as one of the cashless methods show that perceived value significantly explains intention to adopt such technology. Similarly, the findings from Vishwakarma et al. (2020) study on intention to adopt VR technology indicate that perceived value significantly and positively influence intention to adopt VR technology. The same effect has also been found in Yu et al. (2019) study on adoption of self-customisation service. Thus, based on the previous findings, as well as the aim to gain comprehension on the still under-explored relationships, the following relationship is proposed:

Proposition 3 (P3): Perceived value has a significant positive relationship with adoption intention.

Conceptual Model

The conceptual framework, presented in Figure 1 below, illustrates the connections between the factors that influence users' intention to adopt cashless technologies. These factors, considered as independent variables, include perceived benefit (perceived usefulness and enjoyment), perceived sacrifice (privacy risk, monetary risk, innovative resistance and technicality) and perceived value. The figure depicts how these factors are related to the ultimate decision of accepting cashless technologies.

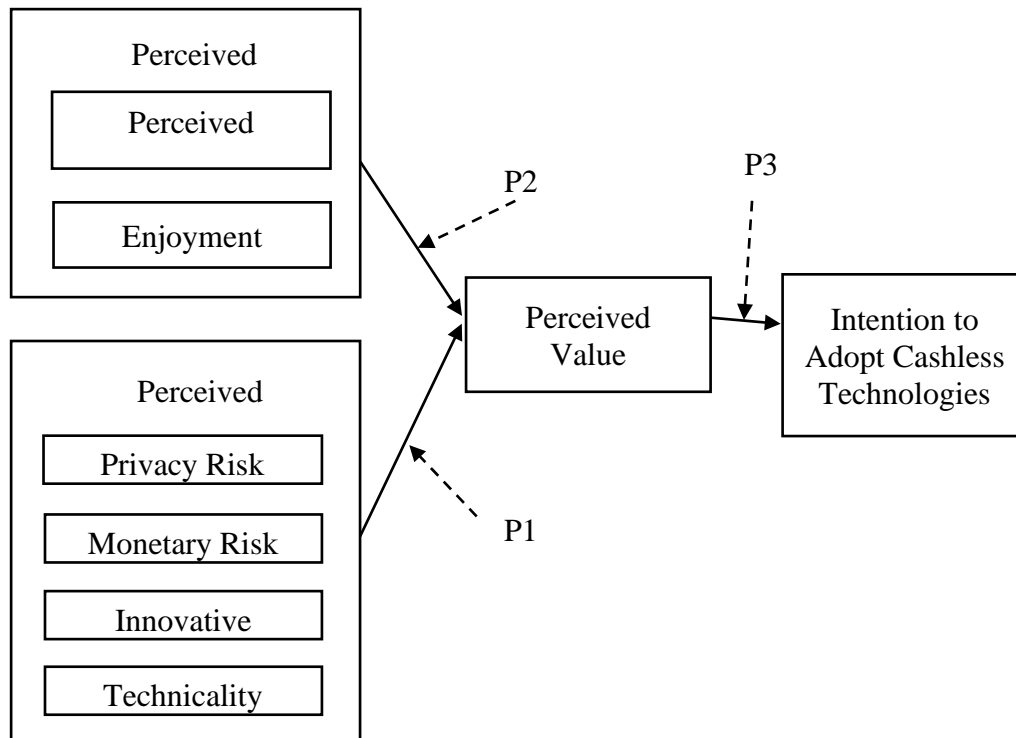


Figure 1: Conceptual Model.

Conclusion

It is a typical practice that the data in a conceptual study does not necessarily derive from statistical analyses but rather constructed or adapted from previous empirical research, theories, or ideas (Jaakkola, 2020). The main focus of conceptual studies, according to Jaakkola (2020), is not statistical analysis but rather acquiring a deeper understanding of the idea, concept, or theory explaining the phenomenon or subject under investigation. In this study, evidence is obtained from previous research, including literature reviews and findings, rather than depicted from primary data. This methodology is appropriate for constructing this conceptual study as it contributes new insights into the effect of perceived sacrifice and perceived benefits on intention to adopt cashless technologies.

The proposed conceptual model aims to enhance understanding of consumers adoption behaviour in the context of cashless technologies such as e-wallet. The conceptual model considers perceived sacrifice and perceived benefits as factors expecting to play a significant role in influencing individuals' behavioural intentions in a digital cashless technology setting. All these factors are believed to contribute to a behavioural response from users, specifically their intention to embrace cashless technology. This proposed conceptual model offers valuable insights for both theory and practice, particularly in Malaysia context considering the relevancy of this issue currently in the country. For scholars, it introduces new perspectives and ideas for exploring this less-explored area of study. Additionally, it provides guidance for practitioners, industries players and the government as policy makers on potential factors that could help them develop and implement effective cashless ecosystems policies and strategies to encourage and to foster transitions of Malaysian to becoming a cashless society. Given the substantial investment made by industry players, private institutions, and government in developing digital cashless platforms, achieving promising results from these investments becomes vital.

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THE APPLICATIONS OF UNIFIED THEORY OF ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY MODELS IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY SETTINGS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract.

This study seeks to provide literature on the application of Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) Models in tourism and hospitality sector based on a literature review. The data (articles) of this study were extracted from Scopus database. Reviews of the articles are conducted through reading and analysing 20 journal articles, presented, and summarised in a table. This paper aims to address three fundamental questions: (1) In what context has the UTAUT model appeared in tourism research? (2) Which types of UTAUT have attracted interest in tourism and hospitality research? (3) What methodologies are used in the applications of UTAUT in tourism and hospitality study? Hence, a literature review with a focus on the application of the UTAUT model in tourism setting is the ideal approach to answer the projected questions. Based on the analysis, a few prevalent constructs are identified; social media marketing and mobile applications. This work offers suggestion, guidelines, and opportunities for future studies.

Keywords: UTAUT Models, Tourism and Hospitality, Scopus Database, Literature Review

Introduction

Information and communication technology (ICT) is a phenomenal invention that is very effective in simplifying jobs as well as accelerate knowledge sharing (Hameed et al., 2022; Wen et al., 2023). This technology allows user to access information worldwide effortlessly and quickly. To examine individual's technology adoption and usage behaviour, scholars utilised technology related models and theories such as Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis (1989), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) developed by Ajzen (1991) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model developed by Venkatesh et al. (2003).

Technology has affected many industries and one of it is the tourism industry. The nature of the tourism industry makes it susceptible towards changes in technology. In this 21st century, tourism and hospitality industry are undergoing a massive technological shift in term of online booking systems and global distribution networks (Murad & Aziz, 2021). Credits must be given to mobile tech which enables connections, interactions, and reviews between organisations as tourism providers and consumers as tourists. Due to the adoption and usage of technology, customers now have significant influence on businesses more than ever (Venkatesh et al., 2016). Despite the increasing trends on the application of the UTAUT model in tourism related studies, the information obtained from its application is lacking especially in tourism setting. This paper seeks to demonstrate how UTAUT is applied in tourism studies and provide insights for future researchers.

Literature Review

In most of technology acceptance theories and models, the variable behavioural intention to use a technology is refers to the inclination of individuals to use a technology. According to the UTAUT model, individual's behavioural intention to use a technology would be influenced by his or her perception on several factors which are performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and facilitating conditions. Venkatesh et al. (2003) who pioneered the development of the UTAUT model proposes that individual's behavioural intention is shaped by these four factors. Moreover, UTAUT model also proposes factors such as gender, age, experience, and voluntariness of use to moderate the relationship between the four factors and behavioural intention to use a technology.

There are several theories and models have been developed to explain individual's technology adoption and usage. Originally, the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model was introduced by Venkatesh et al. (2003) to forecast and to explain individual's technology acceptance behaviour in business or organisational context. The UTAUT model suggests several individual, technological, and environmental factors, beside a number of potential moderation variables, as viable research directions (Venkatesh, 2022). Formulated for over a decade ago, UTAUT has gained vast attention and broadly applied in various information systems research (Venkatesh, 2022).

Among the technology related theories and models available, one of the models that most applied to study individual's behaviour on technology acceptance and adoption is the Unified Theory of

Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). It can be noted that most technology acceptance related model including the UTAUT model focus more on individual or a person perspective despite originally the model was created for business or organisational context such as UTAUT. These models (including the UTAUT model) have several limitations of which these models overlooking factors such as organizational factors and learning factors. Even acknowledging the limitations, UTAUT is still the most widely applied technology acceptance model to explain and to understand technology acceptance and usage behaviour compared to other technology related theories and models.

The UTAUT model, which known for its high explanation power (70% as found by Venkatesh et al. 2003) able to explain individual's technology acceptance and usage behaviour effectively compared to other technology related models. Established in 2003, UTAUT model developed to assess individual's readiness, willingness, and ability to use technology (Khechine et al., 2016; Pinto et al., 2022). This model helps to determine if individuals are inclined to adopt and use new technologies in future. In several technologies studies conducted in various context utilising the UTAUT model, the findings showed that when individuals introduced to a new technology, their behaviour are influenced by their perception of its performance (performance expectancy), perception of its easiness to use (effort expectancy), perception towards others thought of its usage (social influence) and support availabilities to use the technology (facilitating conditions) (e.g.,(Palau-Saumell et al., 2019; Pinto et al., 2022; Venkatesh, 2022)).

Based on the current literature, studies in tourism settings mostly have been carried out in automated technologies, smart technologies, Augmented or Virtual Reality (VR) and Artificial Intelligent (AI) context. The UATUT model was used as a base model to examine users' perceptions towards acceptance and to assess what influences users' perceptions on these sophisticated technologies in tourism technology related context. When using sophisticated machine learning technologies such as automated machines or robotics technologies, it affects how the machines/technologies interacts with users and its overall performance. UATUT model is increasingly applied to examine and to explain individual behaviour involving technology adoption. However, how UTAUT model had been applied to analyse individual's acceptance towards sophisticated machine learning technologies applications in tourism context is yet to be explored in this paper.

Methodology

This paper seeks to reveal the current state of tourism and hospitality research specifically concentrating on the application of UTAUT model. To achieve what it aims, a literature review was chosen as the appropriate method. As suggested by Pickering et al. (2015), literature review helps to identify what is already identified and what remains unexplored. The method used for this literature review involves searching the Scopus Database subscribed by the Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) through the library website. The searching process began with employing related keyword relevant to author's expertise and research interest. The first keyword chosen is "Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology" and it showed 3,781 results from Scopus database. The second keyword chosen is "tourism and hospitality" since the research interest also involves tourism and hospitality field.

Next, the search is refined in the quick filter. The search is refined to include, article written in English only, publication stage limited to final publication and limited to all open access only. The publication years were limited to only include publication years within 5 years from 2019 until 2023. The document types include articles, proceeding papers, and book chapters. However, the result revealed only articles available. The result of the source type also showed only journals available. The refined search produced 17 results from Scopus database. Next, the screening process was carried out.

The screening process was conducted via a careful reading of the articles identified from the Scopus database search results. Key points from several sections of the articles such as the abstract, conclusion, and future research recommendations are pull out to make the literature review. This process can also stir new research questions or research goals. This review process will focus on the intersection of knowledge in the fields of UTAUT model and tourism and hospitality sector. From the screening process, 2 paper was omitted since the article wasn't focused on the application UTAUT in tourism and hospitality settings instead it focused on healthcare sectors and utilised other technology acceptance theories.

Findings and Discussions

The summary of the 15 papers on UTAUT that were published in 13 journals are displayed in Table 1 as well as Table 2. The journal of Sustainability recorded the highest number of articles (3 articles).

Table 1: The 16 final analysed papers

Authors	Date of Publication	Themes
Nawaz et al. 2020	2020	The acceptance of mobile apps for hotel booking in Sri Lanka
Hameed et al. 2022	2022	Understanding the Consumer's Adoption Mechanism for Mobile Payment System in tourism setting
Chang et al. 2022	2022	Investigating the Acceptance of Marine Ecotourism after the COVID-19 Pandemic in Taiwan
Wen et al. 2023	2023	Determining the Key Drivers for the Acceptance and Usage of AR and VR in Cultural Heritage Monuments
Nathan et al. 2020	2020	Tourists' use of Airbnb app for visiting a historical city
Araújo Vila et al. 2021	2021	Applying the UTAUT2 model to a non-technological service: The case of spa tourism
Tamilmani et al. 2022	2022	Indian Travellers' Adoption of Airbnb Platform

Continue: Table

Floros et al. 2021	2021	Imagine being off-the-grid: millennials' perceptions of digital-free travel
Lu et al. 2022	2022	What Motivates Tourists' Responsible Behavior? An Investigation Based on the Extensive Socialized Model of UTAUT
Yawised et al. 2020	2020	Factors Affecting SMEs' Intention to Adopt a Mobile Travel Application based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT-2)
Rauscher et al. 2020	2020	Virtual reality in tourism: Is it 'Real' enough?
Anh et al. 2022	2022	Stakeholders' Participation Intention Towards a Sustainable Destination Management System
Ronaghi & Ronaghi 2022	2022	A contextualized study of the usage of the augmented reality technology in the tourism industry
Pinto et al. 2022	2022	Augmented Reality for a New Reality: Using UTAUT-3 to Assess the Adoption of Mobile Augmented Reality in Tourism (MART)
Zhou et al. 2023	2023	Using TikTok in tourism destination choice: A young Chinese tourists' perspective

Three articles out of a total of 15 are published in the Q1-indexed journal on Scopus, the journal Sustainability. The remaining articles are published in respectable journals dealing with not just tourism related topics but also in a various technology and management related topics.

Table 2: Distribution of the 16 papers in journals

Journal	Number of Studies
Journal of Critical Reviews	1
Human Behaviour and Emerging Technologies	1
Sustainability	3
Information Technology and Tourism	1
Information System Frontiers	1
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	1
Mathematical Problems in Engineering	1
Emerging Science Journal	1
Academica Turistica	1

Continue: Table

Journal of Sustainability Science and Management	1
Decisions Analytics Journal	1
Journal of Information System Engineering and Management	1
Tourism Management Perspectives	1
Total	15

Table 3: Types of applied theories

Type of applied models	Number of studies
UTAUT	7
UTAUT 2	7
UTAUT 3	1
Total	15

Most of the reviewed manuscripts were based on the UTAUT and UTAUT2 models. Only 1 study utilised UTAUT3 model. Mobile applications appeared to be the most frequent theme on tourism and hospitality research (6 articles), followed by augmented reality/virtual reality adoption (4 articles). One article focused on tourism experience and several papers focused on other tourism and hospitality related topic (16 articles).

Table 4: Contexts/Themes of UTAUT applications in tourism and hospitality research

Context/Themes	Number of studies
Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality	4
Mobile Application	6
Tourism Experience	1
Others	4
Total	15

Table 5: Summary of the 15 papers' methodologies

Methodology	Number of studies
Survey	12
Interviews	2
Content analysis	1
Total	15

In term of the research methodology, most of the articles (12 articles) had opted for quantitative research approach via survey as means to collect data follows by 2 papers utilised qualitative research approach via interview and 1 article opted for content analysis.

This paper assesses the current application of the UTAUT model in tourism and hospitality research setting by analysing articles in Scopus database that apply UTAUT model in tourism and

hospitality context. This study reviews 15 scientific articles in 4 different themes in tourism and hospitality settings where UTAUT model has been applied. Table 4 shows the main themes in which the UTAUT model is used in tourism and hospitality related literature. This contributes to additional understanding of how UTAUT is utilized in tourism literature. Based on the review of the articles, it can be noted that there is a lack of efforts of the utilisation of the UTAUT model in areas such as online travel agencies and consumer perception. Different consumer segments (such as leisure tourist, business tourist, adventure seekers tourist) have different perception on technology adoption. Therefore, understanding how different consumer segments adopting technology is an area of research that may require further attention because they are unique in their inclination to adopt and to use technology for different purposes such as for booking, navigation, and reviews.

A review of 15 recent articles from 2019 to 2023 found that augmented/virtual reality and mobile apps are the most frequently themes researchers had focus on. It's worth noting that extended UTAUT model do not specifically assess how machine learning (e.g., AI robot applications) directly influence individual perception, attitude, and involvement (Go et al., 2020). Looking ahead, based on the market trend, it can be predicted that blockchain technology is expected to bring substantial alterations to the tourism and hospitality industry in the future. At present, cryptocurrencies are one of the most advanced uses of public blockchains, offering benefits such as a collective mode of payment and reduced fees via elimination of intermediaries (Treiblmaier et al., 2021).

The article review had identified several key areas where further research is required, specifically in the context of technology acceptance behaviour of different consumer segments and perceptions, machine learning applications (e.g., AI, robotic etc), blockchain, and cryptocurrencies. It's vital for future research in tourism and hospitality to examine the UTAUT model application in the themes mentioned above. The utilisation of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) model introduced by Venkatesh et al. (2003), is thoroughly reviewed. Later, this model was improved by Venkatesh et al. (2012) and had named it as the UTAUT2, incorporating vital improvements in technology adoption literature. Earlier studies had focused on several different themes such as online shopping (Celik, 2016; Haryanto et al., 2023), mobile payments (Namahoot & Jantasri, 2023; Nashwan et al., 2023), online banking (Raza et al., 2019; Thaker et al., 2021) and online learning (Batucan et al., 2022; Twum et al., 2022). However, in the travel and tourism industry, particularly in consumers context, there has been limited consideration given to this significant development of the new UTAUT2 model.

Conclusion

This articles review seeks to analyse the application of the UTAUT model in the tourism and hospitality setting. To achieve this objective, this work performs article reviews in Scopus database. After gone through several selection processes, a final sample of 15 published journal articles in Scopus database was acquired which were used for the analyses. This study investigated how empirical research published in tourism and hospitality related settings have progressed based

on technology adoption theories and models. The goal is to understand the contexts in which new technologies emerged and underline gaps for future research directions and improvements. Based on the literature review, it can be proposed that applying the UTAUT model in various themes in tourism and hospitality settings offers significant values towards tourism literature. Whether in the domain of social sciences, marketing, or digital tourism, there are new interactive approaches for disseminating information that previously not feasible to do so.

The utilisation of the UTAUT model is prevalent in tourism and hospitality research and has become an important area of study for scholars. Due to the development of new technologies that has cause technological shifts in tourism sector, this has made the extension of the UTAUT model become necessary. Other valuable future research directions include exploring how technology adoption models and theories apply in tourism and hospitality, validating research in different cultural settings and more research needed in other themes within the tourism and hospitality sector. To enhance understanding of the UTAUT model, it would be beneficial to employ different research methods such as a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research approach and use various sample (different users' segments) to make comparison in term of the technology acceptance behaviour which would provide valuable insights in the development of knowledge about the UTAUT model.

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Influence of Information Quality and Information Governance on HRIS effectiveness in the financial sector of Pakistan.

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Abstract

In wake of technological advancements and COVID-19 pandemic, the function of Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) has become pivotal yet concerns persist regarding their underutilization despite substantial investments. This study proposes a conceptual framework to examine factors such as information quality and information governance influencing the effectiveness of HRIS in a developing country context, specifically in Pakistan. Focusing on the financial sector, who are a major investor in acquiring information technology resources, this research aims to uncover the information-related determinants impacting the success of HRIS in Pakistan's financial sector. Drawing on the Resource-Based Theory, this study establishes a theoretical foundation for exploring the antecedents that shape HRIS effectiveness. This study also proposes for detailed quantitative research on the identified domains as future recommendations for academics and researchers to add to the body of evolving technological knowledge. This study also contributes to the professionals' interests by providing evidence on the contemporary topic of HRIS effectiveness.

Keywords: Financial Sector of Pakistan, Information Governance, Human Resource Information System Effectiveness, HRIS, Information Quality

Introduction

Over the period of last two decades, the evolving landscape of organizational challenges, driven by technological advancements, globalization, and a knowledge-based economy, has intensified competition (Alshare & Mousa, 2014). Technology, particularly, plays a central role in shaping modern knowledge-based learning organizations (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020). The integration of human resource management (HRM) and information technology have transformed conventional human resource management into strategic HRM, redefining the HR role as more challenging, strategic and transformational (Teo et al., 2007; Ziebell et al., 2019). A crucial research question revolves around understanding the strategic HR role in the modern organizations (Bondarouk et al., 2017). Under the umbrella of information technology, HRM has evolved into what is now credited as a human resource information system (HRIS) (Hussain et al., 2007).

However, the scarcity of substantial research, particularly in the perspective of developing countries, especially the South Asian region, on the adoption of HRIS has been stressed upon in the literature (Quaosar, 2018; Tursunbayeva, 2019). In spite of significantly investing in HRIS, the benefits often fall short of expectations. For instance, a study found that 41% of organizations implementing digital transformation faced benefits lower than 50% of their projected results (Panorama Consulting Group, 2010). Moreover, no metric related to technology updates, operational efficiency, growth and completion, or reporting and visibility showed that the objectives that were achieved in due course, especially with the focus on the implemented information systems, were equal to or exceeded the expectations (Panorama Consulting Solutions, 2019).

The primary objective of this study is to fill the existing research gap that has been discovered in previous literature, emphasizing the underexplored nature of HRIS in developing countries, particularly in the South Asian region, as highlighted by Alam et al. (2016) and Quaosar (2018). Prominent researchers have advocated the need for an in-depth exploration of HRIS from a systems perspective to bridge this research gap and contribute valuable insights to academicians and HR professionals (Khan et al., 2017; Weller et al., 2020; Ziebell et al., 2019). In addition, the importance of the influence of information facets like information governance and quality has also been explored in relation to the effectiveness of HRIS in the financial organizations. Based on the recommendations of past scholars, this study is focused to develop a framework to understand the influence of information related sources of the organizations on HRIS effectiveness in the developing country context, like Pakistan.

Literature Review and Research Propositions

The integration of various and overall HRM activities, practices, policies and procedures with information resources results in the emergence of a unique domain, the HRIS (DeSanctis, 1986). According to DeSanctis (1986), HRIS is a designed system that aims to support several aspects of HRM, that may incorporate planning, management, decision-making, and control. In addition to the aforementioned points, it is worth noting that HRIS plays a crucial role in enabling a wide range of operations and procedures inside an organization. These include but are not limited to pensions and benefits management, career planning, payroll administration, training predictions,

efficiency assessment, succession planning, and recruitment related activities. Other scholars have presented comparable definitions of HRIS with minor discrepancies. For instance, HRIS is delineated as, “a systematic procedure for collecting, storing, maintaining, retrieving, and validating data needed by an organization about its human resources, personnel activities, and organizational unit characteristics” (Kovach et al., 2002; Kovach & Cathcart, 1999).

HRIS Effectiveness

The effectiveness of HRIS is a crucial concept that encompasses the meaningful contribution of HRIS to organizational success across all levels. Numerous scholars have proposed distinct dimensions of HRIS effectiveness based on their studies in diverse contexts (Hani Al-Dmour et al., 2015; Lepak & Snell, 1998; Reddick, 2009; Snell et al., 2001). Acknowledging the work of past scholars, current study specifically centers on the HRIS effectiveness measures introduced by Adel and Younis (2021). Their measures assesses the prospective efficacy of HRIS in relation to operational effectiveness, relational effectiveness, and transformational effectiveness (Siddique et al., 2022).

Information Quality

Information systems aim to generate accurate and meaningful data, encompassing attributes like correctness, precision, currency, promptness, adequacy, understandability, and conciseness within the broader concept of information quality. Scholars, such as Petter et al. (2013), have emphasized these metrics as indicators of how well information systems support users in making business decisions. Definitions from past researchers offer additional perspectives; for instance, Gable et al. (2008) illustrate information quality as; “measure of the quality of system outputs”. Similarly, Petter et al. (2013) note that it refers to “desirable characteristics of system outputs”, and Ghobakhloo and Tang (2015) define it as “the desirable characteristics of the outputs of an existing information system in an organization”.

Furthermore, Ifinedo et al. (2010) characterize information quality with respect to understandability, timeliness, availability, and relevance. Puspitarini et al. (2018) observe that “information quality reflects the level of output quality in the form of information generated by the information system”. Ghobakhloo et al. (2014) have underscored the lack of research on the information quality construct at the organizational level, urging researchers to integrate this crucial element into their future work. Additionally, it has been recommended to further examination of the Delone & McLean information system success measures, including information quality, in diverse contexts (Bradley et al., 2006; Rouibah et al., 2020). Drawing from the literature, following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Information Quality has a positive significant relation with HRIS effectiveness.

Information Governance

Information governance (IG) is delineated as a subset of information technology governance (ITG), encompassing capabilities and practices for the holistic management of information throughout its lifecycle, including generation, capture, assessment, storage, utilization, control, accessibility, archival, and removal (Tallon et al., 2013). Notably, Tallon et al. (2013) highlight a prevailing focus in the literature on physical IT artifacts, neglecting the equally critical aspect of nonphysical IT artifacts related to information governance. Scholars have emphasized the

importance of the information governance construct in the success of IT, noting a scarcity of research on this critical element despite substantial investments in IT systems (Mikalef et al., 2018). Organizational capabilities such as operational and dynamic capabilities have been observed to have a significant and positive correlation with the IG construct, in the study conducted by Mikalef et al. (2018). Based on the existing body of literature, the following hypothesis is posited:

H2: Information Governance has a positive significant relation with HRIS effectiveness.

This study employs the dimensions of information governance proposed by Mikalef et al. (2018, 2020) to examine the influence of this crucial variable on the efficacy of HRISs in the financial sector of Pakistan.

Resource Based View, underpinning theory

The resource-based view (RBV) introduces a distinction between information technology and information systems, adding a layer of interest as underscored by Wade and Hulland (2004). Grounded on their observations, the former approach is focused on assets, whereas the later approach combines assets and abilities that depend on the successful employment of information technology. According to the subject scholars, the utilization of the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory within the domain of information systems possesses the capacity to discern and comprehend the primary determinants that influence performance (Wade & Hulland, 2004). Additionally, it has been highlighted in their extensive literature analysis that essential elements such as the quality of information and governance designs have been acknowledged as varied types of resources inside information systems in different settings (Wade & Hulland, 2004).

Likewise, the RBV theory has been employed to scrutinize and predict the success of organizations' enterprise systems in their post-implementation scenario (Ruivo et al., 2014). In the present study, the RBV theory serves as the foundational framework based on multiple claims gleaned from the literature.

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Conceptual Framework

The proposed conceptual framework for current study is grounded on an extensive evaluation of the existing literature and previous studies.

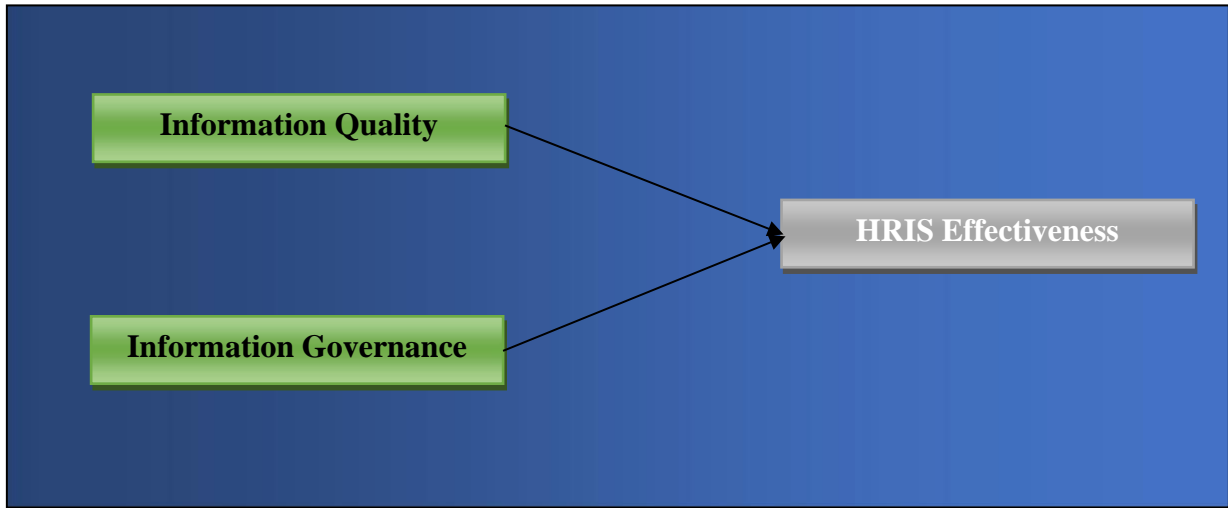


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

This study employs a conceptual model to introduce an innovative framework that integrates two crucial variables, Information Quality and Information Governance, for predicting HRIS effectiveness within Pakistan's financial sector. Drawing on the knowledge of industry experts, a thorough literature review, and an examination of real challenges in the Pakistani financial sector, the researchers have developed this conceptual framework. Significantly, the underpinning theory supporting the proposed conceptual framework is the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory.

Methodology

The study targets organizations within the financial sector of Pakistan as its population. Considering the theoretical conceptualization of variables at the organizational level in alignment with past literature, the unit of analysis chosen is the organization. Given Pakistan's diverse regions, a stratified random sampling method is proposed to ensure comprehensive representation across provinces and the federal capital. The data collection method will involve conducting a survey using structured questionnaires to gather responses and test the hypotheses.

In adopting a positivist paradigm and a deductive approach for theory development to address research questions on HRIS effectiveness and its influencing factors in the domain of information facets, a quantitative approach is deemed most suitable. This approach, recommended by Kilani and Kobziev (2016), entails the utilization of a survey approach, employing structured questionnaires for the purpose of gathering primary and cross-sectional data. This methodological choice aligns with the recommendations put forward by other experts in the field (Saunders et al., 2007, 2019; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study underscores the crucial importance of HRIS effectiveness within the financial industry of Pakistan, shedding light on its influencing factors such as information quality and information governance which are amongst the contemporary research concepts (DeLone & McLean, 2016; Siddique et al., 2022). Two propositions for further study have been developed, urging empirical examination in financial organizations, aligning with the introductory discussions. The significance of the banking sector, constituting almost 95% of Pakistan's financial sector, emphasizes its pivotal role in the country's economy (Husain, 2006; Shair et al., 2019). Given the scarcity of HRIS studies in developing countries, particularly highlighted by Quaosar et al. (2018), this work provides a noteworthy input to the existing body of academic literature, particularly within the complex circumstances posed by the COVID-19 epidemic and encourages researchers towards exploring new dimensions related to particularly the information facets.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant influence on human resource (HR) conventional routines and practices, particularly in relation to the increased use of remote work made possible by technological advancements. This highlights the importance of implementing a strong, adaptable, and contemporary information system such as HRIS. This situation presents an opportune moment to investigate the role of HRIS in organizations, particularly early technology adopters like financial institutions. This exploration can contribute to the establishment of industry standards and best practices, offering valuable insights for effective HRIS implementation and pertinent recommendations. Decision-makers and managers, grappling with significant HRIS investments, seek to understand the factors contributing positively or negatively to their success. Therefore, as a future research proposal, this study advocates and has developed a framework encompassing critical information-related factors influencing HRIS effectiveness. This framework can be utilized for empirical testing, furnishing decision-makers with evidence on the real value-contributing resources and shedding light to the academic understanding of this crucial area. Based on the available literature, it is advisable to prioritize the investigation of this topic across different demographics, particularly within the setting of a developing country (Quaosar, 2018). The results of this study have the potential to assist organizations in enhancing their competitiveness and achieving effectiveness and efficiency by adopting the strategic business partner role advocated by a promising HRIS.

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) ADOPTION AMONG MALAYSIAN SMEs

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Abstract.

Information and communication technology, as is well known, offers countless benefits and opportunities to companies of all shapes and sizes, including small and medium-sized enterprises. The consensus appears that Malaysia is a developing nation experiencing rapid growth and should take advantage of the opportunity to leverage information and communication technology to propel small and medium-sized businesses to new heights. The main objective of this study is to propose a conceptual framework based on technological factors, namely relative advantage, complexity, compatibility and security. This study also anticipates that established relationships could provide better insights into the effect of technological factors on ICT adoption among SMEs and future extension of this study in the context of theory on technology adoption.

Keywords: ICT Adoption, relative advantage, complexity, compatibility, security

Introduction

As commercial and industrial operations become more digitally oriented, information and communication technology offers countless opportunities and benefits to organisations of all sizes, including small and medium-sized ones. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a "diverse set of technological tools and resources used to communicate, create, disseminate, store, and manage information". A decade ago, computers, the Internet, broadcasting technologies (radio and television), and telephony were considered the most significant technologies shaping business and society. However, Industrial Revolution 4.0 has sparked new advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, augmented reality, blockchain, cloud computing, etc.

Therefore, it can be concluded that technology's advancement and day-to-day improvement substantially changed the business's rhythm compared to the pre-millennial era. Specifically, the emergence of Internet enable technologies has significantly changed the manner of business transactions for both large and small medium enterprises (Aboelmaged, 2010; Abou-Shouk et al., 2013; Amoah et al., 2023; Janita & Chong, 2013; Nor & Pearson, 2009; Rahayu & Day, 2016; Rodríguez-Ardura & Meseguer-Artola, 2010). Since the turn of the millennium, global businesses have moved toward high levels of intellectual creativity, regardless of location or nation. This is evident in how ICT is used in the commercial, economic, social, and political spheres. Since the turn of the millennium, global businesses have moved toward high levels of intellectual creativity, regardless of location or nation. This is evident in how ICT is used in the commercial, economic, social, and political spheres. This can be seen in the use of ICT in business, economic, social and political fields. In addition, ICT has also been creatively used to overcome economic, community, political and social development obstacles currently faced by the global community through the platform of gathering, accessing and sharing information. This notion, when viewed within the Malaysian context, has similarly been used as the vehicle by the Malaysian government in spearheading the drive towards becoming a high-income nation by transforming the economic structure to create competitiveness and resilience by 2020 (Hassan & Ali, 2012; Kakroo, 2007; Kuppusamy et al., 2009; Kurniasari et al., 2023; Wei et al., 2009)

Understanding the value of ICT, the Malaysian government has consistently invested significant money and effort in the growth of SMEs, primarily through the national-level plan. Nearly 15 ministries and over 60 agencies actively participate in these national-level programmes to guarantee the effective implementation of the strategic plan, policies, and procedures. It is undeniable that in the last two decades, the Malaysian government invested a huge amount of money in numerous grassroots training programmes and policies on ICT implementation. Given the important role SMEs play, Malaysian government agencies persistently provide financial and non-financial support to boost the business operations of SMEs. Surprisingly, some empirical evidence indicated an apparent disparity in the adoption of ICT among SMEs compared to SMEs in neighbouring countries.

Even though much research has been done on various internet-enabled business technology issues in large firms, it is unclear whether the insights gleaned from these studies apply to SMEs in Malaysia. This is due to the nature of Malaysian SMEs being slightly different from SMEs outside Malaysia, such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. In fact, past findings from ICT-related studies provided conflicting conclusions on how ICT-related technologies are adopted in

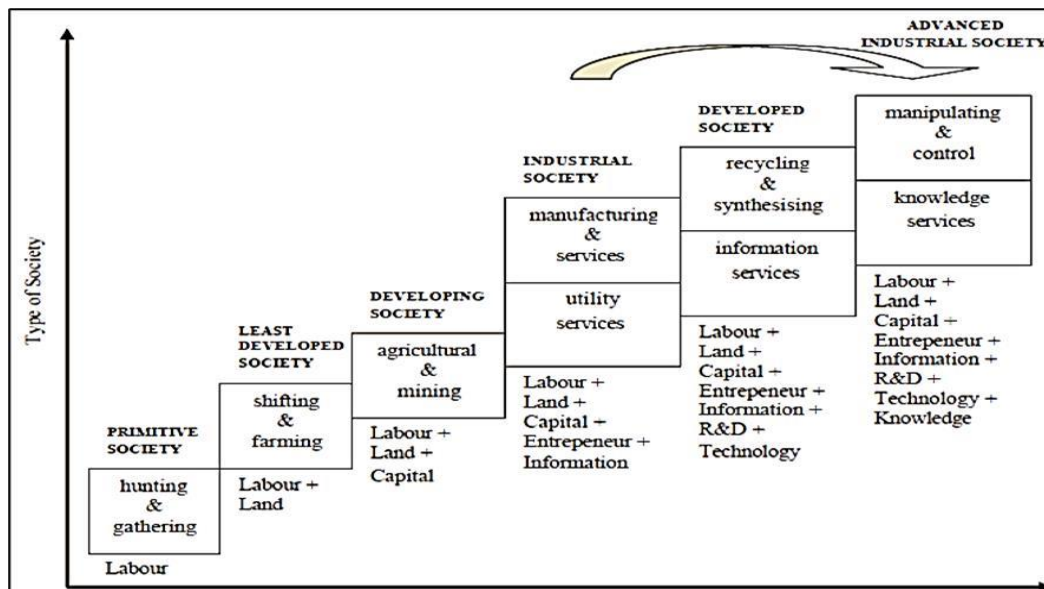
SMEs (Golding et al., 2008; Houghton, 2004; Kurniasari et al., 2023; Ramayah et al., 2015; Setterstrom et al., 2013).

Concerning the importance of ICT, previous research proved that ICT transformed the performance of business organisations around the world (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2013; Gilaninia et al., 2012; Jalil et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2010; Kiveu & Ofafa, 2013; Lee et al., 2022; Salwani et al., 2009). ICT has helped individuals and organisations benefit from new workplace technologies for many years. It is undeniable that the Internet embarks large and small firms to compete in a highly digitalised market landscape and enhance their competitive advantage. Although SMEs in Malaysia are a huge contributor to the national economy and social development, the current low adoption, usage, and penetration of ICT among SMEs in Malaysia is alarming and requires investigation.

Literature Review

ICT Progress and Scenario in Malaysia

In general, "ICT" refers to corporate organisations' use of information and communication technology to facilitate their administration and operations. This includes optimal use of computer hardware and software connected to the Internet and networks made possible by computers. (Qureshi & Qazi Abro, 2016). Specifically, the Internet took an essential part in SMEs Malaysia, starting from the introduction of the Seventh Economy Plan (1996-2000) that highly emphasises the development of infrastructure and environment of ICT to parallel with the emergence of the information era (Tan & Eze, 2008). Then, as a supporting element of ICT, the National Information Technology Agenda was introduced in 1996 with the objective as depicted in Figure 1.0.



Source: National IT Agenda (NITA), 1996

Figure 1: Society Paradigm of Malaysia

Recently, the Malaysian government also introduced Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint, which includes plans to boost digital literacy. This initiative was also expected to create high-income employment opportunities in the banking and finance sectors, bring medical facilities to remote towns, and provide access to virtual education nationwide. Despite the extraordinary efforts by several parties, including the government, NGOs and individuals, to accelerate the Malaysian economy, SMEs in Malaysia are still incapable of tapping the opportunity that is widely available to expand their business. According to Singh (2016), parallel with the ongoing development of ICT tools and government initiatives to transform society, the Malaysian community has partially succeeded.

Information and Communication Technology Adoption

There is no universal definition of information and communication technology. ICT has been defined as adopting new and relevant ICT applications for business operations. Furthermore, ICT innovation is considered an intelligent database and an integrated application adopted by business organisations for their business purposes (Damanpour & Schneider, 2006). However, if ICT focused on the contemporary argument, ICT would be digital technologies such as hardware (computer, laptop, tablet, smartphone and smartwatch) while software applications are more internet-enabled (email, cloud computing, Internet, social media and virtual machines). Furthermore, if ICT is under the big umbrella, it would be more to e-commerce, mobile commerce, collaborative commerce, f-commerce, apps commerce, etc. Predominantly, research on technology or innovation adoption gauged the interest of practitioners and academicians since the 19th century. Historically, concepts of adoption that were initially called diffusion were first researched by French sociologist Gabriel Tarde in the early 19th century. Subsequently, research on diffusion was carried out by German anthropologist Fiedrich Ratzel and Austrian geographer Leo Frobenius (Kinnunen, 1996; Spier, 1929). Then, in the early 19th century, rural sociologists conducted studies to understand how independent farmers were adopting hybrid seed equipment and techniques (Valente & Rogers, 1995).

In summary, a considerable amount of literature has been published on ICT, focusing on adopting particular innovations such as ICT in general, email, websites, social media, mobile commerce, RFID, EDI, enterprise information systems, intranet, etc. Therefore, this study focuses on ICT adoption, which focuses on some significant ICT tools that Malaysian SMEs use, such as electronic mail, websites, and online transaction platforms.

Technology Context: Relative Advantage

Relative advantage is "the degree to which an innovation is perceived as being better than the idea it supersedes" (Rogers, 2003). Some past studies used terms such as perceived benefits, performance expectation, and perceived usefulness in their past studies, reflecting interchangeable term usage of relative advantage. The evidence from past studies, numerous researches have been conducted to examine the effect of the relative advantage as a predictor variable. Relative advantage as predictor has been tested in the various contexts from e-commerce, e-business, ICT, electronic data interchange, website, email, enterprise resource planning and Internet of thing (Alam et al., 2011; Duffy, 2010; Hameed & Counsell, 2014; Hussin & Noor, 2005; Jeon et al., 2006; Khong et al., 2010; Löfstål et al., 2023; Sin et al., 2016; Song & Jo, 2023; Tan, 2000). Remarkably, some past research results revealed several significant results and vice versa. Based on past studies, researchers debated the significant relationship between relative advantage and

innovation adoption. Some studies also identified these inconsistent results, possibly due to the level of organisation, readiness and perceived ease of use by organisations regardless of innovation adoption (Gao, Leichter, & Wei, 2012). In summary, the relative advantage is an important predictor of technology adoption although critics and catchall definitions in the past research.

Security

Security refers to "the level of safety of technology itself." Most innovation adoption theories and models did not consider security issues or concerns. However, in the context of the digitally interconnected economy, businesses pay more serious attention to the issue of internet security (Tsiakis, 2012; Weber & Kauffman, 2011). To establish a better conceptual definition, Hartono, Holsapple, Kim, Na, and Simpson (2014) argued that perceived security can be categorised into four dimensions: confidentiality, integrity, availability, and nonrepudiation. Researchers refer to confidentiality as a "degree to which improper disclosures of information are anticipated and prevented", while integrity refers to "the degree to which improper modifications to information are anticipated and prevented". Security was a significant predictor of e-commerce adoption, as highlighted in the previous studies (Ackerman & Davis, 2001; Alan et al., 2009; Marchany & Tront, 2002; Schmidt et al., 2009). Secure infrastructure becomes a vital industry concern in response to ongoing ICT development in hardware and software, especially on the enterprise information system. In summary, it is challenging to sum up the relationship between security issues and innovation adoption due to contradicted findings.

Compatibility

According to Rogers (2003), compatibility is "the degree to which an innovation is perceived as consistent with existing values, past experiences, and needs of potential adopters". On the other hand, Tornatzky & Klein (1982) further defined compatibility as "compatibility with values or norms of potential adopters or may represent congruence with existing practices of the adopter". Rajaguru and Matanda (2013) argued that compatibility could be categorised into three in the context of inter-organisational capabilities to measure supply chain capabilities. In this regard, technical compatibility refers to the similarity of the partner's information system comprising software, point-of-sale, internet-enabled technology and standard operating procedures. Several past studies revealed that compatibility significantly influences the firm's acceptance and adoption of related technology (Chittipaka et al., 2023; Michels & Musshoff, 2022; Nuseir & Elrefae, 2022). This significant influence of relative advantage could result from the time and effort required to change or fit organisational culture, work practice, infrastructure and norms according to adopted innovation.

Complexity

Complexity is another central independent variable in most innovation adoption research. Complexity is "the degree to which an innovation is perceived as relatively difficult to understand and use" (Roger, 2003,). Ifinedo (2011) and Tan et al. (2009) suggested that complexity is an essential predictor of Internet-enabled business technology acceptance among SMEs, although some reported contradicted findings (Lai & Guynes, 1994; Low et al., 2011). Unlike complexity used as a determinant in the context of SMEs, perceived ease of use is mostly employed to determine individual adoption decisions of technology rather than organisational level (Alam et al., 2022; Corne et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2023). In addition, evolution and quickly changing systems,

such as from standalone software-based to internet-based or cloud-based, required new technical skills and an in-depth understanding of technical aspects.

Conceptual Framework

Four independent variables and one dependent variable were employed to develop the research framework. Previous studies have proven that technology could explain the phenomenon of ICT adoption. In particular, the factors of relative advantage, security, compatibility and complexity as a technological factor were examined in this study. Figure 2 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework with a direct relationship.

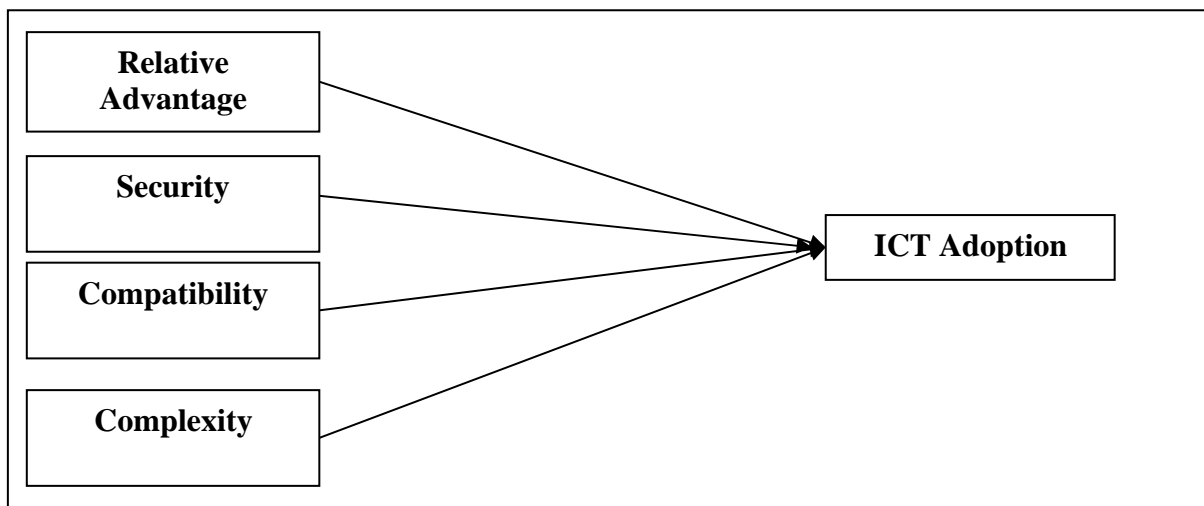


Figure 2: Conceptual framework

Discussion

Drawing from the combination of technological-related factors, diffusion of innovation and institutional theory, this study intended to investigate the relationship between relative advantage, security, compatibility, complexity and ICT adoption. Specifically, this research's theoretical value is the relevance of the diffusion of innovation theory in explaining the relationship between relative advantage, security, compatibility, complexity, and ICT adoption. Given the extraordinary changes in ICT due to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and its implications for new business organisations, it is necessary to improve theories and models concerning accepting and using pervasive and modern technologies. Apart from that, this study also added to the scant ICT adoption literature in Malaysian SMEs. The findings also provided a significant practical contribution to the policymakers to enhance and boost ICT adoption among SMEs in Malaysia.

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WORKPLACE FOMO AND WORKPLACE TELEPRESSURE AMONG WORKING ADULTS IN MALAYSIA: IMPLICATIONS ON THEIR JOB PERFORMANCE

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure among working adults in Malaysia to their job's performance. The data was collected from employees that work from two sector (public sector and private sector) in Malaysia. There were 217 questionnaires collected from working adults to analyze the data which representing the response rate of 43.4% participation through Google Form questionnaire. Three hypotheses were tested using SPSS version 22. The findings to this study found that workplace FoMO is positively influencing job performance while workplace telepressure is not. Theoretical and practical implications of the study as well as suggestions for future research were discussed.

Keywords: Workplace FoMO, Workplace tele pressure, Job performance

Introduction

The fear of missing out (FoMO) and telepressure are two individual difference characteristics linked to increased technology and social media use. Presently, we live in an era where people spend much of their day glued to a screen. People are being very much addicted to the social networking sites and it is becoming their habits to check their profiles many times in a day, chat with the friends, checking daily updates of their friends, changing the status, commenting or sharing their photos and videos on the social networking sites (Gaudin, 2009). This behavior is known as FoMO which refers to the concern that one might be missing out on rewarding experiences (Przybylski et al., 2013). Meanwhile, telepressure refers to the preoccupation with ICT messages and urge to respond to such messages immediately (Barber & Santuzzi, 2017). Telepressure occurs when the individuals perceive others have expectations of receiving immediate responses (Barber & Santuzzi, 2017). Worrying about responding to messages introduces a new demand into our environment that we must juggle with the other tasks.

Since there are advanced technologies in this globalization era, competitiveness become the most important element that determine the organizational performance and effectiveness. This is because there are high demands for skilled human capital to ensure work and economic performance. The major factors associated with job performance is workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure. Workplace fear of missing out (FoMO) is an anxiety created by the idea that something exciting is going on somewhere else, usually online and employees are missing out. Workplace telepressure is an employee's preoccupation and urge to respond quickly to work-related messages via information and communication technologies (ICTs).

In Malaysia, workplace telepressure is on the rise as it has become a norm for employees to respond to work-related emails or chats after working hours or on the weekend as bosses are requesting work and expecting immediate responses to these requests after working hours and even during employee's time off. In this present study, a survey will be conducted among working adults in Malaysia to understand how workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure can affects employee's job performance. In view of that, this study is investigating to answer the following issues: Does workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure has effect on job performance among working adults in Malaysia?

Literature Review

Workplace FOMO and Job Performance

FoMO is a trendy new acronym standing for the expression fear of missing out, used to describe that feeling of anxiety which many people experience when they discover that other people have had fun together, been successful at something, or done just about anything which they might have wanted to be involved in. According to Przybylski et al. (2013), FoMO is a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. FoMO is characterized by the desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing. FoMO can also occur in organization setting. Workplace FOMO is a phenomenon in professional settings where employees experience a sense of anxiety or apprehension about missing out on opportunities, information, or experiences within the workplace. This can manifest in various ways and is often influenced by factors such as team dynamics, company culture, and the nature of the work environment.

Few empirical studies have been found to establish the link between workplace FoMO and job performance. Budnick et al. (2019) indicated that workplace FoMO is a distinct construct from other measures, including general FoMO. Workplace FoMO also predicted work burnout and message checking behavior, but not work well-being. Study by Fridchay and Reizer (2022) indicated that individual differences in FOMO are associated with relatively low levels of job performance. As a result, the study hypothesizes the following:

H1: Workplace FoMO has effect on job performance

Workplace telepressure and Job Performance

Barber and Santuzzi (2015) introduced the concept of workplace telepressure which can be described as an experience of an individual in feeling the sense of urgency to immediately reply to online messages or emails and always give a quicker reply, faster decisions, and other beneficial outcomes in terms of response timing.

A study has been found to establish the link between employee engagement and employee communication. Larissa et al. (2019) indicated that employees' workplace telepressure negatively related to satisfaction with work–life balance. It also showed that psychological detachment may explain the relationship between workplace telepressure and satisfaction with work–life balance. As a result, the study hypothesizes the following:

H2: Workplace Telepressure has effect on job performance

Theoretical Framework And Theoretical Background

Figure 2.1 demonstrates the framework of the study which investigates the effect of workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure on job performance. It shows the relationship between independent variables (Workplace FoMO, Workplace telepressure) and the dependent variable (Job performance). The social exchange theory is used to understand work behaviour and employment relationship between employees and organisation. The central concept in social exchange theory is that the participants participate and sustain an exchange relationship with each other's with the expectation that this affiliation will be beneficial (Blau, 1964).

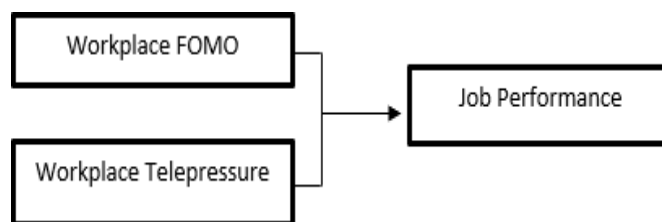


Figure 2.1: Framework of the Study

Methodology

Research Design

This study has employed quantitative approach to test the hypothesis in the research framework (Figure 2.1). The study was conducted using cross-sectional. Questionnaires were distributed in order to collect the data. The collected data are then analyzed by SPSS and the results are then generalized to the entire population.

Sample, Population, Unit of Analysis

The entire population of this study consist of 500 working adults from either private or government sector all over Malaysia. Sample of 217 respondents were drawn based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970). This study employs convenient sampling technique where it is based on convenience to fill in the form. The unit of analysis is individual employee.

Measurement of Variables

The operationalization and measurement of the variables under study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Measurement

Variables	Operational definition	Number of items	Sources
Workplace FOMO	Pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent and is characterized by the desire to stay continually connected with what others are doing.	9	Adapted from Przybylski, Murayama, Dehaan, & Gladwell (2013)
Workplace telepressure	A compulsive motivation to respond to ICT messages rather than engage in desirable recovery experiences.	6	Adapted from Barber & Santuzzi (2015)
Job performance	Employees willingly put extra effort into their work, help colleagues, and diligently seek better ways to do their work, resulting in better productivity.	6	Adapted from Chiang (2012) Ang et al., (2003), Kim et al., (2009)

Data Collection and Analysis

A total of 500 of questionnaires was given to working adults in Malaysia through online and link sharing. The researcher manages to get 217 returned questionnaires, out of 500 questionnaires that were distributed to the target respondents. This accounted for 43.4% response rate. Multiple Linear Regression was performed to test the hypothesis under study.

Results

Demographic profiles

The survey reveals that the majority of respondents are belong to the age of 20-26 years and followed by 27-35 years. In the same way, the female percentage is 67.7% which higher than male percentage. Furthermore, the degree holder respondents are 43.3%, diploma respondents are 30.4%, secondary respondents are 16.1%, master respondents are 8.3%, and primary respondents are 1.8% and no respondent belong to PhD level. Moreover, most of the respondents are from Malay ethnic with 85.7%, 4.6% of the respondents are Chinese, 3.7% are Indian and balance of 6% are others ethnic. Meanwhile for working sector, there are private and public which is 50.2% and 49.8% respectively. Most of them spend 1-3 hours 44.7% on social media, 30.9% spend 4-6 hours, 11.1% spend less than 1 hour, 10.6% spend 7-10 hours and 2.8% spend more than 10 hours.

Hypothesis testing results

Table 2 shows R^2 is 10.9% of the total variance in employee engagement. This means that the two variables, FoMO and telepressure collectively explain 10.9% of the variance of the job performance. At the outset, Hypothesis 1 predicted that FoMO has effect on job performance. The result shows FoMO has significant effect on job performance ($\beta = 0.318$, $t = 4.433$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, hypothesis 1 is supported. Hypothesis 2 predicted that telepressure has effect on job performance. Result indicated that telepressure has no effect on job performance ($\beta = .025$, $t = 0.354$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, hypothesis 2 is not supported.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

	Standardized Beta	T	Sig.
FoMO	.318	4.433	.000
Telepressure	.025	.354	.724
Sig	.000		
F	13.099		
R Square	.109		
Adjusted R Square	.101		

Dependent Variable: Job Performance

The result shows a significant and positive effect of workplace FOMO on job performance. This indicates that the elements of workplace FOMO plays an important role in determining the level of job performance. The higher the employees engaging in searching for work-related information, the more they will be performing their job as they stay informed with the latest information. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Budnick et al. 2019; Fridchay & Reizer, 2022). However, the study was unable to show a significant effect of workplace telepressure on job performance. This indicates that job performance is not influenced by the element of workplace telepressure. This finding is consistent contradicts with previous studies (Barber et al., 2019; Barber & Santuzzi, 2015, 2016). One possible reason is workplace telepressure has become a norm in many organizations as the employees need to respond to work-related emails or chats after working hours. Due to this, these behaviors do not impact their performance at work.

Conclusion

The findings of this study will be vital to managers, employers and employees to put into consideration on these influencing factors seriously, which will enhance the job and performance among the employees. Theoretically, the study assessed and test the model developed for workplace FoMO, workplace telepressure as influencing factor with the aim of utilizing the dependent variable (job performance). The research study can provide government and private sectors an instrument to assess how workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure could affect the job performance. By addressing Workplace FOMO, organizations can contribute to a healthier and more productive work environment where employees feel engaged, connected, and motivated.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF WORKING ADULTS IN MALAYSIA: THE EFFECT OF WORKPLACE FOMO AND WORKPLACE TELEPRESSURE

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Abstract:

Fear of missing out (FoMO) and workplace telepressure problems should not be taken lightly by the organization and it is a global issue that give huge impact on organizational productivity. FoMO is a term that's used to describe the anxiety of missing out on opportunities. People who struggle with it may not know exactly what they are missing but can still fear that others are having a much better time or doing something better than they are. Workplace telepressure is an employee's preoccupation and urge to respond quickly to work-related messages via information and communication technologies (ICTs) that may be associated with negative well-being outcomes for workers. This study is to examine the effect of fear of missing out (FoMO) and workplace telepressure on working adult. Study of a sample of 200 respondents working adult in Malaysia, the findings shows that workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure are positively link to psychological well-being of working adult in Malaysia. Theoretical and practical implications of the study as well as suggestions for future research were discussed.

Keywords: Workplace FoMO, Workplace Telepressure, Psychological Well-being

Introduction

The number of global social network users is increasing gradually from year to year and it is predicted to continue increasing (Clement, 2020). There are more than 4.5 billion people are using internet at the beginning of 2020 and 49% of the amount are active users. Furthermore, there is about 9.2% growth in the total number of social media users from year 2019 to 2020. It believes that the advancement of mobile information and communication (ICT) is also boosting the usage of social media and online networking in workplace to discover more about job-related information. Apart from benefiting the use of technologies where the employees can use social media to get the information and solve problems in the workplace (Bizzi, 2018), this will also affect their psychological well-being. With the increase in using work technologies, expectations for quick responses, technical failures and disruptions, and other technology use challenges have emerged as common workplace demands (Day et al., 2012). Besides, workplace telepressure which requires employees to quickly respond to ICT messages will also lead to poor physical and psychological health (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015). In view of that, this paper is investigating to answer the following issues: Does workplace FoMO has effect on psychological well-being? Does workplace telepressure has effect on psychological well-being?

Literature Review

Workplace FoMo and Psychological Well-being of Working Adult

The Fear of missing out (FoMO is defined as “pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experience from which one is absent” (Pryzbyski et al., 2013, p.1841) which is had captured to popular media’s attention. The Harvard Business Review and The Wall Street Journal shows some tips to avoid FoMO and reducing disruption with FoMO (e.g., Bonchek, 2016; Brubaker & Mobley, 2017; Lieberman, 2016; Kitchen, 2018). Workplace FoMO usually driven by fear of missing important task or lost opportunities relating to their work. Sometimes, working adults that have workplace FoMO want to know everything going in the company especially even they not at the work or in real time. They feel every little thing at work is a breaking news that must to know and not missed all little thing at work which is this is not healthy for the working adult. At many companies these days, working adult treat every detail at work as a pop quiz. They have to know every fact, figure, name and event. This will make a waste brain power and even more waste of attention.

Several studies have been found to establish the link between psychological well-being and workplace FOMO. Kim and Bahl (2018) found that using smartphones frequently may cause psychological health issues and resulting in negative health experiences such as suffering from FOMO, experiencing phantom rings or vibrations and they would feel panicking if unable to have their smart phone on hand. In the study conducted by Reer and Quandt (2019), people may feel forced to stay in touch forever and keep abreast of others’ activities because of FOMO. Additionally, people who frequently use of social media might lead to decreases in well-being, because of more social media-based comparisons with others and due to increase in FOMO. A study by Schneider and Hitzfeld (2019) stated that people may feel anxiety if they are missing out on the experiences of others and not notified on what is happening in the social online environment. Thus, the threat of missing out may lead to habitual checking which, in turn, could result in problematic use of one’s electronic device, especially of one’s phone in co-present situations. For that reason, the study hypothesized the following:

H1: Workplace FoMO has effect on psychological well-being of working adult

Workplace Telepressure and Psychological Well-being of working adult

Due to the lots of using information and communication technology (ICT) in the work make employees feels suffer to respond quickly to the ICT message which is phenomenon that known as workplace telepressure (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015). The engagement with ICT platform such as checking or replying to message allows individuals to feel as though they have met a social expectation and provide short term relief from feel pressure (Arielle, 2019). Previous study has shown that employees who experienced high level of workplace telepressure is reported increase in email responding (Barber, Santuzzi; 2015). Majority of the employees that checking their work email via smartphone on daily basis, may have a relation between workplace telepressure and work-related smartphone use during off-jobs hours (Stemers et al., 2017). Due to convenient and short time management, employees respond to message via the same ICT device. So, the employees that experienced high workplace telepressure have increased work related smartphone use during off-job hours.

