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Intellectual Discourse
Vol. 30, No. 2, 2022

Contents

<i>Note from the Editor</i>	259
 Research Articles	
Mediation as an Alternative Mechanism to Resolve Family Disputes in Malaysia: A Comparative Analysis with Australia and New Zealand <i>Nur Ezan Rahmat</i> <i>Muhammad Ikhwan Mohd. Zain</i> <i>Hartini Saripan</i> <i>Daleleer Kaur</i> <i>Muhammad Fikri Othman</i>	263
Understanding Factors Influencing Crime Prevention Information on Social Media <i>Nurzali Ismail</i> <i>Shuhaida Md Noor</i> <i>Jamilah Ahmad</i> <i>Mohamad Hafifi Jamri</i>	289
Examining the Effects of News Frames as a Risk Factor of Radicalisation <i>Nurul Miza Mohd Rashid</i> <i>Noor Aqsa Nabila Mat Isa</i>	315
The PRC'S Military Strategies on the Security Architecture of East and South China Sea under President Xi Jinping <i>Lokman Karadag</i>	343

Mental Well-Being and Religious Values Among
Muslims Across Four Cities
Nik A. Hisham Ismail
Mustafa Tekke
Ismail Fatah
Shazmin Rafeeq 371

Unravelling the Roles of Social Media Usage,
Individual Well-Being, and Working Environment
on Happiness at The Workplace
Aini Maznina A. Manaf
Tengku Siti Aisha Tengku Azzman
Syed Arabi Idid 395

Research Notes

Orientalism and the Globalised Muslim World:
Decolonising “Exotic” Narratives of Eurocentrism
in the Era of Post-colonial Studies
Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin
Nadhirah Zainal Rashid 419

Conference Reports

*Report on the first International Conference on
Islamic Spiritual Care:*
Conceptualising Spiritual Care Between Traditional
Guidance and Modern Practices
Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil 431

Note from the Editor

This issue of *Intellectual Discourse* (Vol. 30, No. 2) presents six articles, a research note and a conference report. The articles range from mediation as an alternative mechanism to resolve family disputes to mental well-being and religious values among Muslims, and from factors influencing crime prevention information on social media to the effects of news frame as a risk factor of radicalisation. These articles are the outcomes of research carried out by academics from different parts of the world. For this edition, all but one of the articles are collaborative efforts among authors, some from the same institution while some others from different ones. The topics and contents of the articles reflect the diverse disciplines in Islamic revealed knowledge and the human sciences.

The first article (Mediation as an Alternative Mechanism to Resolve Family Disputes in Malaysia: A Comparative Analysis with Australia and New Zealand)—written by Nur Ezan Rahmat, Muhammad Ikhwan Mohd. Zain, Hartini Saripan, Daleleer Kaur and Muhammad Fikri Othman—compares family mediation practices in Malaysia with those in Australia and New Zealand. It suggests that family mediation practices in the two countries can be a reference for the Malaysian government to learn from. This article argues that compared to court settlement, mediation is more suitable for dispute settlement because of the sensitive nature of family issues, and that mediation can avoid the glare of publicity and keep family disputes low-key and private.

In the second article, (Understanding Factors Influencing Crime Prevention Information on Social Media), Nurzali Ismail, Shuhaida Md. Noor, Jamilah Ahmad and Mohamad Hafifi Jamri surveyed active Malaysian social media users—among the highest users of social media in Southeast Asia—between the age of 18 and 34, and find that interest in crime prevention information on social media was primarily

motivated by information seeking and sharing. The survey also finds that videos, written texts and infographics are the most preferred social media content. The public also has positive perception on the authority's crime prevention information on social media. The factor that most significantly influence public's perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media is credibility. Finally, the study also finds that public perception can influence behaviour intention to access and share crime prevention information on social media.

The third article (*Examining the Effects of News Frames as a Risk Factor of Radicalisation*), written by Nurul Miza Mohd. Rashid and Noor Aqsa Nabila Mat Isa, is an online experiment to examine whether news frames could cause radicalisation. The participants in this study read and summarised news articles which contained either positive, negative or neutral news frames pertaining to Islamist extremism. Their study finds that news-framing content that narrates the goodness of Islamist extremist group could be a factor in the radicalisation process through media. The authors recommend improved news content regulation, especially during times of crisis which could increase the public's vulnerability to extremism.

In the fourth article (*The PRC's Military Strategies on the Security Architecture of East and South China Sea under President Xi Jinping*), Lokman Karadag analyses the four main military strategies of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in East and South China Sea—the militarisation of the South China Sea and the nine-dash line, the establishment of an air defence identification zone over the East China Sea, the reunification of Taiwan and the breach of the first island chain. This article demonstrates that the PRC under President Xi Jinping seeks to reorder the regional security architecture to its favour. It also argues that the successful conclusion of the rising power's strategies over East and South China Sea will translate the current geopolitical rivalry into a power transition to the detriment of the established power.

Nik A. Hisham Ismail, Mustafa Tekke, Ismail Fatah and Shazmin Rafeeq collaborate in a comparative study for the fifth article (*Mental Well-Being and Religious Values Among Muslims Across Four Cities*) in this edition. This article investigates mental well-being among the

diverse Muslim groups in Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos and London. This study finds that several factors such as self-acceptance, social interest, and self-development, significantly correlate to mental well-being among the Muslim respondents of different nationalities, cultures and values. Because of the diversity of the respondents, the study shows varying degrees of correlation among the Muslim groups in the selected cities. This article also finds that religious values such as piety and hope, however, were moderately correlated with mental well-being among the Muslim groups.

On the subject of employee happiness, the sixth article (*Unravelling the Roles of Social Media Usage, Individual Well-Being, and Working Environment on Happiness at the Workplace*), the authors—Aini