A study by Halfmann and Rieger (2019) revealed that the relevance of autonomy and competence need satisfaction during mobile communication as mediators of the effects of social pressure on well-being. There is the challenge may face by the smartphone users which is social pressure may reduce their autonomy and competence by increasing media-related goal conflicts. According to Grawitch et al. (2017), there are more obvious variation with various measures of well-being, with neuroticism indicating the strongest correlation with emotional exhaustion, while satisfaction with work-life balance and workaholism indicating the strongest correlation with the detachment of psychological well-being. Nasalevich (2019) observes that there is negative influence of higher level of workplace tele-pressure on relational well-being, particularly on relationships after working hours. The relationship between workplace tele-pressure and relational well-being can be concluded that relational well-being can be specified by workplace tele-pressure as a determinant of modern work needs. Consequently, the study hypothesized the following:

H2: Workplace telepressure has effect on psychological well-being of working adult

Theoretical Framework And Theoretical Background

The research framework of the study is summarized in Figure 1 which show the relationship between independent variable (workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure) and the dependent variable (psychological well-being of working adult). This research framework is underlying by self-determination theory. There are basic psychological needs satisfactory theory states which is need for competence, relatedness and autonomy. Satisfaction of basic psychology needs can enhance well-being, reduce mental illness and deviant behavior. People with low need of belonging are positive corelated to FoMO. Based on self-determination theory, individual that lack of psychological needs will experience FoMO. However, when their needs are satisfied, FoMO are reduced.



Figure 1: Framework of study

Methodology

Research Design

This study has employed quantitative approach to test the hypothesis in the research framework. The study was conducted using cross-sectional studies. Questionnaires were distributed in order to collect the data. The collected data are then analysed by SPSS and the results are then generalized to the entire population.

Sample, Population, Unit of Analysis

The population of the study consist of working adults in Malaysia which reported to be 14.93 million (Key Statistics of Labour Force in Malaysia, 2020). Based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample of 384 need to be collected to represent the whole population. Individual working adult is the unit of analysis of the study because individual working adult is the major entity that we are analysed.

Measurement of Variables

The operationalization and measurement of the variables under study are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Measurement

Variables	Operational definition	Items	Sources
Fear of Missing Out (FoMO)	A general concern that others may lack a rewarding experience and FoMO is characterized by a desire to keep in continually connected with what others do.	10	Adapted from Przybylski, Murayama, Dehaan, & Gladwell (2013)
Workplace Telepressure	The status of continuous connection and potentially connection at any time anywhere leads to continuous thinking about ICT messages and the need to overcome the response to it and this phenomenon is called workplace telepressure.	6	Barber & Santuzzi (2015)

Cont: Table 1

Psychological Well-being	Psychological well-being is simultaneously a disability factor that absence of human experience which are depression, anxiety, anger, fear-and the presence of enablers-positive emotions, meaning, healthy relationships, mastery of the environment, participation and self-actualization.	12	Adapted from Golberg (1972)
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Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaires were distributed through google form for the working adults in Malaysia and the answer of respondents will also be collected directly through google form. The researchers manage to collect 200 returned questionnaires from working adults in Malaysia and those returned questionnaire were used for further analysis. Multiple Linear Regression was performed to test the hypothesis under study.

Results

Demographic Profiles

The survey reveals that the majority of respondents are belong to 20 – 26 years and 81.5% of the respondents are Chinese. In the same way, the female percentage is 62% which is higher than male percentage. Furthermore, the degree holder respondents are 70.5%, secondary school respondents are 14%, diploma respondents and master respondents are 6% respectively, primary school respondents are 2%, and 1.5% respondents belong to PhD level. Moreover, majority of respondents are single, followed by married. Majority of respondents live in Pulau Pinang, while minority live in Kelantan and Perlis. On the other hands, 67% of the respondents are from private sector and balance of 33% are from public sector. Most of the respondents are part timers which contributes to 22%, and majority of respondent have worked for two years and earn monthly income of RM1,999 and below. Most of the respondents first access WhatsApp / Other IM daily and it is also the mostly used media per day. In addition, Facebook is the social networking sites which most of the respondents mostly spent on per day and majority spent for 1 – 3 hours daily.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 2 shows R2 is 51.3% of the total variance in psychological well-being is explained by the predictors. This means that the two variables, workplace FoMO and workplace telepressure explain 51.3% of the variance of the psychological well-being. Specifically, the result shows that the workplace FoMO has significant and positive effect on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.128$, $t = 2.169$, $p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, the workplace telepressure also has a significant and positive effect on psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.639$, $t = 10.796$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, hypothesis 1 and 2 were supported.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Model	Beta (b)	T Value	Sig.
Workplace FoMO	0.128	2.169	0.031
Workplace Telepressure	0.639	10.796	0.000
R2	0.513		
Adjusted R2	0.508		
F Change	103.895		

Dependent Variable: Psychological Well-being

Discussions

The research findings of this study empirically tested the effect of FoMO and telepressure on psychological well-being among working adult in Malaysia. The result shows that both FoMO and telepressure are positively effect on psychological well-being. From the demographic result, it has shown that the hour spend has effect on telepressure however it is differing from the gender term. Hence, to reduce FoMO and telepressure at the workplace, their psychological well-being must be improved.

The finding results also consistent with previous studies (e.g., Felix Reer, 2019; Barber, 2018). The studies have found evidence that people will experience FoMO when the psychological well-being is at the lowest resulting in an increased use of social media. While workplace telepressure has captures the expectation response that link to increase worker stress and decrease their psychological well-being.

Nevertheless, most of the recent studies in this field of study suffer limitations because the FoMO problems are still fresh. Future work will extend it to a broader context in order to get better understanding, as the trend of popularity among social media users has increased, contributing to the FoMO among users. For telepressure in the workplace, it is recommended that organisations should show consideration in accepting their mental wellbeing so as to preserve their positive energy.

Conclusion

The findings of this study will be vital to employers, employees and other stakeholders to put into consideration on these influencing factors seriously that will help to reduce their FoMO experience and workplace telepressure. Moreover, such research could help organization to identify their strategies in helping workers to reduce the FoMO in negative ways but perceive it in positive so it could improve their dependency in handling workplace telepressure. In addition, the findings of this study are vital to top management of the company such as Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Managers and Executive Directors. They need to be well-understanding of their workers in developing their company. It believes that the advancement of mobile information and communication (ICT) is also boosting the usage of social media and online networking in workplace to discover more about job-related information and solve problems in the workplace.

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FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI NIAT PEMBELIAN PRODUK BERJENAMA MEWAH DAN PRODUK TERPAKAI BERJENAMA MEWAH

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Abstrak

Kertas konsep ini membincangkan mengenai pasaran produk terpakai berjenama mewah. Pasaran produk terpakai merupakan satu pasaran besar yang mempunyai segmen penggunaanya yang tersendiri. Produk terpakai dari jenama-jenama yang terkenal sering menjadi perhatian terutamanya dalam kalangan pengguna yang kurang berkemampuan tetapi cuba meningkatkan status sosial mereka dalam masyarakat. Produk terpakai berjenama mewah mendapat permintaan tinggi daripada pengguna dan pasaran ini terus berkembang pesat disebabkan perubahan persepsi pengguna ke atas barangan terpakai itu sendiri serta kemunculan platform media sosial yang memudahkan maklumat tentang produk terpakai diakses oleh sesiapa sahaja. Kajian ini mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pengguna dalam membeli produk berjenama mewah dan produk terpakai berjenama mewah melalui proses tinjauan bagi memantapkan karya-karya yang sudah sedia ada.

Kata kunci: Jenama Mewah, Produk Terpakai, Produk Fesyen, Milenial, Generasi Z

Pengenalan

Pembelian produk terpakai menjadi satu tren semenjak sedekad yang lalu (Araujo, 2021; Yang, Song & Tong, 2017). Aktiviti pembelian dan penjualan produk terpakai dari jenama mewah, dikatakan semakin meningkat dengan kadar yang cepat dan tidak menunjukkan tanda-tanda penurunan (Siwak, 2020). Pasaran ini dijangka mencapai nilai jualan \$25 billion dalam tahun 2025 (Silva, Duarte, Sandes & Almeida, 2022), di mana ia meningkat 4 kali ganda lebih cepat berbanding pasaran produk fesyen mewah utama iaitu pada kadar 12% berbanding 3% seperti yang didakwa oleh Beauloye (2020). Ini selari dengan kewujudan perkongsian ekonomi dalam pasaran fesyen itu sendiri yang semakin popular dalam kalangan Milenial (Araujo, 2021) selain generasi Z yang turut dikenalpasti sebagai kumpulan pengguna yang berkemungkinan besar membeli dan menjual pakaian terpakai secara atas talian (ThredUp, 2022)

Aktiviti membeli-belah produk terpakai dikenali sebagai '*thrifting*' iaitu aktiviti membeli belah di kedai-kedai *thrift*, *garage sale*, atau pasar lambak di mana pengguna boleh mendapatkan item terpakai yang digunakan dengan baik pada harga diskaun (Ronobir, 2020). Pembelian produk terpakai kini dikatakan semakin berkembang di seluruh dunia termasuklah Malaysia. Satu laporan oleh Malay Mail pada 6 Disember 2021 ada memetik sebuah platform rangkaian sosial iaitu Carousell Malaysia yang mendapati majoriti pengguna di Malaysia gembira untuk menerima produk terpakai sebagai hadiah. Antara alasan pengguna menerima produk terpakai ini antaranya adalah nilai untuk wang, selain ia dilihat sebagai satu cara mampan dan kurang pembaziran. Dengan penerimaan dan permintaan meluas pengguna terhadap produk terpakai di Malaysia, maka tidak hairanlah jika Malaysia pernah diposisikan untuk menjadi hab terbesar di Asia bagi perniagaan dan penjualan semula produk terpakai berjenama mewah dan negara dijangka mendahului pemimpin pasaran sebelum ini iaitu Singapura (Malek, 2019). Memandangkan pengguna menerima baik produk terpakai, pasaran produk terpakai bukan sahaja menjadi satu tren pada hari ini, akan tetapi akan menjadi sebahagian daripada perniagaan fesyen mewah pada hari esok (Hawsley, 2021)

Umumnya, pencetus kepada gelagat pengguna dalam membeli produk terpakai adalah didorong oleh keinginan pengguna dalam memiliki produk mewah yang baharu. Christodoulides et al. (2021) mendakwa pembelian produk terpakai berjenama mewah adalah cara baharu pengguna bagi memiliki produk mewah utama. Oleh yang demikian, pemahaman berkaitan konsep produk berjenama mewah adalah perlu bagi mengenalpasti mengapa pengguna terdorong membeli produk terpakai berjenama mewah.

Kajian tinjauan ini bermatlamat mengenalpasti: i) faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi niat pembelian produk fesyen berjenama mewah, dan ii) faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi niat

pembelian produk fesyen terpakai berjenama mewah. Bagi tujuan itu, kajian ini akan menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan dari kajian-kajian terdahulu berkenaan kedua-dua konsep produk berjenama mewah dan produk terpakai berjenama mewah bagi mendapatkan maklumat awalan.

Ulasan Karya

Produk Mewah, Jenama Mewah dan Industri Mewah

Produk mewah adalah produk yang mempunyai ciri-ciri kemewahan di mana mewah itu sendiri didefinisikan sebagai sesuatu yang lebih dari perlu (Bearden & Etzel, 1982) (seperti yang dipetik oleh Heine (2011). Heine (2011) mengoperasikan produk mewah berdasarkan ciri-ciri produk itu sendiri iaitu produk yang mengandungi 6 ciri utama iaitu harga, kualiti, aestetik, jarang-jarang, luar biasa (*extraordinary*), dan mempunyai makna simbolik. Dubois et al. (2001) mentakrifkan produk mewah sebagai produk yang mempunyai ciri-ciri seperti kualiti terbaik, harga tinggi, kekurangan dan unik, aestetik, warisan nenek moyang dan sejarah peribadi, dan berlebihan (*superfluosness*). Dalam pada itu, Heine mengkategorikan produk mewah kepada kategori-kategori tertentu dan antaranya adalah produk fesyen yang merangkumi pakaian, kasut, dan pakaian dalam, aksesori fesyen yang merangkumi tali pinggang, sarung tangan, *scarf*, topi, tali leher, dan *eyewear*, serta barangan kulit seperti beg tangan, dompet, beg bagasi, serta kosmetik dan minyak wangi. Phau dan Prendergast (2000) menekankan yang produk mewah mempunyai pengiktirafan dari segi identiti jenama, persepsi kualiti, kepekanaan jenama yang tinggi yang dapat membantu dalam membina dan mengekalkan kesetiaan jenama untuk jangka masa panjang. Definisi umum yang diberi kepada produk mewah adalah barangan yang menjadi sumber prestij kepada pemilik dan mempunyai fungsi utiliti, pemilikan, dan persembahan (Grossman & Shapiro, 1988). Secara umumnya, produk mewah adalah mewakili jenama mewah yang berharga mahal, berkualiti tinggi, unik, berjenama hebat, *rare*, dan luar biasa.

Dari segi jenama mewah pula, tidak ada kata sepakat mengenai definisi tepat berkenaan jenama mewah kerana sarjana-sarjana sebelum ini berbeza pandangan dari segi konsep jenama mewah itu sendiri. Konsep jenama mewah didefinisikan oleh McKinsey (1990) sebagai barangan di mana harga dan *ratio* kualiti adalah yang tertinggi di pasaran. Ia kemudiannya di definisikan oleh Vigneron dan Johnson (1999) sebagai tahap tertinggi jenama berprestij yang menyediakan beberapa jenis nilai fizikal dan psikologikal. Vigneron dan Johnson (2004) kemudiannya membangunkan kerangka indeks jenama mewah yang memberikan definisi lanjut kepada jenama mewah sebagai mempunyai lima faktor iaitu *conspicuousness*, unik, kualiti, digunakan untuk *extend* diri, dan hedonisme. Dalam pada itu, Heine (2011) mendefinisikan jenama mewah sebagai imej jenama dalam minda pengguna yang mengandungi perkaitan berkenaan tahap tinggi harga,

kualiti, estetik, jarang-jarang, luar biasa, dan simbolisme. Berdasarkan Nuenno dan Quelch (1998) pula, jenama mewah adalah jenama yang berharga premium yang dibeli oleh pengguna kerana nilai psikologinya iaitu dari aspek hedonik dan simbolik yang ada padanya dan bukan semata-mata nilai fungsian dan ekonomi yang dimiliki oleh jenama berkenaan. Ini berbeza dengan Hung et al. (2011) yang mendefinisikan jenama mewah sebagai ‘satu produk berjenama yang dibentuk secara berhati-hati, unik, dan mudah dilihat’

Walaupun pelbagai definisi jenama mewah diberi oleh pelbagai sarjana, namun kesemua sarjana berkenaan bersetuju yang perkataan ‘mewah’ itu sendiri tidak didefinisikan berdasarkan kategori produk akan tetapi sebagai konsep dan dimensi yang simbolik. Menurut Vickers dan Renand (2003), dimensi simbolik ini mengandungi nilai yang sangat berkaitan dengan elemen budaya atau konteks sosioekonomi di mana penyelidik berkenaan mengenal pasti barangan mewah sebagai simbol kepada identiti peribadi dan sosial seseorang.

Dalam pada itu, jenama mewah menurut Li et al. (2011), menganugerahkan *esteem* kepada pemiliknya dan mampu memenuhi keperluan fizikal dan psikologikal seseorang. Dan ciri-ciri inilah yang menjadi faktor utama yang membezakan antara jenama mewah dengan bukan jenama mewah atau produk tiruan (Arghavan & Zaichkowsky, 2000). Jenama mewah umumnya sangat berkait rapat dengan keunikan identiti, prestij, dan status sosial yang tinggi (Chadha & Husband, 2006), istimewa serta mempunyai nilai yang tinggi dan bersifat eksklusif, yang mampu membezakan status seseorang yang berada dalam kelas elit dan bukan elit (Triandewi & Tjiptono, 2013). Ini sesuai dengan sifat semulajadi produk mewah itu sendiri yang mempunyai makna simbolik terhadap pengguna hingga menyebabkan pengguna membelinya (Dubois & Duquesne, 1993). Pengguna yang ingin dikenali dengan imej yang disediakan oleh produk berjenama mewah, sanggup membayar harga premium untuk memperoleh produk berkenaan.

Umumnya, produk-produk berjenama mewah sangat berkaitan dengan produk yang bersifat *visible* yang biasanya dipakai pada tubuh badan seperti produk fesyen. Ini menunjukkan jenama mewah sangat sinonim dengan fesyen. Kebiasaannya, produk fesyen berjenama mewah dipakai sebagai satu cara untuk mempamerkan identiti dan harga diri seseorang (Husic and Cicic, 2009), selain dipakai di hadapan orang lain bagi menonjolkan prestij kepada pemakainya. Kajian sebelum ini cuba mengenal pasti kenapa pengguna berminat dengan produk fesyen dan mendapati yang pengguna mengikuti fesyen bagi mendapatkan perhatian dari orang lain sebagai satu cara komunikasi sosialnya (Potts, 2007), dan menggunakan fesyen berjenama mewah untuk menunjukkan kekayaannya (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004)

Dari perbincangan sebelum ini, jelas bahawa produk fesyen dari jenama mewah bersifat tersendiri yang mempunyai makna simbolik terhadap sesetengah pengguna hingga menyebabkan pengguna sanggup membeli walaupun berharga tinggi dan mempunyai unit yang terhad. Jadual 1 merumuskan definisi jenama mewah seperti berikut:

Jadual 1

Definisi Jenama Mewah

Rujukan	Definisi Jenama Mewah
McKinsey (1990)	jenama di mana harga dan ratio kualiti barangan adalah yang tertinggi di pasaran
Nuenno dan Quelch (1998)	jenama yang berharga premium yang dibeli oleh pengguna kerana nilai psikologinya iaitu dari aspek hedonik dan simbolik yang ada padanya dan bukan semata-mata nilai fungsian dan ekonomi yang dimiliki oleh jenama berkenaan
Vigneron dan Johnson (1999)	.tahap tertinggi jenama berprestij yang menyediakan beberapa jenis nilai fizikal dan psikologikal
Heine (2011)	imej jenama dalam minda pengguna yang mengandungi perkaitan berkenaan tahap tinggi harga, kualiti, estetik, jarang-jarang, luar biasa, dan simbolisme
Hung et al. (2011)	satu produk berjenama yang dibentuk secara berhati-hati, unik, dan mudah dilihat

Produk berjenama mewah yang ada dalam pasaran membentuk satu pasaran besar yang semakin berkembang di mana ia mempunyai industrinya yang tersendiri (industri mewah) yang dianggarkan bernilai melebihi 1 trillion euro pada tahun 2015 (Bain & Company, 2015). Penggunaan produk berjenama mewah di seluruh dunia telah berkembang kepada anggaran saiz pasaran sebanyak €1.06 trilion setahun (Bain & Company, 2016). Penggunaan produk berjenama mewah hadir dalam kedua-dua pasaran matang dan baharu (Deloitte, 2017), telah meningkatkan persaingan dalam kalangan produk berjenama mewah di seluruh dunia, dan telah menjadikan produk berjenama mewah lebih mudah diakses oleh pengguna dengan jumlah yang lebih besar.

Produk berjenama mewah diingini oleh sesiapa sahaja dan setiap individu mempunyai pelbagai alasan untuk memiliki produk berjenama mewah. Golongan muda dikatakan mencari pengesahan identiti, dan juga rasa kepunyaan daripada pemilikan barangan berjenama mewah dan tujuan mereka membeli barangan berjenama mewah adalah berbeza dengan tujuan pengguna-pengguna kaya yang lain (Park, Robolt & Jeon, 2008). Selain itu, penggunaan produk berjenama mewah boleh menjadikan individu mencapai matlamat atau aspirasi. Ini kerana penggunaan produk mewah boleh memberi sesuatu isyarat status kepada orang lain kerana pengguna produk berjenama

mewah dikatakan mempunyai sumber untuk membeli dan memiliki barangan tertentu (Dubois, Jung, & Ordabayeva, 2021). Selain itu, penggunaan produk berjenama mewah juga didorong oleh nilai *interpersonal* dan konsep sendiri (Jain et al., 2015). Berdasarkan pengertian konsep sendiri, pengguna yang menggunakan produk berjenama mewah saling bergantung kepada beberapa faktor dan kesan seperti memberi tumpuan kepada pendapat dan reaksi orang lain terhadap penggunaan produk berjenama mewah. Oleh yang demikian, pengguna mencari produk mewah untuk menonjolkan identiti diri (Belk, 1988), menunjukkan tahap kekayaan dan prestij (Bagwell dan Bernheim, 1996), dan menunjukkan kelas sosial tertentu (White dan Dahl, 2007). Pengguna juga menggunakan produk fesyen berprestij bagi membezakan diri mereka dan menunjukkan yang mereka mempunyai citarasa peribadi (Hessen, 1998).

Di samping itu, alasan lain adalah psikologi untuk integriti diri yang bertindak sebagai pendorong untuk membeli produk berjenama mewah. Sebagai contoh, pengguna yang mempunyai harga diri yang tinggi (Sivanathan & Pettit, 2010), mungkin mencari barangan berstatus tinggi untuk memulihkan rasa harga diri mereka. Di sini, pengguna akan menggunakan produk berjenama mewah yang bersifat ketara dan lebih cenderung untuk membeli produk dengan jenama yang lebih baik lagi (Han et al., 2010) bagi menyampaikan kepada orang lain bahawa mereka berada di hadapan (Ordabayeva dan Chandon, 2011).

Umumnya, permintaan bagi produk baharu berjenama mewah didorong oleh beberapa faktor. Seo dan Buchanan-Oliver (2015) mengenalpasti tren dalam persekitaran makro yang mendorong pembelian jenama mewah dari kajian-kajian lalu iaitu (1) globalisasi dan konvergen budaya (Chadha & Husband, 2006), (2) kemunculan segmen pasaran baharu (Okonkwo, 2009), (3) peningkatan secara konstan dalam ekonomi pengguna yang kaya (Mandel, Petrova & Cialdini, 2006), (4) perhatian yang diterima oleh jenama dari media (Mandel et al., 2006), (5) peningkatan populariti pembelian melalui internet (Nuenno & Quelch, 1998), dan (6) peningkatan pengembara antarabangsa. Menurut penyelidik berkenaan, tren tersebut telah menyumbang kepada pertumbuhan pesat industri jenama mewah dan menyebabkan perubahan penting dalam komposisi jenama, secara khususnya asas pengguna (*consumer base*) bagi jenama mewah. Jain, Khan dan Mishra (2015) dalam kajian mereka telah mengenalpasti 4 faktor yang mempengaruhi niat membeli produk mewah iaitu orientasi budaya, faktor intrinsik, faktor ekstrinsik, dan sumber.

Berdasarkan karya-karya lalu, terdapat pelbagai faktor yang mempengaruhi niat membeli produk berjenama mewah dan ia ditunjukkan dalam Jadual 2 yang berikut :

Jadual 2

Faktor Mempengaruhi Niat Pembelian Terhadap Produk Berjenama Mewah

Faktor	Sumber
1.Globalisasi & Budaya	Chadha & Husband (2006) Chen et al. (2022) Eng & Bogaert (2010) Ling (2009) Shukla (2012) Okonkwo (2007)
3.Sosial	Dubois & Peternault (1995) Katanakis & Balabanis (2012) Pino et al. (2019) Purwanto et al. (2019) Vigneron & Johnson (2004)
4.Populariti Internet	Kessous & Valette-Florence (2019) Okonkwo (2007) Nueno & Quelch (1998)
5.Peribadi	Hashim & Abdullah (2019) Richin & Dawson (1992) Wiedmann et al. (2009) Wong & Ahuvia (1998)
6.Pendapatan	Kapferer & Bastein (2009) Nueno & Quelch (1998)

Vintage , Produk Terpakai, Fesyen Terpakai Bejenama Mewah

Produk vintaj didefinisikan sebagai produk yang jarang didapati, pernah dimiliki, akan tetapi tidak semestinya digunakan (Gerval, 2008). Produk vintaj mengandungi elemen nostalgia dan termanya sendiri telah digunakan untuk menggambarkan sekeping koleksi lepas, tanpa ikatan masa yang sebenar selain dari bukan musim yang terkini (Carvellon et al., 2012). Sama ada sesuatu pakaian dianggap ‘*vintage*’ atau tidak, ia ditentukan oleh umur pakaian berkenaan dan bukannya dari segi ianya pernah digunakan (Mortara and Ironico, 2011). Oleh yang demikian, vintaj dikonseptualkan sebagai hasil yang asli dan jarang-jarang didapati, yang diwakili dan berkaitan dengan stail tertentu sesuatu era (Gerval, 2008).

Dari segi produk terpakai pula, Lopez dan Quattara (2021) mendefinisikan produk terpakai sebagai benda yang tidak baharu dan pernah dimiliki oleh orang lain. Dalam konteks pakaian terpakai, ia digambarkan sebagai keadaan sehelai pakaian yang pernah digunakan dan telah ada kitar hayat sebelum ini tidak kira berapa lama dan berapa kerap ia digunakan (Yang, Song & Tong, 2017). Sama ada pakaian terpakai tersebut dianggap vintaj atau tidak, ianya ditentukan oleh umur pakaian berkenaan dan bukannya fakta yang ianya pernah digunakan (Mortara and Ironico, 2011). Carrigan

et al. (2013) mengkonseptualkan item terpakai sebagai item yang pernah dimiliki dan digunakan yang mana pemerolehannya biasanya didorong oleh harga yang rendah dan gaya hidup yang mampan. Berdasarkan kedua-dua definisi vintaj dan produk terpakai, adalah jelas perbezaan antara kedua-duanya di mana produk vintaj merujuk kepada produk dari era tertentu yang pernah dimiliki dan tidak semestinya pernah digunakan manakala produk terpakai adalah produk yang pernah digunakan sebelum ini.

Dalam konteks produk fesyen terpakai, ia merangkumi pakaian dan/atau aksesori yang pernah digunakan sebelum ini dan mendapat jangka hayat baharu dengan memasuki industri pasaran terpakai, yang menghubungkan aspek mampan di mana sisa material digunakan semula, dan kehidupannya dipanjangkan (Cervellon Carey & Harms, 2012). Produk fesyen biasanya berkait rapat dengan jenama-jenama mewah dan oleh yang demikian, dari perspektif fesyen terpakai berjenama mewah, Turunen et al. (2020) dan Turunen dan Leipamaa-Leskinen (2015) mendefinisikan produk fesyen terpakai berjenama mewah sebagai pakaian dan aksesori dengan jenama mewah yang pernah dimiliki dan digunakan dengan baik.

Membeli belah produk terpakai melibatkan pemerolehan objek terpakai melalui kaedah dan tempat pertukaran yang secara umumnya agak berbeza dengan produk baharu (Guiot & Roux, 2010, p. 384). Produk fesyen biasanya mempunyai kitar hayat yang singkat disebabkan oleh perubahan secara konstan dalam kegemaran pengguna (Robinson & Doss, 2011). Oleh yang demikian, ramai pengguna tidak sanggup mengeluarkan wang yang banyak bagi membayar harga mahal hanya untuk memiliki produk yang hanya akan bertahan untuk jangka masa yang singkat. Dengan adanya pasaran produk terpakai, maka ia dapat memberikan peluang bagi pengguna-pengguna muda dalam mendapatkan barangan berjenama mewah yang diidamkan tanpa perlu berbelanja lebih untuk memiliki produk mewah baharu yang hanya akan bertahan dalam jangka masa yang singkat.

Penggerak Kepada Perkembangan Pasaran Produk Terpakai

Walaupun, pembelian produk terpakai berjenama mewah bertitik tolak dari keinginan memiliki produk baharu berjenama mewah, namun kajian lalu contohnya dalam kajian oleh Aycock (2021) mendapati yang motivasi ke atas pembelian produk berjenama mewah yang baharu dan pembelian produk terpakai berjenama mewah adalah berbeza. Bagaimanapun, terdapat persamaan antara kedua-dua pasaran produk baharu dan produk terpakai berjenama mewah iaitu dari segi segmen pengguna yang membelinya iaitu generasi muda yang menyokong kedua-dua pasaran yang menjadi penyebab kepada pertumbuhan pasaran tersebut.

Dazinger (2019) mengenalpasti yang segmen pengguna iaitu Milenial (generasi Y) dan generasi Z dijangka menjadi pengguna berpengaruh bagi produk fesyen berjenama mewah. Dan dalam konteks produk terpakai berjenama mewah, kedua-dua kumpulan pengguna berkenaan turut dikenalpasti sebagai pengguna paling ramai terlibat dalam pembelian produk terpakai berbanding generasi-generasi lain (Beauloye, 2019; Berg et al., 2021). Menurut Beauloye (2019), generasi muda seperti Milenial dan generasi Z membeli produk terpakai 3 kali lebih cepat berbanding kumpulan umur yang lain. Bain dan Company (2020) turut melaporkan yang 35% daripada generasi Y telah terlibat dalam pembelian produk mewah pada tahun 2019 dan jumlah golongan ini yang menyumbang kepada pembelian produk mewah global dijangka akan meningkat kepada 45% pada tahun 2025. Tidak mustahil golongan ini juga merupakan pengguna bagi produk fesyen terpakai berjenama mewah memandangkan generasi Y adalah *'fashion conscious'* di mana menurut Boston Consulting Group dan Altagamma (2019), hampir 40% pengguna Milenial terlibat dalam pasaran berkenaan. Dalam pada itu, Raszka dan Borusiak (2020), Bardhi dan Arnould (2005) serta Weiss et al. (2014) mendakwa, kebanyakan pengguna produk terpakai berjenama mewah adalah wanita.

Selain itu, penggerak kepada perkembangan pasaran produk terpakai adalah peningkatan dalam jualan secara atas talian contohnya melalui platform digital (Aycock, 2021). Dalam masa yang sama, perubahan citarasa pengguna, dan peningkatan kesedaran kepada kemampanan juga adalah pemacu kepada perkembangan pesat pasaran produk terpakai berjenama mewah (Aycock, 2021; Bianchi et al., 2020). Peningkatan mendadak dalam jualan produk terpakai berjenama mewah turut didorong oleh *celebrity endorsement* (Cavallo, 2020).

Dari segi alasan pula, Berg, Berjaoui, Iwatami dan Zerbi (2021) melaporkan alasan pengguna membeli produk terpakai berjenama mewah iaitu faktor akses kepada item yang sukar didapati atau sudah tiada lagi, faktor kemampanan, penjimatan wang, kemudahan untuk membeli, dan tidak perlu menunggu masa yang lama untuk membeli.

Dari segi motivasi pengguna ke atas pembelian produk terpakai secara umum pula, kajian-kajian contohnya oleh Cervellon et al. (2012), Cui et al. (2019), Guiot & Roux (2010), Kessous & Valette-Florence (2019), Padmavathy et al. (2019), Roux & Guiot (2018) dan Zaman et al. (2019) mengenal pasti yang pembelian produk terpakai umumnya didorong oleh lima kategori utama iaitu ekonomi, kritikal, hedonik, fesyen, dan pencarian status. Namun motivasi ini sedikit berbeza apabila melibatkan produk terpakai berjenama mewah. Apa yang memotivasikan pengguna dalam membeli produk terpakai berjenama mewah adalah didorong oleh pilihan mampan, tawaran sebenar, *pre-loved treasure*, pelaburan risiko, dan penemuan unik (Turunen dan Leipamaa-

Leskinen, 2015). Selain itu, Amatulli et al. (2018) dalam kajian mereka berkenaan produk vintaj mewah pula mengenal pasti faktor kemampuan, mengelakkan pembaziran, identifikasi diri, keyakinan diri, perbezaan, membuatkan orang lain kagum, menjadi menarik, penerimaan sosial, dan pencarian harta, sebagai antara motivasi pembelian produk tersebut. Dalam pada itu dapatan kajian oleh Aycock (2021) mendapati bahawa faktor ekonomi, motivasi kritikal, fesyen, dan pencarian status sebagai motivasi pengguna dalam membeli produk fesyen terpakai berjenama mewah.

Daripada perbincangan sebelum ini, adalah dikenal pasti bahawa pembelian kategori produk terpakai yang berbeza didorong oleh motivasi yang berbeza. Selain itu, dalam kajian berkaitan produk terpakai juga, didapati yang pasaran ini memberikan ancaman dan juga peluang kepada pasaran produk berjenama mewah utama iaitu '*sales cannibalization*', brand imej tercalar di mana pemilik produk mewah kehilangan kawalan ke atas jenama mereka, dan tiada jaminan ketulenan dengan barangan yang diperdagangkan (Bianci et al., 2020). Namun demikian kelebihan yang ditawarkan oleh produk terpakai berjenama mewah tidak boleh dipertikaikan lagi. Antaranya adalah dari segi harga yang jauh lebih rendah antara 30% hingga 70% berbanding produk baharu seperti yang dipetik oleh Turunen, Carvellon dan Carey (2019), serta perlanjutan kitaran hayat produk (Cervellon et al., 2012).

Metodologi Kajian

Penyelidik menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan (*review*) dalam menyediakan kajian ini dari pelbagai artikel ilmiah yang berkaitan dengan gelagat pembelian produk berjenama mewah dan produk terpakai berjenama mewah. Prosedur tinjauan ini diharap dapat meningkatkan pengetahuan dan menyumbang ilmu yang berkaitan dengan kedua-dua konsep produk berjenama mewah dan produk terpakai berjenama mewah selain dari karya-karya lalu yang sudah sedia *established* dalam bidang gelagat pengguna.

Kesimpulan

Pasaran produk terpakai berjenama mewah menawarkan kelebihan kepada kedua-dua pengguna dan pemilik jenama. Selain itu, ia juga mampu memberikan ancaman kepada pemilik jenama terutamanya pemilik jenama mewah. Kajian-kajian lalu mengenalpasti gelagat pembelian bagi produk berjenama mewah dan terdapat juga kajian-kajian sebelum ini yang mengkaji tentang produk terpakai secara umum atau menumpu kepada kategori produk tertentu seperti produk

fesyen berjenama mewah. Namun demikian, kajian berkaitan produk fesyen terpakai dari jenama mewah masih agak terhad. Ini merupakan satu jurang kajian yang perlu diberikan perhatian.

Kajian-kajian lalu turut mengenalpasti terdapatnya perbezaan antara faktor-faktor yang mendorong gelagat pembelian produk berjenama mewah dan produk terpakai berjenama mewah walaupun produk terpakai berjenama mewah adalah versi lama produk berjenama mewah. Selain itu, produk terpakai berjenama mewah perlu dikaji selanjutnya terutamanya dalam aspek jenama itu sendiri. Kajian berkaitan produk terpakai turut menawarkan beberapa jurang yang seharusnya dikaji antaranya dari perspektif penjual dan pembeli produk terpakai. Ini kerana pengguna boleh berperanan sebagai pembeli pada hari ini dan menjadi penjual pada besok hari. Kajian ini diharap dapat menyediakan asas maklumat mengenai kedua-dua produk berjenama mewah dan produk terpakai berjenama mewah terutamanya produk fesyen berjenama mewah. Produk fesyen adalah unik kerana ia mempunyai kitaran hayatnya yang tersendiri.

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MEASURING PENANG TOURISM DESTINATION ATTRACTIVENESS: POST-PANDEMIC INSIGHTS THROUGH A CONTEXTUAL APPROACH

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate the perceptions of destination attractiveness in Penang, a renowned tourism destination in Southeast Asia. The primary objectives of this study revolve around the assessment of crucial destination attractiveness attributes that hold significance for tourists visiting Penang. To achieve these objectives, a comprehensive survey was conducted, encompassing both online and on-site data collection from various attraction sites across the region. The study involved the analysis of 400 responses utilizing the SPSS 24 software program. A total of 16 distinct attributes were considered during the investigation. The results revealed that safety and security emerged as the most vital attributes perceived by tourists who have experienced Penang as a destination. These findings are poised to make a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge within the domains of destination marketing and management, enhancing our understanding of how to further elevate Penang's tourism appeal.

Keywords: Penang tourism, Destination attractiveness, Tourist perceptions, Safety and security, Destination marketing.

Introduction

Tourism, a vital global industry, significantly impacts economic development, employment, and foreign exchange earnings. The COVID-19 pandemic, starting in 2020, dealt a severe blow to the tourism sector worldwide, with Malaysia facing unique challenges. Before the pandemic, Malaysia's tourism sector thrived, contributing significantly to the GDP and providing jobs. However, the outbreak led to a substantial decline in tourist arrivals and receipts. Despite government initiatives to revive the industry, including the tourism bubble program in 2021, challenges persist. This research focuses on exploring the destination attractiveness attributes of Penang, Malaysia, a culturally rich state. The study aims to understand factors influencing domestic tourists' perceptions of Penang and provide insights for strategic tourism management amid the ongoing post-COVID challenges. As Malaysia seeks to rejuvenate its tourism sector, a focused analysis of Penang's unique appeal will contribute to both immediate recovery strategies and long-term sustainability planning.

This study has three main objectives. Firstly, it aims to understand the perceived importance of destination attributes for different vacation experiences, distinguishing between Leisure Group and Business Group. Secondly, it seeks to investigate the overall significance of destination attractiveness attributes. Finally, the study explores which attributes are considered most important by Penang tourists based on socio-demographic factors like age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, and monthly personal income. These objectives provide a comprehensive perspective on Penang's destination attractiveness and contribute valuable insights for tourism management and marketing strategies.

Concept of Destination Attractiveness

The term "attraction" comes from the Latin word "atrathere," which literally translates as "to attract" (Gunn, 1987). With this it can be said that if any aspects of a tourist location are classified tourist attractions, it must have elements that are unique and interesting to potential visitors. Several studies evaluate destination attractiveness by analyzing current inventory resources and tourist spot attractions (Backman, Uysal, and Backman, 1991; Ferrario, 1979), as well as by studying visitor perceptions (Ritchie & Zins, 1978; Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Attraction is the force of the whole attraction that exists in a place at a particular time that succeeds in attracting tourists (Formica & Uysal, 2006). Whereas destinations are spatial tourist service providers with different attractiveness characteristics (Cracolici & Nijkamp, 2009; Tardivo & Viassone, 2009). Another approach to attractiveness, which is referred to as 'demand driven,' focuses on the visitor rather than the destination (Formica & Uysal, 2006). As a end result of this approach, the tourist's view

of the destination's capability to go through their requirements and deliver personal advantages determines the destination's attractiveness (Mayo & Jarvis, 1980).

The attraction of a tourism destination has been widely studied and defined by academics. For example, Tourism destination attractiveness was developed by Mayo and Jarvis (1980), who connected this concept with visitors' decision-making processes and the unique benefits they acquired as a result of their travel. Essentially, it's a mixture of the significance of individual gains and the perceived value of the destination. A destination's attractiveness, according to Hu and Ritchie (1993), may be described as the feelings, beliefs, and judgments that a person has regarding a destination's perceived potential to suit his or her specific vacation demands. According to Vengesai (2003), attractiveness reflects visitors' feelings and views regarding a destination's future potential to meet their needs. A similar point of view is expressed by Cracolici and Nijkamp (2009) in terms of how well the availability, quality, and administration of local tourism services satisfy the demands of the customers. The attractiveness of the destination is very relevant to study because it becomes an importance in understanding the demands and desires of tourists and the ability to meet their satisfaction of traveling to a destination.

Factors on Destination Attractiveness

Researchers have extensively studied destination attractiveness, identifying various factors contributing to it. Natural factors, including climate, landscape, and historic-cultural structures, alongside man-made factors like accommodation and services, all play crucial roles (Ariya et al., 2017; Laws, 1995; Buhalis, 2000). Gearing et al. (1974) categorized these attributes into natural, unique, historical, recreational, and shopping facilities. Hu and Ritchie (1993) identified 16 major tourist attributes, including climate, scenery, cultural uniqueness, and accessibility.

Natural Factor

Climate, a naturally endowed tourism attraction, is a significant draw for tourists (Kresic & Prebezac, 2011). Scenic beauty and environmental preservation also contribute to a location's attractiveness, especially if the natural state has been well-preserved (Keyser, 2009).

Cultural and Historical Factor

Culture significantly influences how tourists perceive a destination, providing a framework for authentic experiences (Bajs, 2011). Historical attractions and events play a role in conveying a location's distinctive characteristics and attracting visitors (Keyser, 2009).

Accommodation

Accommodation availability directly impacts the flow of tourists and economic impact on a destination (Nuntsu et al., 2004). Factors such as staff friendliness, lodging cost, service, room cleanliness, and location influence hotel preferences (Dolnicar & Otter, 2003).

Service

The quality of services, especially in the food and beverage industry, affects tourists' decisions (Wirtz & Mattila, 2006). Factors like staff friendliness, food quality, and price influence visitor choices (Duarte Alonso et al., 2013).

Tourism Infrastructure

Infrastructure, including accessibility, safety, and security, is crucial for overall economic and tourism growth (Jafari and Xiao, 2016). A safe and secure environment is a key determinant of a tourism destination's competitiveness (Ryglova et al., 2015).

Activities

Recreational activities, sports tourism, water parks, and entertainment contribute significantly to destination attractiveness (Haarhoff & Gany, 2017). Visitor preferences are influenced by the availability of various activities, including sports, nightlife, and entertainment (Swarbrooke et al., 2003).

Understanding these factors helps in evaluating a destination's attractiveness, aiding in destination choices and predicting future visitation intentions. This knowledge is vital for destinations to stay competitive and sustain their tourism potential.

Attributes of Destination Attractiveness

Many tourism scholars have looked into destination attractiveness evaluations, the criteria used to assess original and frequently referenced and adapted attractiveness are from Gearing et al., (1974) who developed the original and frequently referenced and adapted attractiveness criteria. Attributes of tourist attraction is a collection of seventeen characteristics, which are as follows:

Table 1

Destination attractiveness attribute by Gearing et al., (1974)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural beauty • Infrastructure • Food and lodging • Climate • History • Archaeological sites • Local attitudes • Religious significance • Art and architecture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport facilities • Nightlife • Shopping • Peace and quiet • Festival • Local features • Educational facilities • Fairs and exhibits
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These attributes are then modified, and the Ritchie and Zins (1978) adjustment is the most frequently employed as a measure for a tourist destination's attractiveness. The attributes include: Natural beauty and climate, cultural and social characteristics, accessibility of the region, attitudes towards tourists, infrastructure of the region, price levels, shopping and commercial facilities, sport, recreation, and educational facilities. Hu and Ritchie (1993) identified sixteen derivative tourism attributes to study the importance of attributes that affecting destination attractiveness with some departures and extensions from previous studies by Gearing et al. (1974) as:

Table 2

Destination attractiveness attributes by Hu and Ritchie (1993)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate • Scenery • Historical Attractions • Museums/Cultural Attractions • Availability/Quality of Accommodations • Sports/Recreational Opportunities • Food • Entertainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniqueness of Local People's Life • Communication Difficulty Due to Language Barriers • Festivals/Special Events • Accessibility • Shopping • Attitude Towards Tourists • Availability/Quality of Local Transportation • Price Levels
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While Tam (2012) extended Hu and Ritchie (1993) study by including the Safety and Security as additional attributes as follow:

Table 3

Destination attractiveness attributes by Tam (2012)

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Climate• Scenery• Historical Attractions• Museums/Cultural Attractions• Availability/Quality of Accommodations• Sports/Recreational Opportunities• Food• Entertainment• Uniqueness of Local People's Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communication Difficulty Due to Language Barriers• Festivals/Special Events• Accessibility• Shopping• Attitude Towards Tourists• Availability/Quality of Local Transportation• Price Levels• Safety and Security
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The study from Hu and Ritchie (1993) and Tam (2012) are well suited to be studied with different travel experiences and various groups such as recreational group (Morachat, 2003), historical places groups (Choi, 2012), visitors and non-visitors (Tomigova, 2016) and tourism experts (Choi, 2012). Therefore, attributes from Hu and Ritchie (1993) and Tam (2012) were used in this study.

Conceptual Framework

All the ideas that comprise the conceptual framework are mutually supporting, express their respective phenomena, and contribute to the formation of a certain philosophical framework (Jabareen, 2009). Therefore, the conceptual framework for this research is adapted by using 15 attributes from Hu and Ritchie (1993) and 1 additional safety and security attributes from Tam (2012). The list of attributes as shown below:

Destination Attractiveness Attributes

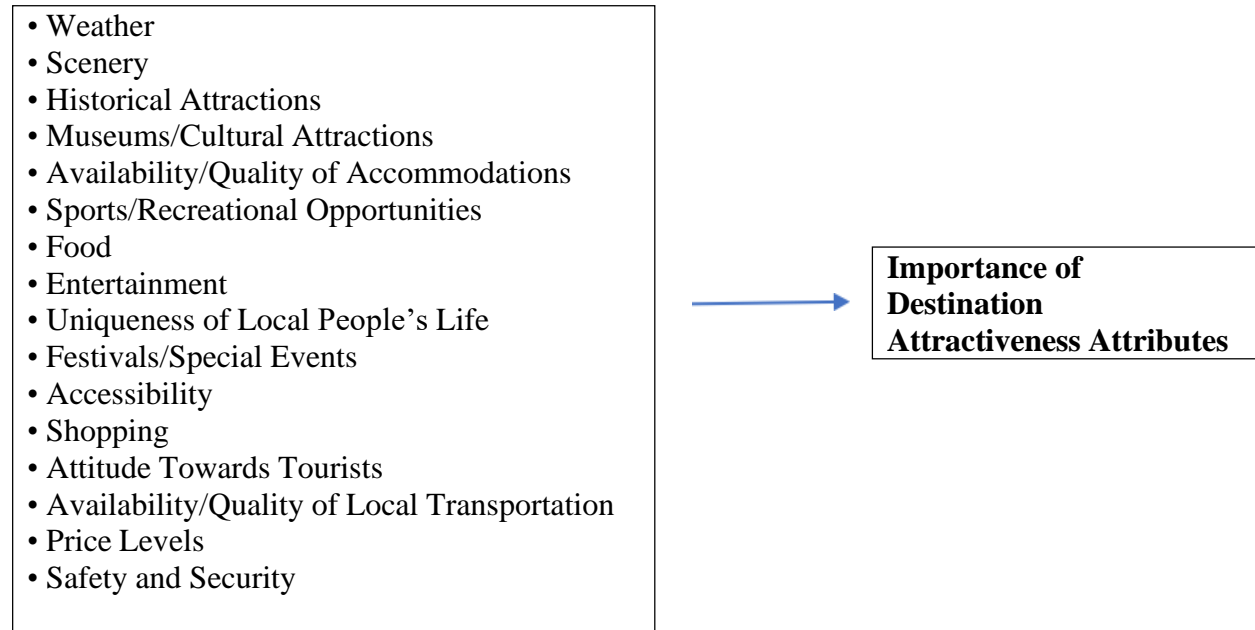


Figure 1
Conceptual framework

Methodology

The research methodology adopted for this study is designed to comprehensively investigate the intricate dimensions of travel behavior and identify the underlying factors contributing to the attractiveness of Penang as a destination. The study focuses specifically on domestic tourists who have previously visited Penang. Grounded in a quantitative descriptive approach, the research employs a bilingual questionnaire comprising 16 carefully curated attributes, aiming to capture and quantify tourists' nuanced perceptions of Penang's aesthetic charm. The questionnaire is structured into two sections: the first section gauges the perceived importance of destination attractiveness attributes, requiring respondents to prioritize the most significant features, while the second section collects demographic information, including the purpose of travel, gender, age, race, income, marital status, and intention to revisit Penang.

To ensure a representative sample, a purposive non-probability sampling technique is employed, targeting Malaysian travelers who, though not residents of Penang, have visited the region for various reasons within the past three years. The amalgamation of manual and online survey distribution methods is employed to maximize response rates. Google Questionnaire forms facilitate the online survey, with participants receiving survey links via email and various social

media platforms, including WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram. Simultaneously, manual distribution of questionnaires takes place in strategic locations such as public libraries, shopping malls, and tourist attraction areas. This dual approach aims to enhance respondent engagement and diversify the sample.

Data collection involves the compilation of responses garnered from both manual and online surveys. The subsequent quantitative analysis encompasses the calculation of frequency distributions and mean scores, employing Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 for Windows. This analytical framework aims to derive insights into the relative significance of different attributes contributing to Penang's attractiveness as perceived by domestic tourists. The methodological rigor applied in this research is anticipated to provide valuable academic contributions to the understanding of destination attractiveness and travel behavior in the post-pandemic context.

Findings and Discussions

The study attained an exemplary 100% response rate, as all 400 distributed questionnaires targeting domestic tourists who had visited Penang were diligently completed and returned. The questionnaires were strategically disseminated through both face-to-face interactions and online platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, ensuring a comprehensive outreach. In preparation for subsequent statistical analyses, a rigorous data screening process was implemented to affirm the cleanliness and reliability of the dataset, revealing an absence of missing values across the 400 returned questionnaires.

The socio-demographic descriptive analyses provided a nuanced understanding of the participant profile. Gender distribution demonstrated a balanced representation, with 53% female and 47% male respondents. Age-wise, the majority fell into the 18-30 age group (43.5%), followed by the 31-40 age group (24.5%), the 41-50 age group (19%), and those aged 51 and above (13%). Ethnically, the respondents comprised 60.3% Malays, 21.8% Chinese, 10.3% Indians, and 7.8% from other ethnic backgrounds. Marital status revealed that 52.8% were single, 43.5% were married, and 3.8% were either divorced or widowed. In terms of monthly income, 43% reported earnings below RM2000, 31.3% between RM2001 and RM5000, 12.5% between RM5001 and RM7000, 7% between RM7001 and RM10,000, and 6.3% exceeding RM10,000.

These socio-demographic insights not only enrich the context of the study but also lay a robust foundation for comprehending the diverse perspectives contributing to the investigation of

destination attractiveness in Penang. Table 4 shows the overall background of respondents. This is including gender, age, ethnicity, marital status, and total monthly personal income.

Table 4
Socio-demographic Profile of Respondents (n= 400)

Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	188	47
Female	212	53
Age		
18 - 30	174	43.5
31 - 40	98	24.5
41 - 50	76	19
51 and above	52	13
Ethnicity		
Malay	241	60.3
Chinese	87	21.8
Indian	41	10.3
Others	31	7.8
Marital Status		
Single	211	52.8
Married	174	43.5
Divorced/Widowed	15	3.8
Personal Income for a Month		
<RM2000	172	43
RM2001 - RM5000	125	31.3
RM5001 - RM7000	50	12.5
RM7001 - RM10,000	28	7
>RM10,000	25	6.3

Relative Importance of Destination Attractiveness Attributes For Different Vacation Experiences

In addressing the first objective of the study, an average rating was employed to systematically rank the perceived relative importance of destination attributes among different vacation experiences, specifically within the Leisure Group and Business Group categories. The division into these groups was determined through respondents' self-identification of their primary reason for visiting Penang, whether for business or recreation. Mean analysis was then applied to derive average ratings, facilitating the subsequent ranking of attributes within these two distinct groups.

The findings, presented in Table 5, reveal the distinct preferences of the Leisure Group, where food, safety and security, accessibility, scenery, and availability/quality of accommodation emerged as the top five attributes deemed crucial for Penang's attractiveness.

The overall importance of destination attractiveness attributes

Conversely, cultural attractions, entertainment, sports and recreational opportunities, uniqueness of local people's life, and shopping were perceived as the five least important attributes. For the Business Group, safety and security, scenery, availability/quality of accommodation, food, and accessibility received the highest ratings, whereas entertainment, uniqueness of local people's life, cultural attractions, sports and recreational opportunities, and festivals or special events were rated as the five least important attributes. The subsequent synthesis of data from both leisure and business groups in Table 6 discerns the overall importance of destination attractiveness attributes. The paramount factors contributing to the perception of Penang's attractiveness across all tourists include safety and security, food, scenery, availability/quality of accommodation, and accessibility. In contrast, entertainment, festivals or special events, uniqueness of local people's life, shopping, and sports and recreational opportunities were collectively considered the least important attributes by tourists in Penang. This comprehensive analysis provides a nuanced understanding of the varied preferences that shape tourists' perceptions of destination attractiveness in Penang.

Table 5
The relative importance of destination attractiveness attributes for different vacation experiences in terms of leisure and business group

Attributes	Leisure Group (n=240)		Business Group (n=160)		Sig. between n groups
	Average Rating	Ranking	Average Rating	Ranking	
Weather	4.16	10	3.82	6	0.000
Scenery	4.48	4	4.28	2	0.000
Historical attraction	4.15	11	3.52	10	0.027
Cultural attraction	4.14	12	3.29	14	0.204
Uniqueness of local people's life	3.96	15	3.34	13	0.000
Festival, special event	4.19	9	3.14	16	0.000
Attitude toward tourists	4.41	7	3.65	7	0.045
Accessibility	4.55	3	4.03	5	0.000
Entertainment	4.09	13	3.34	12	0.000

Continue: Table 5

Food	4.63	1	4.11	4	0.000
Shopping	3.88	16	3.42	11	0.000
Sports, recreational opportunities	3.98	14	3.2	15	0.000
Availability/quality of accommodation	4.45	5	4.26	3	0.000
Availability/quality of local transportation	4.33	8	3.59	8	0.000
Price levels	4.45	5	3.54	9	0.000
Safety and security	4.56	2	4.46	1	0.000

Note: Likert's scale: from 1 – not at all important to 5 – very important.

Table 6

The overall importance of destination attractiveness attributes

Attributes	N=400	
	Average Rating	Ranking
Weather	4.03	9
Scenery	4.4	3
Historical attraction	3.9	10
Cultural attraction	3.8	11
Uniqueness of local people's life	3.71	14
Festival, special event	3.77	13
Attitude toward tourists	4.11	6
Accessibility	4.34	5
Entertainment	3.79	12
Food	4.42	2
Shopping	3.7	15
Sports, recreational opportunities	3.67	16
Availability/quality of accommodation	4.38	4
Availability/quality of local transportation	4.04	8
Price levels	4.09	7
Safety and security	4.52	1

The relative importance of destination attractiveness attributes by socio-demographic.

The study reveals that both male and female tourists in Penang highly value safety and security attributes, aligning with previous research emphasizing the significance of these factors for both

genders during travel. The findings also indicate that young tourists prioritize food, consistent with other studies highlighting the appeal of Penang's street food for this demographic. In contrast, adult and elderly tourists prioritize safety and security. The influence of ethnicity on preferences is evident, with Malays emphasizing accessibility, Indians favoring food, and Chinese and other races prioritizing safety and security. Marital status plays a role, as single and divorced tourists prioritize food, while married individuals emphasize safety and security. Personal income further shapes preferences, with low-income earners prioritizing food, middle-income tourists valuing safety and security, and high-income tourists emphasizing the scenic attractions of Penang. These nuanced insights into various demographic factors provide a comprehensive understanding of what attracts different groups of tourists to Penang. Table 7 summarizes of relative importance of destination attractiveness attributes by socio-demographics.

Table 7: Summary of the relative importance of destination attractiveness attributes by socio-demographic

Variable	Frequency (n)	Highest rating
Gender		
Male	188	Safety and security
Female	212	Safety and security
Age		
18 - 30	174	Food
31 - 40	98	Safety and security
41 - 50	76	Accessibility
51 and above	52	Safety and security
Ethnicity		
Malay	241	Accessibility
Chinese	87	Safety and security
Indian	41	Food
Others	31	Safety and security
Marital Status		
Single	211	Food
Married	174	Safety and security
Divorced/Widowed	15	Food

Continue: Table 7

Personal Income for a Month		
<RM2000	172	Food
RM2001 - RM5000	125	Safety and security
RM5001 - RM7000	50	Safety and security
RM7001 - RM10,000	28	Safety and security
>RM10,000	25	Scenery

Conclusions

This study, while providing valuable insights into what makes Penang attractive to tourists, has some limitations. It only considered respondents who had visited Penang, excluding those from certain regions. The use of online surveys during the COVID-19 period posed challenges, especially for older participants. Future research should replicate the study in different destinations, involving various tourism experts. The study's findings highlight the importance of safety and security, food, and scenery for tourists in Penang. These insights can guide recovery and long-term strategies for Penang's appeal in the tourism landscape.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING WORKER PARTICIPATION IN SAFETY: A STUDY AMONG FOREIGN WORKERS IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES

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Abstract

Communication plays an important role in an individual's life. Communication is defined as the exchange of messages, facts, or feelings. Despite the plethora of forms of communication, messages are sometimes misunderstood or simply misconstrued. Such hiccups in communication lead to failures in the communication process. This breakdown is called "noise" or "communication barriers". These barriers include language differences, cultural diversity, and language barriers. This study investigated the role of language barrier and safety management practices on safety participation among foreign workers in Malaysia's construction industry. A total of 201 foreign workers participated in the study. The data were examined using Statistical Software in Social Sciences (SPSS). The findings supported the hypothesized direct effects between language barrier, safety rules and procedure, safety training, management commitment, and worker safety participation. To achieve an optimal positive safety environment in the organization, management should concentrate on the application of safety management practices and take into account the language barrier faced by foreign workers when making decision regarding safety management in their organization. Finally, theoretical and practical implications were discussed at the end of the text.

Keywords: safety management practices; safety participation; language barrier; foreign workers; construction industries.

Introduction

Anything unforeseeable, unplanned occurrence, including violent acts, that takes place during or in connection with employment and results in one or more workplace injuries, illnesses, or fatalities is referred to as a workplace accident (OECD, 2007). The Department of Statistic Malaysia (DOSM) reported that there are about 21,534 occupational accidents in the year of 2021, with over 301 fatalities (DOSM, 2022). Manufacturing, with 7,994 cases, reported the most industrial accident by work sector in Malaysia, This was followed by Services and Utilities (4,299 cases), Construction (2,297 incidents), and Wholesale and Retail Trade (1,979 cases) (DOSM, 2022). In 2021, the country reported 1.43 cases per 1000 workers for occupational injuries and 2.00 cases per 100,000 workers for occupational fatalities. The manufacturing sector, with 3.20 cases per 1,000 workers, continues to have the highest number of fatality rates, trailed by the construction sector (1.98) and services and utilities (1.92). (1.95) (DOSM, 2022).

Occupational accidents are one of the most important challenges for the economy and should never be neglected. According to ILO (2012), occupational accidents have a devastating economic impact that results in a loss of 4% of worldwide GNP (GDP). This has been confirmed by the annual report from the Malaysia Social Security Organization (SOCSO), which indicated that the number of recipients for all types of benefits increased by years. SOCSO has given out RM1.4 billion in compensation for industrial accidents involving both domestic and foreign workers from all industries (SOCSO, 2022). With these numbers, it is critical to stop what can only be described as a downward spiral of industrial accidents resulting in disability, dependency on benefits, early retirement, unemployment, the loss of a family provider, and financial problem. In order to reduce costs for victims, their families, businesses, and governments, it is important to maintain a safe and healthful environment in the organization.

Safety Issues in Construction Sector

Building projects for homes and businesses are in high demand in Malaysia, particularly in urban areas. The rapid development of construction projects has led to an increase in fatalities and accidents (Manzoor et al., 2021). Due to the numerous work risks in the construction industry, numerous catastrophes that result in fatalities, property damage, and financial losses as well as impede project goals occur every year (Zamani, Banihashemi, & Abbasi, 2020). Since most construction projects create hazardous conditions that could result in accidents, their worker safety is directly impacted (Buniya et al., 2021).

Construction is the industry with the highest rate of occupational fatalities (Misiurek, 2017; Mohammadi, Tavakolan, & Khosravi, 2018) even though it ranks third in terms of injuries. The Department of Occupational Safety and Health, Malaysia (DOSH), reports that there were 148 occupational accidents in total in 2021, down from 217 cases the year before (DOSH, 2022). In 2021, these accidents resulted in 59 cases of fatalities, 87 cases of non-permanent disabilities, and 2 cases of permanent disabilities (DOSH, 2022). Even though the number decreased from previous year, but the effect still devastating.

Due to the harsh characteristics of the work environment, it is possible to relate construction accident types, such as contact with objects, collision by vehicles or machines, fall relates accidents, and those due to falling objects, with the above data. Construction accidents frequently result from inadequate designs, a lack of warning signs, a failure to wear personal protection equipment, faulty equipment installation, and bad housekeeping. (Williams, Hamid, & Misnan, 2019). These elements may have an impact on productivity and result in unanticipated workplace and efficiency risks.

More knowledge on the worker safety behavior and their participation on safety should be further review to lower the statistic of occupational accidents in this work sector. It gives us the impression that the sector is one of the leading industries that requires a significant and rapid overhaul of current safety practices in the field. An in-depth study is crucial to lowering the likelihood of accidents involving workers in the construction industry. Therefore, this paper aims to analyze worker safety participation in the workplace. Workplace safety index can be improved, and occupational accidents' financial and social costs can be decreased, by understanding the elements that affect participation in safety in the selected sector.

Immigrant Worker In Malaysian Construction Sector

Malaysia booming economic has led to vacancies in the labor market being filled more and more by foreign construction workers (Marhani et al., 2012). Abdul-Rahman et al. (2012) also revealed that 800,000 employees that reflect about 8% of the overall labor force are employed by the Malaysian building industry, 69% of whom are foreign workers. The dominance of foreign workers in the construction sector was a result of a lack of local participation and a huge demand for labor in Malaysia (Jamalulil et al., 2022). In Malaysia, foreign workers make up roughly 70–80% of the construction workforce. Long-term reliance on low-skilled migrant laborers has been a problem for Malaysia's construction sector. Indonesia (50.9%), Bangladesh (17.4%), Nepal (9.7%), Myanmar (7.8%), India (6.3%), and the remainder is Vietnam make up the contributing

nations in migrant workers in Malaysian construction sector (Hamid et al., 2011). Confrontation between locals and migrants may happen due to social issues, an uptick in crime, and a higher rate of unemployment as a result of the presence of foreign employees in this situation.

Problem Statement

The most successful safety and health programs all share one thing in common: all their workforces are engaged and actively participating in safety activities. This is true regardless of how workplace health and safety programs may appear in different industries or companies. OSHA defines worker participation as “involvement in establishing, operating, evaluating, and improving the health and safety program” (Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), U.S. Department of Labor, 2017). Effective participation among workers in safety included attending safety meetings, offering to help enhance the safety plan, assisting coworkers with solving safety-related problems, and enhancing the safety environment.

Organizational safety performance may be improved through workers participation. Studies reveal a strong beneficial relationship between workers participation and safety performance (Albrechtsen, Solberg, & Svensli, 2019; He et al., 2020; Kalteh et al., 2021). When compared to non-involved employees, engaged workers had incident and lost time rates that were five and seven times lower, respectively (Wachter & Yorio, 2014). Employees that are totally invested in and passionate about their jobs will operate in a way that helps them share a similar objective and make a greater contribution to their teams, positions, and workplace culture. Based on Queens School of Business and the Gallup Organization, workers disengagement accounts for 60% of human mistakes and performance flaws at work. The same report shows that companies with more engaged workers had 70% fewer safety incidents compared to companies with low levels of participation, which shows an undeniable correlation: as participation rises, safety improves, and incidents decrease (Ge, 2020). The goal of this investigation is to understand the vital element of safety participation among foreign workers in Malaysian construction companies and its effectiveness in the organizational environment, health, and safety programs.

Safety Management Practices and Safety Participation

Safety management practices are defined as “the approaches, policies, strategies, procedures, and activities implemented by the management of an organization with the objective to prevent occupational accidents and injuries” (Subramaniam et al., 2016). Preventing workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities, as well as the suffering and financial burden these occurrences may cause

for employees, their families, and employers, is the primary objective of good safety management practices (OSHA, 2022). The proposed practices take a proactive approach to managing workplace safety and health because conventional approaches are frequently reactive, that is, problems are only addressed after an employee gets hurt or ill, then new standard or regulation is published, or an external inspection to identify a problem that must be fixed) that far more ineffective approaches (Hollnagel, 2012). The idea is to begin with a basic program and simple goals and grow from there.

According to prior research, there are six (6) safety management practices that should be used to achieve safety goals, monitor safety performance, and assess safety outcomes. These practices are management commitment, safety training, workers' involvement in safety, safety communication and feedback, safety rules and procedures, and safety promotion policies. (Vinodkumar and Bhasi, 2010; Kim et al., 2019; Najji et al., 2021). These strategies aid organizations in a variety of forms, including curbing occupational accidents and illnesses, increasing compliance with safety rules and regulations, lowering costs—including significantly lowering workers' compensation costs, boosting productivity, and upgrade all aspects of business operations (Purwanto, Asbari, & Budi Santoso, 2019; Sanni-Anibireet al., 2020; Ajmal, Isha, & Nordin, 2021; Rajabi et al., 2022).

Language Barrier and Safety Participation

Language barriers were characterized as impediments to efficient communication that appear when speakers don't speak the same language and don't have a common language in which they are fluent native speakers (Ne'Matullah, Roslan, & Lim, 2021). An analysis of various academic articles revealed that foreign employees had occupational injuries more frequently on average than native workers (Oswald et al., 2019; Ne'Matullah, Roslan, & Lim, 2021).

The construction sector employs millions of people annually across the world, with immigrants making up around 25% of this workforce (Buckley et al., 2018). That means that language barriers in construction can be a major challenge. In Malaysian construction industry, immigrant workers have higher likelihood of injuries and death due to occupational accidents (DOSM, 2022). Their involvement in 3D jobs (dangerous, dirty, and demanding/degrading) also lead to this situation. Low awareness in adhering to the guideline and work instruction due to communication and language barrier may also be one of the factors (Hamid et al., 2011; Ayob et al., 2018). Project delays, financial losses, ineffectiveness, accidents, and even fatalities can result from language barriers. The industry should thus prioritize closing these linguistic loops to prevent such occurrences.

Method

This research determines to investigate employee's views about safety management practices, language barrier and their influences on safety participation in the construction companies of Malaysia. Self-administered questionnaires were used in this quantitative methodology research to collect the collect the required data. The items in the questionnaires were based on adaptations from previous works. A total amount of 518 questionnaires were be given to participants in respective construction companies. The respondent for this study is the foreign construction workers working in Malaysia. Data collected through the survey were analyzed using SPSS (Version 23). Prior to the implementation of the actual data collection, a pilot test was done. The outcome indicated that all variables obtained Cronbach's alpha values over 0.70.

Result

Most of the respondents were male, with 196 (97.5%), while the remaining 5 (2.5%) were female. Concerning their age group, 42.3% of the respondents were within 30 and below 40 years, followed by those within the age group of 31-40 years (30.8%). Next group of ages are 45 and 50 years (23.9%). Then, group age between 51-60 years (2.5%) and group age 61-70 years (0.5%) of the sample.

Table 1 displays the overall mean for latent variables ranged from 3.58 to 4.34. In particular, the mean and standard deviation for safety participation were 4.38 and 0.826, respectively. This suggests that respondents displayed a high level of engagement with safety programs in the workplace. Further, the result also shows a high score of for all other constructs. The descriptive statistics on respondent's perception of safety management practices revealed that the mean value of different dimensions of safety management practices were high (means range between 3.83-4.10; standard deviation range between 0.714-0.827). The descriptive statistics also revealed that language barrier (means=3.58, standard deviation=0.754) has the lowest mean value.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Values

Variables	Number of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
SP	5	4.38	.826
SPP	3	4.10	.827
SCF	5	4.10	.801
MC	9	3.95	.700
SRP	5	3.94	.827
ST	6	3.83	.714
WI	5	3.83	.714
LB	20	3.58	.754

Table 1: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.707 ^a	0.499	0.481	1.663118

Predictors: **WI, SPP, LB, SCF, MC, SRP, ST**

Table 2: Anova^a

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	532.418	7	76.060	27.498	.000 ^b
	Residual	533.830	193	2.766		
	Total	1066.248	200			

a. Dependent Variable: SP

b. Predictors: WI, SPP, LB, SCF, MC, SRP, ST

Table 3: Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	C	Beta		
		1	(Constant)	1.031		
	LB	-.146	.131	-.243	-2.319	-0.09
	MC	.150	.071	.199	2.094	.038
	SCF	.088	.047	.128	1.854	.065
	SPP	-.043	.044	-.063	-.980	.328
	SRP	.157	.059	.211	2.652	.009
	ST	.153	.066	.249	2.314	.022
	WI	-.009	.045	-.017	-.197	.844

a. Dependent Variable: SAFETY PARTICIPATION (SP)

The model summary's R-value is 0.707, indicating a strong linear association between the variables. The model summary's R square value is 0.499. This number shows that the correlation between independent factors contributed for 49.9% of the variation in safety participation. In accordance with the analysis, there is a significant and positive link between respondents' safety participation and management commitment ($t = 2.094$, $p = 0.038$), safety rules and procedures ($t = 2.652$, $p = 0.009$), and safety training ($t = 2.314$, $p = 0.022$). On the other hand, there is a substantial and adverse association between language barriers and the dependent variable ($t = -2.319$, $p = 0.009$).

Discussion

The main objective is to investigate the link between safety management practices, language barrier and safety participation among foreign construction workers in Malaysia. A total of seven hypotheses were formulated to test the direct relationship between the independent variables and safety participation. Only four were supported, while other been rejected. The investigation was able to prove the positive and significant relationship between management commitment, safety rules and procedures, safety training, and safety participation among the respondents.

Firstly, it was confirmed that management commitment has a direct relation with workers participation among respondents. The degree to which managers respect and encourage safe working conditions and are devoted to workers' safety is valued by their employees as "management commitment" (McGonagle et al., 2016), and it put a vital role in success of safety programs in the workplace (Mashi, Subramaniam, & Johari, 2020). The current finding indicates that the higher the management's commitment to safety in the workplace, the higher the employee involvement in safety among the study respondents. The top management should be open about the significance of health and safety across the workplace to foster a strong workplace culture that appreciates these factors. This transparency is improved by effectively including the workers in all elements of health and safety, including planning, implementing, and daily operations.

Next the significant influence of safety training toward safety participation. Employees who participate in safety training can develop the abilities, attitudes, and necessary knowledge to execute their tasks in a safe and positive manner (Ahamad, 2022). To ensure safe conditions and activities, as well as the general performance of the firm, it is crucial that all employees have the necessary abilities, attitudes, and safety awareness. (Bayram, 2019). The current findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between safety training and worker safety participation, i.e., the greater the level of management emphasis on safety training, the higher the safety participation

among respondents. The finding supports the works of Vinodkumar and Bhasi (2010), Subramaniam et al. (2016), and Bayram Arpat, and Ozkan (2021). Safety training provides the workers with the essential knowledge and skills that they need to perform their job safely and, at the same time, avoid creating hazards that could place themselves or others at risk. Both formal and informal safety training educates workers not only on risk identification, but also on hazard controls and good work practices.

Another tested independent variable that also has a positive and significant correlation with safety participation is safety rules and procedures. Safety rules and procedures refer This is the degree to which an organization creates a clear mission, responsibilities and goals, settings up of standards of behavior for employees, and the establishment of a safety system to correct workers safety behavior (Lu & Yanh, 2010). Every workplace has safety regulations in place to protect both the workers and the business. By reducing risk and preventing accidents, these policies can enhance worker wellbeing and successful working practices. According to the findings, the more management enforces workplace safety rules and procedures, the higher the correlation of its effect on worker safety participation. It been supported by prior study such as Vinodkumar and Bhasi (2010), Subramaniam et al. (2016), and Bayram Arpat, and Ozkan (2021). Meanwhile, language barriers have a significant and negative relationship with worker safety participation. This indicates that the respondents' level of participation in workplace safety declines as perceived language barriers mount. This critical finding supported by other past investigation (Arcury, Estrada, & Quandt, 2010; Vignoli et al., 2021) Most Malaysian construction workers are immigrants who have limited understanding of the local language and limited educational attainment (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020). This makes them more vulnerable and become victims of accidents at the workplace since they are unable to follow the correct safety rules and procedures and are hindered from participating in the safety activities at their workplace (Yusof & Rahmat, 2020; Ne'Matullah, Pek, & Roslan (2021).

Conclusion

In the workplace, proactive safety management techniques are crucial and heavily rely on workers participation. When implementing safety management programs, it is important to emphasize the responsibility of all company members (regardless of level in the organization), as having a low accident rate is vital for the business. This is because achieving the organization's safety objectives requires a high level of participation from all members. Employers must first make an effort to improve safety performance by reducing risks and hazards from the workplace, and then workers must actively participate in all phases of the process, starting with safety program design. They

must be given the chance to share ideas and feel at ease approaching the company's management with concerns about health and safety.

One of the main challenges the researchers must overcome during this investigation is gathering data from the foreign workers. Communication is hampered during the data collection process by language barriers. This study recommends further research be done on language barriers and their impact on organizational safety performance, such as self-reported accident and self-compliance behavior among the foreign workers different work sector such as manufacturing and services.

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KELUARGA ASNAF DI KEDAH: KAJIAN PENGESANAN GRADUAN

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Abstrak.

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengemukakan cadangan kerangka kajian mengenai hubungan di antara kemahiran insaniah, bidang pengajian yang diikuti, dan latarbelakang keluarga dengan kebolehpasaran di kalangan graduan *asnaf*. Jelas bahawa cabaran semasa memerlukan para graduan untuk melengkapkan diri mereka dengan beberapa kemahiran tambahan selaras dengan jangkaan pihak majikan. Sejumlah kajian terdahulu menyarankan bahawa beberapa faktor seperti kemahiran insaniah, bidang pengajian yang diikuti, dan latarbelakang keluarga mempunyai pengaruh terhadap kebolehpasaran para graduan. Kebanyakan kajian terdahulu menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan di antara pembolehubah yang dicadangkan. Dapatan kajian ini dijangka akan memberi sumbangan dari segi praktikal, teoritikal dan seterusnya membolehkan pihak LZNK untuk meningkatkan keberkesanan bantuan pendidikan kepada para asnaf.

Keywords: Pengesanan graduan, keluarga asnaf.

Pengenalan

Kerajaan telah melaksanakan inisiatif pengesanan para graduan institusi pengajian tinggi awam (IPTA). Usaha telah dilaksanakan melalui penyertaan semua universiti awam di Malaysia. Secara umumnya kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengumpul maklumat mengenai pembangunan kerjaya para graduan setelah mereka menamatkan pengajian mereka di sesebuah IPTA (Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, 2022). Dengan perkataan lain, kajian ini merupakan satu saluran yang dapat menyediakan maklumat mengenai status pekerjaan seseorang graduan setelah mereka menamatkan pengajian. Maklumat yang diperolehi ini juga sangat penting kepada pihak Kerajaan, terutamanya dalam proses pengubalan dasar pembangunan modal insan negara.

Di Malaysia, bermula pada tahun 2010, pihak Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi (KPT) telah merangka pelbagai pelan transformasi dengan tujuan bagi memantapkan sistem pendidikan negara agar menjadi lebih baik serta sebagai satu landasan untuk melahirkan sumber tenaga kerja dan graduan yang kreatif, inovatif dan berkemahiran tinggi (Hanapi et al., 2016). Sungguhpun begitu salah satu isu utama yang sedang menghantui para graduan ialah untuk mendapat pekerjaan yang bersesuaian dengan bidang pengajian ataupun kelayakan mereka (Mohd Ali, 2022). Susulan daripada itu kerap kali para graduan yang telah menamatkan pengajian disarankan untuk melibatkan diri secara aktif di dalam bidang keusahawanan.

Di negara ini, kebanyakan para pelajar menerima pembiayaan samada melalui pemberian biasiswa atau pinjaman pendidikan dari pelbagai pihak. Berita Harian melaporkan, Kerajaan telah memperuntukan sebanyak RM 3.8 billion sebagai biasiswa dan pinjaman pendidikan untuk anak-anak Malaysia pada tahun 2023 (Muzamir & Parzi, 2022). Sumber yang sama melaporkan pihak Kerajaan akan terus meningkatkan peluang serta kemudahan pendidikan kepada anak-anak Bumiputera khasnya bagi mereka yang berasal dari keluarga yang kurang berkemampuan. Sesungguhnya pendidikan merupakan satu senjata yang mampan untuk mengubah nasib seseorang individu agar menjadi lebih baik pada masa hadapan.

Di negeri Kedah, selain dari pelbagai agensi kerajaan dan swasta, Lembaga Zakat Negeri Kedah (LZNK) turut menawarkan bantuan pembiayaan pendidikan kepada anak-anak negeri Kedah yang kurang berkemampuan untuk mendapat pendidikan. Bantuan pembiayaan ini meliputi dari pendidikan rendah, menengah dan pendidikan tinggi dalam pelbagai bidang pengajian (Majlis Agama Islam Kedah, 2022). Apa yang lebih unik ialah bantuan yang ditawarkan terbuka untuk semua bidang pengajian dan tidak hanya terbatas kepada bidang keagamaan sahaja (LZNK, 2017). Pembiayaan pengajian kepada pelajar yang terdiri dari golongan asnaf dengan tujuan untuk

memenuhi tanggungjawab keagamaan serta dengan hasrat untuk memperkasa penerima bagi menghadapi bidang pekerjaan yang semakin mencabar pada masa kini.

Pernyataan masalah

KPT(2022) melaporkan bahawa secara amnya kadar kebolehpasaran graduan pada peringkat nasional telah menunjukkan peningkatan yang agak baik. Negara dilihat mampu mengharungi cabaran pandemik Covid-19 dengan agak baik dan selesa. Chung dan Ikram (2023) melaporkan bahawa kadar kebolehpasaran graduan pada peringkat kebangsaan telah meningkat kepada 90.2% pada tahun 2022. Pada tahun sebelumnya, 2021, kadar kebolehpasaran graduan mencapai 85.5%, iaitu terdapat peningkatan sebanyak 4.7%.

Bagi tahun 2022, laporan tersebut juga menunjukkan bahawa bidang kejuruteraan, pembuatan dan pembinaan menunjukkan kadar kebolehpasaran sebanyak 92.7%, teknologi maklumat dan komunikasi sebanyak 91.9% dan 90.2%, dan bidang sains tulen, matematik dan statistik sebanyak 90.2% (Chung & Ikram, 2023).

Laporan menyebutkan bahawa sektor tenaga kerja menunjukkan perkembangan yang semakin baik pada tahun 2022 kerana terdapat peningkatan yang berterusan dalam guna tenaga dan penurunan dalam trend pengangguran di negara ini (Jabatan Perangkaan Negara, 2023). BERNAMA (2023) melaporkan pada Disember 2022, kadar pengangguran berada pada paras 3.6% dengan bilangan orang yang menganggur menurun dari 600,900 kepada 599,600. Laporan tersebut juga menyebutkan guna tenaga buruh telah meningkat sebanyak 0.1 peratus, mencatatkan 16.73 juta orang berbanding dengan 16.71 juta tenaga buruh. Peningkatan ini disokong oleh perubahan dasar Kerajaan yang membenarkan organisasi untuk beroperasi dengan masa yang lebih panjang (Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, 2023).

Selain dari isu pengangguran, terdapat juga laporan mengenai kadar ketidaksepadanan (*mismatch*) dalam pekerjaan bagi tahun 2001 dan 2019. Kadar ketidaksepadanan in telah meningkat dari lebih kurang 15% kepada lebih 25% bagi tempoh tersebut (Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, 2020).

Berbalik kepada pembiayaan oleh LZNK, pada tahun 2015 LZNK telah membelanjakan sebanyak kira-kira RM33.28 juta sebagai bantuan derma siswa kepada para pelajar untuk mengikuti pengajian di dalam (IPTA dan swasta) dan luar negara misalnya ke Mesir, Jordan, Syiria dan Indonesia. Manakala terdapat sedikit penurunan sebanyak RM 1.53 juta bagi tahun

2016 berbanding tahun sebelumnya, iaitu sebanyak RM31.75 juta telah dibelanjakan untuk membiayai pengajian para pelajar. Pembiayaan ini telah memberi manfaat kepada seramai 23,142. (LZNK, 2017). Pembiayaan pada tahun 2016 merupakan kira-kira 50% dari keseluruhan kategori bantuan untuk asnaf fisabilillah yang berjumlah RM63.47 juta.

Sungguhpun begitu berdasarkan semakan dengan pangkalan data yang terdapat di Universiti Utara Malaysia, kajian mengenai kebolehpasaran graduan dari kalangan penerima pembiayaan LZNK masih terlalu kecil. Hasil dapatan kajian kebolehpasaran graduan yang dijalankan oleh pihak KPT mungkin tidak menggambarkan secara sepenuhnya kebolehpasaran para graduan yang terdiri dari asnaf ini.

Sorotan karya

Persoalan kebolehpasaran graduan merupakan isu nasional yang memerlukan penyelesaian yang berkesan. Harvey (2001) menyatakan kebolehpasaran sebagai keupayaan para graduan untuk mempamerkan kriteria-kriteria yang diinginkan oleh para majikan untuk keperluan masa hadapan organisasi. Pencapaian dalam bidang akademik membolehkan seseorang individu untuk berada dengan lebih lama di dalam kerjaya mereka serta memberi sumbangan yang lebih bermakna di dalam organisasi yang mereka sertai (Nagaraj et al., 2014).

Sejak 2012, jumlah keluaran tahunan graduan tempatan melebihi 200,000 orang dan sebahagian daripadanya berjaya mendapatkan pekerjaan dalam tempoh setahun setelah menamatkan pengajian (Abdul Rahim, 2023). Namun begitu kerap kali para graduan tidak mendapat bayaran yang setimpal dengan kelayakan akademik yang mereka miliki. Terdapat laporan yang menyatakan kira-kira 45% graduan baru IPTA menerima gaji kurang dari RM2000 sebulan (Seng, 2018). Gaji sebanyak ini merupakan pendapatan di bawah jangkaan bagi seseorang pemegang ijazah sarjana muda. Ibrahim dan Mistree (2019) pula berpendapat pencapaian akademik semata-mata adalah tidak mencukupi bagi seseorang graduan dalam pasaran pekerjaan yang sangat sengit cabarannya. Kemahiran insaniah diperlukan sebagai komponen pelengkap untuk membolehkan mereka bersaing bagi mendapat pekerja (KPT, 2022).

Jelas bahawa kemahiran insaniah turut mempunyai merit kepada para graduan semasa mereka melamar pekerjaan. Succi dan Canovi (2020) berkeyakinan bahawa kemahiran insaniah akan meningkatkan kadar kebolehpasaran para graduan. Dengan perkataan lain, kemahiran insaniah yang mereka miliki juga dapat menutupi kekurangan atau kelemahan yang terdapat pada

seseorang graduan. *Kemahiran insaniah* memainkan peranan yang penting di dalam membentuk dan menyediakan seseorang *graduan* untuk menempuh alam pekerjaan yang akan mereka ceburi.

Terdapat juga rungutan dari para majikan bahawa setengah-setengah graduan gagal untuk berkomunikasi dengan baik terutamanya apabila untuk berbuat demikian di dalam bahasa Inggeris. Beberapa kemahiran yang penting ialah kemahiran berkomunikasi, fasih berbahasa Inggeris, kemahiran teknologi maklumat dan komunikasi, boleh berkerja secara berkumpulan, kemahiran kepimpinan, kemahiran menyelesaikan masalah, serta keupayaan untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan persekitaran merupakan ciri-ciri penting sebelum seseorang graduan dipilih untuk bekerja oleh seseorang majikan (Juhi et al., 2007; Koo et al., 2009; Ting et al., 2017). Kefasihan berbahasa tetap dilihat salah satu faktor yang penting untuk meningkatkan kadar kebolehpasaran graduan. Nafi (2011) menyebutkan bahawa pencapaian semasa menduduki peperiksaan MUET juga salah satu faktor yang penting.

Gabungan di antara kemahiran amali dan pencapaian akademik merupakan kombinasi yang dikehendaki oleh pihak majikan. Koe (2019) menekankan bahawa orientasi keusahawanan, inovasi dan sikap proaktif turut membantu graduan untuk mendapat pekerjaan. Seterusnya beliau lebih menyarankan agar para graduan melibatkan diri dengan bidang keusahawanan dari bergantung untuk mendapatkan pekerjaan. Jamaludin et al., (2019) turut memberi penekanan terhadap beberapa kemahiran keusahawanan misalnya kemahiran berfikir, ciri-ciri peribadi, dan kecekapan di tempat kerja.

Pinto dan Ramalheira (2017) berpendapat pencapaian akademik serta penyertaan di dalam aktiviti di luar bilik kuliah turut membantu para graduan untuk memperolehi pekerjaan. Terdapat majikan yang meletakkan penilaian yang tinggi terhadap kemahiran teoretikal dan amali berbanding dengan pencapaian gred yang tinggi semata-mata (Hossain et al., 2018).

Selaras dengan kemajuan dan perkembangan semasa, graduan dari beberapa bidang pengajian lebih mudah untuk mendapat pekerjaan apabila menamatkan pengajian. Dalam satu kajian mendapati graduan dalam bidang ICT mempunyai kadar kebolehpasaran yang lebih baik (OECD, 2017). Razak et al. (2014) mendapati graduan dari bidang sains sosial, pentadbiran perniagaan, dan undang-undang menunjukkan kadar kebolehpasaran yang agak rendah. Sebaliknya graduan dalam bidang kejuruteraan, pembuatan dan pembinaan, teknologi maklumat dan komunikasi, dan bidang sains tulen, matematik dan statistik lebih mempunyai kadar kebolehpasaran yang lebih baik (Chung & Ikram, 2023).

Dari sudut gender, bagi tahun 2020, penyertaan tenaga kerja wanita berada pada paras yang agak sederhana iaitu sebanyak 49%, berbanding dengan kadar penyertaan tenaga kerja lelaki sebanyak 74% (*International Labour Organization, 2020*). Menurut laporan tersebut majoriti masih melihat tanggungjawab untuk mencari nafkah (*breadwinners*) terletak di atas bahu kaum bapa, manakala kerap kali peranan wanita dilihat lebih cenderung sebagai menjaga keluarga (*caregivers*). Dapatan kajian sebelum ini adalah selari dengan pernyataan tersebut iaitu gender masih merupakan salah satu faktor yang mempengaruhi kebolehpasaran graduan (Piad et al., 2016).

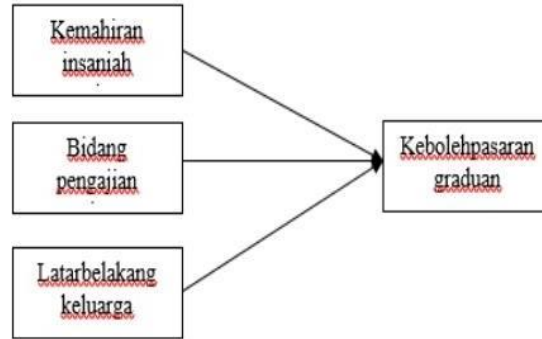
Selaras dengan pernyataan di atas, dapatan kajian oleh Jayasingha dan Suraweeran (2020) mengesahkan bahawa kebolehpasaran graduan dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor seperti gender, kelayakan profesional, kefasihan berbahasa Inggeris, latihan dan pengalaman yang berkaitan, dan faktor yang terakhir ialah kemahiran insaniah. Piad et al., (2026) menyebutkan program *internship* atau pengalaman pekerjaan seseorang calon turut merupakan salah satu faktor yang penting apabila mereka melamar pekerjaan.

Dapatan kajian oleh Passaretta dan Triventi (2015) juga selari dengan dapatan kajian sebelum ini, iaitu pengkaji mendapati graduan yang mempunyai pengalaman yang diperolehi melalui penglibatan di dalam aktiviti luar semasa mereka masih berada di kampus mempunyai peluang yang lebih tinggi untuk diterima bekerja.

Walaupun terdapat pelbagai faktor yang mempengaruhi kebolehpasaran graduan, kajian mengenai hubungan di antara latarbelakang keluarga dan kebolehpasaran graduan masih agak terhad. Hossain et al. (2018) mendapati pengangguran para graduan yang berasal dari keluarga berpendapatan rendah adalah agak tinggi. Oleh itu tujuan utama kertas cadangan kajian penyelidikan ini ialah untuk melihat tahap kebolehpasaran asnaf yang menerima pembiayaan pendidikan dari LZNK di dalam pasaran pekerjaan setelah mereka menamatkan pengajian di kampus.

Cadangan Kerangka Kajian

Berdasarkan kepada sorotan karya yang telah dibuat sebelum ini, cadangan kerangka kajian adalah seperti Rajah 1 di bawah.



Rajah 1: Kerangka kajian.

Kesimpulan

Saban tahun ribuan pelajar telah menamatkan pengajian dan masuk ke dalam pasaran pekerjaan. Oleh itu, kajian pengesanan graduan penting untuk dilakukan bagi mendapat maklum balas mengenai pekerjaan seseorang graduan apabila mereka telah menamatkan pengajian dari sesebuah institusi pengajian tinggi. Walaupun pihak LZNK telah mengeluarkan bantuan pendidikan yang agak besar kepada anak-anak dari keluarga asnaf, tetapi maklumat mengenai kebolehpasaran graduan dari kalangan golongan ini masih agak terhad. Berdasarkan kepada sorotan karya, beberapa faktor seperti kemahiran insaniah, bidang pengajian yang diikuti semasa di kampus dan latarbelakang didapati mempunyai pengaruh terhadap kebolehpasaran graduan. Kerangka kajian yang dicadangkan seperti dalam Rajah 1 di atas.

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INVESTIGATING TVET AWARENESS IN PROMOTING HIGH-SKILLED WORKFORCE FOR MALAYSIA INDUSTRY

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Abstract

The Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays a pivotal role in providing the skilled workforce required for Malaysia's economic transformation and the next stage of her growth. It is the pathway of the 21st century, the way forward to close gaps between economies of the globe and the vital to meet the demands of a technologically complex and unique future. In Malaysia, industries are an integral part of the TVET ecosystem that develops competent graduates who benefit the nation. It is vitally important to understand industry's perspective of TVET issues in Malaysia, as this will help policymakers to plan effective strategies for competitive TVET. Hence, one of the significant concerns from the industry's perspective is the mismatch between the skills acquired by TVET graduates and the actual needs of the job market. Employers often find it difficult to fill positions with skilled workers who possess the specific technical competencies required for their industries. There is a need for better collaboration between TVET institutions and industries to align the curriculum with industry demands and incorporate emerging technologies and skills. Hence, understanding the industry's perspective on TVET issues in Malaysia is indeed crucial for addressing the challenges effectively and ensuring the relevance and quality of TVET programs. Consequently, this paper focuses on developing tailored marketing strategies to promote TVET in Malaysia. The objective is to address negative perceptions, highlight the benefits and opportunities of TVET, and attract students and industry engagement. The expected outcomes include tailored marketing themes, increased awareness and interest in TVET, enhanced industry engagement, and recommendations for implementation. By effectively promoting TVET, the paper aims to encourage enrollment and develop a high-skill workforce in Malaysia's industry.

Keywords: TVET, TVET awareness, marketing strategies, high-skilled workforce.

Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has evolved as an important component of Malaysia's education system, playing an important part in achieving the country's economic, social development goals and contributing to the supply of human resources in the high impact industry. TVET programmes in Malaysia aim to educate individuals with the required capabilities to satisfy the demands of the job market and contribute to the country's industrial progress, with a focus on practical skills and hands-on training (Pavlova, 2019; Zolkifli et al., 2016). Malaysia has recognized the importance of TVET in attaining economic success and long-term development. The government has prioritized the development of a trained and competent workforce capable of facing the difficulties provided by expanding sectors and technological advances (Rasul et al., 2015). As a result, TVET has gained significance in the educational environment, providing individuals pursuing technical and vocational education with a variety of options. Malaysian TVET may be traced back to the 1970s, when the country began a journey to diversify its economy and reduce its reliance on natural resources. Recognizing the importance of a skilled workforce in supporting industrialization, the Malaysian government began developing comprehensive TVET programmes and initiatives. These endeavors are intended to improve individuals' employability, stimulate entrepreneurship, and create a sustainable and inclusive economy.

TVET in Malaysia has grown and expanded over time, including a diverse range of disciplines and areas (Yaakob et al., 2020). It provides certificate, diploma, and advanced diploma programmes, allowing individuals to pursue their selected career routes (Azmi & Salleh, 2021). Malaysian TVET institutions work closely with industry partners to ensure the relevance and quality of their programmes. Through internships, industrial affiliations, and on-the-job training, students can receive practical experience, bridging the gap between theory and practise. The development of dedicated institutions, such as the Department of Skills Development (Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran, JPK) and the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia, MQA), demonstrates the government's commitment to TVET. These organisations govern and supervise the development and implementation of TVET programmes, ensuring that they meet national and industry standards. However, students, parents, instructors, and employers frequently lack awareness and understanding of the benefits and opportunities afforded by TVET education (Hussin et al., 2017). The purpose of this study is to investigate effective techniques for raising awareness and knowledge of TVET education and its potential advantages. The aim of this paper is to investigate effective marketing tactics for increasing secondary school students' knowledge and understanding of TVET. TVET education provides excellent job options and practical skill development, but students frequently lack awareness and understanding of its

benefits. The purpose of this study is to discover and assess marketing methods that effectively engage and enlighten secondary school students about TVET education possibilities. The TVET training Provider institutions in Malaysia will be studied to create an engaging brand image for the TVET Training Provider Institutions. A clear brand image of these institutions can focus on the benefits and advantages of new technology advancements and improvements priorities.

Literature Review

TVET is a crucial component of Malaysia's education system, contributing to the nation's socio-economic development. This literature review explores the existing body of research on TVET awareness in Malaysia, examining the policies, initiatives, challenges, and the impact of awareness on public perception and participation.

Policy Landscape and Strategic Initiatives

Malaysia's commitment to promoting TVET is evident in its policy landscape. The National TVET Policy (2015-2025) underscores the importance of creating awareness about the value and opportunities provided by TVET. It emphasizes outreach efforts to students, parents, and the wider community to dispel misconceptions and highlight the practical and lucrative aspects of TVET careers (Ministry of Education, 2015). The subsequent National TVET Blueprint (2018-2025) builds upon this foundation by outlining specific strategies for enhancing public awareness. Initiatives such as career counseling programs, industry collaboration forums, and outreach campaigns aim to raise awareness and showcase the diverse career paths available through TVET (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Industry Collaboration and Dual Training System

A notable feature of Malaysia's TVET approach is the emphasis on collaboration with industries. The Dual Training System (DTS), which combines institutional learning with workplace training, stands out as a mechanism to bridge the gap between education and industry needs. Through DTS, students gain practical experience, and industries actively participate in shaping the skills of the future workforce (Ministry of Human Resources, 2017).

Industry Advisory Committees further contribute to the synergy between TVET institutions and businesses. These committees, comprised of industry experts, provide invaluable insights into the current needs and trends, ensuring that TVET programs remain relevant and responsive to the evolving job market.

Challenges in TVET Awareness

Despite these policy efforts, challenges persist in raising awareness about TVET in Malaysia. Social perceptions often prioritize academic pathways over vocational ones, leading to a lack of awareness among students and parents about the potential benefits of TVET. There is a need for targeted campaigns to challenge stereotypes and showcase success stories of individuals who have thrived through TVET programs. Additionally, the lack of understanding among industry stakeholders about the value of TVET graduates can hinder collaboration. Bridging this gap requires targeted efforts to communicate the skills and competencies gained through TVET that align with industry needs.

Impact of TVET Awareness on Participation

The level of awareness about TVET directly influences enrollment and participation rates. Studies indicate that regions with higher levels of TVET awareness tend to have increased enrollment in vocational programs. Efforts to raise awareness not only contribute to a more informed decision-making process for students but also foster a positive perception of TVET within the community (Ahmad et al., 2020).

Future Directions and Recommendations

Despite the positive strides, challenges persist in the TVET landscape of Malaysia. The perception of TVET as a secondary option compared to academic pathways remains a hurdle. Efforts are needed to change societal attitudes and showcase the value and potential for success within TVET careers. There is also a need for continuous improvement in the quality of TVET programs. This involves addressing issues related to the competency of instructors, updating facilities, and incorporating modern teaching methodologies to keep pace with technological advancements. Furthermore, to enhance TVET awareness in Malaysia, future initiatives should focus on tailoring communication strategies to different target audiences, including students, parents, and industry stakeholders. Collaboration between educational institutions, industries, and government bodies is crucial for creating a unified and effective awareness campaign. Research should further explore the effectiveness of current awareness initiatives and identify innovative approaches to address persistent challenges.

Research Methodology

The study investigates the existing literature on TVET, labor market trends, and operation management and marketing techniques to gain a thorough understanding of the TVET awareness

and factors impacting the technological advancement priorities among the TVET Training Provider institutions in Malaysia. This study will use qualitative methodology in the process of obtaining input to be used as research findings. Creswell (2012) defines qualitative research as a process of inquiry into the direction of understanding based on the data collection methods used when reviewing a social problem. This study employs an interpretive qualitative approach and uses an inductive approach to understand the context of various industries from the experiences of the experts involved in training interns and fresh graduates. Data will be collected through in-depth interviews and social interactions with industry experts to determine their observations, knowledge, experience and opinions on TVET issues and challenges in Malaysia. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), the experts' range of experience and knowledge would provide rich insights into the need to improve the quality of education.

Conclusion

This study highlights TVET issues and the challenges that need to be tackled through industry experts' perspective. Their experience of accommodating TVET students and graduates as interns and employees will help to produce better quality graduates in the future. Essentially, collaboration with industry is not just about providing employment opportunities, but is a key factor in providing quality skilled workers. In order to achieve an effective and competitive TVET ecosystem, industry involvement in addressing the real issues and challenges of TVET in Malaysia is imperative.

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PENGARUH INOVASI PEMBUNGKUSAN PRODUK TERHADAP PRESTASI PERNIAGAAN USAHAWAN WANITA

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Abstrak

Kajian ini dijalankan bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh inovasi pembungkusan produk terhadap prestasi perniagaan dalam kalangan usahawan wanita. Kajian ini melibatkan kolaborasi antara penyelidik di Universiti Utara Malaysia, Bahagian Pembangunan Wanita, Kesihatan dan Warga Emas di Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah serta Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita Negeri Kedah. Sampel kajian bagi kajian ini ialah seramai 370 orang responden yang merupakan usahawan wanita kategori Industri Kecil Sederhana (IKS). Kaedah persampelan rawak mudah telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Data bagi kajian ini dikumpul melalui borang soal selidik yang dihantar kepada responden dalam kajian ini. Borang soal selidik yang diedarkan adalah dalam versi Bahasa Melayu. Analisis bagi kajian ini dibuat dengan menggunakan perisian *Statistical Package For Social Science* (SPSS) versi 27. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan inovasi pembungkusan produk mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan prestasi perniagaan usahawan wanita. Kesimpulannya usahawan wanita perlu sentiasa mempersiapkan diri dalam menjamin kelestarian serta kelangsungan perniagaan mereka. Mereka juga perlu mengadaptasi dengan perubahan yang berlaku samada dalam persekitaran dalaman mahupun luaran.

Kata kunci: prestasi perniagaan, usahawan wanita, inovasi pembungkusan produk

Pengenalan

Penglibatan wanita dalam tenaga kerja negara amat penting untuk mengubah negara daripada status negara membangun menjadi negara maju (Abd Rani & Hashim 2018; Hassan & Yusof, 2015). Di samping itu, wanita telah dapat meletakkan diri mereka di barisan hadapan sebagai pemimpin dalam banyak bidang kepakaran seperti perubatan, perniagaan, undang-undang, politik dan lain-lain (Thuaibah et al., 2007). Menurut laporan oleh *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor* (GEM) 2015, keusahawanan wanita sangat menyumbang kepada perkembangan ekonomi dan pengurangan kemiskinan di seluruh dunia.

Lebih 190,000 usahawan wanita yang kebanyakannya terbabit dalam perniagaan mikro dan sektor perkhidmatan turut terjejas disebabkan fenomena pandemik Covid-19. Golongan usahawan perlu bijak mengatur strategi baharu untuk terus meraih pendapatan meskipun negara masih berdepan dengan krisis ini. Ia bukanlah mudah untuk meneruskan strategi perniagaan yang dirancang apatah lagi kelangsungan hidup, namun usahawan harus kekal positif dan tidak berputus asa. Dunia kini berubah ke arah pendigitalan. Justeru, adalah penting agar usahawan wanita diberikan ilmu mengenainya. Usahawan wanita juga perlu banyak bersabar serta memenuhi masa dengan meningkatkan ilmu dan pengetahuan dalam kemahiran keusahawanan selain memperkuat fizikal dan mental untuk mengharungi cabaran global ini. Adalah penting bagi memastikan usaha mempertingkatkan usahawan wanita dapat dilaksanakan sehingga dapat mencapai kejayaan.

Pernyataan Masalah

Kajian lepas menunjukkan prestasi usahawan wanita terutamanya usahawan wanita kategori mikro masih kurang memuaskan (Ayob et. al). Pernyataan ini disokong oleh (Revenga, 2020) yang menyatakan bahawa rata-rata usahawan wanita menjalankan perniagaan yang mempunyai usia yang rendah serta saiz perniagaan yang bersaiz atau berskala kecil. Perniagaan yang diceburi oleh mereka juga terdedah kepada risiko penutupan perniagaan. Di samping itu fenomena Covid-19 juga telah menyebabkan cabaran tertentu bagi usahawan wanita di mana kebanyakan perniagaan melibatkan usahawan terjejas secara tidak seimbang disebabkan oleh kemelesetan ekonomi. Seterusnya, dalam fenomena Covid-19 yang mengakibatkan penutupan sekolah serta penjagaan anggota keluarga yang lebih berusia, telah menyebabkan usahawan wanita terpaksa lebih cenderung dalam memberi perhatian kepada keluarga, sementara dalam masa yang sama mereka perlu berusaha untuk menyelamatkan perniagaan mereka (Manolova, Brush, Edelman dan Elam, 2020).

Dalam era pasca pandemik covid-19, inovasi perniagaan perniagaan termasuk inovasi pembungkusan produk dilihat dapat membantu memajukan perniagaan seseorang usahawan. Mahani dan Suraiya (2019) menyatakan bahawa inovasi pembungkusan produk dapat membantu meningkatkan jualan serta jangka hayat sesuatu produk. Kajian yang sama turut menyatakan bahawa masih terdapat kelemahan dalam menghasilkan pembungkusan produk terutamanya dalam kalangan usahawan mikro. Produk yang dibungkus adalah kurang menarik dan tidak tahan lama. Usahawan IKS juga berpendapat bahawa asalkan produk itu menarik dan berkualiti maka ianya sudah mencukupi (Vvine, 2018).

Ulasan Karya

Prestasi perniagaan usahawan wanita

Dalam usaha meningkatkan prestasi perniagaan, seseorang usahawan perlulah mempunyai daya saing yang tinggi, kreatif dan inovatif serta mempunyai iltizam perniagaan yang tinggi dalam menghasilkan barangan serta perkhidmatan yang dapat memenuhi kehendak pelanggan dan juga pasaran (Ayob et. al. 2020). Prestasi sesebuah perniagaan dapat dilihat daripada sudut objektif dan subjektif. Sudut objektif merujuk kepada pengukuran prestasi perniagaan berasaskan faktor kewangan manakala sudut subjektif pula membawa kepada pengukuran berasaskan kepuasan dalam menjalankan sesebuah perniagaan. Dalam kajian lain yang dilakukan oleh Cheung dan Halpern (2010), wanita yang berjaya juga didefinisikan sebagai kemampuan untuk menyeimbangkan antara pekerjaan dan keluarga, di mana walaupun mereka bekerja berjam-jam, mereka masih mempunyai masa untuk keluarga. Selain itu, kejayaan usahawan wanita telah ditentukan berdasarkan pengiktirafan yang mereka terima. Sebagai contoh, Ranasinghe (2012) dalam kajiannya mendefinisikan usahawan wanita berjaya sebagai mereka yang mendapat pengiktirafan atas pencapaian mereka yang luar biasa dari Dewan Industri dan Perdagangan Wanita di Sri Lanka. Di samping itu, Dyke dan Murphy (2006) dalam kajiannya mendapati bahawa wanita menentukan kejayaan seperti ketika mereka dapat menyeimbangkan antara kerjaya dan kehidupan peribadi mereka.

Inovasi pembungkusan produk

Pandemik Covid19 telah memberi kesan ke atas perniagaan tanpa mengira jantina. Namun demikian, pemilik perniagaan wanita menghadapi rintangan tambahan, seperti perbezaan pendidikan, halangan undang-undang untuk pekerjaan, dan tanggungjawab sebagai ibu. Wanita mungkin sukar untuk mendapatkan kewangan kerana sejarah kredit yang terhad, jarang memasuki sektor yang menguntungkan dan sukar untuk mengembangkan hubungan perniagaan (Revenga & Doodley, 2020). Syarikat bersaiz kecil bermungkinan tidak mempunyai kelebihan dari segi

kekuatan kewangan di dalam pemasaran tetapi mereka masih boleh menonjol dengan memikirkan idea perniagaan yang kreatif. Perniagaan bersaiz kecil sering mengabaikan potensi pembungkusan di dalam membantu jualan produk mereka. Pernyataan ini disokong oleh Rich Cohen, pengasas dan presiden Distant Village Packaging, sebuah syarikat reka bentuk dan pengeluaran pembungkusan lestari yang berpusat di Chicago.

Usahawan wanita perlu mempunyai sikap proaktif dalam usaha mendapatkan maklumat, dorongan serta bimbingan dalam usaha meningkatkan pengetahuan dalam aspek pembungkusan produk. Produk yang dibungkus dengan plastik kebiasaannya tidak tahan lama, berbau kurang enak serta mudah lembik (Mahani dan Suraiya, 2019). Dalam era teknologi yang canggih ini, maklumat seperti inovasi pembungkusan produk membolehkan sesebuah perniagaan menghasilkan pembungkusan produk yang unik dan berbeza berbanding dengan produk pesaing.

Usahawan wanita

Golongan wanita ini selalu dianggap lemah dan tidak mempunyai daya kesedaran untuk mengubah nasib ke arah satu taraf kehidupan yang lebih baik. Menurut Abd Rani (2018) dan Rahayu (2012) usahawan wanita sering menghadapi masalah seperti kekurangan latihan dan pendedahan kepada aspek yang berkaitan dengan keusahawanan. Di samping itu, kumpulan ini juga menghadapi masalah kekurangan pengetahuan mengenai peluang perniagaan serta pelbagai skim bantuan kerajaan. Kajian terdahulu menunjukkan bahawa golongan usahawan wanita paling ramai terjejas bukan sahaja disebabkan oleh saiz dan usia perniagaan yang lebih rendah, sektor perniagaan yang diceburi oleh mereka juga terjejas teruk akibat pandemik Covid-19 (Manolova et. al, 2020). Kumpulan ini juga dikatakan tidak memiliki peluang perniagaan untuk memasarkan produk atau perkhidmatan yang mereka hasilkan.

Pembangunan Hipotesis

Hubungan antara inovasi pembungkusan produk dan prestasi perniagaan dalam kalangan usahawan wanita

Aspek inovasi pembungkusan produk adalah penting dalam sesebuah perniagaan. Syarikat bersaiz kecil bermungkinan tidak mempunyai kelebihan dari segi kekuatan kewangan di dalam pemasaran tetapi mereka masih boleh menonjol dengan memikirkan idea perniagaan yang kreatif. Perniagaan bersaiz kecil sering mengabaikan potensi pembungkusan di dalam membantu jualan produk mereka. Pernyataan ini disokong oleh Rich Cohen, pengasas dan presiden Distant Village Packaging, sebuah syarikat reka bentuk dan pengeluaran pembungkusan lestari yang berpusat di

Chicago, Amerika Syarikat. Pembungkusan produk yang berinovatif dapat membantu meningkatkan prestasi perniagaan melalui peningkatan hasil jualan

H1: Terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara inovasi pembungkusan produk dan prestasi perniagaan dalam kalangan usahawan wanita.

Rekabentuk kajian

Terdapat dua jenis kajian untuk reka bentuk kajian iaitu kajian kuantitatif dan kualitatif bagi pendekatan analisis terhadap pengumpulan data (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Dalam kajian ini, reka bentuk kuantitatif dipilih sebagai kaedah pengumpulan data kerana ia menentukan pendekatan deduktif kepada penyelidikan untuk membuktikan dan menyangkal teori yang sedia ada (Leavy, 2017). Kaedah keratan rentas telah dijalankan kerana kekangan masa untuk mengkaji hubungan penggunaan dompet digital dengan faktor-faktor yang digariskan dalam kajian ini.

Populasi dan sampel

Terdapat 11,812 orang usahawan wanita di negeri Kedah Darul Aman. Daripada jumlah tersebut seramai 370 orang usahawan yang berdaftar di bawah Pertubuhan Bukan Kerajaan dan agensi wanita di negeri Kedah seperti Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita Negeri Kedah Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Kedah telah dipilih untuk menyertai kajian ini.

Unit analisis

Unit analisis dalam kajian ini melibatkan individu sebagai responden yang memenuhi keperluan kajian. Oleh itu, data yang dikumpul daripada setiap responden dianalisis sebagai sumber data individu.

Pengumpulan data dan Teknik persampelan

Kajian ini melibatkan usahawan wanita yang berdaftar di bawah Jabatan Pembangunan Wanita Negeri Kedah dan Yayasan Sultanah Bahiyah Kedah. Pengumpulan data dijalankan melalui borang soal selidik yang akan dibangunkan. Teknik persampelan yang akan digunakan adalah pula ialah teknik persampelan rawak mudah memandangkan kerangka persampelan adalah tersedia.

Analisis Data

Analisis data dalam kajian ini akan menggunakan perisian *Statistical Package of Social Science* (SPSS) versi 27. Kajian ini melibatkan analisis data iaitu analisis inferential.

Dapatan Kajian

Analisis kebolehpercayaan

Analisis kebolehpercayaan menunjukkan bahawa bagi pemboleh ubah bersandar iaitu prestasi perniagaan yang mengandungi 9 item, nilai Cronbach alpha adalah 0.819. Manakala bagi pemboleh ubah tidak bersandar iaitu inovasi pembungkusan produk pula, jumlah item yang digunakan ialah 10 dan nilai Cronbach alpha ialah 0.868. Jadual di bawah menunjukkan jumlah item dan juga nilai Cronbach alpha bagi setiap pemboleh ubah dalam kajian ini.

Jadual 1: Nilai Cronbach Alpha

Pemboleh ubah	Bilangan item	Cronbach alpha
Prestasi perniagaan	9	0.819
Inovasi Pembungkusan	10	0.868

Analisis Korelasi Pearson

Analisis Korelasi Pearson telah dijalankan untuk menentukan kekuatan dan arah hubungan antara pemboleh ubah bebas iaitu inovasi pembungkusan produk serta pemboleh ubah bersandar; prestasi perniagaan. Salkind (2009) menyatakan bahawa korelasi antara 0.8 dan 1.0 dilihat sangat kuat, manakala korelasi antara 0.6 dan 0.8 menunjukkan korelasi yang kuat, kemudian antara 0.4 dan 0.6 dicerminkan sebagai sederhana dan korelasi antara 0.0 dan 0.2 dianggap sebagai sangat korelasi yang lemah. Dapatan daripada analisis ini digunakan dalam menguji kepentingan hubungan hipotesis antara pemboleh ubah. Jadual menunjukkan dapatan analisis Korelasi Pearson. Daripada jadual di atas, keputusan menunjukkan inovasi pembungkusan produk mempunyai hubungan signifikan dengan prestasi perniagaan iaitu pada pekali korelasi (r) = 0.420.

Jadual 2: Korelasi Pearson di antara pemboleh ubah.

	Prestasi perniagaan	Inovasi Pembungkusan
Prestasi perniagaan	1	0.420**
Inovasi Pembungkusan	0.420	1

Analisis Regresi

Analisis regresi digunakan untuk menjelaskan sumbangan pemboleh ubah bebas iaitu inovasi pembungkusan produk kepada varians prestasi perniagaan. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa

persamaan regresi dengan peramal $R = 0.664$, $R^2 = 0.440$, R^2 Dilaraskan = 0.419. Ini mendedahkan bahawa peramal (inovasi pembungkusan produk) menyumbang 41.9% tahap varians dalam menjelaskan prestasi perniagaan. Seperti yang digambarkan oleh jadual di bawah, keputusan menunjukkan bahawa inovasi pembungkusan produk yang ditunjukkan dengan nilai beta (0.215) mempunyai sumbangan dalam menjelaskan varians dalam prestasi perniagaan.

Tambahan pula, analisis regresi menunjukkan inovasi pembungkusan produk menunjukkan bukti hubungan yang signifikan ($\beta = 0.215$, $t = 0.469$, $P > 0.05$) dengan prestasi perniagaan, iaitu nilai- β adalah sama dengan 0.215, nilai-t ialah 0.469 dan nilai P 0.044 iaitu lebih kecil daripada 0.05. Oleh itu, hipotesis H1, diterima menunjukkan bahawa inovasi pembungkusan produk mempunyai pengaruh positif terhadap prestasi perniagaan. Jadual berikut membentangkan hasil analisis regresi yang dilakukan dalam kajian.

Jadual 3 : Analisis Regresi

Model		B	S.E	Beta	t	Sig.
1	Constant	3.421	1.491		2.295	.033
	Inovasi Pembungkusan	.304	.648	.215	.469	.044
R						.664
R ²						.440
R ² Adj.						.419
Pembolehubah bersandar: Prestasi perniagaan						
** $p \leq 0.05$						

Perbincangan

Terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara inovasi pembungkusan produk dan prestasi perniagaan

Daripada analisis korelasi, ia menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan korelasi yang tinggi antara inovasi pembungkusan produk dan prestasi perniagaan dalam kalangan usahawan wanita disokong oleh analisis regresi, ia mencerminkan bahawa nilai beta positif ($\beta=0.361$) dengan nilai t skor pada 8.135 dan tahap keertian kurang daripada itu. julat yang boleh diterima pada $p=0.000$, oleh itu ia membawa persepsi keselamatan mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan prestasi perniagaan usahawan wanita. Ia juga menggambarkan inovasi pembungkusan produk mempunyai

pengaruh yang kuat ke atas pembolehubah prestasi perniagaan dalam kalangan usahawan wanita di Malaysia. Penemuan ini menyokong keputusan kajian yang diperolehi oleh Wong & Mo (2019) yang menunjukkan bahawa inovasi pembungkusan produk adalah elemen penting dan boleh mempengaruhi kejayaan sesebuah perniagaan. Adalah dipercayai bahawa bilangan produk dengan pembungkusan yang berinovatif akan meningkat dan akan menjadi faktor penting yang menentukan prestasi perniagaan usahawan wanita. Justeru lebih banyak pendedahan mengenai pembungkusan kreatif diperlukan bagi membantu golongan usahawan wanita ini agar terus berdayasaing pada masa hadapan. Sebagai kesimpulan, hipotesis 1 adalah diterima.

Syor bagi kajian masa depan

Terdapat beberapa cadangan untuk kajian masa depan yang mungkin melibatkan peranan pembolehubah penyederhana contohnya sokongan sosial serta jaringan perniagaan yang secara tidak langsung mencetuskan lebih ramai kejayaan dalam kalangan usahawan wanita. Selain itu, kajian masa depan juga mungkin meneroka faktor-faktor lain yang boleh menyumbang kepada kejayaan usahawan wanita dalam era digitalisasi ini. Bagi penyedia perkhidmatan, mereka memainkan peranan penting untuk mencapai visi menyokong negara dalam merealisasikan Dasar Keusahawanan Negara 2030 bagi melahirkan lebih ramai usahawan berjaya di Malaysia.

Kesimpulan

Hasil kajian yang dijalankan telah menunjukkan bahawa inovasi pembungkusan produk mempunyai hubungan yang positif terhadap prestasi perniagaan dalam kalangan usahawan wanita. Faktor ini dilihat penting dalam membantu meningkatkan prestasi perniagaan dalam era yang penuh cabaran ini. Justeru usahawan wanita perlu sentiasa mempersiapkan diri dalam menjamin kelestarian serta kelangsungan perniagaan mereka. Mereka juga perlu mengadaptasi dengan perubahan yang berlaku samada dalam persekitaran dalaman mahupun luaran. Jika ini dapat direalisasi, sudah tentu ianya dapat membantu meningkatkan ekonomi negara seterusnya mengurangkan kadar kemiskinan dalam negara.

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GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AS POTENTIAL MODERATOR IN ENHANCING THE BUSINESS PERFORMANCE OF MALAYSIAN SME WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

This concept paper is to study the relationship of SME women entrepreneurs in Malaysia between business networking and business performance. This paper sets out a framework that illustrates the moderating role of government support in the relationship between business networking and business performance. The proposed framework is based on the scope literature review. Recognizing its importance to the government, the current study aims to examine the moderating effect of government support on the relationship between business networking and business performance in Malaysia, as few studies have reported independently on the work they examined. In obtaining the data and answering the research questions respectively, a questionnaire survey and the PLS - SEM analysis methods will be used. This study also seeks to look at factors that can improve in-depth knowledge on this topic. Furthermore, this study will also provide a clearer understanding as well as the contribution of literature on the entrepreneurial performance of women's PMKS in Malaysia with business networking and government support as a moderation variable. In addition, this study is expected to assist researchers, policy makers and economists in taking a closer look at the entrepreneurial performance of the traditional confectionery industry.

Keywords: Business Networking, Business Performance, Government Support, SME & Women Entrepreneurs

Introduction

Women are known to be a pillar of life that can educate and shape the next generation and can also contribute to economic performance. Women have a large population in the world and the female population is estimated to be half the total population in the world. (Abdul Bari, 2015) (United Nations, 2022)

The UN has built 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agendas for the 2030 target. The fifth agenda is gender equality, which aims to ensure women's involvement in the administration of life and by providing equality of opportunity in global economic growth in general. Further UN Women has established a strategic plan 2022-2025 with the objective of guiding and facilitating the achievement of the fifth objective of the SDGs with the specifics of women's economic empowerment through the involvement of women in entrepreneurship. (UN Women, 2021)

As early as the 1930s, Schumpeter gave the definition of entrepreneurship "those who initiate new combinations, new markets, products or distribution systems". Meanwhile De Bruin et al., (2006); and Davidsson (2005), it is defined as an effort in starting a new business by employing yourself, opening a new organization or developing an existing business either individually, in a group or through a company that is already established. The producer of the entrepreneurship report, Global Entrepreneur Monitor, also gives the definition of entrepreneurship as the activity of starting and working on a business as well as spending time and finance in the success of the business.

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2022) It is estimated that 274 billion women worldwide are involved in business start-ups and one in three of the business owners are established businesses. This shows that there is a significant contribution of women entrepreneurs to the entire economy and social world. In addition, almost half of active entrepreneurs are women and 11 percent are at the initial or *total early stage* (TEA) in entrepreneurial activity. (TEA; defined by GEM as an individual aged 18 to 64 who ventures into entrepreneurship or as its new business manager). This data shows women have a high involvement in entrepreneurship and have an impact and impact on the market, community, and economy.

In the context of Malaysia, women's involvement in the world of entrepreneurship increases day by day. Entrepreneurship is seen as one of the career areas for women who can indirectly change the fate of their lives. According to the former Minister of Higher Education, Datin Seri Dr Noraini Ahmad, women Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have relevantly contributed RM69.1 billion to GDP while also opening almost 800,000 jobs. (Sinar Daily, 2022) In addition, women

are also encouraged to participate and engage with the country's performance including joining the entrepreneurial world which has impacted the number of women's enterprises which has increased by 44 percent since 2011 according to the 2016 National Economic Census data.

Women entrepreneurship is important for the economic performance of the country including Malaysia. Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) is a business entity that has been registered with the Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM) or anybody of similar status as a professional or district office of East Malaysia. In 2013, SME Corporation raised the threshold qualification rate for annual sales and the number of employees for the entire economic sector. There are three categories of SMEs in Malaysia which are micro, small and medium. This category of SMEs can be differentiated by the annual sales volume and the number of employees of an SME. The definition and classification characteristics of the SME category in Malaysia are explained in Table 1. (Isa et al., 2019)

Table 1. Definition and classification of SMEs in Malaysia

Category	Manufacturing Sector	Services Sectors and Other Sectors
Micro	Annual Sales less than RM300,000 Or have less than 5 employees	Annual Sales less than RM300,000 Or have less than 5 employees
Small	Annual Sales from RM300,000 to or less than RM15 million Or have 5 to 75 employees	Annual Sales range from RM300,000 to or less than RM3 million Or have 5 to 30 employees
Simple	Annual Sales of RM15 million to or less than RM50 million or less Or have 75 to or less than 200 employees	Annual Sales of RM3 million to RM50 million or less Or have 30 to or less than 75 employees

Source: Malaysian Small and Medium Enterprises.

To this day, women entrepreneurs contribute a lot to the country's economy, (Ambepitiya, 2016) especially micro, small, and medium women entrepreneurs (SMEs). It can be seen that today is that studies on entrepreneurs are gaining more attention and there is a lot of demand for the opening of the cost of entrepreneurship in learning in universities in Malaysia although the risk of failure in business is 70 per cent. (Hisrich & Brush, 1985)

The female population in Malaysia for the first quarter of 2023 was 47.3% of Malaysia's total population of 33.2 billion, while 6.1 billion were working women. Based on data up to 2022

published by the Department of Statistics Malaysia, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (PMKS) comprised 97.4% (1,173,601 firms) of the total business establishments in Malaysia. Meanwhile, based on the 2016 Economic Census, 20.6 per cent of women's sole proprietorship businesses out of the total number of SMEs in Malaysia and Malaysian women's enterprises experienced an increase of 44 per cent since 2011 and 20.6 percent. (Department of Statistic Malaysia, 2023) (Md Zaki, 2021)

Generally, women's business performance is measured economically through financial and non-financial. Financial measures of business performance are such as assets, sales, profitability, number of employees and the average sustainability of the business. Whereas customer satisfaction, self-achievement and self-development are counted as non-financial performance. (Zin & Ibrahim, 2020) ; (Hyvönen, 2007; Kader et al., 2009; Reijonen, 2008; W. M. Y. Teoh & Chong, 2008)

In the context of entrepreneurial activity, most of the studies done to look at business performance are through several factors such as the personality factors of business entrepreneurs and it is often associated with the Big Five model in finding the success of a business (Postigo et al., 2021) . This is because personality is the closest factor that is strongly related to entrepreneurship. In addition, motivational factors are also widely associated with business performance as through motivation can improve business performance. There are a number of other factors that are also often associated with personality such as self-efficacy, innovation, achievement motivation, optimism, stress tolerance, risk management and internal control locus. (Chang Chang & Chen, 2018; Lingappa et al., 2023; Salim et al., 2020; Singh, 2008) (Cuesta et al., 2018; Frese & Gielnik, 2014; Muñoz et al., 2014; Postigo et al., 2021; Rauch & Frese, 2014; Suárez-Álvarez & Pedrosa, 2016)

Malaysia has been hit by the Covid-19 pandemic which has left all Malaysians locked up at home at the behest of the country's government. As a result, many businesses have been forced to close due to losses, many workers are laid off and Malaysians lack the income to survive. Therefore, online businesses are getting attention and there are firms that need to change the way they do business digitally online or start a new business that is also online.

According to F. Li et al. (2020) and Marshall et al. (2015) to him, most of the businesses that fail in disasters are women's enterprises rather than men because women are forced to close their businesses to protect their families, leaving them with no income. Therefore, with the increasingly sophisticated and convenient technology, women easily switch their business management to

online even during the disasters especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study wanted to see how much social media adoption can impact the performance of businesses undertaken by Malaysian women entrepreneurs. (Pacho, 2023)

Among the factors in improving business performance is through business networking. (Abdul Rahman et al., 2023) The business network has been known as a significant factor for a PMKS firm to achieve success or improve business performance. In addition, the business network is also able to make a business unique and different from other businesses.

Women who are often associated with various responsibilities especially at home are often associated with failure to expand the network due to lack of time and the effect of not being able to participate in various pampering activities. Therefore, being a woman who has a business will have an impact on her business as it does not have the opportunity to build a business network. (Abd Rani et al., 2019)

Business networking is important in maintaining business performance and is the best factor especially in sharing business information (Abdul Rahman et al., 2023) . In addition, according to him, business networks are able to support women entrepreneurs in building new relationships as well as maintaining existing relationships to have business performance. The three things that can strengthen the business network to improve business performance is through improved communication, social relationships and identifying opportunities. Therefore, this study was conducted taking into account the business networking factors in the business performance of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. Moletta et al. (2021) Crittenden et al. (2019).

The annual SME report 2018-2019 states that women's enterprises are experiencing a number of problems and among them are in terms of receiving financial assistance provided by the government. According to the report, there was a high demand for financing assistance for women's firms, which was 33 per cent of the total respondents at 22 percent but had a low approval rate of 83 per cent (2019) . No specific reason was stated, only among the factors was the lack of documentation which was seen as less reasonable. Therefore, the study of business performance, especially those of women's firms, is a necessity.

Tambunan found female entrepreneurs in Asian countries managing small businesses easily through low-capital start-ups, having skills in running businesses and technology applications. Among the causes of the lack of improvement in women's business performance is due to the lack of financial support which is the main need to start a business or expand the business. In addition,

gender factors also make it difficult for women entrepreneurs to receive opportunities in obtaining financial assistance. (2009) (Mohd Suhaimi et al., 2018) ; (Al-Shami et al., 2020; Basit et al., 2020; CHIPFUNDE et al., 2021; Shahrizan et al., 2020)

Literature Review

Business Networking to Women's Business Performance

There is a lot of evidence showing that business networking has a positive impact on women's business performance. Business networking is known as an activity that can help improve the performance of an enterprise (Gilmore et al., 2006) . This statement is not in line with, her research states that business networking is challenging in the entrepreneurial world especially for women. In order to improve business performance, women's involvement in entrepreneurship is seen to be increasing and when women are involved in business networking to grow their business, it is seen as effective and has a positive impact. (Hamed, 1995; Wangari & Kenyatta, 2021)

Therefore, it is important for women SMEs especially in playing the role of building and managing entrepreneurial networks to improve entrepreneurial performance. Many studies believe that through business networks, entrepreneurial performance will increase. Through business networks, the potential for an enterprise to fail is less but rather increases the potential for success. (Hampton et al., 2009,; Abd Rani et al., (2019); Bogren et al., (2013); Moletta et al., (2021); Wangari & Kenyatta, (2021); Zin & Ibrahim, 2020) ; Zin & Ibrahim,(2020)

Thus, we proposed that:

P1: There is a significant relationship between Business Networking and Women Business Performance

Government Support as a Moderator

The government plays a big role in improving the performance of entrepreneurship. To improve business performance, the government should provide support to entrepreneurs, especially SME women entrepreneurs (Das & Rangarajan, 2020), (Kyal et al., 2022) . There is an argument that the government's support is not only subject to financial support, but also needs to be broader as an example of the provision of training and business skills development. Roxas and Chadee (2012).

There are several literary contributions that prove that the moderator of government support can further improve business performance. This is because with the support of this government, the

business performance of women SMEs will improve due to the presence of strong support. (Kyal et al., 2022; C. Li et al., 2020; Mohd Shariff et al., 2010; Saberi & Hamdan, 2019; Yoon et al., 2018).

Thus, the following proposition is formulated:

P2: Government Support Moderate the Relationship between Business Networking and Business Performance.

Methodology

In analyzing and interpreting how the government supports components moderate the relationship between business networking and women business performance of SME from three states in the north of peninsular Malaysia namely Perlis, Kedah and Penang in Malaysia, the current study developed a research framework from the theoretical perspective. The variables to be examined are proposed as shown in Figure 1 in the research framework.

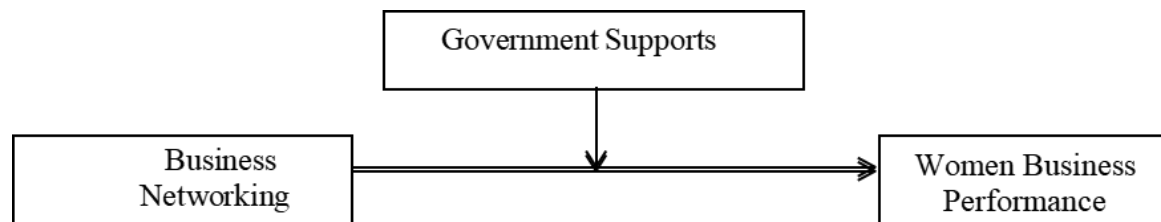


Figure 1: Proposed Research Framework

Conclusion

This paper proposes a framework that illustrates the moderating effect on the relationship between business networking and women business performance of government supports. According to Atela et al., (2018), entrepreneurial research is an important study and has been given attention in recent years, but it is still lacking when it comes to women's PMKS business in Malaysia. Therefore, this study is a necessity as this business is seen as one of the opportunities for women to increase their income and maintain their existing business performance.

This study also seeks to look at factors that can improve in-depth knowledge on this topic. Furthermore, this study will also provide a clearer understanding as well as the contribution of

literature on the entrepreneurial performance of women's PMKS in Malaysia with business networking and government support as a moderation variable. In addition, this study is expected to assist researchers, policy makers and economists in taking a closer look at the entrepreneurial performance of the traditional confectionery industry.

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SOCIAL MEDIA ADOPTION AS POTENTIAL INDEPENDENT VARIABLE FOR WOMEN BUSINESS PERFORMANCE: A PURPOSED RESEARCH STRUCTURE

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Abstract

The objective of this conceptual paper is to study the relationship between social media adoption and the business performance of women entrepreneurship in Malaysia. This paper has come out with an illustration of a framework that shows the relationship between social media adoption and women's business performance. This proposed framework is based on the scope of the literature review. In collecting the data and responding to the research question respectively, a survey questionnaire and PLS-SEM analysis methods were determined to be applied. The outcomes of this study are expected to contribute to the literature on women entrepreneurs and thus recognize how local government would improve the involvement of women in entrepreneurship.

Keywords: social media, social media adoption, business performance, women entrepreneurs, TAM.

Introduction

The usage of the internet has been rising since the period of the Movement Control Order (MCO) in Malaysia up until 86% of the total population according to the Communications and Multimedia Ministry, there are approximately 28 million users of social media in Malaysia as of January 2021. The figures showed that Malaysians were among the most active in social media during that time. Moreover, the number had increased by two million, or 7%, in just a year from 2020, believed due to the pandemic situation which caused people to stay home most of the time following the implementation of the movement control order.

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has significantly changed the quality of people's lives. The reach of social media has broadened in recent years. Due to the low technical skills needed, entrepreneurs use social media as a platform for commerce (Siamagka et al., 2015). Entrepreneurs are seeing an increasingly popular substitute medium for their business purposes. It enables entrepreneurs to engage with numerous people instead of just one (Ahmad et al., 2019).

The advancement of infrastructure and technological development is a must for a nation to be considered a developed country. It encompasses the advancement of every single citizen, regardless of gender, who will experience an enhanced standard of living. A nation's ability to prosper economically depends on its gender equality (World Bank, 2006). Some of the main concerns that require specific attention to make the world a better place to live are women's impoverished conditions, limited social mobility, and inequality at home and at work (Saikia, 2018). Women continue to face biases in developing nations when it comes to their access to economic resources, employment opportunities, education, and political decision-making (Dutta, 2022).

Women and entrepreneurship are no longer peculiar in this world. Women who own business around the world is estimated at 274 million and almost half of the entrepreneurs are active in the business and 11 percent are at the level of the beginning or the total early stage (TEA) of the business. (The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2022). According to SMEs, women in relevance accounted for RM69.1 billion to the GDP in addition to opening almost 800,000 opportunity employment (Rays Daily, 2022). Moreover, 44 percent since the year 2011, women entrepreneurs in Malaysia also had seen an increase in involvement in entrepreneurial. This shows that there is a contribution of significant entrepreneurs women across the economic and social world including

Malaysia. This shows that there is a high involvement of women in the entrepreneurial world and had an impact on the market, economy, and community.

Despite the numerous studies that have been done related to social media adoption's effect on business performance, there is still a lack of research that studies on social media adoption among women entrepreneurs (Beninger et al., 2016; Emmanuel et al., 2022; Puriwat & Tripopsakul, 2021; Sudha, 2020; Yeong et al., 2022) that in need for the study especially in Malaysia (Yeong et al., 2022).

Literature review

Business Performance

Based on (Moore & Penrose, 1960), performance is a measurement of how well a company accomplishes its goals. Therefore, there are two ways to measure the concept of business performance which are financial performance and non-financial performance (Rauch et al., 2009; Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). According to (Stam et al., 2014), the financial performance measurement will look into economic factors such as return on assets, return on equity, profit to revenue ratio, cash flow from operations, profit, return on investment, revenue growth, market share gained, productivity, effectiveness (i.e., sales growth and range of product or service growth), and efficiency (i.e., productivity and profitability growth) (Al-Mamary et al., 2020). While brand loyalty, customer base, company image, reputation, quality of human resources, and investment in research and development including the creation of new products, the ability to establish a competitive profile (Al-Mamary et al., 2020) quality, satisfaction, efficiency of the market and market development are other non-financial performance indicators (Zehir et al., 2016). In this research, the business performance of women entrepreneurs will be measured in both measurements to see how adopting social media can impact business performance.

Social media adoption

Obar & Wildman (2015) defines social media as computer-mediated technology that facilitates and enhances communication, information exchange, and other types of expression through online groups and networks. Social media are producing material and communicating with each other through many-to-many as an alternative to the conventional approach "one-to-many,". This has led to new innovative ways of interacting, participating, cooperating, and collaborating on communication methods (McCann & Barlow, 2015). Social media has been crucial for assisting many businesses to develop. It has made it easier for consumers and clients to engage with various

businesses and has given enterprises new ways to reach their target market at lower or no cost (Oladipo et al., 2020).

The term social media adoption is defined as the source of the internet that has the ability as well as the force of the power of technology that is capable of providing complimentary synergy with the resources of the organization to another (Tajvidi & Karami, 2021). Additionally, Bernoff & Li (2008) stated that social media is important for research and development, sales, support customers, operations and marketing in the business. The application of technology such as social media to drive the growth of the organization by achieving the goal of success should be accelerated in tandem with the requirements of the current (Faridah et al., 2019).

Therefore this study intends to see how women entrepreneurs in Malaysia are adopting social media into their businesses because some studies have proven the adoption of social media in business could have a positive effect and impact on the business performance (Chakraborty & Biswal, 2023; Constantinidis, 2011; Faridah et al., 2019; Sihotang et al., 2020; Tanti et al., 2021). Thus, we proposed that:

P1: There is a significant relationship between social media adoption (SM Adoption) and business performance

Methodology

In analyzing and interpreting how social media adoption (SMA) affects the business performance of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The current study developed a research framework from the theoretical perspective and this perspective includes the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) theory. The variables to be examined are proposed as shown in Figure 1 in the research framework.

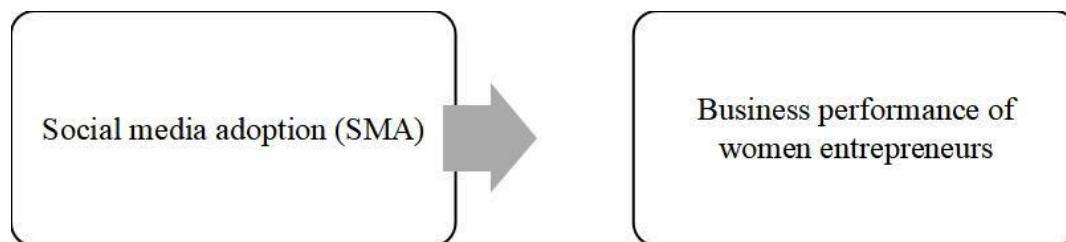


Figure 1: The Proposed Research Framework

Conclusion

This study proposes a framework that represents the relationship between social media adoption (SMA) and the business performance of women entrepreneurs. Theoretically, this paper will provide a view into the relationship between women entrepreneurs in Malaysia regarding social media adoption and business performance. Moreover, by focusing on the social media adoption of women entrepreneur as the main subject in this study, it could be an extension of the women entrepreneur literature especially on business performance that have been conducted in Malaysia (Nair et al., 2022; Yeong et al., 2022; Yong et al., 2021).

Furthermore, this study also will provide Malaysian women entrepreneurs with better knowledge and information through social media adoption as a strategy to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of business performance that has been managed by women themselves.

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**THE MEDIATING EFFECT OF TQM ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MARKET
ORIENTATION
AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**

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Abstract

This paper examined the role of total quality management (TQM) in mediating the relationship between market orientation (MO) and organizational performance (OP). This quantitative research used a survey. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) managers at 143 Jordanian businesses provided the necessary data. To analyze the hypothesized paths, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) and bootstrap techniques were used. The data gathered were screened using SPSS (version 26), and these hypothesized relationships were tested with that data. The outcomes indicated that MO and TQM substantially impacted organizational performance. Additionally, the relationship between market orientation and organizational performance was mediated by total quality management. Developing nations look to the ICT sector to create new jobs and accelerate their economic progress. The findings improve the understanding of the associations and impacts of MO and TQM on organizational performance among owners/managers, practitioners, and academics in the ICT sector. Owners and managers can use the findings as a guide to make better and more effective decisions for applying MO with TQM standards to achieve superior performance and engage in ongoing market competition. Owners/managers should develop improved and effective decisions for implementing MO with TQM practices. This is the first empirical research that has examined the links among total quality management, market orientation and organizational performance in an ICT sector within an Arab developing country context.

Keywords: Market orientation, quality management, organizational performance, ICT sector, Jordan.

Introduction

Companies in the Information communication and technology (ICT) sectors are among the fastest developing and growing organizations, and they are constantly working to strengthen capabilities and strategies to increase performance (Mustafa & Badarin, 2016). Per the Information and Communication Technology Association-Jordan (Int@j, 2021), the significance of the ICT sector in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan stems from the extent of its contributions to the nation's gross domestic product, the volume of its investments, and the employment opportunities this sector provides; however, the profits of Jordanian ICT companies declined in the past three years, as mentioned by Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) 2020. Consequently, performance needs to be continually improved for ICT companies to support the national economy's progress (Almajali et al., 2021; Valinejad & Rahmani, 2018). The main issue related to this improvement is boosting the OP of Jordanian ICT companies.

A lack of managerial experience, poor market orientation and weak implementation of quality management is to blame for the fragility of organizational performance in most emerging nations (Asad, Chethiyar, & Ali, 2020). In Jordan, the argument has been made that the underperformance of Jordanian ICT firms might be ascribed to the absence of a high enough quality to satisfy customer requests. (TRC, 2020; Al-Zyoud et al., 2021). Moreover, a key factor behind poor growth is the absence of a strategic market orientation (Asha'al, Obeidat, & Alhmoud, 2019). So, the current study aimed to examine quality and market orientation issues that affect the OP of the Jordanian ICT sector.

Implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) aims to supply clients with high-quality products, goods or services, lower costs, and boost productivity (Ahmad et al., 2017). Adopting Market Orientation (MO) methods is another crucial component. MO is to develop a market culture that emphasizes the competitiveness of markets and boosts Customer desires (Asad & Abid, 2018) and OP. Consequently, It is crucial to emphasize the value of a good working environment (Asad et al., 2018).

For ICT businesses to stand out from the competition and gain a competitive advantage, they must offer high-quality services and goods and adopt more Market Orientation (MO) practices (Asha'al et al., 2019). Thus, many practitioners introduced MO with TQM to improve quality performance, reduce cost, and increase productivity, asserting that MO and TQM are complementary processes for improving organizational performance in the services sector (Asad et al., 2020; Ali et al., 2020; Wang, Chen, & Chen, 2012). So, ICT organizations initiated individual efforts to gain the

philosophy of sustainability by implementing TQM and MO together (Demirbag et al., 2006). Thus, this study aims to determine how TQM has affected the link between MO and OP in the Jordanian ICT industry.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

In the Jordanian ICT industry, the study investigates the impact of MO on OP and TQM as mediating variables on the OP. Additionally, this study presents empirical data from the assessed literature to support the creation of hypotheses and build a theoretical framework.

Organizational Performance

OP is essentially a gauge of how ICT firms use their resources to generate revenue (Antoni, Jie, & Abareshi, 2020). Performance can be characterized as the results of business operations or the goal achievement (Shakoor, Khan, & Nawab, 2010), efficient management of capital (Khomnich et al., 2016), and client and employee satisfaction (Amin et al., 2017; Sharma & Gadenne, 2008). Financial and non-financial performance is included in performance indicators (Homaid, Minai, & Rahman, 2015). Additionally, performance depicts total gains and losses (Jaca & Psomas, 2015). The financial, business process, customer, employee, and learning and commitment perspectives are based on performance evaluation (Hidayat, Akhmad, & Mu'alim, 2015).

A review of these different types of OP indicators indicates that no agreement exists about specific indicators to measure OP in the ICT sector. Moreover, there is a lack of studies that use the holistic approach to measure OP based on several factors, despite the BCS approach, which is the best method to measure op in the service sector (Homaid et al., 2015; Kaplan & Norton, 2001). For the OP is multidimensional as a single construct, simultaneous evaluation of these various dimensions is preferable to individual performance dimension consideration when inferring the efficacy of managerial activities (Carton, 2004). In particular, in the services sector, market performance, customer relationship, and operational performance play an important role in improving the holistic OP (Psomas & Jaca, 2016). At the same time, Sabella et al. (2014) stated the role of innovation performance and employees' performance. At the same time, Homaid et al. (2015) added social responsibility because of its important role in the service sector. Each of the following indicators reflects a specific level of activity: customer connections, staff employee performance, innovation performance, operational performance, market performance, and social responsibility (Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014). In previous studies, inventory performance was not mentioned in the services sector due to its lack of importance in improving organizational performance.

The focus of this study is on OP in the services sector. Sadikoglu and Olcay's (2014) financial and non-financial measurements can be used to evaluate an OP. Sadikoglu and Olcay (2014) employed a variety of performance factors to examine all facets of an organization's success, including “operational performance, employee performance, innovation performance, customer results, social responsibility, and market and financial performance”.

Total Quality Management

TQM is a method for providing customers with high-quality goods, services, and products while boosting efficiency. Anderson (1994), who advocated for a thorough approach to quality that relies primarily on a system of prevention rather than correction, made the initial proposal for total quality control. Aróstegui, Bustinza-Sánche and Molina (2015) stated that TQM is a philosophy that helps to improve an organization’s competitiveness through continuous improvement of the process management and environment organization, quality services and products. Also, TQM is defined as a strategy involving continuous improvement, customer focus, effective process management, management leadership, product services design, and staff education and training (Anderson, 1994). According to Talwar (2011), focusing on a select few quality elements that rivals disregard can help an institution gain a competitive advantage. Rohaizan and Tan (2011) indicated that TQM remains problematic in many institutions because of the implementation of a wrong strategy and irregular process, lack of understanding about TQM practices and wrong deployment of the driven success factors. Thus, scholars need to comprehend key factors for important practices. As a result, the study identified the TQM practices based on the quality gurus. Leadership management, supplier relationships, customer focus, strategic planning teamwork, and information analysis were determined based on the opinions of past ICT practitioners.

Many studies have examined TQM procedures and their impact on OP in TQM literature. However, just a small number of these researchers have demonstrated that TQM significantly and favorably influences performance (Jaca & Psomas, 2015; Homaid et al., 2015; Jiménez et al., 2015; Al-Dhaafri, 2016; Amin et al., 2017; Shafiq et al., 2017; Marina Godinho Antunes, 2018; Honarpour et al., 2018; Escrig-Tena et al., 2018). Additionally, some organizations report less than optimal results (Sila, 2007; Yang et al., 2009). Consequently, given these conflicting results, more study into the relationship between TQM and performance is necessary. As a result, this hypothesis is posited.

H1. TQM positively affects organizational performance

Market Orientation

Market orientation refers to gathering market intelligence that organizational departments then act on (Jabeen, Aliyu, & Mahmood, 2016). Market orientation increases consumer satisfaction and a company's performance (Lekmat, Selvarajah, & Hewege, 2018). The association between MO and OP is positive and significant (Buli, 2017). As a component of corporate culture, MO produces the behaviours needed to create exceptional value for consumers, which leads to consistently outstanding performance (Rojas-Méndez & Rod, 2013). MO emphasises businesses' dedication to creating goods and services that meet consumer expectations and demands (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). This commitment exemplifies the notion that an effective MO encourages performance linkage to support organizations by leveraging the potential benefits of adaptability, flexibility, expertise, and responsiveness into a unique strategic resource (Raju, Lonial, & Crum, 2011). Thus, in the current context of a dynamic organization, MO may have a significant role in a corporation's performance (Buli, 2017). As Jaworski and Kohli (1993) put forth, the three basic components of the MO concept are intelligence dissemination, intelligence generation, and responsiveness.

MO is generally positively related to performance (Morgan, Vorhies, & Mason, 2009; Rogo et al., 2017; Lekmat, Selvarajah, & Hewege, 2018; Ali et al., 2020). Buli (2017) found that MO was crucial for SMEs' performance (Majali et al., 2022). Moreover, Shehu and Mahmood (2014) and Demirbag et al. (2006) did not find a direct association between MO and OP. This review demonstrates that empirical studies on MO have produced inconsistent and complex and inconsistent findings, necessitating further research on the association between MO and OP in different environments (Ali et al., 2020). Consequently, the following hypothesis is posited.

H2. MO positively affects organizational performance.

Few empirical studies evaluating the connection between MO and TQM practices have been published in the quality management and marketing literature. While some works have suggested a connection between MO and TQM practices (Mohr-Jackson, 1998), the empirical evidence seems thin (Raju & Lonial, 2002). Systematic data gathering is necessary for marketing operations and TQM practices to meet customer expectations, necessitating tight coordination with other organizational units. Customer value creation requires close coordination between an organization's quality and marketing units (Slater & Narver, 1995; Lai, 2003). According to Day (1994), building a market-oriented organization includes measures to improve market sensing and customer connection capabilities. The use of TQM techniques seems to support these competencies, and at the core of TQM is the view of an organization of a linked collection of processes rather than a set of functions that interact (Day, 1994). Implementing TQM and MO

demand that organizational structures be created around the flow of value-adding activities and that staff members be given the authority to manage organizational transformation. TQM implementation may provide wide-ranging tools businesses could use to achieve market orientation given the information-oriented nature of TQM practices and a market-orientation. The success of TQM procedures is an internally constrained, repeating process, which may not move beyond an organization's boundaries, which Day (1994) notes as a problem in adopting TQM to accomplish MO. Effectively implementing TQM methods could aid in an organizational shift toward becoming more market-oriented, which calls for a bottom-up change and unwavering top management commitment. Cross-functional initiatives, common goals, and a decentralized structure are required to support such a change program, which may improve a firm's capacity to adapt to its clients (Day, 1994). Thus, this hypothesis is posited:

H3. MO positively affects TQM.

Similarly, the resources approach should be used to model market orientation (MO) to identify an organization's core competencies to be market-oriented (Foley & Fahy, 2009), TQM, as an illustration. Although MO has been found to positively and considerably influence organizational resources like TQM (Demirbag et al., 2006), no management research has discussed the influence of MO on TQM capabilities, especially in the ICT sector. This demonstrates that there is a void in the body of literature that the current study fills.

It has been suggested that TQM procedures can help organizations acquire, integrate, and use their resources in a way that better aligns with market prospects, and, as a result, an advantageous position in a marketplace is attained (Yeng et al., 2018; El Shenawy et al., 2007). Additionally, it is argued that a complicated link exists between organizational resources, other organizational resources, and organizational performance and that abilities can be utilized as mediators in that relationship (Al-Dhaafri et al., 2013). Additionally, the current literature claims that organizational capabilities are likely to mediate the association between performance and resources (Firman et al., 2020).

However, Day (1994) argued that TQM moderates' organizational performance when combined with MO and organizational capacities (via changes to organizational practices like TQM). Some empirical evidence has been found to support TQM's mediating function. Prajogo and Sohal (2004) state that TQM practices mediate the link between organizational strategy and performance. Lai (2003) causally linked the application of MO and TQM, and OP. So, the following hypothesis is posited:

H4. TQM mediates the relationship between MO and organizational performance.

The study used the Resource-Based View (RBV), which fully explains how a business can get a competitive edge by utilizing its resources and strengths (Hitt, Carnes, & Xu, 2016). According to the resource-based paradigm, strategic capabilities, such as MO and TQM, are a pool of internal resources that can result in competitive advantages (Gupta et al., 2018). By incorporating TQM practices as a mediating variable in RBV, this research filled a knowledge gap by evaluating the effects of MO and TQM on performance using RBV theory. The literature discussed elements like TQM, MO, and OP that substantially impact the relationship between strategic orientations. Correctly integrating TQM into key organizational components leads to better outcomes (Martin & Javalgi, 2016). Based on the discussion above, this study examined the association among MO, TQM, and OP in Jordanian ICT businesses. Figure 1 provides the theoretical model.



Figure 1. Conceptual model

Methodology

The managers of 143 ICT companies made up the study's population (Int@j, 2021). Due to the small population, all managers were included. Because of their executive positions and capacity to provide information on implementing strategies in firms, managers are trustworthy sources (Al-swidi & Mahmood, 2012). Consequently, the research sample is representative of the whole population. Using the relevant literature as a guide, a questionnaire was created.

As shown in Table 1, construct measurements from earlier studies were used to ensure high reliability and validity. The six-dimensional MO orientation was the subject of the first part (intelligence generation, intelligence dissemination, responsiveness). The second half was devoted to the TQM practices' six aspects: the mediating component (customer focus, information analysis, leadership management, teamwork, strategic planning and supplier relationship). Organizational

performance was the dependent variable that was evaluated in the third segment (employee performance, innovation performance, market and financial performance, operational performance, and social responsibility). Likert scale questions featured five possible responses: 1 for severely disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree. A 76% effective response rate was obtained from the 109 useable surveys returned from the 143 distributed.

Partial least squares (PLS), a structural equation modelling technique that employs a principal-component-based estimate strategy, was used for data analysis (Chin, 1998). According to previous studies, PLS is a suitable technique for examining predictive research models containing formatively modelled constructs (Hair et al., 2011; Ringle et al., 2012).

Table 1: Construct Measurements

Market orientation	Intelligence Generation (IG)	Jaworski & Kohli (1993)
	Intelligence dissemination (ID)	Jaworski & Kohli (1993)
	Responsiveness (ER)	Jaworski & Kohli (1993)
Total quality management	Leadership management (LM)	Lam, Lee, Ooi, & Lin (2011))
	Customer focus (CF)	Wang et al. (2012)
	Teamwork (TW)	Talib, Rahman, & Qureshi (2013)
	Information analysis (IA)	Sabella et al. (2014)
	Supplier relationship (SR)	Androwis et al. (2018)
Organizational performance	Strategic planning (SP)	Lam, Lee, Ooi, & Lin (2011)
	Operational performance (OPP)	Sadikoglu & Olcay (2014)
	Employee performance (EP)	Sadikoglu & Olcay (2014)
	Innovation performance (IP)	Sadikoglu & Olcay (2014)
	Customer results (CR)	Sadikoglu & Olcay (2014)
	Social responsibility (SR)	Sadikoglu & Olcay (2014)
	Market and financial performance (MP)	Sadikoglu & Olcay (2014)

Data Analysis

To assess the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha was utilized. Convergent validity, defined as the assessment of connected and related similar constructs, was determined after reliability was established (Hair et al., 2014). The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value was used to assess the convergence validity. An acceptable value of AVE is more than 0.50. Internal consistency must then be guaranteed. Internal consistency was measured using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach Alpha (CA). Reliability ranges from 0 to 1 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sinkovics, 2009), while 0.70 and higher is preferred. The findings in Table 2 indicate that all the values of CA and CR were more than 0.70, indicating that the measurements were reliable in

measuring this study's variables and all the values of AVE were more than 0.50. Thus, all the criteria, including AVE, the factor loadings (FL), Cronbach's alpha, and Composite Reliability, achieved the required level. This indicates that the criteria were met, and the measurement model was acceptable.

Table 2: Reliability and Validity

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	CR
Market orientation	0.933	0.943	0.624
Intelligence Generation (IG)	0.875	0.924	0.802
Intelligence dissemination (ID)	0.872	0.912	0.723
Responsiveness (ER)	0.847	0.908	0.767
Total quality management	0.971	0.973	0.591
Leadership management (LM)	0.911	0.935	0.742
Customer focus (CF)	0.859	0.915	0.782
Teamwork (TW)	0.952	0.969	0.912
Information analysis (IA)	0.940	0.954	0.807
Supplier relationship (SR)	0.925	0.947	0.817
Strategic planning (SP)	0.893	0.922	0.702
Organization performance	0.955	0.959	0.542
Operational performance (OPP)	0.843	0.906	0.762
Employee performance (EP)	0.917	0.937	0.750
Innovation performance (IP)	0.864	0.917	0.786
Customer results (CR)	0.651	0.976	0.954
Social responsibility (SR)	0.887	0.930	0.815
Market and financial performance (MP)	0.892	0.926	0.757

Descriptive statistics for mean and standard deviations (Std.) were calculated using SPSS. This study employed three categories to interpret the five-Likert scale: low when the values are less than 2.33 [$4/3 + \text{lowest value (1)}$], high when the values are higher than 3.67 [$\text{highest value (5)} - 4/3$], and moderate when the scores fall in the middle of the two extremes. Noor and Kumar (2014) offer this classification in their study on the 5-point Likert scale's interpretation because it is comparable to and pertinent to this study. Except for Leadership Management, Customer Focus, and Strategic Planning, Table 3 demonstrates that all were moderate.

Checking the data's reliability is crucial after ensuring the instrument is reliable. Researchers suggested examining normality by looking at kurtosis and skewness (George & Mallery, 2008; Hair et al., 2017; Pallant, 2016). . Table 3 shows Skewness ranged between .147 and .868, and kurtosis ranged between -1.560 and -.131, as shown in Table 3. These values are within normal ranges Hair et al. (2017).

Table 3: Skewness and Kurtosis

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Label	Skewness	Kurtosis
Market orientation	2.47	1.08	Moderate		
Intelligence Generation (IG)	2.70	1.24	Moderate	.149	-1.415
Intelligence dissemination (ID)	2.37	1.09	Moderate	.582	-.796
Responsiveness (ER)	2.36	1.08	Moderate	.529	-.995
Total quality management	2.48	1.03	Moderate		
Leadership management (LM)	2.14	1.03	Low	.868	-.131
Customer focus (CF)	2.23	1.11	Low	.831	-.434
Teamwork (TW)	2.49	1.24	Moderate	.529	-1.048
Information analysis (IA)	2.78	1.45	Moderate	.275	-1.459
Supplier relationship (SR)	2.67	1.28	Moderate	.147	-1.375
Strategic planning (SP)	2.27	1.11	Low	.857	-.176
Organizational performance	2.52	1.09	Moderate		
Operational performance (OPP)	2.56	1.31	Moderate	.482	-1.072
Employee performance (EP)	2.43	1.29	Moderate	.522	-1.190
Innovation performance (IP)	2.34	1.29	Moderate	.741	-.809
Customer results (CR)	2.69	1.33	Moderate	.200	-1.560
Social responsibility (SR)	2.65	1.26	Moderate	.136	-1.488
Market and financial performance (MP)	2.47	1.14	Moderate	.383	-1.269

This study employed the tolerance value and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) to determine whether multicollinearity issues were present among the variables (Brien, 2007). Table 4 shows no multicollinearity as the tolerance values ranged between 0.798 and 0.928, and the VIF values ranged between 1.078 and 1.240. Therefore, no multicollinearity exists among the independent variables.

Table 4: Collinearity Statistics Tolerance

Model		Collinearity Statistics Tolerance	
		Tolerance	VIF
MO	Organization	0.807	1.240
TQM	performance	0.798	1.254
MO	TQM	0.820	1.219

The first step in a PLS-SEM analysis is the measurement model (outer model). Based on researchers' suggestions, a factor with a loading of less than 0.70 should be removed because it adds little to the prediction of a variable (Hair et., 2017). This model deals with the measurement that shows how theoretically loaded indicators relate to a construct above 0.70. See Table 5.

Table 5: Outer Loading

Variables	Items	Loading
TQM	Leadership management (LM) LM1: "Top management always encourages staff to be involved in quality management and improvement activities."	0.720

	LM2: "Top management empowers staff to solve quality problems."	0.886
	LM3: "Top management allocates adequate resources for staff education and training."	0.838
	LM4: "Top management learns quality-related concepts and skills."	0.926
	LM5: "Top management is actively involved in quality management and improvement process."	0.921
	Customer focus (CF)	
	CF1: "Our activities mainly focus on satisfying our customers."	0.924
	CF2: "It is imperative to satisfy our customers and exceed their expectations."	0.796
	CF3: "Our senior executives always emphasize the importance of customers."	0.928
	Teamwork (TW)	
	TW1: "Our company encourages employees to trust each other and work as a team."	0.964
	TW2: "Our company encourages team members to appreciate constructive criticism."	0.953
	TW3: "Our company facilitates communication among team members to generate good ideas about potential changes and solutions to problems."	0.948
	Information analysis (IA)	
	IA1: "This company has an effective system to assess its operational performance."	0.870
	IA2: "This company does have a clear, comprehensive appraisal system."	0.883
	IA3: "All staff in this company understands the indicators linked to their performance well and take them seriously."	0.918
	IA4: "This company adjusts its performance according to the changes in the environment."	0.892
	IA5: "Senior management adjusts the company policy and strategy by analyzing information and facts."	0.926
	Supplier relationship (SR)	
	SR1: "Our company has a Long-Term relationship and long partnership with key suppliers."	0.891
	SR2: "Our company relies on reasonable few dependable suppliers who are evaluated and selected based on their capability and commitment to product and service quality and value for money."	0.912
	SR3: "We emphasize quality and delivery performance rather than price in selecting suppliers."	0.929
	SR4: "Our suppliers are actively involved in our new product development process."	0.882
	Strategic planning (SP)	
	SP1: "Our company sets and reviews our short and long-term goals through a comprehensive planning process."	0.857
	SP2: "In our company, strategic plans are linked to quality principles."	0.821
	SP3: "Our company has a written strategy covering business operations which is clearly articulated and agreed by top management."	0.870
	SP4: "The mission of our company is communicated and supported by our staff."	0.878
	SP5: "We always take into account (consider) donors' capability and other stakeholders' needs when we develop our plans, policies, and objectives."	0.759
MO	Intelligence Generation (IG)	
	IG1: "We generate a lot of information related to market trends (e.g., regulations, technology, politics and economy)."	0.933
	IG2: "We are fast to detect fundamental changes in our target market environment."	0.831
	IG3: "We periodically review the likely effect of changes in our business environment (e.g., regulation and economy)."	0.919
	Intelligence dissemination (ID)	
	ID1: "We disseminate all Information that can influence the way we serve our customers to the relevant personnel."	0.809
	ID2: "We often lose information about our customers in the system."	0.829
	ID3: "Information concerning competitors' activities often reaches the relevant personnel too late to be of any use."	0.888
	ID4: "Important information related to target market trends (e.g., regulation and technology) is often discarded as it makes its way along the communication chain."	0.872
	Responsiveness (ER)	
	ER1: "We are fast to respond to important changes in our business environment (e.g., regulation and technology)."	0.915
	ER2: "We are fast to respond to significant changes in our competitors' price strategies in target markets."	0.814
	ER3: "We are fast to respond to competitive actions that threaten us in our target markets."	0.895
OP	Operational performance (OPP)	
	OPP1: "Quality of our products/ services is high."	0.830
	OPP2: "The reliability of Our company products/ services is high."	0.886
	OPP3: "The company our products/ services delivery on time to customers."	0.901
	Employee performance (EP)	
	EP1: "Our company employees' commitment is high."	0.879
	EP2: "Our company employees' job performance is high."	0.881

Continue: Table 5

EP3: "Our company employees' absenteeism is low."	0.861
EP4: "Our company employees' morale is high."	0.860
EP5: "Our company employees' turnover rate is low."	0.849
Innovation performance (IP)	
IP1: "The technological competitiveness of the company is high. "	0.905
IP2: "The speed of new products/ services development is high. "	0.881
IP3: "The number of the company's new products that are first-to-market is high."	0.873
Customer results (CR)	
CR1: "Customer satisfaction has improved."	0.916
CR2: "Customer retention has improved."	0.918
CR3: "Customer complaints have decreased."	0.873
Social responsibility (SR)	
SOR1: "Protection of the environment in the company has developed."	0.977
SOR2: "The company is actively involved in the community."	0.976
Market and financial performance (MP)	
MP1: "Return on assets of the company has increased."	0.817
MP2: "Market share of the company has improved."	0.894
MP3: "Profits of the company have grown."	0.902
MP4: "Sales of our company have grown."	0.865

Convergent validity, which evaluates related and connected similar constructs, was assessed. Convergent validity is substantiated if items load at more than .50, when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is at least 5 (Hair et al. 2014), and the Composite Reliability Coefficient (CR) is more than 0.60. According to these criteria, convergent validity was confirmed. See Table 6.

Table 6: Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
IA	0.791	0.911	0.912
IG	0.865	0.922	0.747
ID	0.855	0.901	0.693
LM	0.882	0.899	0.743
CF	0.892	0.889	0.658
TW	0.785	0.901	0.754
IA	0.783	0.854	0.699
SR	0.810	0.844	0.723
SP	0.792	0.861	0.787
OPP	0.863	0.875	0.721
EP	0.922	0.884	0.764
IP	0.771	0.911	0.680
SOR	0.863	0.897	0.659
CR	0.855	0.875	0.668
MP	0.855	0.833	0.719

The ability to measure a single variable is discriminant validity (Voorhees et al.). Confirming that the items of a variable measure the variable that an item was designed to measure rather than any other variable. Tables 7 and 8 show that discriminant validity was achieved.

Table 7. Discriminant Validity of the Second Order

	Market orientation	Organizational performance	Total quality management
MO	0.904		
OP	0.820	0.860	
TQM	0.830	0.851	0.864

Table 8: Discriminant Validity of the First Order

	CF	IA	IG	ID	RE	TW	CR	EP	IP	LM	MP	OPP	SOR	SP	SR
CF	0.884														
IA	0.711	0.898													
IG	0.749	0.711	0.895												
ID	0.654	0.623	0.722	0.850											
RE	0.710	0.593	0.651	0.807	0.876										
TW	0.649	0.571	0.612	0.562	0.547	0.955									
CR	0.558	0.622	0.652	0.621	0.577	0.508	0.977								
EP	0.707	0.484	0.555	0.633	0.746	0.527	0.541	0.866							
IP	0.616	0.584	0.633	0.588	0.576	0.730	0.777	0.608	0.887						
LM	0.812	0.781	0.767	0.648	0.696	0.637	0.564	0.553	0.599	0.862					
MP	0.619	0.629	0.626	0.684	0.552	0.548	0.455	0.601	0.578	0.661	0.870				
OPP	0.520	0.582	0.544	0.393	0.441	0.354	0.635	0.459	0.530	0.625	0.602	0.873			
SOR	0.730	0.690	0.734	0.702	0.710	0.612	0.714	0.755	0.698	0.702	0.784	0.608	0.903		
SP	0.674	0.779	0.694	0.459	0.518	0.511	0.493	0.456	0.521	0.728	0.628	0.544	0.687	0.838	
SR	0.705	0.733	0.710	0.615	0.704	0.639	0.686	0.688	0.732	0.757	0.616	0.543	0.834	0.713	0.904

The measurement model results in this current research show that the “reliability and validity” of all constructs were sufficiently achieved, supporting analysis of the structural model to access the associations among the variables under study.

Figure 2: Measurement Model

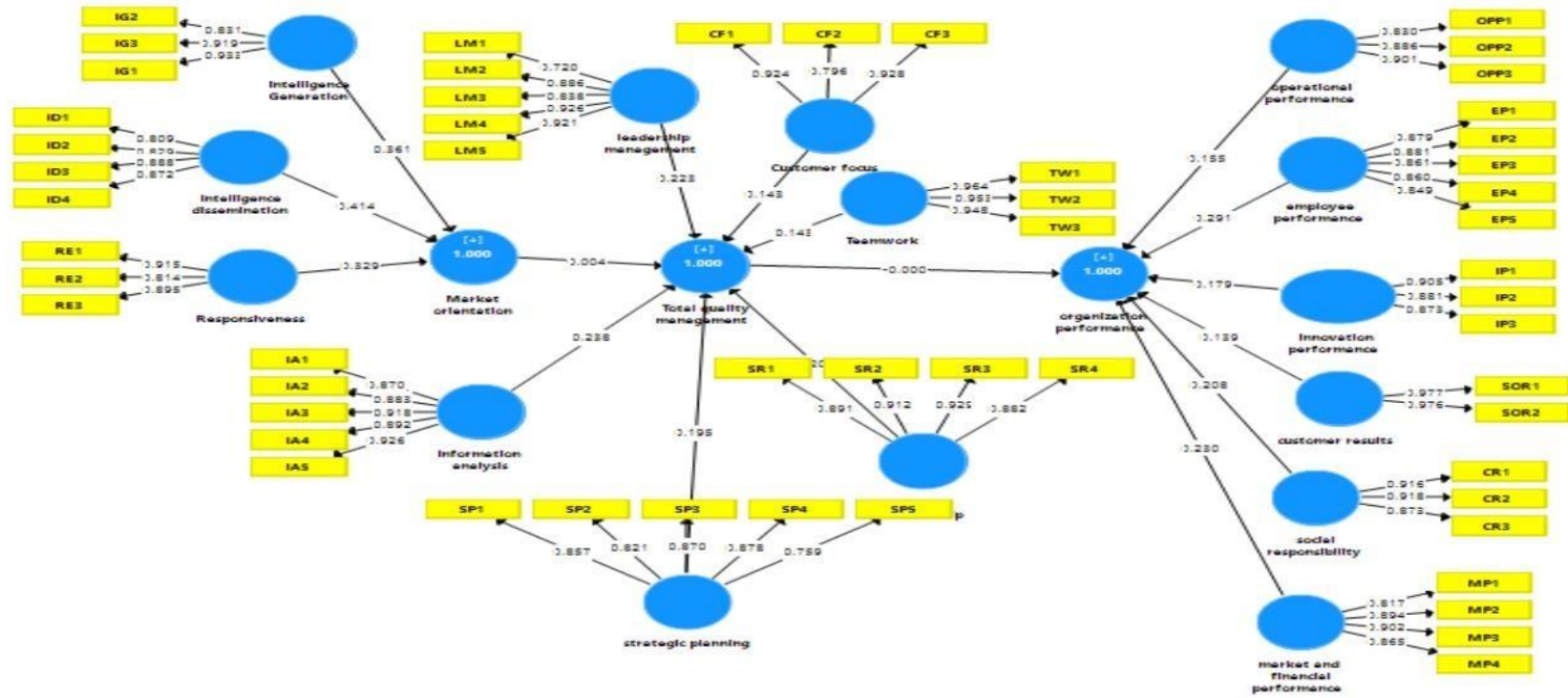


Table 9 supports the first hypothesis by demonstrating a significant and favorable relationship between MO and organizational performance ($\beta=0.227$; $t=1.932$; $p=0.05$). The main discovery regarding the relationship between MO and organizational performance is consistent with those made by Lekmat et al. (2018) and Migdadi et al. (2017). TQM has a significant link with performance, according to results from Table 8 ($\beta=0.340$; $t=3.596$; $p=0.01$). The second hypothesis on these relationships is therefore accepted and is consistent with Amin et al. (2017), Shafiq et al. (2017), and Honarpour et al. (2018). MO and organizational performance were shown to be significantly correlated ($p=0.05$; $t=2.133$; $\beta=0.253$). This conclusion aligns with Slater and Narver (1995) and Lai (2003). The mediation results also confirmed Hypothesis 4. This study showed that TQM mediates the association between market orientation and organizational performance. See Table 10.

Table 9: Results of Hypothesis Testing of Direct Relationship

Relationships	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
MO-> OP	0.227**	0.058	1.932	0.017	Supported
TQM-> OP	0.340***	0.045	3.596	0.000	Supported
MO-> TQM	0.253**	0.043	2.133	0.015	Supported

Note: ***: $p<0.01$; **: $p<0.05$.

Table 10. Results of Hypotheses Testing (Mediation)

Relationship	Std. Beta	Std. Error	t-values	p-values	Confidence Intervals CIs		Decision
					LLCI	ULCI	
MO-> TQM -> OP	0.123***	0.025	4.346	0.000	0.166	0.278	Supported

Note: ***: $p<0.01$.

Conclusions

This study explored the mediating impact of TQM on the association between MO and OP in Jordanian ICT companies. This study's empirical evidence confirms that MO positively impacts organizational performance and total quality management. The assumption of Resource-Based Value guided the development of the theoretical framework for this investigation (RBV). According to the findings, TQM and MO significantly affected organizational performance in Jordanian ICT companies. The data also show that TQM mediated the link between MO and OP.

Managerial Implications

This paper constructed a research framework using relevant published studies to ascertain the relationships among MO, TQM, and OP. For managers and decision-makers, these research findings suggest many commercial avenues. The government can use this study's findings as a roadmap to address economic concerns affecting the Jordanian ICT sector and improve performance.

Government and ICT organizations should work together to create a market-oriented approach. Furthermore, these organizations should encourage adopting TQM via appropriate policy programs and training. Owners and managers of ICT businesses should therefore focus on enhancing their staff members' capacities to consider important market-oriented and high-quality methods. Owners and managers of ICT companies can create a sustained competitive edge by coming up with innovative plans and utilizing the potential benefits of their flexibility and proximity to clients.

Limitations and Future Research

There are a few restrictions to this study. First, Liu et al. (2002) argued that it is improper to use a cross-sectional snapshot to study the temporal character of an organization's learning orientation. To address the limitations of a cross-sectional study, longitudinal studies that track changes in TQM implementation, market orientation, and changes in the market performance of organizations are advised.

Second, because the data were gathered from the Jordanian ICT sector, it is difficult to extrapolate the findings to other businesses or industries operating in more stable environments. As a result, the results should be regarded with caution. Because the data for this study were gathered from the ICT sector, future research using manufacturing industries or comparing manufacturing and service sectors could provide additional insights into the MO and TQM relationship. Third, although Jaworski and Kohli's (1993) MO scale was used in this investigation, other scales might be appropriate. Using different scales on the same sample might reveal more information about the relationships between MO, TQM, and organizational performance. Lastly, the study did not consider organizational culture and structure as potential mediators.

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TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS IN COLLABORATIVE LEARNING OF EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

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Abstract

Achieving proficiency in teaching Employee Performance Management as part of the Bachelor of Human Resource Management program at Universiti Utara Malaysia is essential for students post-graduation. This subject necessitates a solid grasp of fundamental knowledge in human resource management and related business subjects, as students are required to connect issues and needs in strategic decision-making for business ventures. However, the challenge lies in the difficulty students face due to a weak foundation in the basics, resulting in a limited understanding. To address this issue, an action research project spanning two consecutive semesters was conducted to identify the most effective method of enhancing students' foundational understanding, thereby facilitating their connection to higher-level knowledge. Collaborative learning, introduced through transformative teaching via small group discussions, was selected to enhance the quality of Employee Performance Management education. The outcome revealed that students were more at ease, open-minded, and less stressed when learning with their peers compared to traditional instructor-led methods. Interviews and observations indicated that collaborative learning significantly improved understanding and fostered critical thinking. The developed approach created a more relaxed and conducive learning environment, with evidence of improved training effectiveness reflected in students' performance.

Keywords: Collaborative learning, Transformational Teaching; Employee Performance Management, Training Effectiveness, Human Resource Management

Introduction

In recent times, there has been a significant focus on empirical investigations related to intellectual development. Over the past six decades, research has examined methods by which instructors can enhance the interest and engagement of their classes (Richardson, 2008; Wood, 1989; Gubbiyappa, Barua, Das, Murthy & Baloch, 2016). The integration of multimedia into lectures (Berk, 2009; Cerbin, 2018), the use of classroom-based electronic voting systems for real-time communication (Caldwell, 2007), collaboration through social media (Kaufer et al., 2011; Ford et al., 2011; Markham, Gentile, & Graham, 2017), and providing students with multimedia materials or notes to reinforce learning and retention (McKinney et al., 2009; Schwieger & Ladwig, 2018) have all been associated with improved student attention. These outcomes have not only influenced and changed instructors' teaching styles but have also become widely adopted in higher education, where traditional lectures remain the predominant form of instruction, occupying the majority of class time (Benjamin, 2002; Twenge, 2009; He, Holton, Farkas & Warschauer, 2016). However, innovations in lecturing style represent only one facet of the overall pedagogical progress that has been made (Mazur, 2009; Sharples, de Roock, Ferguson, Gaved, Herodotou, Koh & Weller, 2016).

Shifting focus to Employee Performance Management within the Bachelor of Human Resource Management program at Universiti Utara Malaysia, the subject seamlessly integrates elements of Management and Business into its activities (Aguinis, 2014). After five semesters of teaching the subject, it became apparent that students faced challenges in critically grasping the skills the subject aimed to develop and connecting them to the course learning outcomes. Enrollment in this subject requires students to pass the prerequisite of Human Resource Management.

Regrettably, many students undertake the subject without recognizing its practical importance for their future careers. This study explores the potential of collaborative learning to enhance understanding of the subject. The motivation behind choosing this method is twofold. First, it aims to transform students' perceptions of reading-based subjects, making them more approachable by revealing interesting findings through effective techniques and styles. The sharing session's primary objective is to enhance critical thinking for a better understanding of the subject. Second, the study identifies that many students have weaknesses and lack confidence in oral communication. Consequently, the second objective is to enhance communication skills, enabling students to convey and share acquired knowledge, reflecting their understanding levels.

This paper is structured as follows: Section 2 discusses the literature review and theoretical framework. In Section 3, the methodology is presented. Section 4 delves into the results, and the concluding section summarizes the work of this paper.

Literature Review

Broadly speaking, collaborative learning is an instructional approach that involves pairing or grouping individuals to collaborate towards common objectives (Fu & Hwang, 2018). Beyond fostering interest among participants, this method has been shown to enhance training

effectiveness (Badlishah & Majid, 2019). Grouping individuals of varying proficiency levels not only holds participants accountable for their own learning but also for the learning of their peers. Achieving set goals implies that students have contributed to each other's learning through collaborative teaching and learning (Lang, 2008). In a study conducted by Johnson & Johnson (2008) among secondary school students, collaborative learning demonstrated a prolonged retention of information compared to individual learning.

Collaborative learning amalgamates sharing, debating, organizing thoughts, and reflecting on thoughts, thus fostering enthusiasm for learning in accordance with constructivist principles. The process compels students to become more aware of their learning and discerning in selecting the best ideas. Furthermore, through shared learning, students become more adept as knowledge is exchanged through discussions, leading to increased critical thinking. Collaborative learning represents the most comprehensive of these approaches, encapsulating the overarching principle that learning is most effective when undertaken in groups (Badlishah & Abdul Majid, 2016).

Drawing from transformative learning theory, adult learners enhance their comprehension of the world by revising their "frames of reference," encompassing their habits of mind and points of view (Mezirow, 1997). These frames of reference are initially shaped by social and cultural influences but are subject to modification through problem-solving (instrumental learning) or discussing problems (communicative learning) while critically reflecting on and reframing underlying assumptions (Mezirow, 1996).

In light of this conceptualization, Mezirow (2000) posited four ways in which students can learn: elaborating on existing frames of reference, acquiring new frames of reference, transforming habits of mind, and transforming points of view. However, effective collaborative learning necessitates vigilant monitoring and assessment. Instructors must establish both group goals and individual accountability to ensure that each participant gains meaningful insights during the task completion process. Interestingly, participants who assume the role of teachers often emerge as the ones who benefit the most, a finding supported by numerous researchers

Methodology

The course on Employee Performance Management is offered to both students majoring and minoring in the Human Resource Management program. Typically, each semester sees an enrolment of approximately 80 students for this subject. In the first semester of 2019/2020 (A191) when the research was conducted, the class schedule comprised two-hour sessions twice a week, spread over 14 academic weeks with a total of 28 meetings.

At the onset of the semester, students are organized into permanent groups, each comprising individuals with varying levels of preliminary knowledge in human resource management, distinct university entry qualifications, and diverse backgrounds in terms of race and gender. The intent behind this grouping is to ensure diversity and equivalence among all groups collectively.

The research unfolds in three experimental phases utilizing a collaborative mode of discussion. In the initial phase, during the first sharing session, students engage in a simple discussion responding to questions posed through a game quiz format. Each group member has 60 seconds to discuss before providing concise answers. Questions are sequentially directed to each member, allowing them to deliberate on the correct response with their peers before answering

This session serves as a gauge for the instructor to assess the level of understanding. If a student answers without discussion, it is inferred that they possess an adequate understanding. Conversely, if a student engages in group discussion, it suggests uncertainty or an insufficient grasp of the material. Following the game quiz, a straightforward individual written test is administered, enabling the instructor to evaluate training effectiveness among students individually.

The second phase involves presenting information to conclude an Employee Performance Management case study. Each group is allotted 15 minutes to prepare their conclusions before presenting them to the entire class. This discussion format encourages all members to contribute, evaluate, and negotiate their arguments. Subsequently, an individual test on the topic is administered in the following week to assess their understanding.

The third phase entails assigning a group project after completing the second cycle. The group assignment spans five weeks, with a requirement for a minimum of three discussion sessions with the instructor to guide, argue, and resolve encountered problems in order to complete the assignment. Many groups request additional consultation meetings. The outcome of this task is assessed through a written report.

This process is reiterated in the subsequent semester with a new cohort of students to validate the results. Additionally, before concluding each cycle, a simple survey is conducted face-to-face during debriefing sessions to evaluate students' understanding and the effectiveness of the training.

Questions posed include:

1. What have you learned today?
2. What is discussed during the Employee Performance Management process?
3. Do you feel comfortable discussing the given Employee Performance Management issue? Why?
4. Are you able to understand the learning content?
5. Why do you perceive the outcome (of the issue) as positive/negative

Results and Discussions

As observed throughout the course, students found enjoyment in informal learning through sharing sessions. It is noteworthy that, given the participants' reliance on self-reporting questionnaires, there may be a tendency to conceal certain information (Hamid, Shah, Rahman & Badlishah, 2020). Participants also exhibited a greater comfort level admitting lack of knowledge or understanding to their peers rather than to teachers. For instance, in the initial phase, weaker

students were identified as they were indirectly prompted to engage in discussions with group members to correctly answer posed questions.

In the second phase, groups were extensively involved in discussions, indicating an advanced sharing session. Instructors were occasionally consulted to confirm arguments or sought for help in providing clearer explanations. Confusions were addressed by the instructor during presentations, and students promptly asked questions, often referring to their friends or the collective group for clarification.

For example:

"My friend here asked why in the Employee Performance Management topic there is performance appraisal while not in the Performance Management topic? Why are there differences?"

"We would like to know why Employee Performance Management is the same as compromising and often regarded as 'Performance Appraisal?'"

Students, instead of using "I," were observed assisting their friends in clearing confusion when they were unable to rationalize. In response, the instructor refrained from directly answering the questions but redirected them to the entire class, inviting a broader circle of discussion. Some students even called on the instructor to confirm their understanding, such as:

"He/she would like to know why we have to ensure proper communication, ethics, practicality, and impasse are the main elements in Employee Performance Management."

Through the instructor's probing for critical thinking, it was intriguing to observe that students prepared themselves for further discussions to elucidate the issue. The individual tests given revealed that weaker students gradually improved their understanding, demonstrating the ability to solve assigned tasks. During the post-mortem of the test, students related the questions to specific learning sessions, even recalling who asked questions, argued on the issues, and provided answers.

The third phase elevated the discussion to a higher level, termed as the reflection session, testing their teamwork and written communication. Each consultation allowed the instructor to delve deeper into identifying the understanding level of each group member. Weaker students were observed forming strong attachments with proficient students, declaring themselves as study partners. Previously unsupportive students successfully overcame shyness barriers and addressed their weaknesses on the topic. Additionally, writing reports together assisted weaker students in articulating their understanding better. During consultations, the instructor probed why and who constructed a particular argument for Employee Performance Management cases, leading to oral explanations by one group member, often interrupted and leading to further discussions by others, confirming their understanding of the issue.

Overall, understanding of the topic was reflected during and after the course. Individual improvements were documented through cumulative assessment. Positive comments were collected, such as:

"We didn't know that we were actually learning during the semester. All along, we only talked to each other."

"It is so fun and interesting."

"I was afraid of doing Employee Performance Management before, but now I understand why you (the instructor) claimed that negotiating with strangers is actually very interesting."

"I hate group work as usually we had free riders. However, compulsory consultation allows us to be more serious in learning. Everybody has to understand the topic before you (instructor) ask a question. We do not want to lose marks." (They thought they would be penalized if a prompt answer to a question was incorrect).

"I thought Employee Performance Management is difficult, but my friends make it easier by giving tips and tricks during discussions."

"I do not know how, but now I found my prerequisite subject is easy. Why didn't I score before?"

"I do not feel guilty for not knowing. My friends help me, and I remember. Excellent."

"No readings, but I know many new things. This is great."

Findings show that test and final exam results improved through the application of collaborative learning. Students who initially neglected the importance of prior knowledge were able to enhance their understanding, not only of prior knowledge but also of current knowledge. Responses changed from "What is the correct answer?" to "Why is this the correct answer?" towards the end of the semester. By grasping the concept, students focused more on enhancing their knowledge through critical thinking rather than memorizing facts for the purpose of passing exams. The learning process helped students develop their critical thinking skills by fulfilling the need to find solutions.

The method of intake also varied from different subjects being taught, as opposed to the usual repetitive teaching approach. This learning approach opens more opportunities for students to enhance their communication skills through active learning, which involves speaking, demonstrating, and report writing. Timid students were compelled to speak rather than becoming passive or free riders. Among students with fears of theoretical subjects, they became more comfortable and engaged when the subject was shared through understanding, and the mode of learning also differed from other subjects being taught.

Conclusion

This study proves that collaborative learning is beneficial in achieving training effectiveness. The approach is two-branched, allows formal and informal objectives being targeted simultaneously. In this case, collaborative learning, mainly discussion, was able to improve not only understanding by being more critical but also communication skills, oral and written.

However, findings of this study relied too much on observation and semi-formal survey. The study would be more reliable if it is supported with comparisons between different natures of subject, as this subject is centred on personal based analysis. It is also suggested that comparisons are made between different groups to see the effectiveness of collaborative learning in Employee Performance Management. The study would be more reliable if it is supported with comparisons between different natures of subject, as this subject is centred on personal based analysis. (Badlishah, Mustafa & Pourpunsawat, 2018)

Lastly, the research also prompts teacher to be more sensitive in understanding students' need. As discussed by Badlishah & Majid (2019), participants enjoyed "informal" learning via interactive sessions during a learning session. The understanding between students-teachers also contributing to students' level of comfort in a sharing session enable them to relax during the session. By this, collaborative learning can be fully benefitted to students base on transformation teaching.

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IMPAK JARINGAN PERNIAGAAN KE ATAS PRESTASI KOPERASI DI MALAYSIA: SATU KAJIAN EMPIRIKAL

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Abstrak

Sumber merupakan sesuatu yang dimiliki dan juga dikawal oleh organisasi. Sumber juga telah dikenal pasti dapat meningkatkan keberkesanan dan juga prestasi sesebuah organisasi. Ia merupakan aset organisasi. Kajian oleh sarjana yang terdahulu ada menjelaskan bahawa sumber-sumber organisasi adalah asas kepada penghasilan prestasi organisasi. Sumber organisasi di sini boleh dikategorikan kepada dua jenis iaitu sumber nyata dan sumber tak nyata. Sumber nyata terdiri daripada aset fizikal organisasi manakala sumber tak nyata pula adalah terdiri daripada aset bukan fizikal. Kajian oleh sarjana terdahulu telah membuktikan dan mengesahkan bahawa aset tak nyata mewujudkan kelebihan daya saing bagi sesebuah organisasi. Oleh yang demikian, penyelidik cuba untuk melihat hubungan di antara sumber tak nyata dengan prestasi koperasi di Semenanjung Malaysia. Sumber yang difokuskan adalah jaringan perniagaan. Jaringan perniagaan tersebut akan diuji bagi menentukan perhubungan dan pengaruhnya kepada prestasi koperasi dan dapatan kajian mendapati bahawa jaringan perniagaan mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan prestasi koperasi.

Kata Kunci :Jaringan Perniagaan, Prestasi Koperasi, Sumber organisasi

Pengenalan

Koperasi merupakan sebuah perniagaan di mana matlamat utama penubuhannya adalah untuk menawarkan produk dan perkhidmatan kepada pelanggan dan mencipta keuntungan melalui penawaran tersebut. Ia merupakan sejenis organisasi perniagaan yang dimiliki dan dikawal secara demokratik oleh sekumpulan manusia di mana mereka ini mempunyai tujuan yang sama iaitu menggunakan perkhidmatan serta mendapat faedah yang diagihkan secara sama rata di atas penggunaan perkhidmatan tersebut (MKM, 2010). Peranan koperasi juga dilihat semakin meningkat sejajar dengan arus pembangunan negara. Pengiktirafan yang diberikan kepada sektor koperasi di mana sektor ini telah diangkat sebagai sektor ketiga dalam menjana pembangunan ekonomi negara bukan saja membuktikan bahawa gerakan koperasi masih relevan, tetapi juga penting kepada kejayaan ekonomi negara.

Pengiktirafan yang diberikan oleh pihak kerajaan ini telah menuntut komitmen yang tinggi kepada tenaga penggerak koperasi dalam usaha untuk menjayakannya. Matlamat asal penubuhan koperasi iaitu sebagai peminjam wang pada suatu ketika dahulu tidak lagi relevan dalam konteks dan aspirasi kerajaan ini. Pengiktirafan ini telah menyebabkan penekanan perlu diberikan kepada aspek-aspek yang mampu dan dilihat berpotensi untuk melepasi tahap yang telah disasarkan oleh pihak kerajaan. Walaupun bilangan koperasi di Malaysia semakin bertambah saban tahun di mana jumlah koperasi pada tahun 2021 adalah sebanyak 14,834 buah berbanding 14,629 buah bagi tahun 2019 (SKM, 2022). Namun ia bukanlah merupakan satu petunjuk aras kepada kejayaan prestasi koperasi. Ini dibuktikan oleh SKM (2022) itu sendiri di mana daripada jumlah perolehan sektor koperasi itu sendiri di mana kadar perolehan sektor koperasi ini bagi tahun 2020 menurun sebanyak 9.4% manakala bagi tahun 2021 pula menurun sebanyak 8.6%. Berbalik kepada fokus kajian, kajian cuba untuk mengkaji hubungan antara sumber dengan prestasi koperasi dan sumber yang ingin dikaji adalah jaringan perniagaan.

Jaringan perniagaan bermaksud perkongsian usaha antara organisasi sama ada organisasi di peringkat hiliran dan hulu (Wong, 1999). Keperluan jaringan perniagaan turut disebut oleh Datuk Abdul Fatah Abdullah iaitu pengerusi Angkasa, di mana jaringan perniagaan mampu memperluas pasaran dan perolehan kepada koperasi (Hafiz, 2014). Malah, Dasar Koperasi Negara (2011-2020) telah mengenal pasti pembinaan jaringan perniagaan sebagai salah satu aktiviti perlaksanaan untuk mencapai Teras 1 dalam dasar tersebut (SKM, 2010). Melalui jaringan perniagaan yang kukuh, koperasi dinyatakan mampu untuk mencapai peningkatan prestasi yang baik. Walau bagaimanapun, sifat dan hala hubungan antara jaringan perniagaan dengan prestasi koperasi belum dapat ditentukan sehingga kini.

Tinjauan Kesusasteraan

Kajian ini pada dasarnya adalah untuk mengukur tahap jaringan perniagaan yang dimiliki oleh sesebuah koperasi. Jaringan perniagaan merupakan salah satu elemen yang penting bagi memastikan sama ada sesebuah perniagaan itu berjaya ataupun berkembang. Jaringan membantu organisasi membina reputasi dan kredibiliti dan perniagaan seterusnya dapat memberi kelebihan

saingan (Abu & Norita, 2002). Jaringan perniagaan adalah merupakan hubungan yang wujud di antara beberapa individu di dalam sesebuah perniagaan (Abu & Norita, 2002) termasuklah peniaga, pembekal, pemborong dan juga pelanggan. Namun, perkara ini kebanyakannya dipandang ringan oleh pihak-pihak terlibat. Jaringan perniagaan yang baik secara tidak langsung akan mencerminkan sesebuah perniagaan itu sendiri sama ada dapat berkembang secara maju mahupun sebaliknya. Jaringan perniagaan adalah merupakan satu sumber penting yang boleh memberi kelebihan dari segi pertumbuhan (Gulati, 1998) dan daya saing (Dyer & Singh, 1998) sesebuah organisasi. Dyer dan Singh (1998) juga turut menjelaskan bahawa jaringan perniagaan merupakan suatu aset yang amat berharga kepada organisasi. Terdapat kajian yang mengetengahkan mengenai kesan jaringan ke atas kejayaan organisasi (Julie & William, 2001).

Sirmon dan Hitt (2003) pula beranggapan jaringan perniagaan sebagai satu sumber organisasi yang cukup bernilai. Melalui jaringan perniagaan yang baik, sesebuah perniagaan itu didapati dapat berkembang dengan lebih cepat. Selain itu, menurut Chung dan Yang (2009) melalui pembinaan jaringan perniagaan yang baik antara organisasi juga secara tidak langsung akan memberi kesan yang signifikan kepada prestasi organisasi dari segi saiz jaringan dan kekerapan jaringan.

Hasil sorotan karya penyelidikan mendapati kajian yang dilakukan oleh Chinuntdej (2003) dalam melihat penentu strategik kepada kejayaan hubungan pembeli-pembekal telah mengukur dimensi jaringan perniagaan yang terdiri daripada dimensi kepercayaan, komitmen, kerjasama, kebergantungan dan pertukaran maklumat. Chinuntdej (2003) telah melakukan kajian ke atas pelbagai industri di Thailand. Beliau telah menyatakan bahawa dimensi-dimensi tersebut berupaya untuk membina, mengekalkan dan mengukuhkan hubungan tersebut. Menurut beliau lagi, ia merupakan konstruk utama dalam kejayaan hubungan perniagaan terutamanya dalam hal hubungan antara pembeli-pembekal.

Chung dan Yang (2009) menyatakan bahawa jaringan perniagaan adalah merupakan faktor utama yang menjamin permulaan kejayaan dan prestasi sesebuah organisasi. Mereka juga turut menyatakan bahawa kejayaan sesebuah perniagaan mendapat sumber-sumber adalah bergantung pada hubungannya dengan rakan perniagaan. Chung dan Yang (2009) telah melihat jaringan perniagaan dalam konteks tindakan seorang pemilik atau pengurus membangun dan mengekalkan rakan perniagaan. Kajian mereka menguji ke atas Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana di Korea dan China dari sudut saiz jaringan, kepercayaan dan juga kekerapan jaringan.

Hasil sorotan karya juga mendapati Leonidou. dan Kaleka. (1998) dalam kajian mereka telah mengukur jaringan perniagaan melalui adaptasi, komitmen, komunikasi, kerjasama, konflik, kebergantungan, jarak, kepuasan, percaya dan pemahaman. Kajian mereka memfokuskan kepada hubungan antara pengimport dan pengeksport Menurut mereka, walaupun ia datang dari dua disiplin (iaitu pengimport-pengeksport dan hubungan pemasaran) yang berbeza tetapi masih berkongsi beberapa aspek yang sama (Leonidou & Kaleka).

Manakala, Moeller (2010) pula menyatakan bahawa jaringan perniagaan adalah merupakan satu bentuk kerjasama yang khusus yang melibatkan sekurang-kurangnya tiga buah syarikat. Kajian beliau lebih kepada melihat mengenai pemilihan rakan kongsi. Beliau telah mengetengahkan

empat (4) dimensi dalam kajiannya ke atas 109 buah syarikat di Jerman di mana dimensi yang digunakan oleh beliau adalah dimensi risiko kesempatan, pemilihan rakan kongsi, kepercayaan serta juga komitmen dalam hubungan. Kajian mengenai hubungan antara jaringan perniagaan dengan prestasi ke atas 137 buah syarikat PKS di China oleh Zeng, Xie, dan Tam (2010) juga telah mengesahkan hubungan antara jaringan perniagaan dan prestasi organisasi adalah positif signifikan. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian-kajian terdahulu masih lagi tidak dapat disimpulkan di mana terdapat dapatan kajian pengkaji yang tidak menyokong dapatan kajian pengkaji-pengkaji di atas. Dapatan kajian oleh Vinit dan Daniel (2015) pula telah menidakkan dapatan kajian pengkaji-pengkaji di atas. Kajian yang dilakukan oleh Vinit dan Daniel (2015) ke atas 117 organisasi yang tersenarai dalam Indeks Industri Sweden ini membuktikan bahawa tidak wujud hubungan positif dan signifikan antara jaringan perniagaan dengan prestasi organisasi.

Maka, penyelidik berpendapat adalah masih wajar untuk menyatakan hubungan di antara jaringan perniagaan dengan prestasi organisasi masih lagi tidak konsisten kerana terdapat dapatan yang menunjukkan hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dan ada dapatan yang menunjukkan hubungan yang sebaliknya. aka, penyelidik berpendapat kebarangkalian untuk jaringan perniagaan berhubung dengan prestasi koperasi. Untuk mengesahkan kebarangkalian hubungan ini, ujian pengesahan akan dilakukan berdasarkan kepada hipotesis tersebut.

Jaringan Perniagaan mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan prestasi koperasi.

H1 : Orientasi Keusahawanan mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan prestasi koperasi.

Metadologi Kajian

Kajian ini memilih koperasi yang tersenarai dan berdaftar dengan Suruhanjaya Koperasi Malaysia (SKM) sehingga 31 Disember 2021 sebagai populasi kajian. Keterlibatan organisasi koperasi adalah koperasi yang beroperasi di negeri-negeri di Semenanjung Malaysia. Pemilihan populasi koperasi yang hanya melibatkan koperasi di Semenanjung Malaysia sahaja adalah disebabkan oleh kekangan-kekangan yang dihadapi dalam kajian ini dari segi masa, kewangan, kekurangan pengalaman, dan juga keupayaan yang dihadapi oleh penyelidik. Dari aspek saiz organisasi koperasi pula, kajian ini memilih untuk mengkaji koperasi yang bersaiz besar (makro), sederhana, kecil dan mikro iaitu melibatkan keseluruhan jenis koperasi. Ini adalah kerana keseluruhan populasi mencerminkan dapatan yang lebih menyeluruh. saiz sampel kajian adalah 370 koperasi seperti yang dicadangkan oleh Krejcie & Morgan (1976) dan Sekaran (2000). Persampelan rawak mudah digunakan, dan responden ialah pengerusi koperasi, timbalan pengerusi, setiausaha dan bendahari. Jawatan-jawatan ini adalah dianggap sebagai orang yang paling berpengetahuan dan berkebolehan dalam koperasi seperti yang dicadangkan oleh Dzulkarnain (2014).

Kajian ini memilih untuk menggunakan pendekatan *survey* ataupun tinjauan. Menurut Cooper dan Emory (1995), kaedah *survey* memerlukan penyelidik menyoal soalan kepada responden dan

merekodkan maklum balas mereka untuk dianalisis. Kaedah *survey* juga dilihat lebih efisien malah lebih ekonomik berbanding pemerhatian. Kaedah *survey* ini juga banyak digunakan dalam kajian berlatar belakangkan perniagaan (Davis, 1996). Ini disebabkan perniagaan merupakan fenomena sosial di mana di dalamnya terdapat banyak urusan-urusan yang dijalankan oleh manusia dan banyak data yang diperlukan untuk membuat keputusan juga datangnya daripada manusia (Azahari, 2011)

Kajian ini telah mengambil dan menyesuaikan instrumen yang diadaptasi daripada beberapa sarjana terdahulu seperti Lumpkin dan Dess (1996) dan juga Dzulkarnain (2014).

Pengukuran aspek jaringan perniagaan ini yang dibuat oleh pengkaji adalah meliputi kepercayaan, komitmen, kerjasama, kebergantungan, dan juga pertukaran maklumat. Penyelidik menggunakan skala likert berukuran enam (6) mata julat bagi kajian ini Kajian ini memilih untuk menggunakan petunjuk-petunjuk prestasi koperasi seperti perolehan pendapatan, untung kasar, untung bersih, pertumbuhan jualan, keupayaan membiayai perniagaan dari keuntungan, pembayaran dividen, dan juga tanggung jawab sosial pihak koperasi kepada ahli dan masyarakat bagi mengukur prestasi koperasi. Instrumen yang digunakan bagi mengukur aspek-aspek tersebut adalah diperolehi dari sumber-sumber seperti yang telah dinyatakan. Penyelidik menyediakan skala 1 hingga 6 bagi mengukur tahap pencapaian atau kejayaan sesebuah koperasi.

Dapatan Kajian dan Perbincangan

Kajian ini telah mengedarkan sebanyak 1,230 soal selidik kepada koperasi yang dipilih secara rawak, dan sebanyak 154 responden telah jawapan. Kadar tindak balas kajian ini ialah 41.6% iaitu lebih tinggi daripada 30% kadar tindak balas daripada tinjauan mel seperti yang didedahkan oleh Sekaran (2000).

Jadual 1 : Kadar Maklum Balas Soal Selidik

Perkara	Maklum balas
Jumlah soal selidik yang dihantar kepada responden	1,230
Jumlah soal selidik yang dikembalikan oleh responden	154
Jumlah soal selidik yang boleh digunakan untuk analisis	135
Peratusan kadar maklum balas secara keseluruhan	12.5%
Peratusan kadar maklum balas yang boleh digunakan	11%
Peratusan kadar maklum balas yang boleh digunakan berbanding saiz sampel seperti cadangan Krejcie dan Morgan (1970)	36.5%

Sebelum analisis dijalankan, data yang dikumpul perlu melalui proses pengimbasan dan pembersihan. Proses ini dilakukan bagi menentukan sama ada wujud ataupun tidak nilai tersisih ataupun *outlier* dalam soal selidik yang diterima. Nilai-nilai tersisih ini boleh disemak dengan membuat pemerhatian ke atas box plot dan juga menerusi ujian *z score*. Nilai *z scores* berada dalam lingkungan -2.5 hingga 2.5 dianggap tidak mempunyai *outlier*. Data juga telah melepasi ujian normaliti di mana ujian dijalankan menunjukkan bahawa nilai *Skewness* dan *Kurtosis* semua

pemboleh ubah kajian adalah berada di dalam lingkungan +2 hingga -2 serta menghampiri nilai 0. Hasil dapatan ujian ini dapatlah dirumuskan bahawa pemboleh ubah yang terlibat adalah bertaburan secara normal.

Sebelum analisis selanjutnya, kajian perlu melakukan ujian bagi mengesahkan kesahihan dan kebolehpercayaan instrument. Analisis faktor dijalankan mengenai untuk menguji kesahan konstruk bagi instrumen tersebut. Analisis faktor adalah satu kaedah yang digunakan untuk menentukan ketepatan item yang digunakan dalam mengukur konstruk (Hair *et al.*, 2006). Hair *et al.* (2006) mencadangkan bahawa *factor loading* adalah dalam julat 0.30 sehingga 0.40 adalah baik dan mencapai nilai minimum bagi menerangkan faktor. Kajian ini mengambil 0.50 sebagai nilai *factor loading* seperti yang dicadangkan oleh Hair *et al.* (2006) kerana bilangan responden dalam kajian ini adalah 135 (seratus tiga puluh lima) responden. Ini bermakna bahawa nilai di bawah 0.50 akan digugurkan. Berikut merupakan keputusan ujian analisis faktor yang dijalankan ke atas pemboleh ubah jaringan perniagaan dan juga prestasi koperasi. Hasil ujian tersebut bolehlah dirujuk pada jadual 2 dan jadual 3 berikut.

Jadual 2 : Keputusan Ujian Analisis Faktor Jaringan Perniagaan

Item	Faktor					Komuniliti
	1	2	3	4	5	
D5	0.963					0.942
D1	0.946					0.924
D16	0.937					0.887
D3		0.938				0.937
D6		0.916				0.914
D12		0.668				0.695
D14			0.867			0.835
D15			0.813			0.765
D11			0.799			0.710
D17				0.968		0.947
D13				0.953		0.914
D9					0.965	0.944
D8					0.957	0.933
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	3.34	2.803	2.061	1.665	1.479	
Peratus varians (%)	25.690	21.562	15.853	12.804	11.380	
<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of Sampling Adequacy (KMO)</i>						0.611
<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi Square</i>						1502.024
df						78
Sig.						0.001

Pemboleh ubah jaringan perniagaan ini diukur dengan menggunakan 17 (tujuh belas) item di mana item-item ini diadaptasikan dari kajian oleh Chinuntdej (2003) dengan lima dimensi. Analisis faktor dengan *varimax rotated principle components* telah dijalankan ke atas pemboleh ubah ini. Hasil analisis telah mewujudkan lima (5) faktor iaitu pertukaran maklumat, kebergantungan, kepercayaan, komitmen dan juga kerjasama di mana terdapat empat (4) item telah digugurkan. Dapatan ujian juga mendapati nilai KMO adalah 0.611 dan nilai penunjuk pada *Bartlett's test of sphericity* adalah signifikan (chi square =1502.024, $p < .001$). Oleh itu, syarat minimum keperluan bagi kedua-dua pertunjuk tersebut telah dipenuhi. Maka analisis untuk pemboleh ubah ini dapat diteruskan untuk peringkat seterusnya.

Jadual 3 : Keputusan Ujian Analisis Faktor Prestasi Koperasi

Item			Komuniti
	1	2	
G3	0.928		0.902
G1	0.913		0.924
G5	0.892		0.865
G4	0.814		0.670
G2		0.930	0.894
G6		0.921	0.936
G7		0.896	0.832
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	4.393	1.629	
Peratus varians (%)	62.759	23.269	
<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of Sampling Adequacy</i>			0.780
<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi Square</i>			1032.077
df			21
Sig.			0.001

Pemboleh ubah prestasi koperasi ini diukur dengan menggunakan tujuh (7) item yang terdiri daripada item kewangan dan item bukan kewangan. Analisis faktor dengan *varimax rotated principle components* telah dijalankan ke atas pemboleh ubah ini. Hasil analisis telah mewujudkan dua faktor iaitu faktor kewangan dan faktor sosial di mana tiada item yang digugurkan. Dapatan ujian juga mendapati nilai KMO adalah 0.780 dan nilai penunjuk pada *Bartlett's test of sphericity* adalah signifikan (chi square = 1032.077, $p < .001$). Oleh itu, syarat minimum keperluan bagi kedua-dua pertunjuk tersebut telah dipenuhi. Maka analisis untuk pemboleh ubah ini dapat diteruskan untuk peringkat seterusnya.

Pengujian Hipotesis dan Perbincangan

Ujian kolerasi Pearson dilaksanakan adalah bagi menentukan tahap signifikan hubungan antara modal insan dengan prestasi koperasi.pemboleh ubah bebas dengan satu pemboleh ubah bersandar. Kekuatan hubungan dilihat menerusi nilai *correlation coefficient* ujian tersebut. Menurut Cohen (Pallant 2005), kekuatan sesuatu hubungan tersebut dapat diketahui dengan meneliti nilai *correlation coefficient* (rujuk Jadual 4).

Jadual 4 :Nilai Kolerasi dan Kekuatan Hubungan

Nilai Kolerasi	Kekuatan Hubungan
$r = 0.10$ to 0.29 / $r = -0.10$ to -0.29	Lemah
$r = 0.30$ to 0.49 / $r = -0.30$ to -0.49	Sederhana
$r = 0.50$ to 1.00 / $r = -0.50$ to -1.00	Kuat

Sumber : Pallant, 2005

Jadual 5 :Dapatan Kajian

UJIAN KOLERASI		
	Jaringan Perniagaan	Prestasi Koperasi
Pearson Correlation	1	0.327**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
N	135	135

Dapatan kajian mendapati hubungan antara jaringan perniagaan dengan prestasi koperasi adalah positif signifikan. Dapatan ini menunjukkan nilai kolerasi iaitu $r = .327$, $p < .001$. Ini menunjukkan tahap kekuatan hubungan antara jaringan perniagaan dengan prestasi koperasi berada dalam tahap sederhana.

Jadual 6 : Keputusan Ujian Ke atas Hipotesis Kajian

Hipotesis	Penyataan	Keputusan Hipotesis
H1	Jaringan perniagaan mempunyai hubungan positif dan signifikan dengan prestasi koperasi.	Terima

Jadual 7 : Analisis Ujian Regresi Linear Jaringan Perniagaan

Outcome: Prestasi					
Konstan	1.876	.558		3.363	.001
Peramal: Jaringan Perniagaan (JP)	.484	.121	.327	3.996	.001
R ²	.107				
R ² Terselaras	.100				
F	15.967	p = .001			

Ujian regresi linear juga telah dilakukan ke atas jaringan perniagaan dengan prestasi koperasi. Keputusan ujian dalam Jadual 5.29 menunjukkan R² = 0.107, R² Terselaras = 0.100, F = 15.967, p < 0.005. Ini menjelaskan bahawa jaringan perniagaan berpengaruh sebanyak 10.7% ke atas prestasi koperasi. Manakala, selebihnya iaitu 89.3% adalah dipengaruhi oleh faktor-faktor lain. Persamaan regresi bagi ujian ini adalah seperti berikut :

$$\text{Prestasi koperasi} = 1.876 + 0.484\text{JP}$$

Keputusan ini juga mendapati konstan sebanyak 1.876 menerangkan bahawa jika tiada jaringan perniagaan, maka prestasi koperasi adalah 1.876. Sementara itu, *coefficient* regresi sebanyak 0.484 pula bermaksud jika berlaku sebarang penambahan (kerana bersifat positif) dalam orientasi keusahawanan, maka ini akan meningkatkan prestasi koperasi. Keputusan ujian ini mendapati jaringan perniagaan berpengaruh secara signifikan ke atas prestasi koperasi pada nilai *coefficient* p < 0.005.

Kesimpulan

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidik hubungan antara jaringan perniagaan dengan prestasi koperasi. Hasil kajian ini secara tidak langsung boleh menyumbang kepada ilmu pengetahuan yang baru dan akan memberi implikasi kepada koperasi. Di samping itu, kajian ini juga mungkin akan menambahkan lagi khazanah literatur dalam bidang sumber dan koperasi.

Sorotan karya berkaitan kajian yang melibatkan koperasi masih agak sukar ditemui terutamanya di Malaysia. Kebanyakan kajian mengenai koperasi hanya melibatkan pihak Maktab Koperasi Malaysia. Secara khususnya, adalah diharapkan kajian ini mampu menyumbang kefahaman secara teori mengenai hubungan antara sumber tak nyata dengan prestasi koperasi dan dapat dijadikan panduan kepada tenaga penggerak koperasi.

Dapatan kajian juga boleh digunakan oleh pihak-pihak yang berkepentingan iaitu Suruhanjaya Koperasi Malaysia dan juga Maktab Koperasi Malaysia di mana agensi ini memainkan peranan yang penting dalam mempertingkatkan imej koperasi.

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**ANJAKAN KERJAYA SEBAGAI USAHAWAN DI KALANGAN SISWAZAH TAJAAN
LEMBAGA ZAKAT NEGERI KEDAH: KERTAS KONSEP UNTUK KAJIAN
TENTANG KEMAHIRAN KEUSAHAWANAN, ORIENTASI KEUSAHAWANAN DAN
NIAT KEUSAHAWANAN**

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Abstrak

Pemberian biasiswa oleh Lembaga Zakat Negeri Kedah kepada pelajar daripada keluarga miskin adalah bertujuan untuk mengubah status sosio ekonomi pelajar dan keluarga tersebut. Malangnya apabila bergelar siswazah terdapat sebilangan mereka menjadi pengganggu atau mendapat pekerjaan yang tidak setimpal dengan kelayakan akademik yang dimiliki. Hal ini dianggap serius jika berpandukan kepada data statistik yang dikeluarkan oleh Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia. Keadaan boleh menyebabkan mereka boleh tergolong dalam golongan yang perlu dibantu melalui zakat iaitu dalam kategori asnaf miskin. Untuk itu usaha yang terancang perlu dilakukan bagi mendorong golongan penerima biasiswa ini atau siswazah untuk menjadi usahawan dan memiliki perniagaan sendiri. Dalam kajian ini dua golongan siswazah iaitu yang menganggur dan mendapat pekerjaan yang tidak setimpal dengan kelayakan akademi dikenali sebagai siswazah yang gagal mendapat pekerjaan yang setimpal. Oleh itu, kajian ini akan mengukur tahap niat keusahawanan, kemahiran keusahawanan dan orientasi keusahawanan di kalangan siswazah yang gagal mendapat pekerjaan yang setimpal dengan kelayakan. Pemilihan tiga konstruk ini dibuat disebabkan ramai penyelidikan terdahulu telah menyatakan bahawa konstruk tersebut adalah pendorong kepada penglibatan individu dalam keusahawanan dan konstruk ini juga dikenal pasti dapat membawa kejayaan dalam perniagaan. Melalui kajian ini, modul-modul latihan dapat dikenal pasti bagi membangunkan golongan siswazah ini menjadi usahawan dan membuka perniagaan. Malah bentuk-bentuk sokongan kewangan dan bukan kewangan juga dapat turut dikenal pasti melalui kajian ini.

Katakunci: Niat keusahawanan, Kemahiran Keusahawanan, Orientasi Keusahawanan, Siswazah Asnaf.

Pengenalan

Siswazah adalah golongan terpelajar yang menjadi generasi peneraju negara di masa depan. Sehubungan itu, Lembaga Zakat Negeri Kedah (LZNK) telah menyediakan biasiswa kepada pelajar daripada keluarga miskin untuk melanjutkan pengajian di institusi pengajian tinggi di dalam atau luar negara. Harapan yang diletakkan kepada penerima biasiswa ini adalah apabila bergelar siswazah nanti, mereka dapat membina kerjaya yang dapat mengubah status ekonomi keluarga masing-masing. Lanjutan perkara ini, kualiti hidup keluarga berkenaan turut dapat ditingkatkan. Walau bagaimanapun data dari Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia menunjukkan data yang membimbangkan berkaitan siswazah di Malaysia.

Menurut Laporan Statistik Siswazah 2021 (Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, 2022) terdapat 4.1% siswazah menganggur dan 33.9% siswazah dalam guna tenaga tidak penuh berkaitan kemahiran. Manakala kadar siswazah menganggur di negeri Kedah adalah pada 5%. Data berkaitan dengan statistik siswazah menganggur dan dalam guna tenaga tidak penuh berkaitan kemahiran tidak dapat diperolehi daripada LZNK buat masa ini.

Pada hemat kajian ini, sekiranya statistik ini dikaitkan dengan siswazah yang menerima biasiswa LZNK, berkemungkinan jumlahnya adalah signifikan. Oleh itu, kajian perlu dilakukan bagi melihat perkara ini dan melihat apakah jalan penyelesaian untuk membantu golongan siswazah ini mendapat pendapatan yang setimpal dengan kelayakan mereka. Sekiranya tidak dibantu, golongan siswazah ini mungkin akan tergolong ke dalam golongan asnaf miskin.

Antara jalan penyelesaian yang sesuai adalah memajukan golongan siswazah ini untuk menjadi usahawan dan memiliki perniagaan sendiri. Bidang perniagaan merupakan bidang yang terbuka dan berpotensi untuk diceburi oleh sesiapa sahaja. Walau bagaimanapun, usaha ini perlu dilakukan secara terancang supaya ia dapat memberikan impak positif kepada golongan siswazah tersebut. Sehubungan itu, kajian ini akan cuba untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang boleh mendorong golongan siswazah ini menjadi usahawan dan memiliki perniagaan sendiri. Bantuan dan sokongan yang bersesuaian turut dapat dikenal pasti melalui kajian ini.

Penyataan Masalah

Lembaga Zakat Negeri Kedah (LZNK) adalah badan yang mengutip dan mengagihkan zakat di negeri Kedah Darulaman. Zakat tersebut diagihkan kepada lapan golongan asnaf seperti yang ditetapkan oleh syarak. Selain itu, LZNK turut memberikan biasiswa terutamanya kepada bakal pelajar yang akan melanjutkan pengajian ke pusat pengajian tinggi sama ada di dalam negara mahupun luar negara. Sejumlah pelajar telah menerima biasiswa daripada LZNK dari tahun ke tahun dan jumlah ini di dapati semakin meningkat. Biasiswa ini diberikan untuk semua peringkat pengajian di institusi pengajian tinggi. Pemberian biasiswa disyaratkan kepada anak di kalangan keluarga miskin.

Biasiswa yang diberikan akan dapat membantu anak tersebut menamatkan pengajian mereka. Dengan itu, mereka akan berkelayakan untuk bekerja di kerjaya yang dapat memberikan pendapatan tinggi kepada mereka. Ini secara tidak langsung akan dapat meningkatkan taraf sosio-

ekonomi keluarga dan pelajar berkenaan. Walau bagaimanapun, memandangkan jumlah pengangguran di kalangan siswazah yang agak signifikan dan hal ini sedikit sebanyak turut terkait dengan penerima biasiswa daripada LZNK.

Berdasarkan kepada statistik daripada Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia (2022) a, kadar pengangguran di kalangan siswazah pada tahun 2021 adalah 4.1% bermaksud bagi setiap 100 orang siswazah, seramai 4 orang adalah penganggur. Dari sudut pengangguran mengikut negeri, negeri Kedah adalah negeri ke empat yang mempunyai kadar pengangguran tertinggi berbanding negeri-negeri lain iaitu sebanyak 5% (Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia, 2022). Menerusi laporan media dari Jabatan Perangkaan Malaysia (2022) menyatakan bahawa terdapat (Elali & Yacoub, 2016) 33.9% siswazah dalam guna tenaga tidak penuh berkaitan kemahiran. Ini bermaksud siswazah berkenaan bekerja di bidang pekerjaan yang memerlukan kelayakan yang rendah daripada apa yang mereka miliki.

Bidang pekerjaan yang disertakan oleh siswazah ini adalah bersifat sementara atau sambilan. Bidang pekerjaan seperti ini menawarkan gaji yang rendah yang tidak setimpal dengan kelayakan yang ada. Tambahan pula, peluang untuk maju dalam kerjaya juga turut terbatas. Jika di teliti, peratusan siswazah menganggur dan dalam guna tenaga tidak penuh berkaitan kemahiran adalah sebanyak 38%. Kadar ini adalah tinggi dan jika diandaikan peratusan yang sama diaplikasi di kalangan siswazah yang menerima biasiswa LZNK, maka ini menunjukkan bahawa perkara ini adalah serius dan perlu ditangani.

Maka, satu kajian perlu dilakukan bagi mengatasi masalah ini. Dalam konteks kajian ini, siswazah yang menganggur dan dalam guna tenaga tidak penuh berkaitan kemahiran dapat dikelaskan sebagai penerima biasiswa yang gagal mendapat pekerjaan yang sesuai dengan kelayakan. Golongan ini perlu dibantu disebabkan mereka datang daripada keluarga miskin. Kegagalan untuk membina kerjaya yang dapat menjana pendapatan yang sepatutnya dan setimpal dengan kelayakan boleh menyebabkan mereka mewarisi kemiskinan keluarga mereka. Keadaan ini juga boleh mengheret mereka untuk tergolong dalam golongan asnaf.

Antara langkah yang boleh dibuat bagi mengatasi masalah ini ialah membantu golongan siswazah ini untuk menjadi usahawan dan memiliki perniagaan sendiri. Dengan bantuan dan sokongan yang terancang, wawasan ini akan dapat dicapai. Untuk mencapai wawasan tersebut, kajian perlu dilakukan bagi melihat tahap niat keusahawanan dan faktor-faktor pemangkin kepada peningkatan niat berkenaan. Dapatan daripada kajian ke atas niat keusahawanan dan faktor-faktor pemangkinnya akan dapat menemukan bentuk bantuan dan sokongan yang bersesuaian. Kajian ini memilih untuk mengkaji niat keusahawanan disebabkan ia bermaksud kecenderungan seseorang untuk menjadi usahawan dan membuka perniagaan dalam masa terdekat (Elali & Yacoub, Borang IPIZ R.V1 6 2016). Ia juga dianggap sebagai faktor terbaik dalam meramal aktiviti-aktiviti keusahawanan yang akan dilakukan oleh seseorang individu (Yusop, 2020). Kajian mengenai tahap kecenderungan akan dapat membantu meramal tentang gelagat seseorang untuk menjadi usahawan dan membuka perniagaan. Semakin tinggi tahap niat tersebut, semakin tinggi kebarangkalian seseorang itu menjadi usahawan dan membuka perniagaan. Sehingga setakat ini, belum ditemui sebarang kajian yang mengkaji tahap niat di kalangan siswazah yang menerima biasiswa daripada LZNK.

Selanjutnya, tahap niat keusahawanan dipengaruhi oleh kemahiran keusahawanan. Kemahiran keusahawanan bermaksud kemahiran dalam membangunkan dan mencipta sesuatu yang boleh memberikan nilai kepada masyarakat dan menjana manfaat kewangan kepada usahawan. Kajian yang dilakukan oleh Ibrahim dan Mas'ud (2016) telah mendapati kemahiran keusahawanan mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan kecenderungan keusahawanan. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa sebarang intervensi yang dilakukan ke atas kemahiran keusahawanan akan meningkatkan kecenderungan keusahawanan seseorang individu.

Selain daripada kemahiran keusahawanan, kajian ini turut mencadangkan pemerhatian dilakukan ke atas orientasi keusahawanan. Orientasi keusahawanan individu bermaksud sifat yang dimiliki oleh individu yang menggambarkan kecenderungan individu tersebut terlibat dalam aktiviti keusahawanan (Koe, 2016). Kajian oleh Yusop (2020) mendapati orientasi keusahawanan mempunyai hubungan positif dan signifikan dengan kecenderungan keusahawanan. Hasil kajian ini menjelaskan bahawa sebarang intervensi ke atas orientasi keusahawanan individu akan meningkatkan niat keusahawanan seseorang.

Oleh itu, sebagai jalan untuk mengatasi permasalahan yang telah diutarakan sebelum ini, kajian terhadap tahap niat keusahawanan, kemahiran keusahawanan dan orientasi keusahawanan individu di kalangan siswazah yang gagal mendapat pekerjaan yang sesuai dengan kelayakan perlu dilakukan. Dapatan kajian ini dapat membantu mengenal pasti bentuk dan sokongan yang bersesuaian untuk mendorong mereka menjadi usahawan dan memiliki perniagaan sendiri.

Tinjauan Literatur

Ringkasan sorotan karya akan membincangkan konstruk yang terkait dalam kajian ini. Konstruk-konstruk tersebut adalah niat keusahawanan, kemahiran keusahawanan dan orientasi keusahawanan. Ringkasan sorotan karya berkaitan konstruk tersebut adalah seperti berikut.

Niat Keusahawanan.

Niat keusahawanan bermaksud kecenderungan seseorang untuk menjadi usahawan dan membuka perniagaan dalam masa terdekat (Elali & Yacoub 2016). Bagi Loria & Rodhiah (2020) pula, mereka menyatakan bahawa niat keusahawanan adalah kecenderungan individu berdasarkan proses berfikir individu untuk memfokuskan diri untuk terlibat dalam kegiatan keusahawanan seperti membuka perniagaan baharu dan bergelagat sebagai seorang usahawan.

Selanjutnya, niat adalah keputusan yang dibuat setelah berfikir dan diterjemah sebagai gelagat seseorang untuk mencapai sesuatu tujuan (Yusop 2020). Semakin tinggi niat, maka semakin tinggi keazaman seseorang itu melakukan sesuatu tindakan atau gelagat. Tindakan atau gelagat dalam konteks kajian ini adalah menjadi seorang usahawan dan membuka perniagaan sendiri (Zhao et al, 2010). Menurut Koe (2016) adalah niat keusahawanan adalah faktor yang tepat dalam meramal penglibatan seseorang dalam keusahawanan. Selanjutnya, kajian mengenai niat keusahawanan akan dapat mengenalpasti minat seseorang untuk menjadi usahawan.

Dapatan kajian seperti ini akan dapat membantu untuk membangunkan program latihan dan aktiviti secara komprehensif untuk meningkatkan niat tersebut (Yusop 2020). Teori yang menjadi dasar

dalam memahami niat banyak di dorong oleh Teori of planned behaviour yang diperkenalkan oleh Icek Ajzen, yaitu seorang psychologist. Menurut beliau, niat melibatkan 3 perkara iaitu sikap, norma subjektif dan tanggapan kawalan gelagat (Ajzen, 1991).

Kemahiran keusahawanan.

Kemahiran adalah pengetahuan seseorang untuk melakukan sesuatu pekerjaan atau dengan lain perkataan keupayaan untuk melakukan sesuatu mengikut kesesuaian yang sepatutnya (Chatterjee & Das, 2016). Kemahiran keusahawanan pula bermaksud kemahiran dalam membangunkan dan mencipta sesuatu yang boleh memberikan nilai kepada masyarakat dan menjana manfaat kewangan kepada usahawan (Ibrahima & Mas'ud, 2016).

Bagi Olagunju, kemahiran keusahawanan adalah keupayaan individu untuk membuka perniagaan baharu melalui exploitasi idea yang memberikan manfaat kepada individu dan masyarakat (Jardim, 2023). Tambahan pula, kemahiran keusahawanan merupakan faktor penting untuk menjadi usahawan yang berjaya. (Chatterjee & Das, 2016). Bagi Guo, Zhao dan Tang (2013), mereka melihat kemahiran keusahawanan adalah modal insan yang dimiliki oleh seseorang usahawan.

Sementara itu, Tsolakidis, Mylonas dan Petridou (2020) pula menyatakan kemahiran keusahawanan dapat dikaitkan dengan keupayaan melakukan inovasi dalam perniagaan. Menurut mereka lagi, kemahiran keusahawanan adalah penting dalam transformasi idea kepada inisiatif keusahawanan yang mempunyai nilai-nilai komersial. Dengan memiliki kemahiran keusahawanan ia mampu menjana keputusan perniagaan yang positif.

Orientasi keusahawanan

Orientasi keusahawanan boleh dikaji dalam dua tahap iaitu tahap organisasi dan individu. Dalam kajian ini, orientasi keusahawanan dikaji melalui tahap individu. Menurut Robinson dan Stubberud (2014), banyak kajian yang telah mengkaji orientasi keusahawanan pada tahap individu. Pemerhatian kajian yang lebih fokus pada tahap individu akan membolehkan kajian tersebut memahami dengan lebih mendalam tentang aspek orientasi keusahawanan yang dimiliki oleh seseorang individu.

Menurut Hassan, Anwar dan Saleem (2021) orientasi keusahawanan adalah proses yang meningkatkan keupayaan seseorang untuk mendapatkan pengetahuan berkaitan keusahawanan dan memahami keseluruhan tentang keusahawanan. Konsep ini mula diperkenalkan oleh Miller melalui penulisannya pada tahun 1983. Pada masa tersebut, beliau melihat orientasi keusahawanan sebagai sebuah konsep yang mempunyai tiga dimensi penting iaitu pengambilan risiko, inovasi dan pro aktif. Apabila konsep ini semakin berkembang, maka pada tahun 1996, Lumpkin dan Des telah menambah dua lagi dimensi yang membentuk orientasi keusahawanan. Dua dimensi tersebut adalah autonomi dan agresif dalam persaingan. Kajian tentang orientasi keusahawanan akan dapat memberikan kefahaman tentang aspek-aspek yang dapat membawa seseorang itu berjaya dalam keusahawanan.

Kesimpulan

Siswazah tajaan LZNK yang menganggur atau mendapat perkerjaan yang tidak setimpal dengan kelayakan perlu dibantu untuk mengelak mereka termasuk ke dalam golongan asnaf miskin. Membangunkan mereka untuk menjadi usahawan dan membuka perniagaan merupakan satu usaha yang dapat dilakukan oleh LZNK. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian perlu dilakukan terlebih dahulu dengan meneliti kemahiran keusahawanan, orientasi keusahawanan dan keusahawanan di kalangan siswazah ini. Maklumat yang diperolehi daripada kajian ini akan dapat menentukan bentuk-bentuk sokongan yang bersesuaian kepada mereka. Tanpa dapatan seperti ini, bantu yang diberikan nanti berkemungkinan tidak sesuai atau tidak menepati seperti yang sepatutnya. Ini akan menyebabkan usaha untuk membangunka para siswazah ini untuk menjadi usahawan tidak akan dapat dicapai.

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SAFETY PERFORMANCE IN START-UPS THROUGH RBV LENS: A PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR MALAYSIA SETTING

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Abstract

This research embarks on proposing a novel conceptual framework that seeks to employ the principles of the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory within the distinctive landscape of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and startups, primarily focusing on fortifying safety performance. In response to an evident void within existing literature concerning the integration of RBV principles into safety practices within these contexts, the study formulates a comprehensive framework. Rooted in an in-depth exploration of pertinent literature, this framework intricately outlines the strategic harnessing of inherently limited resources—specifically, physical, human, and organizational assets—within SMEs and startups to elevate safety standards. By spotlighting the inherent advantages and concurrent challenges encountered by these entities, the framework accentuates the pivotal role of leveraging unique resources alongside seeking external support. Notably, it underscores the significance of governmental initiatives and tailored compliance programs as supplementary resources. This proposed framework not only serves as a guiding map for understanding the dynamics of resource utilization but also emphasizes the potential for gaining a competitive edge through astute resource deployment, fundamentally crucial for achieving excellence in safety practices within the SME and startup domains. Its comprehensive outlook aims to navigate the intricacies and strategic maneuvers necessary for enhancing safety performance within these dynamic business landscapes.

Keywords: RBV Theory, SMEs, Safety Performance, Malaysia, Start-ups

Introduction

Start-ups have emerged as a dynamic and transformative force in Malaysia's economic landscape, igniting innovation, employment, and economic growth (Kee et al., 2019). These entrepreneurial ventures, typically characterized by their agility, risk-taking spirit, and pioneering approaches, contribute significantly to the nation's prosperity. However, in their rapid ascent, start-ups face a multifaceted challenge – the effective management of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and the development of a culture that prioritizes workplace safety. This paper embarks on a conceptual exploration that situates the safety performance of start-ups in the context of the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory.

Every novel business venture and entrepreneurial journey commences with a startup (Mohamad Fauzi et al., 2022). Hence, it comprises limited human capital and financial resources including inferior turnover. This characteristics can be concluded be similar to Small and Medium Enterprise (SMEs)(Mashuda & Laily, 2021). However, considering the substantial impact of start-ups on Malaysia's landscape, their distinct characteristics wield a potential hindrance to achieve good safety performance. Frequent factors contributing to these circumstances encompass inadequate financial resources, managerial disinterest in Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) matters, absence of knowledgable employees, , and inadequate support from relevant stakeholders(Md Deros et al., 2014; Vinberg, 2020; Zulkifly et al., 2023). The relentless pursuit of innovation often overshadows OSH considerations, as limited financial resources prioritize core functions, hindering OSH investments. The drive for rapid growth sometimes results in neglecting OSH planning, inadvertently compromising employee safety. Additionally, the unique start-up culture may encourage bypassing safety protocols, while regulatory compliance presents a substantial challenge. Understanding these challenges is crucial for developing strategies that bridge the gap between growth demands and safety commitments.

Based on the above mentioned justifications, resource constraints are common limitations for both start-ups and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia, hindering investment in OSH measures (Hasan et al., 2021; Khoo et al., 2011).

Understanding these shared limitations is essential for the development of targeted strategies, training programs, and support systems aimed at bridging the gap between growth demands and the commitment to ensuring employee safety. By addressing these challenges collectively, both start-ups and SMEs can work towards creating safer and more productive workplaces, contributing to the overall well-being of the Malaysian workforce.

Resource-Based View theory has long been a cornerstone in strategic management literature. Originally conceived by Barney (1991), RBV posits that an organization's competitive advantage is rooted in its possession of valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate resources (Barney, 1991). This perspective provides a novel lens through which to understand how start-ups in Malaysia can leverage their unique resources – including human capital, organizational capabilities, and innovative technologies – to enhance safety performance (Khor & Surienty, 2018). As Malaysia's start-up ecosystem continues to burgeon, comprehending the determinants of safety performance within these enterprises becomes paramount.

Within this context, this paper embarks on a conceptual journey to explore the intricate relationship between resource-based advantages and the safety performance of start-ups in Malaysia (Barney et al., 2001).

In this paper, the framework is employed based on RBV Theory as a guiding principle to illuminate the nuanced connections between resources, capabilities, and safety initiatives. This exploration seeks to uncover the extent to which start-ups, unique resources enable them to institute effective OSH management practices, cultivate a culture of safety, and optimize their safety performance outcomes.

Literature Review

RBV Theory

RBV suggests that organizations leverage their resources to improve performance and gain competitive advantages (Kee et al., 2019). SMEs including Start-ups can enhance their safety management performance through resources like employees' knowledge and a focus on occupational safety procedures (Tajvidi & Karami, 2017). The inherent flexibility of SMEs allows for cost-effective safety training and interventions (Rhaffor & Jamian, 2020).

Furthermore, RBV emphasizes the critical role of human and physical resources in organizational performance. Owner-managers with prior experience in safety procedures are pivotal resources for SMEs (Barney, 1991). The dynamic nature of knowledge as an organizational resource, as highlighted by Spender (1996), underscores the importance of prioritizing knowledge-sharing practices for improved safety management in SMEs including Start-ups (Spender, 1996).

Organizational resources, including information and financial capability significantly impact firm performance (Grimmer et al., 2017). Business reputation and safety management adherence are essential, making organizational resources an integral part of RBV's application in Start-ups.

The alignment of RBV principles with Start-ups characteristics which are found to be similar with SME characteristics, including Start-ups offers the potential to enhance safety management, capitalizing on human, physical, and also organizational resources.

Physical Resources

Resources of valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable and imperfectly substitutable are the main sources to sustain a superior performance (Barney, 1991). Barney (1991) has defined physical resources as physical, technological, plant and equipment. It is also explained by previous scholar that the location of plants, machines, offices, access to raw materials, and distribution channels are examples of physical resources for small firms (Hafiz et al., 2022; Madhani, 2009). In terms of this research context, SMEs are stated to have limited physical resources namely high-technology equipment, small and simple plant layout, and less machinery. These limitations lead to the less storage of hazardous chemical, less complicated production process, and small building supposedly enable a simple safety management process to achieve required safety performance. For example, with less complicated production process and less amount of hazardous material usage; plus with small numbers of workers, safety compliance within the Start-ups and SMEs is easy to achieve. Moreover, simple and inexpensive safety interventions (safety leadership by owner

manager) is sufficed to achieve safety performance (Zulkifly et al., 2021) comparing to larger firms.

Human Resource

Human resources are considered as unique resources of an organization. Barney (1991) has defined human resources as “training, experience and insights”. A current study (Madhani, 2021) explained human resources as managerial talents and organisational culture. Additionally, Ployhart and Moliterno (2011) argued that humans have differences in skill, knowledge, and abilities that can contribute to organisation performance. In addition, human resources are the capability and competency of the employee in the organization (Barney et al., 2001). Human resources are an essential component of intangible resources that increase performance of an organisation. According to Furthermore, RBV suggests that human resources lead to competitive advantage when they are a fit with organization capabilities (Collins, 2021). Hence, human recourse is the critical asset for organisation. The success or failure of an organization is largely depending on the skill and talented employee working therein. Lack of competent and knowledgeable human resource in OSH is among the limitations possessed by the SMEs which hinder them to achieve safety performance. However, the owner managers of SMEs supposed to have previous working experience before decided to venture in their own businesses. The safety knowledge and experience of the owner-managers is the example of key human resources that could contribute to the achievement of safety performance within the Start-ups.

Organisational Structure

According to RBV, organisation that can manage their organizational resources will contribute towards enhanced performance. Organisational resources are tangible internal resources that have positive impact on performance. Furthermore, organization can generate greater performance by implementing effective and successful strategies derived from key organization resources (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1986). Organisational resources are formal planning, command, and control systems, integrated management information systems (Othman et al., 2018). Othman et al., (2018) have examines the effects of organization resources on cooperative's organization in Malaysia. The finding shows that there is a positive relationship between organisational resources and competitive advantage of cooperative organizations. Perviously, Barney (1991) has defined organisation resources as formal structure of organization. Another study also indicates that organisations which maintain their resources enhance their competitive advantages which subsequently lead to greater performance (Wernerfelt, 1984). Extant literature shows the concept of RBV is a useful tool to investigate the relationship between firm resources and firm success (Meutia & Ismail, 2012; Othman et al., 2018). Thus, organisational resources are vital for organization to sustain in industry. For this research context, simple and flat organisation structure of SMEs and Start-ups are the key factors that could contribute to safety performance. Such organisational structure allows close monitoring by the owner-managers on workers safety. Besides, uncomplicated hierarchy of structure enables the management to make fast decisions in terms of managing occupational safety comparing to larger firms which need to face organisational bureaucracy. Moreover, the unique characteristics of the Start-up SMEs namely agile and flexible allow them to easily grasp and adapt external resources rendered by the government and other related parties to ensure their safety performance.

External Resources

Since the year 2004, a “comprehensive” ecosystem to support the development of SMEs has been developed and later expanded and refined in the SME Master Plan (Chin & Lim, 2018). Thus, it is proven that the government is always putting effort to assist the SMEs to ensure their sustainability. Moreover, in Malaysia’s Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (Ministry of Economic Affairs Malaysia, 2019), increasing SMEs contribution towards GDP is included as the main agenda. The support programs render by the government via SME Corporation Malaysia covers five focus area:

- Access to Financing
- Human Capital Development
- Market Access
- Innovation and Technology Adoption
- Infrastructure

Based on this fact, the Start-up SMEs need to be able to identify and grasp the opportunities provided by the government to support their limitations in achieving safety performance. Moreover, the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH), Malaysia has provided safety compliance support program for SMEs in Malaysia to increase safety performance (Zulkifly et al., 2018)

Research Framework

Based on the review of previous research and evaluation of RBV Theory, the proposed research framework is as depicted in Figure 1.

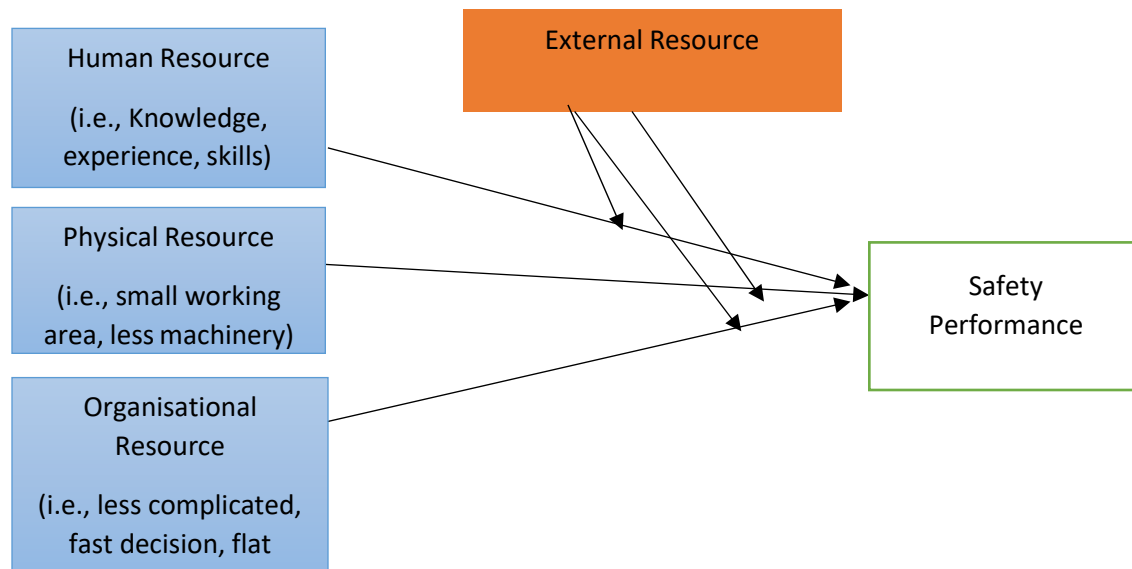


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework.

Discussions

The proposed conceptual framework, as depicted in Figure 1; is designed to address a significant research gap within the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, specifically exploring its application in bolstering safety management within small and medium enterprises (SMEs). Rooted in the foundational principles of RBV, this framework elucidates how Start-up SMEs, often constrained by limited resources, can strategically leverage their assets to enhance safety performance. The delineation of resources—physical, human, and organizational—highlights the pivotal role each category plays in shaping safety management. In the realm of physical resources, Start-up SMEs, despite limitations in infrastructure and technological advancements, possess inherent advantages such as simpler layouts and reduced hazardous material usage, enabling streamlined safety protocols. Human resources, particularly the expertise of owner-managers and the necessity for competent and knowledgeable employees, emerge as critical components influencing safety performance. Additionally, the organizational structure of Start-up SMEs, characterized by simplicity and agility, facilitates quick decision-making and close monitoring of safety procedures. The framework accentuates the adaptive nature of Start-up SMEs, allowing them to swiftly assimilate external safety resources and support, especially through governmental initiatives and specific compliance programs provided by organizations such as the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH). By merging RBV principles with the specific context of safety management in Start-up SMEs, this framework underlines the importance of strategic resource utilization and the potential for Start-up SMEs to gain a competitive edge in safety practices.

This framework prompts a significant discussion around the dynamic interplay between resource limitations and strategic advantage within Start-up SMEs. It accentuates how these enterprises, despite resource constraints, possess inherent advantages that can be capitalized upon for effective safety management. The emphasis on resource categories—physical, human, and organizational—underscores the multifaceted nature of resources crucial for safety performance. Furthermore, it brings attention to the adaptability and flexibility of Start-up SMEs, allowing them to swiftly align with external support and governmental initiatives, ultimately enhancing their safety protocols. The integration of RBV principles into the safety context of Start-up SMEs not only highlights the significance of internal resources but also points to the strategic utilization of external support, rendering it a comprehensive approach. This framework serves as a guide for understanding the nuances of resource utilization and the potential competitive advantage that can be harnessed within the safety landscape of Start-up SMEs.

Conclusion

This proposed framework integrates the RBV theory into the context of safety management within Start-up SMEs, focusing on the specific resources—physical, human, and organizational—alongside the importance of external support. It emphasizes the need for strategic resource utilization and the potential competitive advantage in safety practices for Start-up SMEs.

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IMPAK PENGGUNAAN ICT KE ATAS PRESTASI PERUSAHAAN MIKRO, KECIL DAN SEDERHANA DI MALAYSIA: SATU KAJIAN EMPIRIKAL

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Abstrak

Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana yang mewakili 98.5% perniagaan di Malaysia telah menunjukkan prestasi yang lemah dan memerlukan perhatian khusus. Faktor yang dirasai yang boleh meningkatkan prestasi Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana ialah penggunaan Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi. Oleh itu, kajian ini mengkaji hubungan penggunaan Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi dan prestasi Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana di Malaysia. Melalui persampelan rawak mudah, seramai 159 orang responden telah dipilih dari Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana di Malaysia. Hasil ujian menggunakan SPSS menunjukkan terdapat hubungan yang positif dan signifikan antara penggunaan Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi dan prestasi Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana. Penemuan kajian ini boleh membantu Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana mengubah strategi perniagaan dengan memaksimumkan penggunaan Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi. Kerajaan serta pihak berkepentingan dengan Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana juga dapat bekerjasama dan melaksanakan program dan strategi yang memberi tumpuan kepada penggunaan Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi untuk meningkatkan prestasi Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana.

Kata Kunci: Penggunaan ICT, Prestasi PMKS.

Pengenalan

Kepentingan Perusahaan Mikro, Kecil dan Sederhana (PMKS) tidak dapat dinafikan kerana kebanyakan negara memiliki hampir 90% perniagaan yang diklasifikasikan sebagai PKS (The World Bank, 2023). Menurut Ncube dan Chimucheka (2019), PMKS merupakan aset penting untuk pertumbuhan ekonomi global kerana sumbangan utamanya, yang dilaporkan oleh *The World Bank Organization* (2023) iaitu 50% penciptaan peluang pekerjaan di seluruh dunia dan 40% menyumbang kepada pengeluaran Keluaran Dalam Negara Kasar (KDNK). Justeru, PMKS digelar sebagai tulang belakang serta enjin pembangunan negara di peringkat dunia kerana mempunyai pengaruh yang efektif ke atas ekonomi dalam mencapai matlamat sosio ekonomi global yang berorientasikan masa hadapan yang mampan.

Merujuk profil PMKS 2022 di Malaysia, terdapat sebanyak 98.5% iaitu 907, 065 buah pertubuhan PMKS dari keseluruhan perniagaan di Malaysia (SME Corp, 2021). Jumlah pertubuhan PMKS yang besar ini sangatlah membanggakan kerana PMKS yang berjaya dapat memberikan manfaat dengan memberikan sumbangan besar kepada individu, masyarakat dan negara (Yakob et al 2023). Namun pada hakikatnya PKS Malaysia masih jauh ketinggalan dan sumbangan dan manfaat yang besar belum berjaya terlaksana sepenuhnya disebabkan kelemahan dari segi prestasi PMKS Malaysia. Ini dibuktikan dengan kedudukan dan sumbangan PMKS Malaysia gagal mencapai sasaran yang ditetapkan kerajaan serta lebih rendah berbanding negara-negara luar. Oleh itu kemampuan PMKS Malaysia untuk mencapai sasaran RMK 12, 2025 menjadi tanda tanya apabila sasaran RMK 11 2020 gagal dicapai. Selain itu pencapaian PKS pada tahun 2021 dan 2022 menunjukkan penurunan dalam ketiga-tiga bentuk sumbangan iaitu KDNK, peluang pekerjaan dan eksport. Didapati kadar sumbangan KDNK 2021 menurun kepada 37.4% berbanding 38.1% pada tahun 2020. Sumbangan PMKS kepada peluang pekerjaan 2021 turut menurun kepada 47.8%. berbanding 48%, serta sumbangan jumlah eksport 2022 turut rendah iaitu 10.5% berbanding 13.5% pada tahun 2020.

Berdasarkan kajian oleh Wahab et al. (2019) cabaran utama PMKS ialah kekurangan sumber, daya saing serta kekurangan inovasi dan teknologi. Oleh itu sumber yang dianggap penting untuk dikaji ialah penggunaan Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi (ICT). Ini kerana tumpuan kerajaan dalam Dasar Keusahawanan Nasional 2030 telah menetapkan dalam teras strategik yang pertama iaitu penambahbaikan ekosistem perniagaan dan industri negara melalui pendigitalan operasi perniagaan untuk terus bertahan dalam persekitaran dinamik. Manakala penemuan kajian oleh SME Corp dalam kajian pendigitalan PMKS 2018, menunjukkan 79.7% daripada jumlah responden menyedari dan telah dibuktikan terdapat penggunaan ICT oleh PMKS (SME Corp, 2019).

Tinjauan Kesusasteraan

Kajian ini memberi tumpuan hubungan penggunaan Teknologi Maklumat dan Komunikasi (ICT) dan prestasi PMKS di Malaysia. Kepentingan penggunaan ICT dalam perniagaan sememangnya tidak dapat dinafikan kerana ICT merupakan suatu alat yang boleh menyumbang kepada penjana pertumbuhan ekonomi sesebuah negara (Kriz & Qureshi, 2009). Penciptaan pelbagai aplikasi media sosial terkini seperti Facebook, Instagram, Twitter dan beberapa aplikasi lain memberi kepelbagaian pilihan kepada industri perniagaan atas talian. Menurut Talib et al. (2017),

kepelbagaian aplikasi terkini yang dapat diakses melalui internet menjadikan sesebuah perniagaan mampu menyebar luaskan perniagaan dengan pantas dan berkesan merentasi sempadan masa dan negara dan membantu memajukan sesebuah perniagaan PMKS. Matthews (2007) telah membuktikan bahawa PMKS yang menggunakan ICT berjaya meningkatkan jualan, produktiviti dan pertumbuhan pekerja dalam PMKS.

Berdasarkan pandangan Liang et al. (2010) ICT merupakan sumber dan berupaya meningkatkan keupayaan perniagaan. Sumber ICT terdiri daripada sumber ketara dan tidak ketara seperti infrastruktur, aset, aplikasi perisian, dan pelaburan dan pelengkap ICT (Barney, 1991; Powell & Dent-Micallef, 1999). Oleh itu, dari perspektif RBV penggunaan ICT merupakan sumber kepada organisasi (Barney, 1991; Liang et al., 2010). Para sarjana umumnya bersetuju bahawa ICT mempunyai hubungan dengan prestasi organisasi (Isaac, 2014; Paul, 2018; Yusof, 2013). Sebagai contoh, Xiao (2008) berhujah bahawa ICT berfungsi sebagai sebahagian daripada infrastruktur organisasi yang membawa kepada prestasi organisasi. Begitu juga penyelidik-penyelidik lain turut mendapati ICT membawa kepada peningkatan prestasi organisasi seperti produktiviti dan daya saing (Esselaar et al., 2006; Hofman et al., 2016; Manochehri et al., 2012; Olise et al., 2014; Selamat et al., 2011; Tarutè & Gatautis, 2014). Bharadwaj (2000) mengkaji industri ICT pada tahun 1991 hingga 1994 dan mendapati bahawa organisasi yang berprestasi tinggi mempunyai keupayaan ICT yang lebih baik daripada firma berprestasi sederhana.

Tinjauan literatur telah menemui kajian yang mengkaji hubungan di antara sumber penggunaan ICT dan prestasi PMKS di luar dan dalam negara. Antaranya, kajian-kajian di Nigeria oleh Olurinola et al. (2016) ke atas pemilik perusahaan mikro dan kecil. Objektif kajian ini mengkaji hubungan peranan akses ICT, iaitu komputer yang menjadi yang menjadi penggunaan umum di kalangan pemilik perniagaan tersebut. Kajian ini ini mendapati terdapat hubungan signifikan di antara penggunaan komponen utama ICT dengan prestasi PMKS. Dapatan tersebut disokong oleh Igwe et al. (2020) dalam kajiannya terhadap pengurus PMKS perkilangan di Port Harcourt, Nigeria yang mengkaji hubungan penggunaan teknologi dan prestasi jualan. Kajian tersebut menyimpulkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang positif dan signifikan di antara penggunaan ICT dan prestasi jualan PMKS. Dapatan tersebut turut disokong oleh Assadzadeh et al. (2015), Isaac (2014), Suleiman (2016) Sianjase dan Libati (2016).

Walau bagaimanapun terdapat kajian di luar negara yang menemui penemuan yang tidak signifikan. Seperti kajian oleh Azam (2014), terhadap pemilik dan pengurus 282 buah PMKS di Bangladesh telah menemui dapatan yang sebaliknya, iaitu tidak terdapat hubungan langsung yang signifikan di antara antara penggunaan ICT dan prestasi PMKS. Seterusnya tinjauan literatur turut menunjukkan terdapat kajian yang mengkaji hubungan penggunaan ICT dan prestasi PMKS di Malaysia. Kajian tersebut dijalankan oleh Karim et al. (2019) terhadap 14 buah PMKS di Malaysia yang melihat hubungan penggunaan ICT dan prestasi eksport. Dapatan kajian yang ditemui menunjukkan tahap penggunaan ICT hanya pada tahap sederhana sahaja begitu juga aktiviti eksport sangat rendah dan sukar menembusi pasaran asing. Manakala kajian yang dijalankan oleh Rashid (2016) mendapati penggunaan ICT dalam aktiviti perniagaan berupaya meningkatkan taraf hidup di samping menjana pendapatan bulanan perniagaan di kalangan usahawan mikro wanita di luar bandar.

Kesimpulannya, berdasarkan tinjauan literatur di atas, terdapat kajian yang mengkaji hubungan penggunaan ICT dan prestasi PMKS di luar dan dalam negara. Walau bagaimanapun, didapati

kajian-kajian yang dijalankan di luar negara masih belum konklusif. Manakala kajian-kajian sedia ada di Malaysia pula menunjukkan keputusan prestasi PMKS masih belum komprehensif kerana sampel kajian tidak menyeluruh dan hanya terhad kepada 14 buah PMKS dan usahawan mikro wanita luar bandar. Manakala, penyelidik pula berhasrat untuk melihat dalam populasi yang lebih luas yang mana melibatkan PMKS di Malaysia. Oleh itu, masih timbul keperluan untuk memasukkan penggunaan ICT dalam kerangka kajian ini. Penyelidik berpendapat ujian untuk mengesahkan kembali hubungan di antara penggunaan ICT dengan prestasi PMKS perlu dibuat berdasarkan kepada hipotesis berikut.

H1 : Penggunaan ICT mempunyai hubungan yang positif dan signifikan dengan prestasi PMKS.

Metadologi Kajian

Populasi kajian ini ialah 190,855 buah PMKS Malaysia yang berdaftar di bawah Kementerian Pembangunan Usahawan sehingga 31 Mei 2020. Senarai tersebut diperolehi melalui direktori usahawan nasional yang diakses melalui laman web SME Corp. Bagi mendapatkan dapatan yang menyeluruh, kajian ini melibatkan PMKS dari semua saiz dan industri di Malaysia. Untuk pemilihan sampel PMKS, kajian ini menggunakan persampelan rawak mudah kerana kaedah ini yang terbaik untuk mendapatkan sampel mewakili populasi. Kaedah persampelan ini boleh memberikan generalisasi yang tinggi berbanding dengan kaedah persampelan lain (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). Perisian hamparan elektronik Microsoft Excel digunakan untuk menentukan siri nombor populasi dan pemilihan sampel secara rawak. Soal selidik dihantar kepada responden secara dalam talian, melalui email dalam format *Google Forms*. Kaedah soal selidik dalam talian ini adalah yang kaedah yang efisien digunakan untuk mendapatkan maklumbalas serta menjimatkan kos (Torrentira and Moises, 2020). Kajian ini memilih responden yang terdiri daripada pemilik dan pengurus PMKS kerana mempunyai pengetahuan mendalam tentang organisasi dan berperanan penting dalam pencapaian matlamat PMKS (Ng et al., 2020).

Pengukuran penggunaan ICT diukur secara unidimensi yang diadaptasi daripada model TAM yang diperkenalkan oleh (Davis, 1989) yang terdiri daripada dua belas item dan dua dimensi iaitu: persepsi kemudahan dan persepsi penggunaan. Selanjutnya, pengukuran prestasi PMKS dikaji secara unidimensi menggunakan pengukuran yang diadaptasi daripada kajian Shamsuddin (2014) yang melibatkan dimensi kewangan dan bukan kewangan. Terdapat lapan item prestasi yang terdiri daripada keuntungan, pulangan ke atas jualan dan aset, prestasi kewangan, produktiviti pekerja, pertumbuhan pekerja, kepuasan dan kesetiaan pelanggan. Instrumen pengukuran ini menggunakan skala Likert tujuh mata, iaitu 1 adalah sangat tidak setuju dan 7 adalah sangat setuju.

Dapatan Kajian dan Perbincangan

Daripada 838 soal selidik yang dihantar kepada responden, sebanyak 163 dikembalikan. Ini menunjukkan kadar maklum balas sebanyak 19.5%. Hasil daripada penilaian menyeluruh soal selidik, hanya 159 (atau 19 peratus) daripadanya lengkap dan boleh digunakan. Jumlah soal selidik yang boleh digunakan tersebut dianggap sesuai untuk kajian ini kerana jumlah saiz sampel 159 melebihi 109 yang ditetapkan oleh G*Power 3.1.9.4.

Jadual 1 : Kadar Maklum Balas Soal Selidik

Perkara	Maklum Balas
Jumlah soal selidik yang dihantar kepada responden	838
Jumlah soal selidik yang dikembalikan oleh responden	163
Jumlah soal selidik yang boleh digunakan untuk analisis	159
Jumlah soal selidik yang ditolak	4
Peratusan kadar maklum balas secara keseluruhan	19.5%
Peratusan kadar maklum balas yang boleh digunakan	19.0%
Peratusan kadar maklum balas yang tidak boleh digunakan	0.5%

Sebelum analisis dijalankan, data mesti diimbias dan dibersihkan. Proses pemerhatian ke atas *box plot* dan ujian *z score* digunakan untuk memastikan sama ada soal selidik yang diperolehi mempunyai nilai sisih atau *outlier*. Didapati nilai *z scores* tidak mempunyai *outlier* kerana berada dalam lingkungan -2.5 hingga 2.5. Hasil ujian normaliti juga menunjukkan pembolehubah yang terlibat adalah bertaburan secara normal kerana nilai *Skewness* dan *Kurtosis* untuk setiap pembolehubah kajian berada di dalam lingkungan +2 hingga -2 dan hampir kepada nilai 0 (George dan Mallery (2019)). Seterusnya ujian kebolehpercayaan dan kesahihan instrumen perlu dijalankan. Ujian yang digunakan adalah analisis faktor untuk mengukur ketepatan item yang digunakan dengan menguji kesahan konstruk bagi instrumen yang digunakan (Hair et al., 2006). Hasil ujian analisis faktor yang dijalankan ke atas pembolehubah penggunaan ICT dan prestasi PMKS ditunjukkan dalam jadual 2 dan 3 seperti di bawah:

Jadual 2 : Keputusan Ujian Analisis Faktor Penggunaan ICT

Item	Faktor		Komuniliti
	1	2	
ICT 7	.808		.666
ICT 6	.803		.652
ICT 5	.779		.611
ICT 8	.728		.598
ICT 2		.802	.655
ICT 1		.742	.556
ICT 3		.690	.548
ICT 4		.598	.513
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	3.297	1.501	
Peratus varians (%)	41.20	18.76	
	9	0	
<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of Sampling Adequacy</i>			.799
<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi Square</i>			365.986
Df			28
Sig			.000

Pemboleh ubah penggunaan ICT diukur menggunakan pengukuran dua (2) dimensi dan mengandungi 12 item soalan yang diadaptasi daripada model TAM diperkenalkan oleh (Davis, 1989). Analisis faktor dengan *varimax rotated principal components* telah dijalankan ke atas pemboleh ubah ini. Hasil analisis menunjukkan terdapat dua faktor dikekalkan berdasarkan nilai *eigenvalue* lebih daripada 1 iaitu, faktor-faktor tersebut adalah persepsi kemudahan dan persepsi kebergunaan. Hair (2006), mencadangkan nilai *factor loading* 0.450 untuk bilangan responden 159 orang yang bermaksud nilai di bawah 0.450 akan ditolak. Oleh itu, untuk pemboleh ubah penggunaan ICT nilai *factor loading* adalah di antara 0.598 dan 0.808 maka tiada item digugurkan. Menurut Pallant (2005) mencadangkan ujian KMO perlu berada pada kadaran lebih daripada 0.6 dengan nilai signifikan *Bartlett's test of sphericity* kurang daripada 0.05. Dapatan ujian mendapati nilai KMO adalah 0.799 dan nilai penunjuk pada *Bartlett's test of sphericity* adalah signifikan (*chi square* = 365.986, $p < .000$) Maka dengan itu syarat minimum keperluan bagi kedua-dua petunjuk tersebut telah dipenuhi. Maka analisis untuk pemboleh ubah penggunaan ICT dapat diteruskan untuk ke peringkat yang seterusnya. Berikut adalah analisis faktor yang dijalankan ke atas pemboleh ubah prestasi PMKS.

Jadual 3: Keputusan Ujian Analisis Faktor Prestasi PMKS

Item	Faktor 1	Komuniliti
Prestasi 1	.811	.658
Prestasi 2	.718	.516
Prestasi 3	.675	.446
Prestasi 4	.673	.409
Prestasi 5	.668	.455
Prestasi 6	.641	.453
Prestasi 7	.639	.410
Prestasi 8	.609	.371
<i>Eigenvalue</i>	3.718	
Peratus varians (%)	46.479	
<i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of Sampling Adequacy</i>		.843
<i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi Square</i>		383.345
Df		28
Sig		.000

Jadual 3 menunjukkan keputusan ujian analisis faktor yang dijalankan ke atas pemboleh ubah prestasi PMKS. Pemboleh ubah prestasi PMKS diukur menggunakan pengukuran yang diadaptasi oleh Shamsuddin (2014) yang terdiri daripada 8 item bersifat unidimensi. Analisis faktor dengan *varimax rotated principal components* telah dijalankan ke atas pemboleh ubah ini. Hasil analisis menunjukkan satu faktor dikenalpasti, maka bentuk pengukuran unidimensi dikekalkan berdasarkan nilai *eigenvalue* lebih daripada 1. Dapatan ujian turut mendapati nilai KMO adalah 0.843 dan nilai penunjuk pada *Bartlett's test of sphericity* adalah signifikan (*chi square* =383.345, $p < .000$). Maka dengan itu syarat minimum keperluan bagi kedua-dua petunjuk tersebut telah

dipenuhi. Maka analisis untuk pemboleh ubah prestasi PMKS dapat diteruskan untuk ke peringkat yang seterusnya.

Pengujian Hipotesis dan Perbincangan

Ujian kolerasi *Pearson* dijalankan untuk melihat hubungan antara satu pemboleh ubah bebas dengan satu pemboleh ubah bersandar. Ujian ini dijalankan bagi menentukan tahap signifikan hubungan antara satu pemboleh ubah bebas dengan satu pemboleh ubah bersandar. Selain itu, ujian ini juga digunakan untuk melihat arah dan kekuatan hubungan antara pemboleh ubah bebas kajian (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

Jadual 4 :Dapatan Kajian Ujian Korelasi

	Penggunaan ICT	Prestasi PMKS
Kolerasi Pearson	1	0.583**
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
N	135	159

Menurut Pallant (2005), kekuatan sesuatu hubungan tersebut dapat diketahui dengan meneliti nilai *correlation coefficient* dan terdapat hubungan yang kuat sekiranya prestasi berada pada $r = 0.50$ to 1.00 . Oleh itu dapatan kajian menunjukkan hubungan bebas penggunaan ICT dengan prestasi PMKS ini berada pada $r = .583$, $p < .01$. Ini menunjukkan terdapat kekuatan dalam hubungan antara penggunaan ICT dengan prestasi PMKS di Malaysia.

Jadual 5 : Keputusan Ujian Ke atas Hipotesis Kajian

Hipotesis	Penyataan	Keputusan Hipotesis
H1	Penggunaan ICT mempunyai hubungan positif dan signifikan dengan prestasi PMKS.	Terima

Ujian regresi linear juga digunakan untuk menganalisis pengaruh hubungan antara teknologi maklumat dan komunikasi dan prestasi PMKS. Hasil analisis dapat dilihat pada Jadual 6.

Jadual 6: Analisis Ujian Regresi Linear Penggunaan ICT dan Prestasi PMKS

Pemboleh Ubah	B	SEB	B	t	p
Outcome: Prestasi PMKS					
Konstan	1.705	.368		4.637	.000
Peramal: ICT	.653	.073	.583	8.995	.000
R ²	.340				
R ² Terselaras	.336				
F	80.912	p <.000			

Berdasarkan kepada Jadual 6, didapati nilai $\beta = 0.583$ dan nilai $R^2 = 0.340$. Nilai R^2 adalah sebagai koefisien determinasi yang bererti 34% prestasi PMKS boleh dijelaskan oleh teknologi maklumat

dan komunikasi. Manakala bakinya ($100\% - 34\% = 66\%$) dijelaskan oleh faktor-faktor lain. Maka, persamaan regresi adalah seperti berikut:

$$\text{Prestasi PMKS} = 1.705 + 0.653(\text{ICT})$$

Persamaan regresi ini membawa maksud bahawa tanpa penggunaan ICT, prestasi PMKS adalah 1.705. Koefisien regresi penggunaan ICT adalah 0.653, $p < 0.05$, yang menyatakan bahawa setiap penambahan dalam penggunaan ICT akan dapat meningkatkan prestasi PMKS sebanyak 0.653. Hasil ujian Anova yang mendapati nilai $F = 80.912$ dan $p < 0.05$. Ini menunjukkan bahawa model regresi boleh digunapakai untuk perkiraan prestasi PMKS. Keputusan tersebut juga membawa maksud bahawa terdapat hubungan linear antara prestasi PMKS dengan penggunaan ICT pemboleh ubah bebas kajian ini (Ho, 2006). Keputusan ini menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan ICT adalah berpengaruh secara signifikan ke atas prestasi PMKS.

Kesimpulan

Objektif kajian ini mengkaji hubungan antara penggunaan ICT dan prestasi perniagaan PMKS. Kajian telah membuktikan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang positif dan signifikan antara penggunaan ICT dan prestasi PMKS. Teori yang mendukung kerangka konseptual dalam kajian ini adalah teori RBV. Berdasarkan pandangan Hofer and Schendel (1978), sumber-sumber dan keupayaan yang dimiliki oleh sesebuah firma merupakan penentu utama kepada prestasi dan seterusnya menyumbang kepada kelebihan daya saing sesebuah firma. Oleh itu, dapatan yang diperolehi telah membuktikan bahawa penggunaan ICT merupakan sumber kepada PMKS dan mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan prestasi PMKS.

Hasil kajian ini memberi implikasi dengan membantu pihak kerajaan, sektor swasta dan PMKS untuk membentuk kerjasama memberikan sokongan dan membantu PMKS meningkatkan kemahiran dan pembangunan infrastruktur ICT serta menyediakan platform digital bagi meningkatkan keupayaan PMKS untuk berdaya bersaing dalam ekonomi digital. PMKS perlu meningkatkan kemahiran ICT bagi mengubah strategi perniagaan mereka ke arah pemasaran digital bagi mencapai pangkalan pelanggan yang luas, meningkatkan akses kepada pasaran yang lebih besar, menjadi lebih produktif dan kekal berdaya saing dalam dunia perniagaan yang berkembang pesat. Terdapat beberapa limitasi kajian ini, iaitu tumpuan kajian hanya kepada sumber penggunaan ICT sebagai sumber yang meningkatkan prestasi PMKS. Dicadangkan usaha kajian seterusnya untuk mengenalpasti beberapa sumber-sumber lain yang mungkin mampu memberi kesan kepada peningkatan prestasi PMKS di Malaysia. Kajian ini juga hanya menumpukan kepada sumber dalaman organisasi, maka kajian akan datang dicadangkan untuk menggabungkan sumber dalaman dan sumber luaran organisasi dalam satu kajian yang sama.

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EXAMINING THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CURRICULUM IN MALAYSIAN POLYTECHNICS: AN ARTICLE REVIEW

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Abstract

This paper reviews existing articles in the field of entrepreneurship education particularly in Malaysia. The aforementioned article encapsulates the current entrepreneurship curriculum implemented in Malaysian polytechnics. It serves as an eye-opener for policy makers as well as practitioners directly involved in entrepreneurship education particularly within higher education institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia. Moreover, it serves as a guide for future curriculum review or any future planning regarding the program or field.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship education, curriculum, polytechnics, higher education institutions (HEIs).

Introduction

The entrepreneurship education (EE) derived from two meaningful words of entrepreneurship and education. Entrepreneurship has no absolute definition but early citation by Dollinger (2008) posited that entrepreneurship involved three elements of creativity and innovation, resource gathering and founding of economic organization and the chance for gain under risk and uncertainty.

While education (particularly tertiary education) is explained as a mechanism which produced and aligned the skills, knowledge and capabilities with the vast majority of job growth and career (Dawkins, Hurley, & Noonan, 2019). Thus, entrepreneurship education brings a significant meaning of inculcating the entrepreneurial culture among students in the higher education institutions (HEIs) to be an avenue of career path through formal education. (Almeida, Daniel, & Figueiredo, 2021; Drobyazko et al, 2019; Ismail & Ahmad, 2013; Kozlinska, 2011).

Entrepreneurship Education

In its vision to be a developed country by 2020, Malaysia has focuses efforts on strengthening economic and social agenda through entrepreneurship development within the country (Raki & Shakur, 2018; Pihie, Bagheri, & Sani, 2013). In relation to that, proactive action was taken to obligatory the entrepreneurship education in all public higher institutions, including community colleges and polytechnics (Chang & Rosli, 2019; Embi, Jaiyeoba, & Yussof, 2019; Rahim et al., 2015) in order to instil positive entrepreneurial culture which includes intention, attitude and capabilities among the university graduates. This is thought to be achieved through the creation of numerous entrepreneurship courses in the university and HEIs (Saeed et al, 2018; Rahim et al., 2015).

However, after more than two decades of inception, favourable results were rarely seen with reports indicated that the effectiveness of the EE implemented across public HEIs in Malaysia is questionable (Saibon, Kamis, & Zainol, 2019; Ismail, Sawang, & Zolin, 2018; Nasrudin & Othman, 2012, Department of Polytechnics and Community College Education, DPCCE, 2010). From methodological inflexibility and statistical perspective, Ismail et al. (2018) posited that EE studies were lacking in both comparative and longitudinal studies. Such approaches reflect on little knowledge exists regarding how well the program can shape student's personal attributes in terms of behavioral intention (Ismail et al., 2018; Rideout & Gray, 2013).

In addition, the implementation of EE in Malaysia is purportedly lacking in creativity and innovativeness inculcation among students while lacking in knowledge and skills application in the real business sense (Saibon et al., 2019; Nasrudin & Othman, 2012). Indeed, such worrisome claims were supported an early finding gathered by DPCCE (2010) whereby the unemployed polytechnics graduates within six months of graduation was at 34.2 percent while only 8.4 percent of graduates are self-employed. Such figure is supported by findings by a study by Nasrudin and Othman (2012) whereby 53 percent of students perceived that the entrepreneurship modules taught in polytechnics are not effective and less comprehensive where the content is too theoretical instead.

From the macro perspective, the paper titled *“Examining the entrepreneurship curriculum in Malaysian polytechnics”* is a decent write up. Such claim is based on the argument made by scholars on curriculum development, the process should start with curriculum design, followed by curriculum development, next curriculum implementation and lastly, curriculum evaluation (Ornstein & Hunskins, 2018). Such processes give a holistic dimension in developing a practical and useful curriculum which can be beneficial for the target audiences. According to Ornstein and Hunskins (2018), evaluation can be used to determine the value of some action or program, which helpful for students to meet curriculum standard and its importance.

While from the curriculum implementation perspective, this write up can be said as using the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBA). The CBA can be explained as a model which addresses only adoption (implementation) of curriculum, not development and design (Ornstein & Hunskins, 2018; Hall, 1974). The model assumes that teachers and other educational associates have already analyzed the needs of the school (in this case is the needs to introduced EE in the Malaysian HEIs) and have created or selected a curriculum for the learning institutions (universities, colleges, community colleges and polytechnics) that meets those needs. In addition, this model addresses instructors' (lecturers') concerns regarding content, materials, pedagogies, technologies, and educational experiences.

Findings and Conclusion

In this write up, the authors conducted research on the evaluation over the entrepreneurship education or courses conducted in one of the HEI institutions in Malaysia, namely polytechnics which an institution under the purview of Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE). Specifically, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of the entrepreneurship curriculum employed in Malaysian polytechnics in relation to the students' entrepreneurial tendencies or intention. Methodologically, this research used a quantitative approach of survey questionnaire for over 560 polytechnic students. The respondents were sampled using a purposeful sampling where it helps to enhance the richness of information acquired as well as enable researcher understand the problem and the research question (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Ahmad, Ismail, & Buchanan, 2014).

This article revealed that the entrepreneurship syllabus taught in the polytechnics is less effective and that students are not instilled with the intended entrepreneurial knowledge, skills or attributes during their studies. The skills measured in terms of the need for achievement, need for autonomy, creativity tendency, risk taking propensity, locus of control and general enterprising tendency all shown to a less favourable results in instilling the entrepreneurial tendencies among students. Such result is consistent with the recent study by Ismail et al. (2018) whereby EE taught in the HEIs has little prove on how well it can impact on personal attributes, especially the students' entrepreneurial behaviour intention.

Furthermore, it is posited that the teaching approaches in the form of pedagogical approach by the lecturers or instructors appeared to be inappropriate (Ahmad et al., 2014). The study did conclude two main issues; first the nature of the curriculum itself, which may be overly theoretical to grasp, outdated and obsolete to be relevant. Secondly, the activities and programs implemented in the polytechnics fail to develop an entrepreneurship culture. In general, the results show limitations in

Malaysian polytechnics' success at creating entrepreneurial excitement in students. Indeed, similar claim has been made by other studies in regard with the implementation of EE in polytechnics specifically and other HEIs in Malaysia generally (Saibon et al., 2019; Nasrudin & Othman, 2012; DPCCE, 2010).

Therefore, this write up bring some practical and policy implication towards the relevant parties such as policy makers, the ministries (Ministry of Higher Education, MOHE and MOE), respective HEIs management, and academics in the implementation of the EE. The findings can be helpful for all relevant parties to re-visit the entrepreneurship curriculum development and implementation, as well as to employ a rather effective teaching methodologies in the area of entrepreneurship education in Malaysia. Certainly, it is beneficial in order to support the entrepreneurship agenda in higher education context, not only to inculcate the entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, but ultimately, to produce more graduate entrepreneurs among students in Malaysia HEIs.

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THE EFFECT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCE ON ABSORPTIVE CAPABILITY OF UNIVERSITIES IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract

Achieving solid information technology competence is a winning strategy for Malaysia's universities to succeed in today's highly competitive marketplace. However, the current literature has not yet offered an adequate understanding of the contributing factors in establishing substantial information technology competence due to inadequate research and a narrow approach. In recognition of the information technology competence, this research examines the effect of information technology competence variables on absorptive capability. The researchers plan to use stratified proportionate samples from Malaysian universities and collect them using SPSS software to analyze the collected data using the drop-off survey method. This research is expected to contribute to information technology-business value by increasing theoretical and practical understanding of how information technology competence affects absorptive capability and provide a valuable guideline for future researchers.

Keywords: Information Technology Competence, Absorptive Capability, Competitive Advantage, Higher Education Institution and Information Technology-Business Value.

Introduction

The higher education sector has undergone a significant transformation, driven by global competition and fiscal influence, as Lemoine et al. (2017) emphasized. The current situation has caused higher education institutions to face the double challenge of maintaining their competitive advantage in an increasingly crowded market and managing limited financial resources effectively, as stated by Adams (2017).

After examining Malaysia's higher education sector, it turns out that since independence, Malaysia has undergone a significant transformation in its higher education system, aiming to achieve a quality of education that is commendable with international norms. In 2004, significant progress was observed in the country's higher education system, particularly in focusing on developing internationalization policies.

The increasing emphasis on globalization in educational policy has led to a preference for international educational institutions, which have gained several investment opportunities in the Malaysian educational market. Examples of initiatives in higher education that promote collaboration between local private colleges and universities include 'twinning' programs and international universities' development of satellite campuses (Richards & Richards, 2018).

Undoubtedly, the comprehensive revision of educational policy has given the Malaysian government a distinct advantage in establishing itself as a prominent hub for higher education within the region. This endeavour involves attracting international students and facilitating the influx of global intellectual expertise to Malaysia (Azman & Da Wan, 2021; Shahijan et al., 2016). However, this policy change has resulted in increased competition among public universities in Malaysia. The presence of local private and foreign educational institutions has led to a crowded higher education sector in Malaysia (Subiyakto et al., 2020)

In light of these issues, it has become crucial for these institutions to utilize a strong information technology-business value (ITBV) framework, as highlighted by (Tallon et al., 2020). According to (Roberts et al., 2016), ITBV comprises a comprehensive analysis of scholarly discourse that explores the impact and augmentation of information technology on an organization's performance and competitive position. Previous research has mostly focused on identifying the factors that contribute to the development of an IT Business Value (ITBV) by investigating the capabilities of information technology as a fundamental ingredient for sustaining competitive advantage.

However, the current body of scholarly work tends to have a limited scope, potentially neglecting crucial elements required for a thorough and all-encompassing understanding of how information technology capabilities can impact an organization's capacity to maintain competitiveness in the face of global challenges and economic constraints. The current level of exploration into how information technology competence generates value and its potential to enhance organizational strategic advantage is limited (Ashrafi & Mueller, 2015). Hence, this study employs the theoretical frameworks of the Resource-Based View (RBV) and Dynamic Capabilities View (DCV) to propose a conceptual framework for the direct effects of information technology competence on the absorptive capability of Malaysian universities.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Considering the continued development of internet technology, an expanding array of higher education sectors are encountering sustainability challenges and are consequently leveraging information technology (IT) to attain a competitive advantage. Information technology competence enables higher education sectors to enhance their utilization of internal and external resources, facilitating their growth and development. However, some studies have identified the "IT productivity paradox," wherein an institution's significant financial commitment to information technology fails to generate the expected outcomes (Singh et al., 2024).

In order to further investigate the underlying causes of the "IT productivity paradox," this study presents a paradigm based on competencies that provides a deeper understanding of IT competence. The Resource-based View (RBV), as outlined by (Barney, 2001), suggests that a company's distinctive resources and competencies are the cornerstone of its competitive advantage. This spectrum of resources and competencies includes the firm's tangible assets, workforce, technological endowments, and organizational practices. The RBV theory assumes that these resources are diverse across firms and often cannot be easily duplicated by rivals, thus offering a prolonged competitive edge (Nayak et al., 2023).

Building upon the foundation of the RBV, the Dynamic Capabilities framework, further developed by Peteraf et al. (2013) and Teece (2010), shifts the focus to a firm's capacity for adaptability in the face of environmental shifts by promoting constant learning and innovation. This Dynamic Capabilities perspective posits that firms can cultivate new resources and competencies by capitalizing on existing ones and perpetually reconfiguring their internal and external operations to meet evolving market demands.

In this study, IT competence is characterized by the institution's proficiency in employing suitable IT applications and infrastructure seamlessly incorporated into business operations. This encompasses utilizing software, hardware, telecommunications networks, and technical know-how. Given the paramount importance of IT competence in bolstering an organization's competitive advantage, this competence comprises the aptitude of the IT department to effectively manage the installation of essential information and the accompanying infrastructure within the institution.

According to (Zárraga-Rodríguez & Álvarez, 2014), universities can recognize and incorporate potential insights and knowledge. Furthermore, organizations can anticipate and evaluate future performance results by utilizing software, hardware, networks, and technical expertise to support business processes and operations. By using certain strategies, universities have the potential to enhance their efficacy and efficiency in the identification and integration of decision-making and information dissemination throughout their various business processes.

According to experts in information systems, it is argued that the mere possession of IT resources, such as hardware and software, does not inherently provide firms with a long-lasting competitive advantage. Competitors can easily obtain identical resources (Kruesi & Bazelmans, 2023). The competitive advantage in information technology (IT) is mostly derived from an institution's unique IT competencies (Okorie et al., 2023). Within this context, research investigating the

relationship between information technology competencies and business performance has revealed that institutions have the potential to achieve outstanding performance by effectively integrating and utilizing IT resources to develop unique institutional capabilities. This highlights the importance of cultivating strong IT competencies to enhance overall business performance through other institutional capability.

Additionally, prior research on information technology and business value has primarily concentrated on discerning the mechanisms by which IT competence might provide a competitive advantage to organizations (Bhatt & Grover, 2005; Dale Stoel & Muhanna, 2009; Santhanam & Hartono, 2003; Wade & Hulland, 2004) However, there is still a lack of clear understanding of the precise "underlying mechanisms" by which IT competence impacts competitive advantage or organizational performance (Bharadwaj, 2000 p.188)

A growing body of academic literature posits that competence in information technology acts as a catalyst for "first-order dynamic capabilities" instead of directly correlating with institutional performance (Mithas et al., 2011, p.238). Following this theoretical framework, this research proposes the influence of information technology competence on first-order dynamic capability, specifically emphasizing absorptive capability.

Organizations that exhibit absorptive capability demonstrate proficiency in identifying and leveraging relevant external knowledge to gain competitive advantages (Cohen & Levinthal, 1990). Previous studies indicate that preserving and augmentation absorptive capability is crucial for ensuring long-term sustainability and achievement, owing to the richer knowledge reservoir it offers. According to (Hart et al., 2016), absorptive capacity comprises three fundamental elements.

These elements include the capacity to acquire novel knowledge from the external environment, referred to as exploratory learning, the capacity to internalize and assimilate this knowledge, known as transformative learning, and the capacity to effectively apply the acquired knowledge within the organization, termed exploitative learning. The aspects above encompass explicit and implicit knowledge, crucial in utilizing institutional resources. They aid companies in effectively navigating uncertainty within a dynamic environment, enhancing their competitiveness (Parida et al., 2016). Hence, within the framework of this study, absorptive capacity may be seen as a component of dynamic capabilities.

The significance of absorptive ability for educational institutions is underscored in a recent study conducted by Jackson (2019), which posits that its importance is on par with that of corporations. Nevertheless, despite their emphasis on education and knowledge acquisition, colleges may not consistently exhibit the same level of openness or responsiveness to internal and external changes as other organizational entities.

This research proposes that information technology's competence substantially influences the formation and enhancement of absorptive ability within academic institutions. Information technology competence refers to the proficiency of the IT department in efficiently overseeing and implementing essential IT applications and infrastructure. This proficiency enables the university to identify and incorporate potential information and knowledge (Zárraga-rodríguez & Alvarez, 2013). Furthermore, academic institutions can optimize their operational support and business

operations using software, hardware, networking, and technical knowledge, improving efficiency in predicting future performance results. Consequently, this enhances the coordination and continuity of decision-making and information dissemination across the organization's operations, both within its internal structure and external interactions.

The existing body of literature and empirical studies suggest that IT competence has a significant role in shaping absorptive capacity, as evidenced by the works of (Irfan et al., 2019) (Li & Liu, 2014), (Mehdi et al., 2018), and (Pan et al., 2013). However, there is a shortage of studies investigating this relationship within the context of Malaysian universities. This study posits the idea that the level of information technology competency significantly influences the absorptive capacity of universities in Malaysia. Based on the following discussion, the researchers developed one hypothesis for testing in this study. The hypothesis is:

Hypothesis:

H1: Information technology competence significantly influences the effect of absorptive capability.

Conceptual Framework

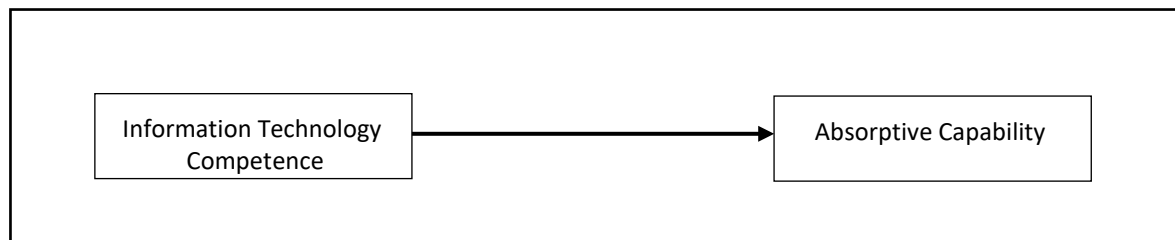


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Methodology

This study will be undertaken by using a quantitative method. The study will employ a cross-sectional time frame and proportionate stratified sampling focusing on Malaysia Higher Education institutions. The study's independent variable is information technology, and the dependent variable analyzed in the present study is absorptive capability. Questionnaires will be used to collect data, and the distribution will be implemented via a drop-off survey method. Once all the data have been collected, SPSS software is used to analyze the collected data. Several analyses include Descriptive analysis, Mean and Standard Deviation, Reliability Test, Pearson Correlation analysis and Multiple Linear Regression analysis. The unit of analysis in the study will be organization, as each of the top management of universities will represent the organizations.

Discussion, Limitations and Recommendations

The results of this research are expected to help Malaysian universities enhance their competitive performance and establish a significant information technology-business value. Accordingly, this research contributes to information technology-business value by increasing theoretical and

practical understanding of how information technology competence affects absorptive capability and will provide a valuable guideline for future research on information technology competence. Among other limitations, this research used a cross-sectional method, which only shows the association of variables rather than causality. It suggests that future researchers use a longitudinal method and extend the results by analyzing whether they differ by business sector or sample of other developing countries' institutions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research highlights the significant impact of information technology competence on the absorptive capability of Malaysian universities. Through a comprehensive exploration of the interplay between IT resources and organizational performance, the study sheds light on the critical role of IT competence in enhancing the competitive advantage of higher education institutions in Malaysia based on absorptive capability. Despite the limitations of employing a cross-sectional method, which mainly reveals associations rather than causality, the findings are expected to provide a valuable guideline for future research and practical applications. The study emphasizes the need for Malaysian universities to develop robust IT competencies, underscoring the importance of these skills in navigating the challenges of a rapidly evolving educational landscape. The insights from this research contribute to a deeper understanding of the IT-business value framework and offer a strategic pathway for Malaysian universities to strengthen their local and global competitive position.

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ICE-BREAKING ACTIVITY FOR NEW STUDENT. DOES IT MATTERS?

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Abstract

The research aims to determine the effectiveness of three distinct ice-breaking techniques: 1) Two Truths and a Lie, 2) A Picture of Me, and 3) Profile on TikTok in enhancing student engagement and interaction within a classroom setting. Utilizing observational methods, this study seeks to offer empirical insights into how ice-breaking activities contribute to an inclusive and dynamic learning environment. The research explores the differential impact of these techniques on fostering interaction, inclusivity, and a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. It addresses the gaps in formal training and guidelines for educators in conducting effective ice-breaking sessions. By evaluating various methodologies ranging from interactive games to structured activities, the research focuses on their impact in promoting communication, collaboration, and community sense among students. The outcomes could lead to the development of formal training modules and guidelines, ensuring a standardized and impactful approach to ice-breaking sessions across diverse educational contexts. The study also delves into the limitations of these activities, such as potential ineffectiveness in culturally diverse classrooms, the risk of superficial engagement, and increased anxiety among certain students. Ultimately, this research contributes to the field of educational practice by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of ice-breaking activities, offering insights into selecting and implementing the most effective techniques to enhance the learning experience and foster community among students.

Keywords: Ice-breaking, student engagement, classroom interaction, educational techniques, higher education.

Introduction

Ice-breaking sessions play a fundamental role in the educational landscape, particularly in higher education. These activities, often employed on the first day of a course, are not merely fun and engaging; they are strategic tools used by instructors to foster a sense of community, encourage communication, and acclimate students to course content and expectations. In the evolving educational context, especially with the rising prevalence of online learning, ice-breakers also serve to warm up digital classrooms, orienting students to the nuances of virtual interactions.

Despite their widespread use and recognized importance, a significant gap exists in the formal training and guidelines provided to educators for conducting these sessions. As a senior lecturer at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), I have observed this gap firsthand. There is an absence of structured exposure, such as workshops or formal documentation, guiding lecturers on effective ice-breaking techniques. This lack of formal guidance can lead to varied, and potentially ineffective, practices across different educational settings.

The purpose of this study, therefore, is to delve into the realm of ice-breaking activities, aiming to identify and evaluate effective techniques that can be universally applied, particularly for new students. The study seeks to address the critical question: What constitutes an effective ice-breaking technique in higher education? This inquiry is crucial, given that these activities are pivotal in creating a conducive learning atmosphere, breaking down barriers, and fostering inclusivity among students.

Through this research, this study aims to fill the void in systematic evaluations and formal guidelines on ice-breaking sessions. The study will explore various methodologies, ranging from simple interactive games and questions to more structured activities. The focus will be on their impact on promoting communication, collaboration, and a sense of community among students. By providing empirical insights and establishing best practices, this study intends to offer a valuable resource for educators, enhancing the effectiveness of ice-breaking sessions in higher education settings.

The outcomes of this research could potentially lead to the development of formal training modules and guidelines for educators, ensuring a standardized and impactful approach to ice-breaking sessions across diverse educational contexts.

Research Problem

The effectiveness of ice-breaking sessions in higher education, a critical component in shaping student engagement and classroom dynamics, has not been systematically evaluated, leading to variability in their impact (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). This research focuses on evaluating specific ice-breaking techniques—"Two Truths and a Lie," "A Picture of Me," and "Profile on TikTok"—to determine their effectiveness in enhancing classroom engagement and student interactions. These techniques range from verbal interactions to visual and digital expressions, each potentially offering unique benefits to the learning environment (Kolb & Kolb, 2005).

The primary research problem is to investigate the differential impact of these ice-breaking techniques on student engagement and communication within the classroom setting. The overarching research question explores the comparative effectiveness of these methods in fostering an interactive and engaging classroom environment. Further, the study examines the specific impacts of each technique in creating an inclusive and comfortable learning atmosphere, a crucial aspect in today's increasingly diverse and digitally-integrated educational landscape (Barkley, 2010).

This research aims to contribute to the field of educational practice by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of various ice-breaking activities. The findings will offer educators insights into choosing and implementing the most effective ice-breaking techniques to enhance the learning experience and foster community among students (Silberman, 1996). Such understanding is vital for promoting a positive, dynamic, and inclusive educational environment, essential for academic success and student well-being (Palloff & Pratt, 2005).

Research Objective

The research objective of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of various ice-breaking techniques in fostering classroom engagement and student interactions, with a focus on their specific dynamics and contributions to the overall classroom environment. Additionally, the study aims to explore how these techniques influence student participation, interaction levels, and engagement. Ultimately, the study aims to provide valuable insights and best practices for educators in using ice-breaking activities effectively in higher education settings.

Research Questions

This question aims to explore the effectiveness of each technique in fostering engagement and interaction within the classroom. It seeks to understand the specific dynamics each activity introduces and how these dynamics contribute to the overall classroom environment, focusing on student participation, interaction, and engagement levels.

RQ1: How do the ice-breaking techniques ("Two Truths and a Lie," "A Picture of Me," and "Profile on TikTok") influence classroom engagement and student interactions?

This question delves into the nuances of how each ice-breaking technique contributes to inclusivity and comfort in the learning environment. It aims to assess the role these techniques play in making all students feel welcomed and valued, encouraging diverse participation, and establishing a supportive classroom atmosphere conducive to learning.

RQ2: What specific impacts do the ice-breaking techniques ("Two Truths and a Lie," "A Picture of Me," and "Profile on TikTok") have in creating an inclusive and comfortable learning environment?

Literature Review

Definition of Ice-Breaking Activities

Ice-breaking activities encompass a wide range of exercises designed to help students get to know each other better, build trust, and establish a sense of community within the classroom. These activities can take various forms, such as team-building games, small group discussions, or personal introductions. The ultimate goal of ice-breaking activities is to create an environment where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts, ideas, and experiences.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Ice-Breaking Activities

The literature review highlights the critical role of ice-breaking activities in higher education, emphasizing their importance in fostering student engagement and creating a sense of community within the classroom. Pioneers like Tinto (1997) and Astin (1993) assert that these activities are instrumental in reducing social barriers and anxieties, particularly in diverse educational settings. Ice-breakers not only initiate interaction and participation but also set a tone for collaborative learning, as noted by Johnson and Johnson (1994). They serve as a foundation for building an inclusive and supportive learning environment, crucial for student retention and success, thereby underpinning the educational journey's positive commencement.

According to Kuh et al. (2005), student engagement is a key predictor of learning and personal development. Ice-breakers can serve as a catalyst for engagement by encouraging participation and fostering a relaxed and open classroom atmosphere. Johnson and Johnson (1994) highlight the importance of these activities in promoting collaborative learning environments, enhancing both academic and interpersonal skills.

With the rise of online education, ice-breakers have also become critical in virtual settings. Palloff and Pratt (2005) discuss the importance of ice-breakers in building community in online classrooms, where students often feel isolated. They argue that well-designed ice-breaking activities can bridge the physical gap, fostering a sense of belonging and collaborative spirit.

On the other sides, ice-breaking activity was acclaimed to have drawbacks, contending that not consistently attain their desired objectives and, in certain cases, may even prove to be counterproductive. One significant limitation of ice-breaking activities is their potential ineffectiveness in culturally and socially diverse classrooms. Gay (2010) highlights the challenges in creating activities that are universally engaging and sensitive to all cultural backgrounds. In a classroom where students come from varied cultural contexts, certain ice-breakers may inadvertently alienate or embarrass students, leading to discomfort rather than inclusivity.

While ice-breakers designed to encourage interaction, often result in only superficial engagement. Brookfield (2012) argues that activities like "Two Truths and a Lie" or "A Picture of Me" might not foster meaningful connections but rather, prompt shallow interactions that do not contribute significantly to long-term classroom dynamics or deeper understanding among students.

Another critical concern is the amount of class time these activities can consume. Johnson and Johnson (1994) point out that excessive focus on ice-breaking activities can detract from academic content, potentially disrupting the course's educational objectives. This is especially pertinent in curricula with stringent timelines and extensive syllabus.

Contrary to popular belief, ice-breakers can sometimes increase anxiety among students. For introverted or socially anxious students, the pressure to participate in these activities can be a source of stress, as noted by Silberman (1996). This contradicts the intended purpose of creating a relaxed and open classroom atmosphere.

In conclusion, past research underscores the significance of ice-breaking activities in higher education for fostering student engagement, reducing social barriers, and creating community, especially in diverse settings. While beneficial for initiating interaction and collaborative learning, as noted by various scholars, these activities also have limitations. They can lead to superficial engagement, cultural insensitivity, academic disruptions, and increased student anxiety, challenging their effectiveness in achieving desired educational outcomes.

Symbiotic of Ice-breaking activity

In the realm of education, fostering classroom engagement, promoting inclusivity, and creating psychological safety are interrelated concepts that work in synergy to establish a conducive learning environment. These ideas are intricately connected, as each one reinforces and supports the others, ultimately leading to a more effective and enriching educational experience.

Fostering Classroom Engagement

Ice-breaking activities are instrumental in enhancing classroom engagement. When students feel connected to their peers and the learning environment, they are more likely to participate actively in class discussions, ask questions, and collaborate with their classmates. This increased engagement can lead to improved learning outcomes (Kang, 2018). Ice-breaking activities encourage students to break out of their comfort zones and interact with individuals they might not have otherwise engaged with. As a result, students develop communication skills and empathy, which are essential for effective collaboration and teamwork (Bingham et al., 2019). These skills are particularly important in today's diverse and interconnected world.

Promoting Inclusivity

Ice-breaking activities play a crucial role in creating an inclusive learning environment. By encouraging students to share their personal experiences and backgrounds, these activities highlight the diversity within the classroom. This visibility of diversity sends a powerful message that every student's perspective is valued and contributes to a richer learning experience (Hughes, 2020). Ice-breaking activities can also help address bias and prejudice by fostering understanding and empathy among students from different backgrounds. For example, research has shown that structured discussions and activities that promote intergroup contact can reduce stereotypes and improve intergroup relations (Paluck et al., 2016).

Creating Comfort and Psychological Safety

One of the key elements of an inclusive learning environment is the establishment of psychological safety, where students feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of judgment or discrimination (Edmondson, 1999). Ice-breaking activities contribute to this by building trust and rapport among students and between students and instructors. Ice-breaking activities help instructors understand the needs and concerns of their students. This knowledge allows educators to adapt their teaching methods and course materials to better accommodate the diversity of their students, ultimately leading to a more comfortable and supportive learning environment (Gehlbach et al., 2016).

In summary, ice-breaking activities are significant tools for enhancing classroom engagement, promoting inclusivity, and creating a comfortable learning environment. These activities enable students to connect with one another, foster empathy, and build trust, ultimately contributing to improved learning outcomes and a sense of belonging for all students. Educators should continue to prioritize the use of ice-breaking activities as an essential part of their teaching strategies, particularly in diverse and inclusive educational settings.

Methodology

This section presents the research design, participants of study, data collection, descriptions for all ice-breaking techniques and data analysis.

Research Design

The study employs a qualitative research design, centered around instructor observation, to align with our research objectives. This approach was chosen to deeply explore teaching methods and gain insights into instructors' perspectives and challenges. Qualitative research's flexibility suits our goal of comprehensive exploration (Smith & Jones, 2020) The study employs a qualitative research design, centered around instructor observation, to align with our research objectives. This approach was chosen to deeply explore teaching methods and gain insights into instructors' perspectives and challenges. Qualitative research's flexibility suits our goal of comprehensive exploration (Smith & Jones, 2020).

Participants

This study involved a total of 178 students from various academic programs. Participants were recruited through their respective course enrollments. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring they were aware of the study's purpose and their voluntary participation. Ethical considerations were followed throughout the recruitment and consent process to safeguard participants' rights and privacy. Details of participants are as follows:

- I. BPMM1013 Principle of Marketing Group H (n= 81). Students are from semester 1 until 7. Different bachelor programs as this course is and elective course. Ice-breaking technique deployed is Two Truths and a Lie.
- II. BPMM3173 Salesmanship Group A (n=60). Students are from semester 3 until 7. All Bachelor in Marketing (Hons). Ice-breaking technique deployed is A Picture of Me

- III. BPMM3173 Salesmanship Group B (n=37). Students are from semester 3 until 8. All Bachelor in Marketing (Hons). Ice-breaking technique deployed is Profile on TikTok.

Data Collection

The ice-breaking activity (Two Truths and a Lie, A Picture of Me, and Profile on TikTok) and the instructor observation in this study was conducted on the first day of semester A231 on October 15th and 16th, 2023. This method allows us to assess how effectively the activity promotes student engagement and social dynamics, directly addressing our research questions.

Ice-breaking techniques

This section deliberates the three ice-breaking techniques and procedures in detail.

I. Two Truths and a Lie

- At the beginning of the semester or a new class, each student prepares two true statements about themselves and one false statement.
- In a random by volunteer, students take turns sharing their statements, and classmates guess which statement is the lie.
- After each participant shares, the class discusses their reactions, fostering conversation and connections.
- This activity can be integrated into the first-class session to create an inclusive and interactive environment.
- It helps students learn about each other's interests and experiences, promoting a sense of community.
- The activity can be followed by a brief reflection or discussion on the value of sharing personal information in an academic context.

II. A Picture of Me

- Each student brings a printed or digital photograph that represents a significant aspect of their life, interests, or values.
- Students take turns presenting their pictures, explaining the significance and allowing for questions from classmates.
- The activity can be expanded by creating a collaborative display showcasing everyone's pictures.
- This activity can be introduced early in the semester to establish personal connections.
- It provides a visual representation of students' identities, promoting understanding and empathy.
- The shared display can serve as a constant visual reminder of the diversity within the class, fostering a sense of belonging.

III. Profile on TikTok

- Students create short TikTok-style videos introducing themselves, showcasing their interests, hobbies, or unique talents.
- These videos can be shared in class or on a class platform, allowing everyone to view and comment.

- This activity leverages the familiarity of social media to engage students in a creative and contemporary way.
- This activity aligns with the preferences of many contemporary students, making it a relevant and engaging ice-breaking technique.
- It taps into technology and media literacy skills, offering an opportunity for digital expression.
- The class can discuss the role of social media in shaping personal and collective identities, connecting the activity to broader themes.

Data Analysis

In this study, qualitative analysis to interpret observational utilizing thematic analysis as chosen methodology (Smith et al., 2019). The aim is to identify recurring themes and patterns pertaining to the impact of each ice-breaking technique (Braun & Clarke, 2006). By applying this approach, the researcher gains valuable insights into how these techniques influence group dynamics and cohesion (Johnson et al., 2020). Through qualitative analysis, the researcher delves into the intricacies of interpersonal interactions during ice-breaking activities, thereby enhancing overall understanding of their effectiveness in different contexts.

Findings

This section delineates the research findings as claimed by ice-breaking techniques.

i) Two Truths and a Lie

- **Diverse Range of Shared Pictures:**
Students shared a diverse range of pictures, including their favorite foods, Spotify playlists, selfies, and more. This diversity of choices contributed to the richness of the activity, making it engaging for students with various interests and backgrounds.
- **Getting to Know Students on a Deeper Level:**
The researcher observed that this technique allowed them to get to know the students on a much deeper level. Students' choices of pictures and the stories behind them provided insights into their personalities, interests, and values.
- **Open Sharing of Secrets:**
Remarkably, some students openly shared their secrets during this ice-breaking activity. This level of trust and vulnerability suggests that the "A Picture of Me" technique created a safe and inclusive environment where students felt comfortable sharing personal information.
- **Facilitating Closer Student Connections:**
Through this ice-breaking activity, the researcher found that it facilitated closer connections among students. By revealing personal aspects of themselves, students not only formed a stronger bond with their classmates but also created a more supportive and collaborative classroom atmosphere.

In conclusion, the "A Picture of Me" ice-breaking technique was observed to be highly effective in enhancing emotional connections, fostering inclusivity, and encouraging students to share personal stories and secrets. This activity contributed to a more enriching and engaging classroom experience, aligning with the objectives of creating a comfortable and interactive learning environment.

ii) A Picture of Me

- **Enhanced Emotional Connections:**

The "A Picture of Me" ice-breaking technique was found to significantly enhance emotional connections within the class. As students shared personal photographs and explained their significance, a deeper bond formed among classmates. This suggests that the activity effectively fosters empathy and understanding.

- **Diverse Range of Shared Pictures:**

Students shared a diverse range of pictures, including their favorite foods, Spotify playlists, selfies, and more. This diversity of choices contributed to the richness of the activity, making it engaging for students with various interests and backgrounds.

- **Getting to Know Students on a Deeper Level:**

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- **Open Sharing of Secrets:**

Remarkably, some students openly shared their secrets during this ice-breaking activity. This level of trust and vulnerability suggests that the "A Picture of Me" technique created a safe and inclusive environment where students felt comfortable sharing personal information.

- **Facilitating Closer Student Connections:**

Through this ice-breaking activity, the researcher found that it facilitated closer connections among students. By revealing personal aspects of themselves, students not only formed a stronger bond with their classmates but also created a more supportive and collaborative classroom atmosphere.

In conclusion, the "A Picture of Me" ice-breaking technique was observed to be highly effective in enhancing emotional connections, fostering inclusivity, and encouraging students to share personal stories and secrets. This activity contributed to a more enriching and engaging classroom experience, aligning with the objective.

iii) Profile on TikTok

- **Innovative Approach with Limited Interaction:**

The "Profile on TikTok" ice-breaking activity introduced a modern and digital element to the traditional ice-breaking process. However, it was observed to be the most passive of the three techniques, with limited interaction among students.

- **Lack of Immediate Response:**
During the activity, the researcher noted that there was no live interaction or immediate response among students. This lack of real-time engagement had consequences for the classroom atmosphere.
- **Dull Classroom Atmosphere:**
The absence of live interaction on their first meet-up resulted in a somewhat dull classroom atmosphere. The lack of active engagement during the ice-breaking activity contributed to a less lively and friendly environment.
- **Separate Work:**
Students seemed to be doing their work separately, with minimal collaboration or communication during the "Profile on TikTok" activity. This isolation hindered the establishment of connections among classmates.
- **Failed Communication and Connection Building:**
The researcher found that this ice-breaking activity did not effectively facilitate communication or connection building among students. Unlike the other techniques, which encouraged sharing and interaction, "Profile on TikTok" fell short in creating a sense of community within the classroom.

In summary, the "Profile on TikTok" ice-breaking activity, while innovative in its approach, was observed to be less effective in fostering interaction, communication, and connection among students. The absence of live interaction during the activity contributed to a somewhat dull and disconnected classroom environment, which did not align with the desired objectives of creating an engaging and collaborative learning atmosphere.

Discussion

This research discusses the findings in accordance with the research questions for clearer understanding and to shed light on how each of the three ice-breaking techniques ("Two Truths and a Lie," "A Picture of Me," and "Profile on TikTok") influenced classroom engagement, student interactions, and the creation of an inclusive and comfortable learning environment.

RQ1: How do the ice-breaking techniques ("Two Truths and a Lie," "A Picture of Me," and "Profile on TikTok") influence classroom engagement and student interactions?

Positive Response to "Two Truths and a Lie": The "Two Truths and a Lie" ice-breaking technique significantly influenced classroom engagement. Students actively participated in the activity, demonstrating heightened interaction levels as they tried to discern truth and lies in their peers' statements. **Voluntary Participation in All Activities:** Across all three ice-breaking techniques, students voluntarily engaged without hesitation. This observation aligns with the goal of promoting classroom engagement through these activities, indicating their success in doing so. **Excitement and Laughter Across the Board:** Each ice-breaking technique contributed to a lively classroom

atmosphere characterized by excitement and laughter. This indicates that all three activities effectively encouraged student interactions and engagement.

"A Picture of Me" activity was found to play a significant role in influencing classroom engagement and student interactions. It accomplished this by fostering emotional connections among students. Through the sharing of personal photographs and their meaningful stories, a deeper bond developed among classmates. This suggests that this ice-breaking technique effectively cultivates empathy and understanding, which, in turn, positively impacts classroom engagement.

The diversity of pictures shared in the activity, ranging from favorite foods to Spotify playlists and selfies, contributed to a rich and engaging experience for students with varying interests and backgrounds. This diversity promoted dynamic interactions within the classroom, aligning well with the goals of promoting active engagement among students.

The "Profile on TikTok" ice-breaking activity had limited impact on classroom engagement and student interactions. It was observed to be the most passive of the three techniques, with no live interaction or immediate response among students. This lack of real-time engagement hindered the development of active student interactions during the activity, making it less effective in this regard.

RQ2: What specific impacts do the ice-breaking techniques ("Two Truths and a Lie," "A Picture of Me," and "Profile on TikTok") have in creating an inclusive and comfortable learning environment?

Inclusivity and Comfort through "Two Truths and a Lie": The "Two Truths and a Lie" activity fostered inclusivity by encouraging students to share personal information, creating a sense of comfort among participants. This openness contributed to a more inclusive classroom environment. **Inclusive Environment Across All Activities:** While focusing on "Two Truths and a Lie," the inclusivity and comfort observed were not unique to this technique.

"A Picture of Me" technique had specific impacts on creating an inclusive and comfortable learning environment. Notably, some students openly shared their secrets during the activity, demonstrating a high level of trust and vulnerability. This indicates that the ice-breaking technique succeeded in creating a safe and inclusive space where students felt comfortable sharing personal information. Such openness and trust are critical elements of an inclusive learning environment where students can be themselves and connect with their peers. Furthermore, the "A Picture of Me" ice-breaking activity was observed to facilitate closer connections among students. By revealing personal aspects of themselves and their backgrounds, students not only strengthened their bonds with classmates but also actively contributed to a more supportive and collaborative classroom atmosphere. This outcome aligns with the objective of creating a classroom environment where students feel connected and comfortable.

In terms of creating an inclusive and comfortable learning environment, the "Profile on TikTok" activity fell short of expectations. The absence of live interaction during the ice-breaking activity made the classroom atmosphere somewhat dull, less friendly, and led to students working separately. This isolation hindered the establishment of connections among classmates, and the activity failed to facilitate communication or connection building effectively. Consequently, it did

not contribute significantly to the creation of an inclusive and comfortable learning environment as compared to the other two ice-breaking techniques.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this analysis of ice-breaking techniques in a higher education context reveals significant insights into their effectiveness in fostering classroom engagement and inclusivity. The "Two Truths and a Lie" activity proved highly effective, actively engaging students and creating a dynamic classroom environment. Its ability to encourage participation and foster inclusivity highlights its potential as a valuable tool in the educational setting. Similarly, "A Picture of Me" significantly bolstered emotional connections among students. By providing a platform for sharing personal stories and values, it deepened empathy and understanding within the classroom, contributing to a more inclusive and engaging learning atmosphere. The varied personal narratives shared through this activity underscored its effectiveness in enhancing classroom dynamics.

Conversely, "Profile on TikTok," despite its innovative approach, fell short in promoting live interaction and immediate student response. This limitation underscored the importance of real-time engagement in ice-breaking activities, a key factor in maintaining an interactive and lively classroom atmosphere. Overall, these findings emphasize the critical role of choosing suitable ice-breaking techniques in higher education. Techniques fostering direct interaction and personal sharing are more adept at enhancing classroom engagement and inclusivity. Furthermore, the study underscores the need for additional research on the cultural sensitivity and inclusivity of these techniques. Educators must consider diverse student comfort levels and backgrounds to ensure the universal effectiveness of ice-breaking activities. Such considerations are vital for creating a learning environment that is both inclusive and conducive to student engagement.

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EXAMINING FACTORS INFLUENCING ATTITUDE AND ADOPTION OF CHATBOTS AMONG CONSUMERS

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Abstract

Implementing chatbots as virtual agents to assist consumers can be viewed as a tool to help an organization provide better customer service. Malaysia is among the countries forging ahead with the Fourth Industrial Revolution. One of the core technologies mentioned is adopting artificial intelligence tools such as chatbots. In the last few years, there has been a growing interest in AI-based chatbot adoption in various business transactions. However, in the context of Malaysia, research on chatbot adoption is still new and is a less explored and examined topic in the information systems domain. Furthermore, most of the studies were not guided by information systems (IS) theories. Therefore, this study aims to identify factors that influence chatbot adoption by adapting the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) as the IS theory reference. An online survey method was applied using the purposive sampling technique. Within a month, data were collected from 121 postgraduate students of Universiti Utara Malaysia who have experience using chatbots. Correlation and regression analyses were used to validate the research model and assess the presented research hypotheses. This research reveals that chatbot adoption is influenced by attitudes towards chatbots. Meanwhile, attitudes towards chatbots are influenced by their perceived usefulness and ease of use. The findings of this study can be helpful to chatbot developers and can be a guide towards quality and marketing strategies for better serving consumers. This study offers theoretical and practical contributions for academics and professionals.

Keywords: Chatbot, Adoption, Attitude, Perceived Usefulness, Perceived Ease of Use.

Introduction

The concept of AI-based technology, in particular chatbots, has generated a lot of interest and has been the central focus of research. The purpose of this study is to examine the factors influencing consumers' adoption of chatbots in their daily transactions. This chapter introduces the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study, and thesis organization.

Recent technological developments have transformed the way consumers and financial institutions interact with each other (Mónika-Anetta et al., 2021). Moreover, the COVID- 19 pandemic has led to a rapid shift to digital technologies and banks have transitioned to remote sales and provision at a fast pace (Bensley et al., 2020). The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) based technology is contributing extensively to this transformation as more and more banks have begun to implement AI-based applications to deepen customer relationships, provide more personalized offers, detect and prevent fraud, improve processes for anti-money laundering, and cost-saving (Business Insider, 2021). One very popular and impactful form of technological development is the implementation of AI based chatbot technology (Lee & Park, 2019).

Chatbots are software agents that provide access to services and information through interaction in the users' everyday language through text and voice (Brandtzaeg & Følstad, 2018). The term 'chatbot' partly overlaps with the terms 'conversational agents' and 'dialogue systems' and may refer to task-oriented as well as non-task-oriented solutions. Chatbots represent one of the most frequently used types of human-computer interaction (HCI). They are virtual customer assistants and "AI technology products that can ask and answer customers through online channels via text message and web chat" (Ho et al., 2018). A chatbot is an application to which humans may ask their questions freely and without limitation (Karri & Kumar, 2020). Chatbots may be provided with a messaging infrastructure or even voice and provide information within the time frame and limits determined by customers.

Chatbots that interact with users through text or voice are frequently used in sales, marketing, customer support, technical support, and training (Smutny & Schreiberova, 2020). Banks often use chatbots in customer relations management, sales, marketing activities, investment analysis, and recommendations. They provide fast services and solutions, personalized digital services, and cost-effective access to customer service. As mentioned by the news website Business Insider (2019), according to a report from research and markets, the chatbot market size is projected to grow from \$2.6bn in 2019 to \$9.4bn by 2024.

Customer service, retail, and e-commerce represent those market segments that are projected to grow their market size at the highest compound annual growth rate, owing to the increasing demand to provide customers with a seamless omnichannel experience (Business Insider, 2019). The ease and accessibility of building a chatbot, the substantial developments in artificial intelligence (AI), and the increased usage of messaging apps are the main factors pushing the chatbot industry forwards.

Chatbots are currently grabbing the attention of a growing number of researchers, addressing their interest in visual-conversational cues and interactivity of chatbots (Go & Sundar, 2019;

Chattaraman et al., 2019) as well as their potential role in enhancing customers' satisfaction (Chung et al., 2018) and company perceptions (Araujo, 2018).

In line with the fourth industrial revolution globally and the National Transformation 2050 (TN50), Malaysia is moving towards AI innovation (Noor & Mansor, 2019). Since the Malaysian government has taken a great interest in pursuing AI-enabled technologies, several initiatives have been commenced by agencies such as the Malaysian Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) (Abdullah et al., 2017). MDEC has announced that it has established an AI unit with local and international experts to support the National AI Framework to ensure Malaysia is on the right track to develop an AI ecosystem in the country. As a result, new technical skills and higher-level capabilities are expected from the current workforce (EAC Focus, 2022).

Chatbots have gained popularity in Malaysia, and they are being used in various industries and sectors. Companies in Malaysia are leveraging chatbots to enhance customer service, streamline operations, and provide personalized experiences. Here are a few examples of how chatbots are used in Malaysia:

1. **Customer Service:** Many businesses in Malaysia use chatbots to provide 24/7 customer support. These chatbots can handle frequently asked questions, provide product information, assist with troubleshooting, and even initiate basic transactions.
2. **E-commerce:** Online retailers in Malaysia utilize chatbots to improve the shopping experience. Chatbots can help customers find products, provide recommendations based on their preferences, assist with order tracking, and handle payment inquiries.
3. **Banking and Finance:** Banks and financial institutions in Malaysia have implemented chatbots to offer customer support, answer account-related queries, provide balance information, and facilitate transactions like fund transfers and bill payments.
4. **Government Services:** Some government agencies in Malaysia have integrated chatbots on their websites or mobile applications to provide information and support to citizens. These chatbots can assist with services like passport applications, license renewals, and general inquiries.
5. **Healthcare:** In the healthcare sector, chatbots are used to provide basic medical information, answer common health-related questions, and assist with appointment scheduling. They can also offer advice on self-care and provide reminders for medication.

These are just a few examples of how chatbots are utilized in Malaysia. With advancements in natural language processing and artificial intelligence, chatbots continue to evolve, providing more sophisticated and personalized interactions to users. Chatbots are widely used in Malaysia across various industries and sectors. They are employed by businesses to enhance customer service, automate processes, provide information, and engage with users. Here are a few examples of chatbots in Malaysia:

1. **Maybank's MAE ChatBot:** Maybank, one of Malaysia's largest banks, has its Mobile Virtual Assistant (MAE) ChatBot. It assists customers with banking transactions, balance inquiries, fund transfers, and other account-related inquiries through popular messaging platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger.

2. **AirAsia's Ava:** Ava is the virtual assistant of AirAsia, a well-known low-cost airline in Malaysia. Ava assists customers with flight bookings, rescheduling, and baggage inquiries, and provides flight-related information. It helps streamline the customer experience and provides quick responses to common queries.
3. **MySejahtera:** MySejahtera is a mobile application developed by the Malaysian government to manage COVID-19-related information. The app includes a chatbot feature that provides users with information on COVID-19, vaccination centers, testing facilities, and guidelines issued by the government.
4. **Lazada Malaysia's Chatbot:** Lazada, an e-commerce platform in Malaysia, employs a chatbot to assist customers with product inquiries, order tracking, and general customer support. The chatbot offers quick responses and helps customers navigate through the online shopping process.

Currently, chatbots are used for marketing, customer service, and sales (Wirtz et al., 2018; Ashfaq, Yun, Yu, & Loureiro, 2020). Consumers can use chatbots to talk and communicate with one another (Przegalinska et al; 2019), either for product information, food ordering, or to place a virtual order (Przegalinska et al., 2019; Pizzi, Scarpi, & Pantano, 2021). Chatbots can aid businesses with technical support, guided selling, website navigation, help desk support, and customer service. Other chatbot applications include weather forecasting (Facebook's Poncho chatbot), news updates, booking flights, ordering pizzas, or delivering flowers, food recipes, health care, and mortgage.

Literature Review

The Development of Chatbot

Industry 4.0 emphasizes the humanization of technology, where it gives focuses on the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI). Humanization of technology can reduce the mistakes done by the human workforce and it can help businesses cut down unnecessary costs (Adamopoulao & Moussiades, 2020). One of the examples of humanization of technology is “chatbot”, or what we call as “chat robot”. According to Wen et al. (2023), chatbots can be categorized into two types:

1. **Rule-Based Chatbots:** These chatbots follow predefined rules and decision trees to respond to user inputs. They are programmed with specific patterns and responses and can handle simple, structured interactions. Rule-based chatbots work well for handling frequently asked questions or providing scripted responses.
2. **AI-Powered Chatbots:** These chatbots leverage machine learning algorithms and NLP techniques to understand and generate responses. They can learn from user interactions and improve their understanding and accuracy over time. AI-powered chatbots are more flexible and can handle complex, unstructured conversations with users.

Chatbots have various applications across different industries. They are commonly used for customer support, providing information and recommendations, assisting with transactions, automating tasks, and enhancing user experiences. Chatbots can save time and resources for businesses by handling repetitive and common inquiries, while also offering 24/7 availability to

users. The development of chatbots involves designing conversational flows, implementing NLP models, integrating with relevant systems and databases, and continuously improving the chatbot's performance through user feedback and iterative development (Nazim Sha & Rajeswari, 2019). Overall, chatbots are powerful tools that enable automated and interactive communication between users and computer systems, providing efficient and personalized experiences in various domains.

Chatbots can be found on various platforms, including websites, messaging apps, mobile apps, and virtual assistants. At the early stage, the chatbot is only used to solve frequently asked questions (FAQ) by the customers. However, as the e-commerce industry grows rapidly, and when the live chat system is not able to handle all the customers' requests and questions anymore, a chatbot is then modified into a more advanced phase (Frank, Chrysochou & Mitkidis, 2023). The development of chatbots worldwide has been rapidly evolving over the years. Chatbots are computer programs designed to simulate conversations with human users, typically through text-based interfaces. They can be found in various applications, such as customer support, virtual assistants, and even as standalone conversational agents.

Here are some key aspects of the development of chatbots worldwide:

1. **Advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI technologies, including natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning, have significantly contributed to the development of chatbots. These technologies enable chatbots to understand and respond to user queries more accurately.
2. **Industry Applications:** Chatbots are widely used in industries such as e-commerce, healthcare, banking, and customer service. They can provide 24/7 support, answer frequently asked questions, assist with transactions, and help streamline business processes.
3. **Messaging Platforms:** Chatbots are integrated into popular messaging platforms like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and Slack, allowing businesses to engage with customers conversationally directly through these platforms.

Chatbot in Malaysia

Today, every organization depends on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for efficient service delivery and cost-effective application of technological resources. With a growing preference towards faster services and acceptance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) based tools in business operations globally as well as in Malaysia. The global chatbot market is going to accelerate in the next decade. In the era of AI, the chatbot market is witnessing extraordinary growth with the increased demand for smartphones and increased use of messaging applications.

In the past few years, the food delivery business, finance, and the E-commerce industry have embraced chatbot technology. Chatbot that is used in today's world is more humanize since it can provide engagement with the customers by chatting to them without the restrictions of time and location. In Malaysia, the development of chatbots has been gaining momentum in recent years. Organizations across various industries have recognized the value of chatbots in improving customer service, enhancing user experiences, and streamlining business processes (Tan & Lim 2023). Below are some key aspects of the development of chatbots in Malaysia:

1. **Business Applications:** Malaysian businesses, including banks, e-commerce platforms, telecommunications companies, and government agencies, have started adopting chatbots to automate customer support and engage with their customers. Chatbots help handle common inquiries, provide information, and assist with transactions.
2. **Language Support:** Chatbots in Malaysia are often developed to support multiple languages, including Malay, English, and Chinese. This ensures that users can interact with the chatbots in their preferred language, catering to the country's multilingual population.
3. **Customer Support:** Chatbots are being used extensively for customer support in Malaysia. They provide 24/7 assistance, answer frequently asked questions, help with troubleshooting, and guide users through various processes. This reduces the workload on human customer support agents and improves response times.
4. **E-commerce Integration:** Chatbots are integrated into e-commerce platforms in Malaysia to provide personalized product recommendations, assist with purchases, track orders, and handle customer inquiries. They enhance the overall shopping experience by offering real-time assistance to users.
5. **Virtual Assistants:** Virtual assistants powered by chatbot technology are becoming popular in Malaysia. These assistants can perform tasks like setting reminders, providing weather updates, answering general knowledge questions, and even controlling smart home devices.
6. **Mobile Applications:** Chatbots are integrated into mobile applications in Malaysia, enabling users to interact with businesses and services seamlessly through chatbased interfaces. This allows for convenient and efficient communication on mobile devices.
7. **Government Services:** The Malaysian government has also embraced chatbot technology to improve citizen services. Chatbots are used to provide information on government initiatives, assist with administrative procedures, and address citizen queries.

The development of chatbots in Malaysia is driven by the need to enhance customer experiences, improve operational efficiency, and keep up with technological advancements (Zainol et al., 2023). As the adoption of chatbots continues to expand, we can expect to see further innovation and integration of chatbot technology across different sectors in the country.

In Malaysia, the usage of chatbots can be seen widely in the Facebook Messenger app. Recently, many small and medium businesses in Malaysia are using the Facebook Messenger Chatbot to keep in touch and respond to the inquiries of customers. For example, GDEX, a courier service in Malaysia, uses its Messenger chatbot to engage with customers in parcel-related matters. In addition, CIMB bank in Malaysia also launched its chatbot which is named EVA to solve customers' banking-related inquiries. Furthermore, Malaysia Airlines also launched its new chatbot named Amadeus chatbot which serves through the platform named MHchat, where it provides a simpler way for clients to book flight tickets, create a secure payment, and verify travel iteration.

In conclusion, chatbots have become an essential tool for businesses to provide efficient and personalized customer service. However, a number of challenges remain to be resolved before the potential of chatbots can be fully realized. To help advance knowledge in this emerging research

area, more research agenda in the form of future directions and challenges need to be addressed by chatbot research.

Technology Adoption Model (TAM)

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is a theory on the usage of information technology systems, which is considered very influential and is generally used to explain the individual acceptance of information technology system usage (Gunawan & Nugroho, 2019). Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is an extensively used and acknowledged model in technology adoption research and it investigates the behavioral intention to adopt new technology (Lai, 2017). TAM was introduced by Fred Davis in 1986 as shown in Figure 1 below. An adaptation of the Theory of Reasonable Action, TAM is specifically tailored for modeling users' acceptance of information systems or technologies (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020).

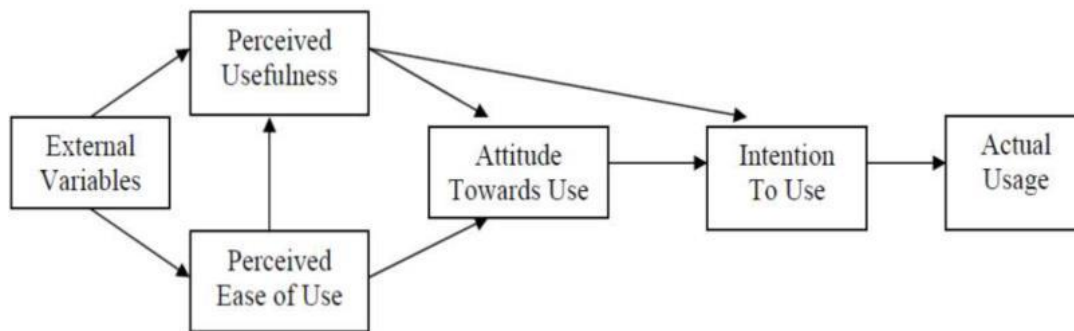


Figure 1
Original Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1986)

The model suggests that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence users' attitudes toward using new technology (Yuen et al., 2021). User shows positive feelings about the new technology if he or she believes it is good for their job performance, thus users' attitudes towards using new technology will be more positive. Such attitudes will furthermore influence the user's behavioral intention and actual system use (Kemp, Palmer & Strelan, 2019). According to Venkatesh (2015), TAM is an extensively used and acknowledged model in technology adoption research and it investigates the behavioral intention to adopt new technology. The user's conviction regarding the perceived ease of use (PEA) and perceived usefulness (PUL) of new technology impacts the user intention (Davis, 1989). TAM was used to study the adoption of social media for selecting tourist destinations (Hua et al., 2017), self-service hotel technology (Kaushik et al., 2015), Web-based self-service technology in the hospitality industry (Lee, 2013), and e-tourism in Egyptian tourism companies (Ghanem et al., 2017).

Adoption of Chatbots Technology

Chatbot adoption refers to the acceptance and integration of the chatbot into a user's routine or activity (Wang et al, 2023). There have been many researchers addressing the consumers' adoption of new technologies (Meuter et al., 2018; Dapp et al., 2016; Lai & Zainal, 2016). The adoption of chatbot technology is an emerging subject of research and many studies have been done worldwide in various contexts. The studies conducted for the adoption and usage of chatbot technologies are travel, tourism, and hospitality companies (Ivanov & Webster, 2019), service chatbots (Sheehan, 2018), hotel interactive technologies (Morosan & DeFranco, 2019), service robots (Belanche et al., 2020; Mende et al., 2019), chatbots in general (Brandtzaeg & Følstad, 2017) and chatbots adoption in Siri case (Io & Lee, 2019).

Most online shopping sites (e-commerce websites) have chatbots because they have a wide range of products with a large and complex database in each of their categories (Sheehan, Jin & Gottlieb, 2020). Those products are spread over many websites and categorized according to their types. Navigating those websites to find relevant and personalized results can be unintuitive, time-consuming, and exhausting. Users visit ecommerce websites to search for specific products or just to do window shopping (Tzeng et al., 2021). Search tools use keyword matching to display multiple results, some of which may be relevant, while others may not. This is supported by Almugari et al. (2022) that irrelevant results lead to unpleasant user experiences. A customer who uses vague keywords to describe a product/service is likely to get irrelevant results. Moreover, conventional systems cannot help a user who knows little about the product he/she is looking for.

The Influence of Perceived Usefulness on Attitude towards Chatbot

Perceived usefulness refers to individuals having faith in information technology being able to increase performance (Moslehpour et al. (2018). Herrero and Martín (2018) define it as “the degree to which an individual considers that using a particular system will improve the performance in a task.” An individual who thinks that a system, a device, or an app can help him/her complete a task is more likely to use it again Raza, Umer & Shah (2017). In a customer setting, perceived usefulness is described as the extent to which customers have faith that the technology can provide interest in performing specific tasks (Keno, 2020).

Perceived usefulness becomes the determiner of a system, adoption, and behavior of the users. Technology can be said to be successful if it has the value of usefulness needed by the customer. According to Rahmi, Birgoren, and Aktepe (2018), perceived usefulness has a dominant influence on online shopping decisions. It is supported by Indarsin and Ali (2017) and Wilson (2019) that perceived usefulness can influence consumers' online shopping decisions. Iriani and Andjarwati (2020) also stated that perceived usefulness has a positive influence on attitude and intention to online shopping. Therefore, the study proved the positive relationship between perceived usefulness and users' attitude toward the technology. Hence, this relationship is hypothesized as follows:

H1: Perceived usefulness positively influences consumer's attitude towards chatbot.

The Influence of Perceived Ease of Use on Attitude towards Chatbot

According to Abdullah et al. (2017), perceived ease of use refers to "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort." According to Wilson, Keni, and Tan (2021), perceived ease of use is a belief in ease of use, namely the level at which the user believes that the technology/system can be used easily and without problems. More specifically, a technology is more favorable for use than another if it is most likely to be approved by users (Irani & Andjarwati, 2020). In other words, the less complicated a technological application is perceived to be, the more likely the technology will be used.

Perceived ease of use gives rise to users' attitudes towards technological devices, which affect their intention to use those devices (Raza, Umer & Shah, 2017). Tubaishat (2018) addressed that the frequency of use and interaction between the users with the system are also able to show the ease of use. The more commonly used system shows that the system is better known, easier to be operated, and easier to be used by its users. In addition, Mensah (2020) suggested that perceived ease of use is also able to increase consumer acceptance related to the product or services. Hanjaya, Kenny & Gunawan (2019) stated that perceived ease of use influences attitudes toward mobile apps. It is also supported by Abdullah et al. (2017) that perceived ease of use is proven to have a positive and significant preference toward online hotel booking.

According to TAM, perceived ease of use affects a person's attitude toward using the system. The existing studies suggest that ease of use is a major attribute of e-business applications such as Internet commerce (Alshammari & Rosli, 2020; Indarsin & Ali, 2017), online banking (Mutahar et al., 2018), and mobile commerce (Wilson, 2019). Users would be concerned with the effort required to use that application and the complexity of the process involved. Such perceived ease of browsing, identifying information, and performing transactions should enable favorable and compelling individual experiences (Nugroho, Bakar & Ali, 2017). Improvements in ease of use may not only be beneficial to influence intentions but also lead to a positive attitude. Thus, this study examines the following hypothesis:

H2. Perceived ease of use positively influences consumer's attitude towards chatbot.

The Influence of Attitude on Chatbot Adoption

Attitude is a concept that describes a person's intentions to behave in specific ways in various contexts (Davis, 1989; Fishbein, 1967; Jattamart & Leelasantitham, 2019). Previous studies have examined intentions related to technology adoption, such as their relationship with user attitudes toward e-banking and attitudes toward using a smartphone chatbot for shopping (Kwangawad & Jattamart, 2022; Lai, 2017). Attitude toward using technology is a manifestation of someone's willingness to adopt the presence of technology before making it a habit (Kemp, Palmer, & Strelan, 2019). It was found that users' attitudes play an essential role in their satisfaction with chatbots (Ahmad et al., 2020; Kasilingam, 2020). Indeed, when a chatbot can meet the customer's basic needs, this condition leads the customer to have a positive attitude, increased satisfaction, and increased intention to use the chatbot (Wang et al., 2023). However, if users are dissatisfied with chatbot conversations or using the technology, this can significantly reduce their intentions to use chatbots.

Attitude toward using a particular system is a major determinant of the intention to use that system, which in turn generates the actual usage behavior. The underlying premise is that individuals make decisions rationally and systematically based on the information available to them (Yuen et al., 2021). Many existing studies in the context of e-business have shown that an individual's attitude directly and significantly influences behavioral intention to use a particular e-business application (Sitthipon et al., 2022; Tan & Lim, 2023; Zainol et al., 2023). For example, Gumus & Cark (2021) found a strong positive relationship between an individual's attitude toward purchasing online and the user's behavioral intention. De Cicco, Silva, and Alparone (2020) studied the acceptance of millennials' attitudes toward chatbot wireless technologies by users. Also, Mun, So, and Jeong (2019) found that attitude significantly affects the intention to adopt mobile banking. They demonstrated support for the relationship between attitudes toward using mobile commerce/banking and behavioral intention. attitude is hypothesized to influence the adoption of chatbots. Accordingly, we hypothesized that:

H3: The positive attitude towards chatbot has a positive effect on the decision to adopt chatbot.

Research Framework

Underpinned by the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the purpose of this study is to determine whether attitude towards chatbots is influenced by perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use of using chatbots and to establish the relationship between attitude and adoption of chatbots. Thus, the research framework for this study is shown in Figure 2 below.

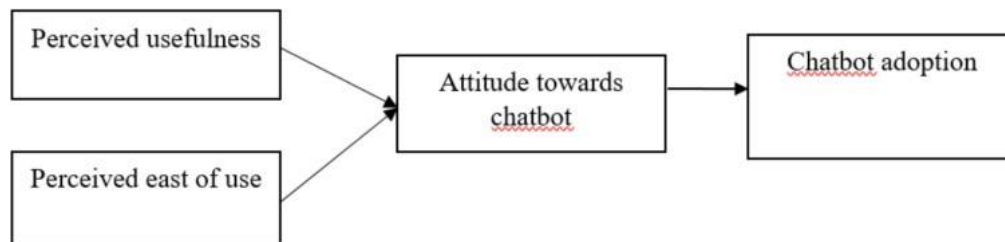


Figure 2

The Research Framework

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative approach in order to test the hypotheses and validate the propose framework. This study is correlational in nature. The study was conducted to obtain a good grasp of chatbot adoption among consumers. This study is cross-sectional where data was gathered once, to achieve the study's research objectives. This study used a survey method since this is best adapted to obtain personal and social facts, beliefs, and attitudes (Kahneman et al., 2004). The unit of analysis for this study is the individual consumers limited to students who have experience using

chatbots via online transactions. This study treats each student's response as an individual data source.

Concerning the time horizon, there are two options available. The first option is a longitudinal study and the second cross-sectional study. The longitudinal study is more appropriate when the researcher aims to seek how things vary over time, which requires data to be collected from the same sample units at multiple points in time (Sahu, 2018). In a longitudinal study, data are collected over an extended period. On the other hand, in a cross-sectional study, data for dependent and independent variables are collected and measured at the same point in time (Bhattacharjee, 2012) where the sampled people are asked to reflect on their experience with research questions (Cooper & Schindler, 2016; Sekaran & Bougie, 2020; Zikmund et al., 2018). The present study engaged in a cross-sectional study where data was gathered once to discover simultaneously the relationships between perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use on attitude as well as the relationship between attitude and adoption.

According to Slattery et al. (2019), surveys and questionnaires are powerful research tools to create meaningful data through correct construction, implementation, and management. Questionnaires refer to specific tools, also known as an instrument for gathering information through a series of questions and are usually self-administered. In the present study, a survey method was employed to collect data. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) mentioned that survey research is best suited to collect facts, beliefs, or attitudes relating to personal and social aspects. In the same vein, Kotler, Keller, Koshy, and Jha (2009) noted that the survey method is used to learn knowledge, beliefs, preferences, and satisfaction.

This study targeted students who enrolled in various postgraduate programs at Universiti Utara Malaysia. The choice of targeted postgraduate students is based on the likelihood of their current or potential involvement with e-commerce activities (Said et al., 2022). Their selection is justified by the fact that they represent the highly educated sector of society, and they have easy access to the Internet and may have had experience in using e-commerce (Al Ziadat et al., 2013). Respondents were requested to engage in this study by completing a Google form questionnaire. The 150 targeted respondents were contacted using various social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and Telegram. They were chosen using the convenience method.

In the context of studying the adoption of chatbot in this study, a purposive sampling method was employed due to the difficulties and complexities associated with obtaining a comprehensive list of the target population. The selection of respondents in this study was guided by the purposive sampling method, which is a non-probability sampling technique. This method is applied because the goal of the study is to understand the chatbot adoption among consumers who have experience using chatbots. As such, it is essential to ensure that the respondents chosen for this study meet the specific criteria for the target population.

Findings

A total of 121 responses were usable and used for subsequent analysis, giving a response rate of 81 percent. Overview of the responses collected is summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Summary of Responses Collected

Distribution of Questionnaires	Number of Responses
Minimum sample needed (based on G-power)	119
Total number of questionnaires distributed	150
Total number of questionnaires received	135
Total number of questionnaire excluded	14
Total useable questionnaire	121
Response rate	81%

The collected data underwent a thorough scrutiny and analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28. Subsequently, the relevant data was analysed and assessed through the correlation and regression analysis application in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 28.

Pattern of Chatbot Adoption Among Respondents

Figure 3 below shows that education is the main chatbot used by respondents (41%), followed by e-commerce 20 percent and government services (16%). As shown in Table 4.4, almost half of the respondents used chatbots everyday (56%), followed by twenty-one percent used once a week and eighteen percent (18%) used once a month.

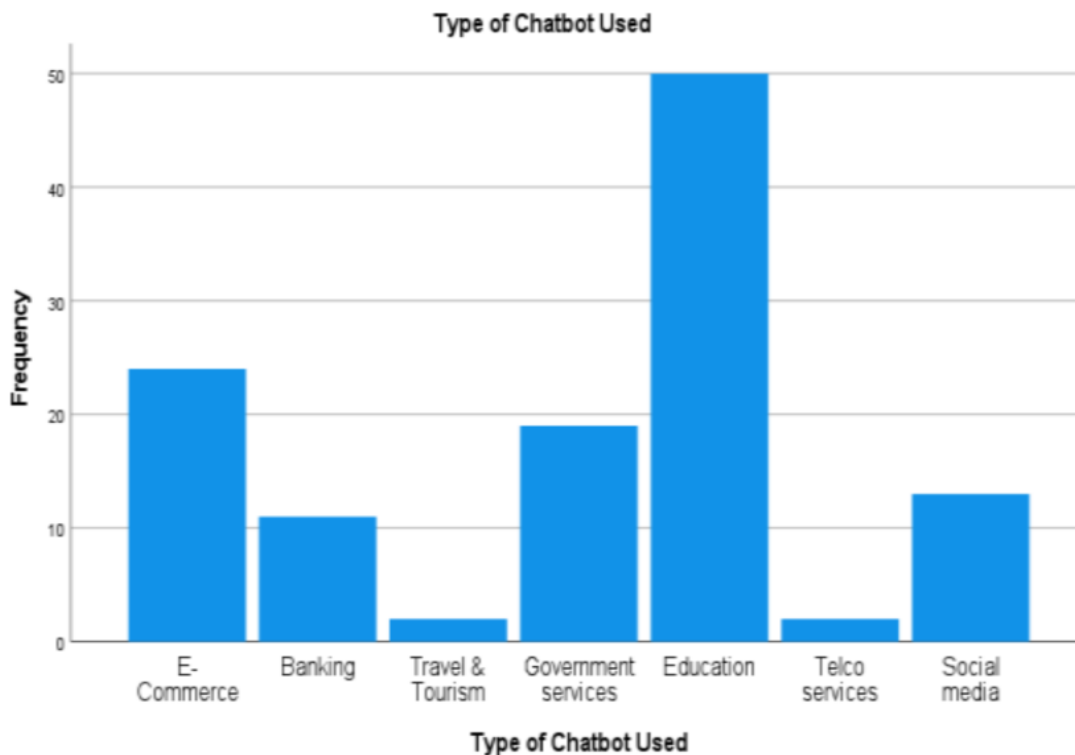


Figure 3
Type of Chatbot Used

Table 2
Chatbot Frequency Usage

Frequency	Percentage (%)
Everyday	56
Once a week	21
Every fortnight	11
Once a month	18
Less than once a month	15

Correlation Analysis

Correlation is a statistical technique that measures the relationship between two or more variables. It provides a numerical value, known as the correlation coefficient, that ranges from -1 to 1. The correlation coefficient can be used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. A value close to 0 indicates that there is no relationship between the variables. Table below shows the correlation coefficient between independent and dependent variables. The values in the table indicate the strength and direction of the relationship between each pair of variables. The correlation coefficient ranges from -1 to 1, where a positive value indicates a positive correlation (an increase in one variable is associated with an increase in the other), a negative value indicates a negative correlation (an increase in one variable is associated with a decrease in the other), and a value close to 0 indicates no relationship.

The values in the table that have two asterisks (**) are considered statistically significant, meaning that the relationship is not likely due to chance. For example, the correlation between Attitude and Adoption is .877, which is considered a strong and positive relationship. On the other hand, the correlation between Attitude and Perceived Usefulness is .49, which is a weak relationship. The correlation between attitude towards chatbot and chatbot adoption is examined. As shown in table below, correlation amongst the variables show that attitude is significantly related to the adoption of chatbots. The correlation is positive and generally strong with correlation value of 0.87. Perceived usefulness is positively related to attitude towards chatbot ($r=0.54$), however perceived ease of use ($r=0.13$) shows no significant influence.

Table 3
Correlation Analysis

	ADOPT	ATT	PEOU	PU
Chatbot adoption (ADOPT)	1			
Attitude (ATT)	.877**	1		
Perceived Ease Of Use (PEOU)	.226	.135	1	
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	.496**	.541**	.198	1

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses tested in this study are as follows:

H1: Perceived usefulness positively influence consumer's attitude toward chatbot.

H2: Perceived ease of use positively influence consumer's attitude toward chatbot.

H3: The positive attitude towards chatbot has a positive effect on the decision to adopt chatbot.

Regression Analysis on the Influence of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use on Attitude towards Chatbot

The F-statistic ($F=27.95$, $p < .001$) indicates that the relationship between independent and dependent variables is significant. The R^2 (0.674) obtained indicates that the independent variables (perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use) account for 67 percent of the variation in attitude towards chatbot. Of the variables included in the regression equation, all variables emerged as significant predictors of attitude towards chatbot. Based on the results, hypothesis 1 and 2 are supported. This leads to the conclusion that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use are positively related to attitude towards chatbot.

Regression Analysis on the Influence of Attitude on Decision to Adopt Chatbot

In order to answer the second research question that is, "What is the relationship between attitude towards chatbots and chatbots adoption among consumers? regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis 3. In this analysis, attitude is treated as the independent variable, while chatbot adoption as the dependent variable. Through regression analysis procedure, attitude was regressed on chatbot adoption. Table 4.7 shows the relationship between attitude and chatbot adoption.

Table 4
The Influence of Attitude on Chatbot Adoption

Independent Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	β
Attitude	.853	.088	.87**

Note: R²= .77; F= 93.526; Sig. F= .001; **p<0.001

B= Unstandardized coefficient beta; SEB= Standard error of regression coefficient; β = Beta coefficient

With F value of 93.526 (p= .001), indicates that attitude is significantly influencing chatbot adoption. The model is moderate with attitude explaining only 77 percent of the variation in chatbot adoption. Furthermore, we note that attitude positively chatbot adoption (β = .87). Therefore, hypothesis 3 is supported. Presented below in Table 4.8 is the summary of the findings from hypotheses testing:

Table 5
Summary of Findings

Hypothesis	Relationship	Std. Error	Unstandardized coefficient value	β - value	Decision
H1	Perceived Usefulness > Attitude	0.092	0.659	0.797	Supported
H2	Perceived ease of use > Attitude	0.206	0.191	0.104	Supported
H3	Attitude > Adoption	0.088	0.853	0.871	Supported

Discussion

The following section discusses in further detail regarding the factors that influence attitude towards chatbot and the influence of attitude on chatbot. The intent of this study is to extend our understanding regarding the adoption of chatbot applications using TAM model. Analyzing survey data from 121 respondents yielded important findings. The results support all the research hypotheses. However, the overall explanatory power of our research model was relatively moderate with an ΔR^2 of 77 percent for chatbot adoption. This is relatively low percentage when compared with previous studies in technology adoption (Al-Emran, Mezhuyev, & Kamaludin, 2018; Ashfaq et al., 2020; Gümüş & Çark, 2021). Several insightful results could be summarized from our research framework. The mean value of chatbot adoption in Table 4.3 indicates that chatbot adoption is at high level. This is inconsistent with Toh and Tay (2022) who found that acceptance of banking chatbots among millennial consumers in Malaysia is at average level. This probably because chatbot is no longer new in Malaysia. And as more and more financial institutions and business organizations launch their chatbot applications, it has become common to users and thus increase the usage level. It was found that among the chatbots, the most frequently

used by respondents is for education purpose. This is probably because the sample of this study is postgraduate students and students mainly used chatbot such as AI chatbot in their studies. As been mentioned by Noor Illiana et al (2022), in the era of AI, chatbots are being utilized more frequently in Higher Education Institutions for teaching and learning objectives among institutional staff and students.

The findings also support that perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use accounted for 67 percent of the variance in explaining attitude. Amongst these two predictors of attitude, perceived usefulness had a larger significant positive influence on creating a favourable attitude toward chatbot, whereas the effect of perceived ease of use on attitude was smaller. This is probably because in some scenarios, perceived ease of use might be critical, such as consumer products targeting a non-technical audience. However, in professional or business contexts, where users are willing to invest time and effort in mastering a technology for its benefits, perceived usefulness becomes more significant.

Results of the study support the addition of the factors that influencing attitude towards chatbot. Results of the study showed that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are significant determinants of consumer's attitude towards chatbot. These findings match those of Al Kurdi et al. (2020) and Huang and Chueh (2020). Students may not use the chatbot without the features that benefits to them. This study also confirmed that attitude had a positive significant effect on the adoption of chatbot. It was quite expected that a favourable attitude toward an object leads to a higher level of consumer response (Albaity & Rahman, 2019; Ho et al., 2022). Adoption of chatbot technology requires mental and physical effort. If consumers do not have a positive attitude towards using it, it is impossible for them to adopt would be toward accepting chatbot as learning tool. This implies that if users perceive chatbots as beneficial to them, they will be more satisfied and more likely to continue using them in the future. These support the findings by Keong (2022) and Toh and Tay (2022). In this light, to be preferred and accepted by the users, any chatbots should be designed with a very good interface in terms of ease of use and useful features. This is because, the easier chatbot is to be used and when the user perceived the chatbot is useful to them, the greater will be a user's feelings of self-competence and tendency to use it (Said et al., 2022).

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

TAM's appropriateness as a theoretical tool for assessing users' acceptance and adoption of chatbots is demonstrated by the findings of this study. This study thus contributes to the emerging literature on TAM by examining the applicability of this theory in the context of chatbot. This study validated the previous findings in similar technology addressing existing constructs to predict adoption in the Malaysian context. As the implementation of chatbot services is beneficial for various service providers and their customers, the findings of this research can serve as a reference and valuable guideline for various chatbot providers in formulating practical solutions to promote consumers' adoption continuance. The study indicates that consumers tend to continue using chatbot services only if they are easy to use and useful. Therefore, chatbot providers must pay close attention to the quality aspects of chatbot services (i.e., content, layout, easy to use, error-free, interaction) and users' expectations.

Developers of chatbots also need to ensure that chatbots have anthropomorphic characteristics so that users feel that chatbots are real, living and human-like. Designers and developers can ensure that chatbots communicate in various languages which would provide a user-friendly interface to the customers. Apart from that, they need to ensure that chatbots do not create any anxiety related to the technology. The designers need to develop user-friendly chatbots so that technology anxiety can be eliminated from customers' minds.

Relevant government bodies should cultivate good knowledge on using chatbots as a path to promote digital intelligent assistants and achieve digital e-commerce inclusion. Consumers are more likely and motivated to adopt chatbots when they perceive their adoption of them is desirable to their needs and value. In turn, they will help promote the use of chatbots to others. Lastly, chatbot providers must ensure the compatibility of the chatbots since miscommunication and accuracy remain a concern. Chatbot developers should ensure that the chatbots are accurate and trustworthy. They should also ensure that the chatbots can deliver the same content and result as a phone call. Otherwise, the users might feel hesitant about using it.

Conclusion

In summary, the study proposes a model that helps to conceptualize chatbot applications adoption through the integration of TAM model. The findings of this study have important implications for researchers and chatbot developers and designers in today's dynamic environment.

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**THE MEDIATING ROLE OF INNOVATION CAPABILITY ON THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIGITAL STRATEGY, AND THE PERFORMANCE
OF MALAYSIAN'S MSMEs: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY**

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Abstract

This study proposes a conceptual framework to examine the relationship between digital strategy, innovation capability, and the performance of MSMEs in Malaysia, underpinned by the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory. The RBV Theory, which emphasizes the strategic management of the firm's internal capabilities and resources as a source of competitive advantage, serves as the theoretical backbone for this study. Innovation capability is considered a critical mediator in this framework, potentially enhancing the impact of digital strategy efforts on micro-enterprises performance. The framework aims to dissect the dynamics of how digital strategy can foster innovation within MSMEs, thereby improving firm performance. By integrating RBV theory, this study not only investigates the direct effects of digital strategy on performance outcomes but also delves into how innovation capability mediates this relationship. The proposed framework is expected to contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications, providing MSMEs with actionable insights on leveraging their unique resources for successful innovation and digital strategy integration. Through this, the study seeks to offer a nuanced perspective on the potential for MSMEs in Malaysia to enhance their competitive positioning and achieve sustained growth.

Keywords: Innovation Capability, Digital Strategy, RBV Theory, Performance, Malaysia

Introduction

The MSME sector in Malaysia plays a vital role in the country's industrialization program and represents the mainstay of industrial development in the country (Ramayah, Ling, Taghizadeh, & Rahman, 2016; Awwad, 2021). Recent statistics show that Malaysia's micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have been performing impressively in the economic landscape. In 2022, the MSME sector achieved a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of 11.6%, which exceeded the national GDP growth of 8.7% (DOSM, 2023). This surge is noteworthy, especially considering that the growth in 2021 was just 1.3%. Furthermore, MSMEs' contribution to the national GDP has risen to 38.4%, up from 37.4% in the previous year (DOSM, 2023).

In the past, digital strategy was often seen as a subordinate aspect of broader business strategy or as equivalent to overall corporate strategy, as noted by Reich and Benbasat (2000), Hirschheim and Sabherwal (2001), and Sabherwal and Chan (2001). However, the role of digital strategy has evolved significantly. Nowadays, it is a crucial element because digital technologies and connectivity are revolutionizing traditional business strategies. This transformation has led to the creation of modular and cross-functional global strategies, allowing business processes to extend beyond traditional limits of time, distance, or function. This evolution is highlighted in the works of Wheeler (2002), Sambamurphy et al. (2003), Banker et al. (2006), and Kohli and Grover (2008). Consequently, to thrive in the digital era, businesses must develop an all-encompassing strategy that integrates all their digital resources, as emphasized by Bharadwaj et al. (2013).

In today's business world, innovation is essential for the economic health and long-term survival of all companies. Innovations enable companies to enhance their efficiency, boost productivity (Ziemnowicz, 1942), and gain a competitive edge (Kislingerová, 2008). For these benefits to be realized, companies must improve their innovation capabilities. These capabilities are understood as a company's ability to utilize its knowledge and resources effectively to innovate or refine its products, processes, organizational structure, and marketing techniques to meet its objectives (Hogan, Soutar, McColl-Kennedy & Sweeney, 2011). This concept encompasses the company's skill in interacting with and leveraging aspects of its external environment (Vos, 2004). Improving innovation capabilities not only strengthens a company's competitive position but also adds value for customers (Agarwal & Selen, 2009; O'Cass, 2009) and encourages the adoption of advanced technologies and knowledge (Hult, Ketchen, & Slater, 2004). Developing these capabilities is crucial for companies, especially to withstand the intense competition posed by larger firms.

In this conceptual study, the focus shifts to examining how innovation capability mediates the relationship between digital strategy and the performance of Malaysian MSMEs, utilizing the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory as a foundational guide. The objective is to explore the intricate interplay between a firm's resources and capabilities, particularly in the digital realm, and how these factors contribute to enhancing overall business performance. This investigation aims to determine the extent to which the unique resources of MSMEs in Malaysia, empowered by digital strategies, enable them to improve their innovation capabilities, thereby boosting their performance metrics in a competitive marketplace.

Literature Review

Digital Strategy

Understanding the alignment of digital strategies with business practices in MSMEs is crucial, given the significant role of digital technology in these firms. This area of research, primarily based on models designed for larger corporations, is still underdeveloped for MSMEs (Spinelli et al., 2013; Street et al., 2017; Mohd Salleh et al., 2017; Wang and Rusu, 2018). Although models like Luftman's (2000) might be adaptable for studying MSMEs (Gutierrez et al., 2009), the application of findings from large corporations might not be directly relevant to smaller firms. Factors such as the environmental, technological, and organizational contexts, often employed in large firm studies, may not be suitable for MSMEs (Kendall et al., 2001). Gutierrez et al. (2009) noted that while businesses of various sizes may have similar perceptions of alignment, they employ different strategies for integration and prioritize different aspects, like governance and system architecture. This suggests that while digitalization in SMEs may incorporate strategies used by larger firms, these smaller entities might also need distinct approaches due to their unique features, including their size and limited resources (Kitsios and Kamariotou, 2019).

Innovation Capability

Several empirical studies have established a strong link between the innovation capabilities of MSMEs and their financial and operational success Heenkenda et al. (2022; Sulisty, 2016). It has been noted that such capabilities positively influence the performance of new products (Odoom and Mensah, 2018) and increase brand profitability and appeal (Dogbe, Bamfo, & Opoku, 2019). This, in turn, boosts the competitive edge of MSMEs and reinforces their customer-focused strategies (Kafetzopoulos & Psomas, 2015). Past research highlights the impact of both individual and collective innovation capabilities on the performance of SMEs. Various studies have shown that all forms of innovation capabilities — including those in products, processes, organizational structures, and marketing — contribute to the productivity (Tassabehji, Mishra, & Dominguez-Péry, 2019) and profitability (Medase & Abdul-Basit, 2020) of MSMEs.

Firm Performance

Firm performance is a multifaceted concept, interpreted differently by various experts in the field. According to Ngo and O'cass (2013), firm performance encompasses both financial and non-financial aspects to gauge a company's success within its industry. While financial measures are commonly utilized to assess SMEs' performance, as highlighted by Shu, Liu, Zhao, and Davidsson (2020), relying solely on financial metrics does not fully capture a firm's effectiveness. Ardyan (2018) acknowledge the central role of financial performance in determining a firm's efficiency, yet they, along with other researchers like Clark (1999), emphasize the importance of marketing performance as a critical success factor. In the realm of knowledge management, both financial and operational performances are often considered key indicators of firm performance (Al-Sa'di et al., 2017). Consequently, this study opts to use a combination of marketing, financial, and operational metrics to comprehensively evaluate how effectively businesses are managed, aligning with the approach suggested by Antony and Bhattacharyya (2010).

Resource-Based View Theory

In this conceptual study, we delve into the role of innovation capability in mediating the relationship between digital strategy and the performance of Malaysian MSMEs, through the lens

of the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory. The RBV theory posits that organizations can enhance their competitive positioning in aspects like cost efficiency, quality enhancement, and distinctive competencies by leveraging resources and capabilities that are valuable, rare, difficult to imitate, and non-substitutable (Barney, 2001; Newbert, 2008). This theory serves as a framework to understand how different resources interact and combine to sustain a competitive edge (Barney, 2001; Peteraf, 1993).

In the context of Malaysian MSMEs, the RBV theory is particularly relevant. It provides a theoretical foundation to analyze how these enterprises can utilize their unique resources, especially in the digital domain, to foster innovation capabilities. These capabilities, in turn, are crucial in effectively implementing and benefiting from digital strategies. The study aims to explore how integrating digital strategies, underpinned by the RBV theory, enhances the performance of MSMEs by boosting their innovative capacities. It seeks to provide insights into the dynamic interplay between digital resources, innovation capability, and performance outcomes, highlighting how MSMEs in Malaysia can navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by digital transformation. This approach underscores the importance of aligning digital strategies with the firm's unique resources and capabilities to achieve optimal performance and maintain a competitive advantage in the increasingly digitalized business landscape.

Research Framework

Based on the review of previous research and evaluation of RBV Theory, the proposed research framework is depicted in Figure 1.

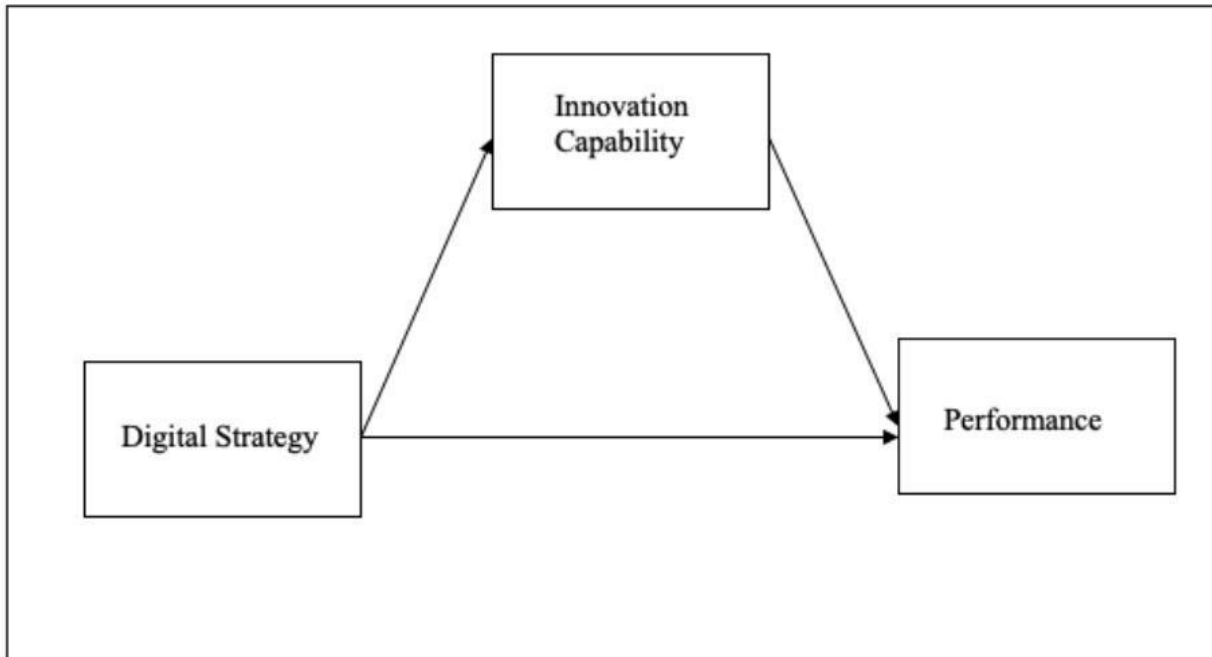


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Discussion

The exploration of the mediating role of innovation capability in the relationship between digital

strategy and the performance of Malaysian MSMEs presents a compelling narrative in the context of the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. This theory, crucial in understanding how organizations leverage their unique resources for competitive advantage, becomes particularly pertinent when applied to the dynamic and evolving digital landscape of Malaysian MSMEs. The data pointing to the substantial contribution of the MSME sector to Malaysia's GDP underscores the sector's pivotal role in the national economy and highlights the need for these enterprises to adapt and thrive in an increasingly digital world. The evolution of digital strategy from a subsidiary element to a core component of business strategy, as discussed in the works of Wheeler (2002) and others, suggests that MSMEs in Malaysia must not only adopt digital strategies but also integrate them holistically within their business models to remain competitive.

The intersection of innovation capability with digital strategy becomes a focal point of this study. As innovation is recognized as a key driver for efficiency, productivity, and competitive edge (Ziemnowicz, 1942; Kislingerová, 2008), the ability of MSMEs to innovate becomes critical. This capability, encompassing the effective utilization of knowledge and resources for innovation in products, processes, and marketing (Hogan et al., 2011; Vos, 2004), is essential for MSMEs to stand out in a crowded market. In light of the RBV theory, these innovation capabilities can be viewed as unique resources that are valuable, rare, and difficult to imitate. The study, therefore, examines how MSMEs can leverage these capabilities, enhanced by digital strategies, to improve their performance in various dimensions — marketing, financial, and operational — as suggested by Ngo and O'cass (2013) and Ardyan (2018). This comprehensive approach to performance evaluation aligns with Antony and Bhattacharyya's (2010) suggestion to use a combination of metrics for a holistic understanding of firm performance.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the pivotal role of innovation capability in bridging the gap between digital strategy and the performance of Malaysian MSMEs, grounded in the Resource-Based View (RBV) theory. The findings demonstrate the critical need for these enterprises to not only embrace digital strategies but to integrate them comprehensively into their business models, capitalizing on their unique resources to gain a competitive edge. This approach is vital for MSMEs to navigate the challenges of a digitalized market and leverage opportunities for growth and innovation. The study's insights into the synergistic relationship between digital strategies and innovation capabilities provide a valuable framework for MSMEs, enabling them to enhance various performance aspects and contribute significantly to Malaysia's economic advancement. By aligning digital strategies with innovation capabilities, Malaysian MSMEs can ensure sustained growth and resilience in a rapidly evolving business environment, thus reinforcing their essential role in the national economy.

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**THE INFLUENCE OF SERVICE QUALITY ON MFA'S MEMBERS' LOYALTY AND
THE EFFECT OF MEMBERS' SATISFACTION AS MEDIATING FACTOR.**

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Abstract

This study investigates the pivotal relationship between service quality, member loyalty and satisfaction within the context of a non-government agency (NGO), referred to as the "MFA" (Malaysia Franchise Association). The primary objective of this study is to examine how MFA service quality impact members' loyalty directly and indirectly through the mediating factor of satisfaction. The research employs a quantitative method approach involving quantitative surveys. Quantitative data collection involves the distribution of questionnaires to MFA members to gauge their perceptions of MFA service quality, satisfaction levels, and loyalty. The conceptual framework of this study draws from established models such as SERVQUAL model, adapting it to the specific context of the MFA. Statistical analysis, including multiple regression analyses and Cronbach Alpha are applied to examine the direct impact of service quality on loyalty and the mediating role of satisfaction in this relationship.

Keywords: Franchise; MFA; service quality; member loyalty; satisfaction; SERVQUAL model

Introduction

Franchising is a platform for business distribution that has developed significantly in recent times globally (Hoffman & Prebel, 2003; Perry & Rajiv, 1999). According to International Franchise Association (IFA), (2023) defined franchise is a method of distributing products or services involving a franchisor, who establishes the brand's trademark or trade name and a business system, and a franchisee, who pay a royalty and often an initial fee for the right to do business under the franchisor's name and system. While (Naatu & Alon, 2019) indicates that franchising is commercial and social models that effect the economy and the society, namely in job creation, economic modernization, and the development of franchise entrepreneur as commercial and social models.

Franchising has emerged as a robust business model that spans across global markets, offering both established brands and aspiring entrepreneur unique opportunities for expansion, growth, and mutual benefits. It represents a strategic alliance between franchisor, who possess a successful business concept, and franchisees, who seek to operate a proven business model under an established brand name. In the global market, franchising has witnessed exponential growth, transcending geographical boundaries and cultural differences. According to the latest Franchising Economic Outlook by International Franchise Association (2023), indicates that the overall number of franchise establishment will increase by almost 15,000 units or 1.9%, to 805,000 units by 2023. In addition, franchising will add approximately 254,000 jobs in 2023 and total franchise output will increase by 4.2%, from \$825.4 billion in 2022 to \$860.1 billion in 2023.

Within this expansive framework, Malaysia stands as a prominent player in the franchising landscape, mirroring the global trend of leveraging as a vehicle for economic progress. The franchising landscape in Malaysia reflects a diverse array of industries, common sectors include food and beverages, education and learning centres, health and wellness, retail, and services. Apart from that, the halal franchise business is gaining momentum in Malaysia and offers good prospects in the international markets. The government, through the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (MDTCA) together with Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (PERNAS) and supported by the Malaysia Franchise Association (MFA), has introduced, and implemented many programs and initiative that are designed to provide a conducive environment to accelerate the development of competitive and high-quality 'fran-preneurs', and to create strategic network and alliances with the private sector (Kirsch, 2022).

According to (Thestar, 2022), the number of franchise outlets that had opened in the country rose by 47% year over year to 13,779, creating around 49, 000 jobs in 2021. Added to that also, Malaysia franchise brands had become more globally renowned, with 68 brands currently present in 74 nations. Yet, through enforcement of Franchise act 1998, has impacts the positive development of franchise industry in Malaysia.

However, the limited study was found related to franchise industry in Malaysia especially focusing on the non-government agency (NGO), is the reason this research is conducted to close the gaps. Despite of a few franchises strategic plan and blueprint made by the Malaysia government from the years of 2012-2016 and the years of 2014-2020 and large amount of incentive, grants, and training budget over the years, to boost the franchise industry productivity and efficiency through

four main franchise strategic planning, which are to increase the competitiveness of the Malaysian franchise industry, business transformation through franchising, developing franchise human capital efficiency, strengthening a dynamic franchise ecosystem (KPDNKK, 2014). Yet, it is only indicating the slower pace driven by the industries prove that the strategic planning is less effective to reach the average key performance indicators (KPI) of domestic franchise industries.

It is also crucial to highlight in this study where the franchise strategic plan made by government, government agencies, and NGO are lacking achievement data and report, based on the national franchise plan that has been made previously. Thus, to understand the failure of reaching the national franchise strategic objective, mission, and vision, this study would like to examine the effectiveness of Malaysia Franchise Association (MFA) as core supporting system in Malaysia franchise industry. The reason this study chose MFA as main subject because the MFA provides a useful platform to engage with industry players, government agencies and supporting institutions. It also functions as a resource centre for the public, as well as existing and prospective franchisor and franchisees.

Therefore, by doing research through the role of MFA as NGO and their influence toward MFA members in form of loyalty and member satisfaction, would help the research to identify the direction of Malaysia franchise industry as well as the future development of franchise in Malaysia. The problem statement in this study is the lack of capability of MFA as a core in Malaysia franchise industry to boost the industries productivity through their registered members over the years.

Research review

The influence of service quality toward member loyalty and Member satisfaction

Quality is the value a customer derives from a particular product and service (Anderson et al, 2002). Parasuraman et al (2004), defined that service quality is a function of the differences between expectation and performance along the quality dimension. Next, according to Sivadas and Baker-Prewitt (2000), mentioned that there is increasing recognition that the ultimate objective of customer satisfaction measurement should be customer loyalty. The practices of excellent service quality have been proven that customer satisfaction will significantly lead to customer loyalty (Caruana et al., 2000; Caruana, 2002).

According to (Lymeropolous et al.,2006; Panda, 2003), also mentioned that success of a service provider depends on the high-quality relationship with customers which determines customer satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, service quality and customer satisfaction were found to be related to customer loyalty through repurchase intentions (Levesque & Mc. Dougall, 1996; Newman, 2001; Caruana, 2002). According to (Gelade & Young, 2005; Silvestro & Cross, 2000), although customer satisfaction and customer loyalty are different concept, they are highly correlated. A study by Minh & Huu (2016), there is a positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty and customer satisfaction is usually the mediator between them.

SERVQUAL model

SERVQUAL is an instrument developed to measure Service Quality based on the data collected from the respondents who are the users of a product or a service (Parasuraman et. al. 1991). The model was first developed by A Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml and Leonard L Berry in 1983 and being revisited until 1988 and later revised in 1991 as an act of improvement. This model originally has ten dimensions which are as follows: Reliability, Responsiveness, Competence, Access, Courtesy, Communication, Credibility, Security, Knowing the Customer and Tangibles before it was later revised to finalize with the 5 dimensions which classification suited all ten dimensions at the earlier stage.

Service Quality is an abstract and elusive construct because of the three unique features of services: intangibility, heterogeneity and inseparability of production and consumption (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1985). In the absence of objective measures, an appropriate approach for assessing the quality of a firm's service is to measure consumers' perception of quality.

Berry et al. (1985) defined Service Quality as the gap in the service expectation and service performance. Service Quality positively impacts customer satisfaction, leading to loyalty behavior (Zia and Khan, 2018, 2019). Service Quality significantly has a positive influence on customer satisfaction (Santouridis and Trivellas, 2010; Gede Mahatma Yuda Bakti and Sumaedi, 2013). Therefore, this study would like to propose the following conceptual framework.

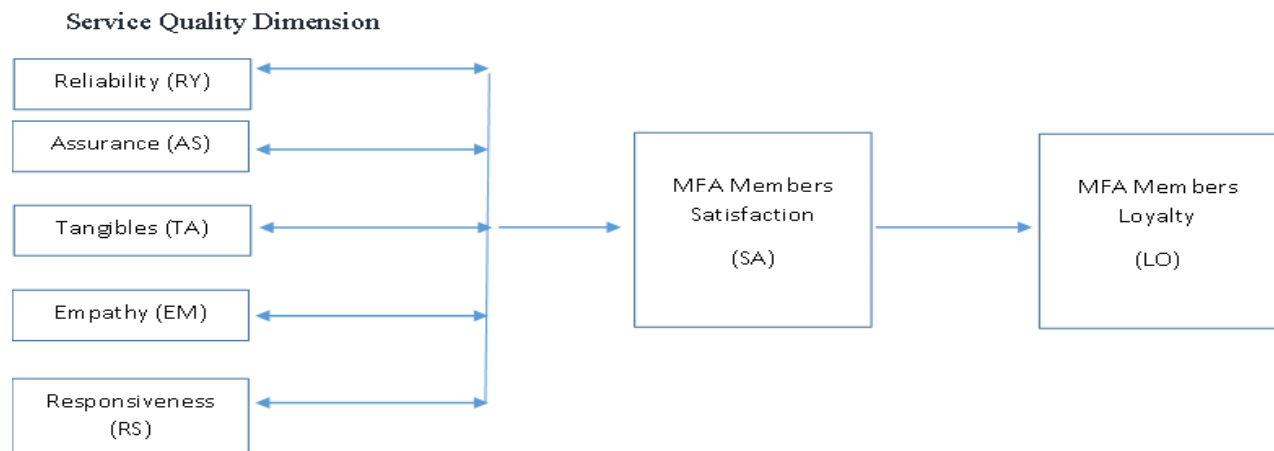


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study would like to use the quantitative methodology as approach to obtain data from the respondent through the distribution of questionnaires. The sources of data related to the membership will be gathered from MFA membership departments. The unit of analysis in this study is at organization level especially those located at Klang Valley. This study will consider the probability and proportionate type of sampling whereby all categories of membership (Ordinary Member, Affiliated Member and Associated Member) will be represented by a proportionate number of samples. Then, the SERVQUAL 22-scale items will be used when developing a set of questionnaires. Questionnaires will be distributed to all respondents via google form and via email

with the assistance of the Corporate Affairs & Membership Department of MFA lead by the General Manager. The department comprises of 3 main units namely Members Affairs Unit lead by the Manager, Public Relation Unit which headed by an appointed Assistant Manager and finally the Design & Promotion Unit headed by an appointed Assistant Manager.

The factors of SQ in this study using SQ scale (SERVQUAL). The validity of this questionnaire for this study will be checked using factor analysis using Cronbach's alpha values. Factor analysis as a method of data reduction and it does by seeking underlying unobservable (latent) variables that are reflected in the observed variables (manifest variables). A relationship model will be developed using the structural equation modelling (SEM) to measure the impact of all factors of the loyalty intentions in this study. Multiple regression analysis will also be done to indicate the relationship between the variables involved. Both multiple regressions and SEM will be used to indicate the correlation of the variables. SEM and multiple regression were widely used to develop more authentic results related to the factors affecting the Service Quality in an institution (Zia A, 2020).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has shed a significant light on the intricate relationship between MFA service quality toward member loyalty and satisfaction. The study unveiled a strong correlation between perceived service quality and member satisfaction, toward member loyalty. And this key finding is supported by a study by Minh & Huu (2016), there is a positive relationship between service quality and customer loyalty and customer satisfaction is usually the mediator between them. These finding reinforce the importance of prioritizing and enhancing service quality as a cornerstone for fostering member satisfaction, subsequently cultivating stronger bonds of loyalty within MFA and their members. Through recognizing the pivotal role of member satisfaction as a mediator would help MFA to strategically align their effort towards delivering exceptional services experiences, thereby solidifying long-term relationship with their members. In essence, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge surrounding service quality management and customer loyalty within membership-based organizations.

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EVALUATING SAFETY AWARENESS AMONG RETAIL WORKERS IN KEDAH, MALAYSIA: INSIGHTS FOR BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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Abstract.

Ensuring workplace safety is fundamental for employee welfare and organizational efficiency, especially in the retail sector, where frontline workers face diverse risks, notably those from COVID-19. This study aims to evaluate safety awareness among frontline retail employees in Kedah, Malaysia, encompassing 177 individuals from a prominent retail chain in the northern state. The research employed a self-administered survey to collect data, subsequently analyzed using SPSS Software for descriptive insights. Results indicated a mean safety awareness score of 4.25, signifying a notably high level among these workers. This study highlights the commendable safety awareness among frontline retail workers in Kedah, indicating the necessity for sustained support and reinforcement of safety measures within the industry. To maintain and elevate this awareness, ongoing investments in safety program which sustaining safety awareness are crucial. Future strategies should focus on tailored interventions and regular assessments to strengthen safety awareness and effectively mitigate workplace risks. Continued emphasis on safety initiatives is essential to safeguard the well-being of retail employees and enhance organizational resilience. By implementing targeted interventions and routinely evaluating safety practices, businesses can create environments that prioritize employee safety while maximizing operational efficiency within the retail sector in Kedah, Malaysia.

Keywords: Business, Safety Awareness, Malaysia, Retail

Introduction

Safety awareness denotes an individual's inherent recognition and alertness concerning safety-related matters within their work surroundings (Kiani & Khodabakhsh, 2014). Safety awareness is pivotal in maintaining optimal safety performance (Sarkam et al., 2018), as it is also found to be the precursor to safety behavior (Uzuntarla et al., 2020) which directly correlates with the incidence of workplace accidents (Bowonder, 1987; Gyekye, 2010; Heinrich, 1941). This conclusion is reinforced by a study that similarly discovered the impact of safety awareness on safety practices within the construction sector in China (Wang et al., 2018). Therefore, it is advocated that ensuring safety awareness among workers could foster safe working behaviour and furthermore decrease work-related accidents.

Workplace safety, especially in Malaysia's retail industry, has gained increased importance due to various factors. The retail sector plays a pivotal role in the country's economy, employing numerous frontline workers who regularly face potential occupational risks encompassing physical, chemical, and biological hazards (Ricci et al., 2017); requiring substantial safety awareness and behaviours. Moreover, based on the statistics published by DOSH, a total of 107 accident cases were reported to happen in wholesale and retail sector in Malaysia for year 2022 (Jabatan Keselamatan dan Kesihatan Pekerjaan, 2022).

In Kedah, the internal records from the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) indicated a total of 214 reported accident cases in 2022. The study, which aims to determine the level of safety awareness is necessary to ensure occupational safety of employees in Kedah's retail sector. By understanding their level of safety awareness, it helps improve workplace conditions, comply with regulations, and maintain the sector's productivity and reputation.

Literature Review

Safety Awareness

Awareness plays a crucial role in how we approach tasks, influencing our behavior and life path. In the workplace, lack of awareness about potential hazards often leads to accidents. Specifically in terms of workplace safety, employees need to understand safety measures for their well-being. This understanding shapes how they perceive risks and their responsibilities, aiming to prevent workplace hazards (Uzuntarla et al., 2020). Published studies determining the prevalence of safety awareness are limitedly found. A study was conducted in selected Technical and Vocational Public Higher Institutions in Peninsula Malaysia, and the results revealed that Based on the result, the level of safety awareness among the staff are at the high-level (Zulkifly et al., 2023).

The importance of safety awareness is also spelled out in a fire safety study. The accomplishment of fire safety goals in buildings, safeguarding lives, preserving property, and ensuring business continuity, hinges on the collective responsibility of stakeholders. This achievement directly correlates with the level of fire safety knowledge and awareness among these stakeholders (Alao et al., 2021).

Another study investigates Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) awareness among workers in a manufacturing company in northern Malaysia. It aims to identify influencing factors and assess OSH awareness levels. The research distributed manual questionnaires to 60 employees, utilizing

SPSS for data analysis, revealing a high OSH awareness level with an average score of 4.23 (Jaafar & Ikhwan Ahmad, 2023).

Besides, a research aiming to examine the determinants influencing safety awareness among students and laboratory staff at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (Ramli et al., 2020). It focuses on several factors including safety policy, procedures, training, tools and equipment, the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) committee, commitment and attitude, and the overall working environment. The findings indicate a commendably high level of awareness among the respondents regarding Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), evidenced by an impressive overall mean grade of 4.20.

Methodology

This study is a cross-sectional design applying a self-administered questionnaire. The measurement items safety awareness were adapted from previous researches. Subsequently, descriptive were performed to determine the level of safety awareness.

Sampling and Sample Size

This study involved retail workers from multiple outlets of Retail Company X in Kedah. To determine the appropriate sample size, we followed the calculation method suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2014). This formula was selected for its simplicity and ease of use, streamlining the researcher's task in applying it. The computation indicated that a minimum of 82 respondents was necessary to conduct the study effectively.

Research Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire, encompassing items to gauge safety awareness, was devised to function as the main research tool. All elements within this questionnaire were structured on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (indicating strong disagreement) to 5 (representing strong agreement), a design adapted from previous study (Uzuntarla et al., 2020). The items are such as “I am clear about what my responsibilities are for the workplace safety” and “When I am at work, I think safety is the top important thing”.

Pilot Testing

To ensure the questionnaire's reliability, a pilot study was conducted, involving 30 retail staff. This pilot aimed to assess the questionnaire's clarity, consistency of meaning across respondents, proper design and sequencing of items, required completion time, and appropriateness of language for the participants. The outcomes of the pilot study shows the Cronbach's alpha for safety awareness is 0.72, surpassing the threshold for internal consistency (Hair et al., 2014).

Data Analysis Technique

The descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation) was employed to determine the level of safety awareness. Davis (1971) established that a variable is deemed high when the mean score falls between 3.68 and 5.00, while a moderate level ranges from 2.34 to 3.67, and a low level spans from 1.00 to 2.33. The collected data was analysed using SPSS software.

Results and Discussions

The results showed that the level safety awareness is high based on the mean value of 4.25 (Davis, 1971). The study's findings underline the critical importance of safety awareness within Kedah's retail sector, especially in the context of frontline workers facing multifaceted risks, notably heightened by the challenges posed by COVID-19. The notably high mean safety awareness score of 4.25 among these workers reflects a positive trend, indicating a strong foundation but also emphasizing the need for continuous reinforcement and support for safety measures.

This signifies a crucial call for sustained investment in safety programs aimed at enhancing and maintaining this high level of safety awareness. Future strategies should revolve around tailored interventions that address specific areas where improvements can be made. Regular assessments, perhaps through periodic evaluations and refresher training, could serve as effective tools to fortify safety consciousness among employees.

The significance of ongoing emphasis on safety initiatives cannot be overstated. It's not just about meeting compliance standards but also about actively prioritizing the well-being of retail employees. The integration of targeted interventions, like safety campaigns and training, alongside frequent evaluations of safety practices, can foster environments that not only ensure employee safety but also augment the overall operational efficiency within Kedah's retail sector.

In essence, this study advocates for a proactive approach—continuous investment, tailored interventions, and routine assessments—to fortify safety awareness. By doing so, businesses can cultivate a workplace culture that places utmost importance on employee well-being while simultaneously bolstering the resilience and productivity of the retail sector in Kedah, Malaysia.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the commendable level of safety awareness among frontline retail workers in Kedah, Malaysia. The notably high mean safety awareness score of 4.25 underscores the significance of ongoing support and reinforcement of safety measures within the industry. To sustain this high level of awareness, continuous investment in safety programs tailored to address specific areas for improvement is essential. The findings emphasize the necessity for strategic interventions and regular assessments to fortify safety consciousness, effectively mitigate workplace risks, and prioritize the well-being of retail employees. By implementing these measures, businesses can create resilient environments that not only ensure employee safety but also maximize operational efficiency within Kedah's retail sector.

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A CONCEPTUAL STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT, BRAND IMAGE AND TOUR SERVICE ON CHINESE SENIOR TRAVELER'S BRAND RESPONSE AND THE ROLE OF BRAND EXPERIENCE AS MEDIATOR

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Abstract

With the large population of elder people in China and the increasing participation of seniors in traveling, the influence of senior travels on tourism market is obvious, the changes of service and the infrastructure need to be made as this situation develops. However, Chinese elderly tour groups face great practical problems. The quality of tour groups in the market is uneven, and travel agencies develop travel plans for some large groups, such as charter flights, accommodation, dining itineraries and shopping strategies. Brand experience plays an important role in attracting travelers' repurchase intention in joining the tour package. Therefore, this research aims to investigate Senior travelers' Brand attitude and Re-purchase intention using the theory of SOR, including Stimulus, Organism and Response. Furthermore, from the perspective of social development, the study combine old-age care and tourism. From the perspective of tourism experience, the market provides better tourism and leisure services for the elderly, which is a kind of social service progress. From the perspective of tourism development, travel agency businesses can better understand the needs of elderly travelers, improve the buyback rate and loyalty of travelers, and increase business performance. In summary, this research serves as a pilot stage for Senior tourism research focused on Brand, as senior tourism is likely to be a market trend in the future.

Keywords: Senior tourism, Brand experience, Tour service, Brand Image, Customer engagement

Introduction

Senior tourism market refers to a group of elderly people who have enough time to consume and have the intention to travel if their health conditions permit. The sources of tourists in this market include existing and potential elderly tourism groups. With the worsening of the aging population and the increasing improvement of people's living standards, the elderly market is constantly being developed. The annual tourism market has also become an indispensable part.

China is becoming aging society. By the end of 2022, China has a population of 280 million people aged 60 and above. The current legal retirement age in China is 60 for male employees, 55 for female cadres and 50 for female workers (Zhang, Strauss, Hu, Zhao & Crimmins, 2022). This means that China's retirement population is very large. After retirement, people's life radius has expanded. They began to meet friends, actively participate in various activities, and also have the idea of experiencing new things and exploring new worlds, such as travelling. According to the World Health Organization's forecast, by 2050, China's population over 60 years old will account for 35%, becoming one of the most aging countries in the world. Thus, it is an inevitable trend for China to step into an aging society.

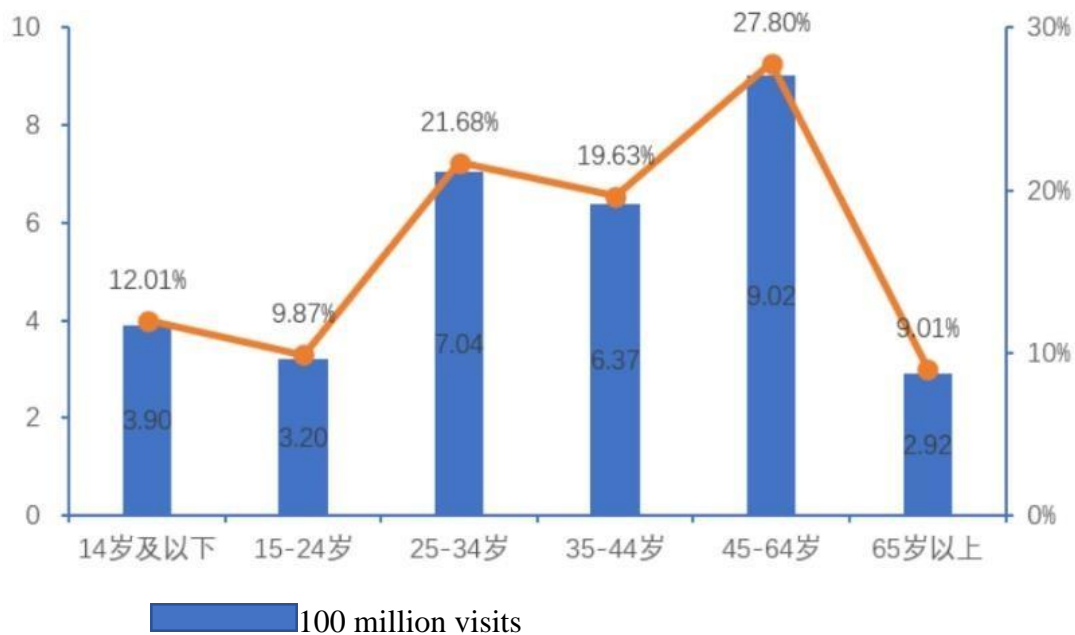


Figure 1: Graph the age ranges of all group of travelers

In 2021, middle-aged and elderly tourists over 45 years old will make a total of 1.194 billion trips, accounting for 36.81% of the domestic tourism source market and becoming an important source of tourists in the domestic tourism market. At the same time, the growth rate of young tourists aged 14 and below is fast, and "one old and one young" has become the highlight and focus of domestic tourism, and elderly tourism, health tourism, research travel and so on have broad prospects.

Problem statement

According to Amaral, Rodrigues, Diniz, Oliveira, Leal (2020), due to the increasing participation of seniors in traveling, the influence of senior travels on tourism market is obvious, the changes of service and the infrastructure need to be made as this situation develops. However, it is difficult for the travel agencies who provide tour package to senior to understand the senior customers since their behavior is different compared to old people in the past Alén, Losada & Domínguez. (2015). Brand experience plays an important role in attracting travelers' repurchase intention in joining the tour package. But elder people may not have been included in studies of travel experiences Amaral et al. (2020).

Furthermore, Chinese elderly tour groups face great practical problems. The quality of tour groups in the market is uneven, and travel agencies develop travel plans for some large groups, such as charter flights, accommodation, dining itineraries and shopping strategies. The advantage of many low-price Tours for the elderly is that they are affordable, can be played with a high degree, and are customized products specifically for the elderly. But at the same time, it also has various drawbacks. First, there are problems such as uncivilized sales. It is also often reported that the tourism situation has taken a turn for the worse, causing tourists to spend money not going to attractions or buying inferior products. Second, there are risks of low prices and poor quality in tourist groups, which will also cause security risks to tourists. As a special group, the elderly must pay special attention to such problems.

Thus, to solve the two main problem above, the research focus on the antecedents of seniors' travel experience, which could lead to their attitude to the travel agency brand and the repurchase intention. Both travel agencies and senior travelers are suffering this problem because the seniors cannot achieve quality travel experience and the business lost repeat customers.

Research Questions

The purpose of this conceptual paper is to determine the relationships between Customer engagement, Brand image and Tour service and Brand experience in China. As a result, the following research questions will be addressed:

- (1) Do Customer Engagement, Brand Image, Tour Service influence Senior travelers' Brand Experience in China?
- (2) Does Senior travelers' Brand Experience influence Attitude towards Brand and Repurchase Intention?
- (3) Does Senior travelers' Brand Experience mediate the relationship between Customer Engagement, Brand Image, Tour Service and Senior travelers' Attitude towards Brand and Repurchase Intention?
- (4) Does Social Media moderate the relationship between Senior travelers' Brand Experience and Attitude towards Brand and Repurchase Intention?

Brief Review Of Literature

Senior tourism research has a long study. Within this broad area of inquiry, there are have been several streams of the research. One stream of the research focuses on consequence, for instance, tour guide quality has the positive impact on tour satisfaction and word-of-mouth (Hwang & Lee 2023). Brand loyalty is also stated as the consequence, for instance, (Hwang & Lee 2019) states the relationship between Brand prestige of tour package and Brand loyalty.

Other streams have focused on the motivation of senior tourists, for instance, Lewis & D'Alessandro (2019) examined the push-motives of senior travelers in rural tourism, which reflected that relax and escape, and experience novelty and adventure were the main motivations. Tuo, Deng, Tao, Xu, Peng, Linghu, Huang & Yu (2022) 's research discussed and examined cultural factors and senior tourisms within China and determined how social media could impact retirees' destination selections through giving cultural or culture pertaining information or insights.

The goal here is to understand seniors' attitudes and Repurchase intention as the dependent variable. Customer engagement, Brand image, Tour service as the independent variables are critical and well-established in Brand experience model. The Figure presents the basic conceptual framework underlying the classis models explaining the Brand experience and Repurchase intention.

To state the research gap, first of all, to the best of our knowledge, the researcher identified an apparent knowledge gap in the prior research concerning Brand experience. In addition, the prior research did not address the impact of Brand experience of senior tourists on their attitude towards the brand and the repurchase intention. A systematic review by Khan & Rahman (2015) confirm that, at present, there is a lack of research on brand experience of service in academia, and the brand experience should be studied in the hospitality, travel, banking, aviation and other industries.

Second, for the evidence gap, previous research has addressed several aspects of the positive impact of customer experience on Brand loyalty, for instance, Hwang & Lee (2018) states the positive impact of memorize Brand experience on the revisit intention. While Ebrahim, Ghoneim, Irani and Fan (2016) examined the insignificant influence of Brand experience on repurchase intention.

In addition, based on the review of prior research, there is a population gap. Some of these sub-populations have been unexplored and under research. The senior tourists' Brand experience and attitude towards Brand appear to be important and worthy of investigation in the context of China. Furthermore, previous research has focused primarily on this population of Korea, for example, Hwang et al. (2023) successfully study the significant role of the experience economy in tour quality which leads to word-of-mouth consequence in the context of Korea senior tourism area.

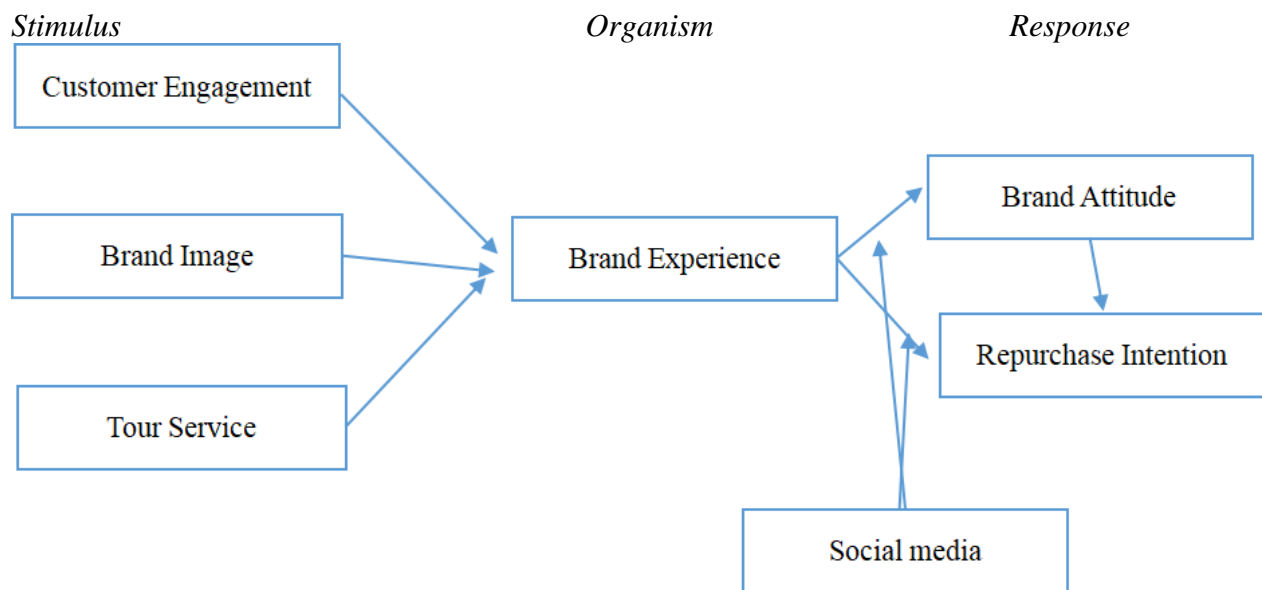


Figure 2: Proposed conceptual model

Conclusion

China is now getting into an aging society, so the society should pay more attention to the elderly groups, which has a deep significance to the market and the society. This paper studies the Brand experience of elderly travelers, providing the benefits for both the travelers and the market. Travel agency businesses can better understand the needs of elderly travelers, improve the buyback rate

and loyalty of travelers, and increase business performance. Also, the elderly have more spare time, it can make up for the lack of tourism off-season, so it has important economic significance. Finally, senior travelers can enrich knowledge, strengthen the body, better expand the vision, improve the quality of life, and prevent the elderly from being marginalized in society.

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PELUANG STRATEGI KEPELBAGAIAN KEPADA PKS DI MALAYSIA

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Abstrak

Kepelbagaian perniagaan merupakan salah satu strategi untuk mengembangkan perniagaan melalui unit atau anak syarikat baharu, memerlukan perancangan yang teliti. Ia boleh meningkatkan pertumbuhan firma, membawa ke arah memaksimumkan kekayaan. Namun, tanpa analisis dan perancangan yang teliti, ia juga boleh membawa kepada kegagalan yang meyebabkan kerugian besar kepada syarikat. Kajian ini memfokuskan peluang dan langkah strategik Perusahaan Kecil Sederhana (PKS) untuk mempelbagaikan perniagaan mereka. PKS perlu memahami keperluan untuk mempelbagaikan perniagaan secara jelas untuk memastikan kejayaan perniagaan. Keputusan syarikat untuk mempelbagaikan adalah hasil daripada proses yang komprehensif, menganalisis potensi peluang dan ancaman dalam industri mereka serta menilai kekuatan dan kelemahan mereka sendiri. Memahami strategi kepelbagaian adalah penting untuk membuat keputusan strategik dan belajar daripada pengembangan yang berjaya. Oleh itu, kajian ini memberikan pemahaman yang menyeluruh tentang proses dan implikasi kepelbagaian perniagaan, menjadikannya sumber yang berharga untuk perniagaan yang mempertimbangkan langkah strategik yang sama.

Kata Kunci: Peluang, Strategi Kepelbagaian, Kepelbagaian Perniagaan, Perusahaan Kecil Sederhana, Kelestarian Perniagaan.

Pengenalan

Kepelbagaian perniagaan boleh disifatkan sebagai salah satu strategi yang dilaksanakan untuk mengembangkan perniagaan. Menurut Sohl, Vroom dan McCann (2020), strategi kepelbagaian perniagaan memperoleh momentum yang semakin meningkat dalam kalangan perniagaan di mana aliran penyelidikan model perniagaan yang semakin berkembang telah mula mengalih perhatian mereka kepada topik firma yang mengendalikan berbilang model perniagaan pada masa yang sama.

Berdasarkan hujah Ansoff (1957), adalah jelas bahawa perniagaan yang melaksanakan strategi kepelbagaian mereka tanpa perancangan rapi boleh menjadi bencana dan membawa kepada kegagalan perniagaan. Oleh itu, mengetahui kepelbagaian sebagai strategi kelestarian jangka hayat perniagaan (Naradda Gamage et al., 2020), perniagaan khususnya dalam kalangan Perusahaan Kecil Sederhana (PKS) memahami dengan jelas dan memahami rancangan yang akan dilaksanakan untuk kejayaan perniagaan

Pernyataan Masalah

Pada peringkat global, pandemik Covid-19 telah melanda lanskap perniagaan dengan teruk. Di Malaysia, dilaporkan bahawa peratusan penutupan perniagaan dalam kalangan PKS meningkat melebihi paras 60 peratus seperti yang dinyatakan (Mustapha & Sorooshian, 2019; Yusoff, Wahab, Latiff, Osman, Zawawi, & Fazal, 2018; Rahman, Yaacob, & Radzi, 2016).

Terdapat pelbagai sebab yang menyumbang kepada kegagalan PKS di Malaysia. Dilaporkan bahawa antara kegagalan itu adalah disebabkan kekurangan kreativiti dan keupayaan inovasi yang mengesahkan potensi dan daya tahan mereka untuk mengatasi persaingan sengit dalam pasaran (Yusoff et al., 2018; Rahman, et al., 2016). Selain itu, isu yang berkaitan dengan kekurangan pengetahuan dan kemahiran keusahawanan (Tang & Hussin, 2020; Tehseen, Ahmed, Qureshi, Uddin, & Ramayah, 2019), lemah dalam amalan perniagaan (Falahat, Tehseen, & Van Horne, 2018; Kader Ali & Perumal, 2016) dan juga ketidakcekapan kepimpinan (Griffin, 2012; Alam Jani, Senik, & Domil, 2011) yang menjejaskan prestasi dan kelestarian PKS di negara ini.

Kegagalan ini masih berlaku di sebalik program bantuan dan pembangunan yang dijalankan oleh kerajaan untuk mempercepatkan sumbangan PKS dalam Keluaran Dalam Negara Kasar (KDNK) Malaysia. Dilaporkan bahawa lebih RM15 bilion diperuntukkan sepanjang rancangan 10 tahun Rancangan Malaysia ke-9 dan ke-10 (MP ke-9 dan ke-10) (Kamarudin, Afendi, Mohamad, & Sufahani, 2021).

Justeru, adalah amat penting untuk melihat strategi perniagaan individu sebagai jalan keluar untuk memperbaiki keadaan semasa di kalangan PKS di Malaysia. Seperti yang dibincangkan, salah satu strategi kelestarian jangka hayat perniagaan yang akan dilaksanakan dalam perniagaan ialah

melaksanakan strategi kepelbagaian yang kukuh yang boleh mempercepat prestasi dan jangka hayat perniagaan (Hernita et al., 2021; Naradda Gamage et al., 2020; Vogl, 2018).

Persoalan Kajian

Kajian ini ingin menjawab soalan seperti di bawah;

- i) Apakah langkah-langkah yang diambil oleh syarikat dalam strategi kepelbagaian perniagaan mereka?
- ii) Apakah isu dan cabaran yang dihadapi dalam melaksanakan strategi kepelbagaian perniagaan?
- iii) Apakah cadangan yang mungkin boleh dibuat berdasarkan penemuan yang dikumpul?

Objektif Kajian

Kajian ini bagi mencapai objektif berikut:

- i) Untuk memahami langkah-langkah yang diambil oleh PKS dalam strategi kepelbagaian perniagaan mereka
- ii) Untuk menyiasat isu dan cabaran yang dihadapi dalam melaksanakan strategi kepelbagaian perniagaan
- iii) Untuk membuat strategi yang sesuai bagi melaksanakan kepelbagaian perniagaan

Ulasan Literatur

Strategi kepelbagaian adalah satu bentuk tindakan reflektif yang dilakukan oleh pemilik perniagaan untuk menambah baik, mempercepat dan memanjangkan kelestarian perniagaan mereka di pasaran (Vogl, 2018). Dari perspektif pertumbuhan perniagaan, literatur terdahulu mengenal pasti strategi kepelbagaian sebagai langkah balas ke arah persaingan yang tidak menentu dan trend pasaran yang sentiasa berubah (Hernita, Surya, Perwira, Abubakar, & Idris, 2021; Naradda Gamage et al., 2020; Vogl, 2018; Spence & Essoussi, 2010). Naradda Gamage et al. (2020) menegaskan bahawa PKS perlu menggunakan strategi kepelbagaian dalam perniagaan mereka sebagai strategi kelestarian jangka hayat perniagaan bagi menghadapi lanskap perniagaan semasa.

Menurut Hernita et al. (2021), usaha dalam mengukuhkan kedudukan PKS dalam pasaran boleh dilakukan melalui strategi kepelbagaian. Usaha tersebut perlu disokong oleh bantuan kerajaan termasuk; i) penggunaan teknologi mesra alam untuk peningkatan produktiviti, ii) pengukuhan kedua-dua keupayaan dan kapasiti sumber manusia PKS dan, iii) suntikan kreativiti dan inovasi,

iv) mengenali pasaran sasaran (peluang), dan v) analisis pasaran untuk mengetahui cita rasa dan jangkaan pengguna.

Menurut Hisrich, Peters, dan Shepherd (2016), terdapat tiga (3) jenis strategi kepelbagaian perniagaan yang boleh dilaksanakan untuk mencapai kelestarian. Strategi tersebut iaitu, i) integrasi ke belakang, ii) integrasi ke hadapan dan, iii) integrasi mendatar. Strategi pertama, penyepaduan ke belakang mentakrifkan strategi yang diambil oleh perniagaan dengan menggerakkan satu langkah ke belakang (naik) pada rantaian nilai tambah ke arah bahan mentah. Dalam kes ini, ia mengakibatkan perniagaan juga menjadi pengedar bahan mentah mereka sendiri. Dengan kata lain, perniagaan menjadi pembekal kepada perniagaannya sendiri (Hisrich et al., 2016).

Strategi kedua yang dinamakan integrasi ke hadapan merujuk kepada aktiviti mengambil langkah ke hadapan (turun) pada rantaian nilai tambah ke arah pelanggan perniagaan. Ini boleh diterjemahkan sebagai perniagaan bertukar menjadi pemborong barang siap dalam hierarki rantaian bekalan (Hisrich et al., 2016). Dengan kata lain, perniagaan boleh menjadi pembeli sendiri. Hisrich et al. (2016) menambah bahawa kedua-dua strategi yang disebutkan menawarkan peluang yang baik kepada usahawan untuk mengembangkan perniagaan mereka. Faedahnya boleh dilihat dari segi memperluaskan pengetahuan sedia ada berbanding wilayah yang tidak dikenali, urusan niaga yang berkesan dapat dijamin hasil daripada dapat mengawal rantaian nilai dan akhir sekali, peluang pembelajaran yang boleh membawa ke arah idea produk atau proses perniagaan baharu.

Manakala strategi ketiga dalam kepelbagaian perniagaan terlibat dengan yang berbeza dan saling melengkapi kepada perniagaan sedia ada atau rantaian nilai tambah mereka. Sebagai contoh, perniagaan yang mengeluarkan peralatan elektrik seperti televisyen, menambah portfolio aksesori seperti mikrofon atau fon kepala. Apa yang penting, 'penembusan' pasaran bagi produk baru adalah berkaitan dengan produk sedia ada. Jadi, perniagaan ingin mempunyai beberapa tahap kecekapan sambil menawarkan peluang pembelajaran dalam proses yang terlibat dalam produk tersebut (Hisrich et al., 2016).

Ketiga-tiga (3) kategori strategi kepelbagaian ini boleh dirujuk sebagai kepelbagaian berkaitan dan ia biasanya ditemui di seluruh ekonomi di seluruh dunia (Pinheiro, Hartmann, Boschma, & Hidalgo, 2022). Semata-mata kerana pengetahuan, kepakaran dan jumlah risiko yang perlu ditangani oleh perniagaan adalah lebih kecil berbanding dengan kepelbagaian yang tidak berkaitan (Pinheiro et al., 2022). Walau bagaimanapun, didakwa bahawa kepelbagaian yang tidak berkaitan membawa kepentingannya sendiri untuk mengelakkan penguncian ekonomi dalam pasaran dan menyediakan peluang baharu untuk pembangunan ekonomi dalam jangka panjang (Ljubownikow & Ang, 2020).

Kesimpulan

Kepelbagaian perniagaan adalah suatu peluang dan keputusan penting untuk mana-mana entiti perniagaan. Ia berpotensi untuk meningkatkan pertumbuhan firma dan membawa kepada pemaksimalan kekayaan. Walau bagaimanapun, ia juga boleh mengakibatkan kegagalan yang mahal sekiranya ia gagal mengambil langkah yang betul dalam melaksanakan perniagaan yang pelbagai. Oleh itu, menjalankan analisis terperinci tentang potensi pasaran adalah penting sebelum mengejar peluang kepelbagaian. Jelas sekali bahawa perniagaan yang melaksanakan strategi kepelbagaian tanpa perancangan yang teliti boleh menghadapi akibat buruk dan kegagalan perniagaan. Sebagai strategi kelestarian dan kelangsungan jangka hayat perniagaan, adalah penting bagi perniagaan, terutamanya Perusahaan Kecil dan Sederhana (PKS), untuk mempunyai pemahaman yang jelas dan rancangan yang teratur untuk mempelbagaikan perniagaan bagi menjamin kejayaan.

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BEYOND THE UTILITARIAN: SYMBOLIC MEANINGS IN CONSUMING ISLAMIC LIFE INSURANCE

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Abstract

In Islam, the Quran is considered the word of God, but more importantly, it provides guidelines on living a religiously acceptable life (Fischer and Bailey, 2008). With increasing attention directed on conforming to the halal (permissible) products and services, institutions are shaping their marketplace offerings to fulfil these needs. One area that generates much research interest is in Islamic financial services. In today's financial markets across the world, we can see an array of different Islamic financial instruments including Islamic life insurance or commonly known as "Family Takaful" which has gained in their consumption among Muslims despite the theological arguments on the service. While there is much interest in the formulation of these Islamic financial services, little is known about its consumption. This research, working hand in hand, with the literature on Islamic consumption as well as Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) aim to explore the meanings behind the consumption of Islamic financial services, specifically, Islamic life insurance. A total of 44 semi-structured in-depth interviews with Takaful, conventional, both-insured, non-insured consumers and agents were conducted to understand the underlying meanings assigned towards this consumption. The meanings surround their lived experience of their religion, social and cultural context. Our findings suggested there are emerging symbolic meanings Malaysian Muslims assigned in consuming Islamic life insurance. This research hopes to contribute to the debates on the oversimplifications of Muslims as a homogeneous market segment (Karatas and Sandikci, 2013) as well as providing insight on the different symbolic meanings Muslim consumers assign to the consumption of such service.

Keywords: Islamic consumption, Islamic life insurance, symbolic meanings, Family takaful, utilitarian

Introduction

The global Muslim population is an expanding market and anticipated to increase to 2.2 billion in 2030, that is nearly a quarter of the world population (Pew Research Centre 2017). Like other global consumers, Muslim consumers, have undergone structural changes and experienced the faith-based consumption landscapes (Sandikci & Ger 2010). They are becoming more aware of the need to apply their faith into their lifestyle as such they assimilate the local cultural values and material consumption (Jafari & Suerdem 2012). This is evident in the increasing number of interests in studying the Muslim consumption further (Sandikci & Ger 2010; Karababa & Ger 2011; Jamal et al. 2013).

In Islam, the Quran is considered the word of God but more importantly, it provides guidelines on living a religiously acceptable life (Fisher 2013). With increasing attention directed on conforming to the halal (permissible) products and services, institutions are shaping their marketplace offering to fulfil these needs. One area that generates much research interest is in Islamic financial services. In today's financial markets across the world, we can see an array of different Islamic financial instruments including Islamic life insurance or commonly known as "Family Takaful" which has gained in their consumption among Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia despite the theological arguments Muslims in other countries have on this service.

While there is much interest in the formulation of these Islamic financial services, little is known about its consumption. The majority of existing Islamic consumption literature still adopts a reductionist approach by making idealistic comparisons between the West and Islam (Jafari & Suerdem 2012).

This is exemplified by Weber (1965) where he categorized Muslims as emphasizing values of militancy (jihad), short-term self-interest (after-worldly) and emotional motivations (martyrdom). However, this does not entirely reflect the real phenomena where some Muslims, given a certain cultural context will interpret Islam differently. For instance, Malaysian Muslims choose to have a range of conventional financial services that could promise a potentially higher return regardless of the interest condition even though consuming interest is highly prohibited in Islam. Meanwhile, within the Islamic consumption research, consumption was analyzed based on a rigid framework of Halal (lawful) and Haram (unlawful), the Mustahhab (favourable) and Makruh (unfavourable). It would be rather unrealistic to assume that Muslims would choose to consume a product or services because of religion per se. As it is rather unrealistic to assume 'Muslims' are a homogeneous segment of consumer.

Therefore, this research has one main objective that is to contribute additional knowledge in the area of Islamic consumption and consumer culture among Muslims (acknowledging that Muslims are heterogeneous and culturally constituted) through the lens of consumer culture theory.

Specifically, this research intends to explore what are the meanings behind Islamic life insurance consumption?

Literature Review

From an examination of relevant papers in the Journal of Islamic Marketing (JIMA), a journal dedicated to intellectual discussion of Islamic consumption and marketing-related phenomena, it is apparent that scholars have approached Islamic life insurance or Takaful from various perspectives. Previously, scholars have explored the consumption of Islamic life insurance by looking at the demand for the service from an economic perspective (Kwon, 2013; Sherif and Shaairi, 2013; Akhter and Khan, 2017; Emamgholipour, Arab and Mohajerzadeh, 2017; Sherif and Hussnain, 2017), the role of Syariah in Islamic life insurance's accounting and reporting (Nahar, 2015; Olorogun, 2015), organisational performance in the Takaful industry (Khan et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2019; Hemrit, 2020), historical development (Alshammari, Syed Jaafar Alhabshi and Saiti, 2018; Hassan, 2019), and the service aspect of Takaful consumption (Alshammari, Syed Jaafar Alhabshi and Saiti, 2018; Hassan, 2019). But one growing research domain is the study of consumer behaviour in consuming Islamic life insurance.

Many Muslim researchers are showing increasing interest in this domain as they realise the importance of understanding Muslim consumers in order to design better marketing strategies for this developing market segment. However, the scientific knowledge development is still at an infancy stage. Three critical points can be observed from the literature. First, the persistent use of particular theories in predicting Islamic life insurance purchase intentions, such as Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Farhat, Aslam and Sany Sanuri, 2019), Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Md Husin and Ab Rahman, 2016; Aziz et al., 2018; Bhatti and Md Husin, 2019; Kazaure, 2019); Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB) (Md Husin and Rahman, 2013); Theory of Diffusion of Innovation (DOI) (Md Husin and Rahman, 2013) and new product adoption theory (Salman, Hafiz and Htay, 2018). These theories are used extensively across various geographical areas in testing or predicting the intention to purchase Islamic life insurance in different countries.

These theories help to provide some insights by testing different variables to best predict Muslim consumers' intention to purchase Islamic life insurance. However, they fail to depict real-life consumption. In reality, Muslims as consumers would inevitably incorporate their social and cultural influences in their consumption. Past scholars tend to limit themselves to a rigid model with the aim of explaining Muslim consumption behaviour. This current study is therefore necessary to expand the existing literature towards inductive perspectives.

Nevertheless, there are some criticisms addressed to the existing state of literature relating to Islamic consumption. First, past scholars tend to adopt a reductionist approach towards

understanding Islamic life insurance consumption. Most of the existing literature focuses on applying pre-existing theories to explain the purchase intention of Islamic life insurance. This approach is fairly idealistic for understanding a literature that is in its infancy with limited theorisation. For instance, Bhatti and Md Husin (2019), Hassan and Abbas (2019) and Kazaure (2019) explored the behavioural intention and adoption of Takaful products through the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The underlying aim was to explain the factors that influence or predict the adoption of Islamic life insurance among Muslims in the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and North-western Nigeria. This direction of research however limits the understanding of Muslim consumption to geographical area only and not on the consumption itself. An inductive approach would be more appropriate as it derives concepts and theories from the consumers themselves without disregarding the social and cultural environment. This is the approach this author has adopted to explore the consumption phenomenon from the participants' experience.

Second, past scholars of Islamic life insurance research tend to treat Muslims as a uniform group. Muslim consumers are seen as homogeneous as the researchers ignore the influence of social and cultural factors already embedded in the lives of consumers. In reality, Malaysian Muslims are not the same as Muslims in the United Kingdom and both groups practice different consumption behaviours. To emphasise further, even different Muslims in the United Kingdom practice Islam and consume things differently. As such, this study is considered timely and much needed to further expand the knowledge in this area.

Methodology

This research employed two phases of in-depth interviews with four different group of consumers namely, consumers who already have Islamic life insurance, conventional life insurance's consumers, consumers who have both insurances as well as those who do not have any sort of life insurance. Agents were also interviewed as they are the closest interaction these consumers have. In-depth interviews deemed appropriate given the sensitivity nature of the topic and its ability to gather an interpretation of meanings through participants' story in relation to the studied phenomena (Kvale & Brinkman 2015).

In-depth interviews were conducted in Malaysia within the area of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur which yielded 1978 minutes of audio recordings from 44 participants. Malaysia was chosen given the unique multi-ethnic community (Malay, Chinese, Indian and other ethnicity) with diverse practicing religions (Islam, Christian, Buddha, Hindu, and others) living in harmony within different subcultures. Although Islam is the official religion professed by the majority of the population (Malay), other religions are freely practiced, and this provides a unique cultural composition. Hence, it is rich of distinctive culture that makes culturally specific research a necessity in this market (Cui 1997). In addition, Malaysia emerged as a leading center for Islamic finance in Asia and second only after Saudi Arabia (Ernst & Young 2014). This further raise the interesting viewpoints of how Muslims in Malaysia view their consumption within the Islamic financial services despite the theological debates on this.

Muslims, despite adhering to the same Islamic principles, different Muslims in a given cultural context would interpret Islam differently. For instance there are two major group of Muslims that exist around the world today which are Sunnis (87-90 percent) and Shias (10-13percent) of the Muslim population (Hino, 2012; Pew Research Center 2012, 2011). Even within the two groups, there are different school of thoughts. Sunnis are split into four major schools, Hanafi, Hanbali, Shafie' and Maliki. Shias are also split into three main schools of thought (Jafari, Ismaili and Zaidiyah) which are then further split into sub-categories.

Malaysia on the other hand is a country that comprises approximately 60 percent Muslims (Department of Statistic Malaysia 2018) where Islam is established as the country's official religion with other religion are free to practice their faith. There are several Malaysian ethnics as mentioned previously and Malaysian Malay are known to be associated as Muslim. Malaysian Malay Muslims would generally follow the Shafie's school of thought which then fall under the Sunnis. There are arguments as most of the Muslims are 'born' Muslim. They are raised with various socio-cultural factors (e.g. tradition, history, ethnicity, power relations and norm) and religion is one of the constituting forces in shaping their daily lifestyle, consumption choices and worldly view. To them, religion is already a part of their culture and to certain extent it becomes a mundane practices without needing any association to religious rituals.

Findings and Discussion

Our preliminary findings suggested that Malaysian Muslims would relate to functional reasons such as to cover death, critical illnesses, total permanent disabilities, medical and educational purposes as to initial reason to purchase any sort of life insurance. But to our surprise, once the researcher probes deeper to understand the reasons behind the decision to choose either the conventional or Islamic alternative, their responses get more interesting. There are other symbolic reasons to the consumption of Islamic life insurance. Several themes emerged constituting some major reasons behind this consumption.

Religious meanings

Religious meanings refer to the association of participants' consumption decisions to their religion; in this case, Islam. Most participants in their interviews attached religious meanings to their consumption of Islamic life insurance. These includes seeking halalness as an obligation and religiocentrism.

Seeking halalness as an obligation

The term 'halal', typically used in food consumption among Muslims, was utilised interchangeably among participants to refer to Syariah compliance in financial services. In understanding what was considered permissible in financial services, most participants agreed that this referred to money that originated from a Syariah-compliant source. A Syariah-compliant source of money refers to two points. First, how the money is invested. Second, the absence of riba' (usury), gharar (uncertainty) or maisir (gambling) elements. Funds pooled under Islamic life insurance policies are expected to be invested only in Syariah-compliant schemes and companies. The funds should also be carefully monitored by Syariah panels and the Malaysian

Central Bank to ensure that they are free from any elements of gambling, alcoholic and pornographic activities and other non-halal investments.

The majority of participants agreed that it was highly relevant to seek halalness in consuming financial services, with just a small number deciding otherwise, as illustrated in Figure 18.

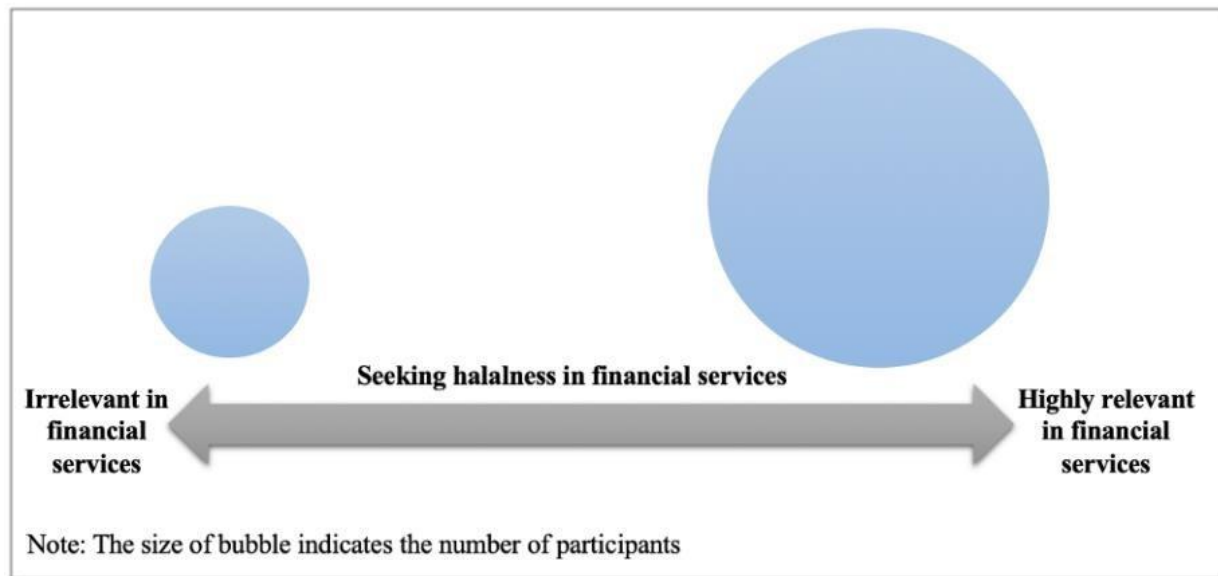


Figure 18 Perceived relevance of seeking halalness in financial services consumption

B1 and N5 agreed that seeking halalness in consuming life insurance was a religious obligation, with B1 repeatedly saying that since an Islamic alternative was available, she was obligated to opt for Islamic life insurance. N5 added that halalness of Islamic life insurance gave her the comfort that she had discharged her obligation.

“responsibility, yes, it is responsibility. It has become a must since we already have the alternative. We have choices, and we are aware of it, so, it is our responsibility. It is different if we don’t have choices. Yes, it is true that we don’t have choices before, people are not aware of this, that’s a different case, but now we have a lot of choices, and many people are aware of this, it is impossible if you don’t know this, it is right in front of our eyes, so, it is our responsibility” (B1)

“We feel that [Takaful] is better than conventional. Although it is a bit expensive. It is more secure for us. Secure, in term of seeking for halalness [laugh]. Yeah, Responsibility. It is a responsibility.” (N5)

A small number of the participants however disagreed that seeking halalness was an obligation. C3 found that seeking halalness was not relevant in consuming financial services. Regardless of the perceived social

pressure to choose Syariah-compliant services, he opted for a conventional policy as it gave him that better return.

“If it is for more, I’m like [pause]. For sure, ordinary people would say go to Islamic, but for me, I fail to see it in that way. I just fail to see. Just to be sarcastic, I see that ‘oh, it’s Islamic just because of the akad, aaaa this one [conventional] doesn’t have akad.’ I was thinking, where is the Islamicness? So, that’s where I feel like it’s okay, just go for conventional ones, So, sometimes my colleagues in the office did say like [pause] ‘just take the Syariah-compliant ones’ and I was like [pause] okay [awkwardly agree with facial expression]. I’ll try my best, but so far, I don’t see it. When it comes to financial, this is [pause] I don’t see where the Islamic part is. [pause] what is the strength in it. Mostly, I would see that conventional is okay, Yes, maybe people would talk about the element of riba’ and what not. But for me, I fail to see the riba’.” (C3)

Religiocentrism

Religiocentrism was found to some extent play part in consumption of Family Takaful. Conceptually, religiocentrism here refers to religious-based sentiment of exclusiveness on believing one's religion in comparison to others either in positive or negative way (Ray & Doratis 1971). As in this study, the elements of religiocentrism emerged as one of the reasons behind the decision to choose Family Takaful over conventional insurance. It is exemplified as below:

"Researcher: You said that conventional insurance offered interesting package, why not choose conventional rather than Islamic?"

Participant 12: Because we are Muslim, we support Islam. After all, Islam has Islamic law, right? But still people said it is just the same between the two, the owners are still Chinese. So, we just believe in Islam, we are helping other Muslims...The main factor is because it is Islamic, then the medical or health reasons. That's it.

Researcher: Even if conventional insurance offers you better?

Participant 12: Definitely! Because we are Muslims. If we don't support Islam, then who will?"
(P12, Takaful consumer)

Familial meanings

Another meaning that emerged from the data is the familial meanings. This includes how consumers are choosing the Islamic ones to continue their family's norms. For most of the participants with life insurance, choosing a particular type of life insurance was seen as continuing their family's norm or tradition. Consuming specific life insurance had become an accepted practice among the participants and their family members; they shared how it was common in their families to consume life insurance as recommended by their parents or siblings.

“...at that time, I don’t feel the need to buy insurance first. I don’t feel the need at all truthfully. None at all. But I think like aaa [pause] I just buy it anyway otherwise my mom would nag on me...yeah just follow my family since it is not a harmful thing anyway.” (B3)

“Hmm [pause] for my case yes, my dad would really like [pause] not decide but pointed out to do this and that and then we will discuss that. But in term of insurance, since he is also involved with insurance, he knows more about that, so obviously we would like to listen to him more” (T1)

Parents played an essential role in shaping consumption decisions either directly or indirectly. Participants would consume a particular life insurance as suggested by their parents, and it is a practice that has become a norm among their family members. Most of them would have purchased life insurance between the ages of 20 to 30 years old, as soon as they secured their first employment. For those within this age range, family played an integral part in influencing their consumption of life insurance.

Societal meanings

The final theme associated with the consumption of Islamic life insurance is societal meanings, which refer to meanings attached to the wider society. Phrases like ‘people’ were often mentioned throughout the interviews in expressing participants’ consideration and concern towards society. ‘People’ here included individuals within the participants’ immediate social circles (family and friends) and the broader society. Society played a unique role in influencing or shaping participants’ consumption decisions or ways of thinking.

Society had a strongly influence on participants’ decision to consume either Islamic or conventional life insurance. T3 clarified this when she expressed how the people around her influenced her decision to choose Islamic over conventional life insurance.

“How would I know that this is alright? [pause] Because the values that society told me to. The experience of other people. When you listen to other people say it is good then it is good” (T3)

The values instilled through the Malaysian Muslim society shaped her perception that Islamic life insurance was the ideal option. Similarly, B5 and T14 highlighted that Malaysian Muslims were becoming more sensitive towards halal and haram issues not only in food consumption but also in financial services. Living in Malaysia, consuming Islamic financial services, or in this case, Islamic life insurance was considered by society as a normal and acceptable practice.

“So, you know why [pause] because err Muslim nowadays are very concern. You know [pause] no doubt you want to take the Islamic policy as you also want to comply with Islamic values. Islamic ways.” (B5)

“I follow because everybody says like that. The source of money is important actually because we are living in a society where if there is an obvious separation between halal and haram, we have to choose halal” (T14)

In consuming Islamic life insurance, participants were found to associate their consumption with participating in a caring community and conforming to accepted social values. These were among the prominent societal meanings participants assigned to the consumption of Islamic life insurance.

Conclusion

There are emerging symbolic meanings that Malaysian Muslims assigned to the consumption of Islamic life insurance given the multicultural ethnic and religious background, it somehow influences the way Malaysian Muslims think about their consumption decision. In this case, Islamic financial services which are an intangible product that is ideally different than the obvious soft product such as fashion, food or cosmetics where there is a distinct need to comply with Islamic Syariah law.

The findings expand the current knowledge of Islamic life insurance consumption to a social and cultural level and question the existing literature that views Islamic life insurance consumption as merely psychological, economical, or utilitarian. Existing Islamic consumption literature adopts a somewhat reductionist approach by making idealistic comparisons between the West and Islam (Jafari & Suerdem 2012). For instance, past research in Islamic life insurance consumption frequently used theories such as Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), Decomposed Theory of Planned Behaviour (DTPB) and Diffusion of Innovation (DOI). Presumably, the purpose was to test these theories on Muslims, to learn about their intention in purchasing Islamic products and services. For years, scholars have been ignoring the social, cultural and historical perspectives that may influence consumption— utilising CCT as the research lens enabled this researcher now, to explore these elements in the consumption further.

Thus, this research hopes to explore at contributing to the domain of Islamic consumption and marketplace. In this domain, Muslims have been oversimplified and the assumption that Muslims is a homogeneous market segment (Karataş et al. 2013). Moreover, deductive methods have been used in drawing the Islamic consumption picture (Jafari & Suerdem 2012) whereas their consumption is more complex and interweaving within various social and culturally drives.

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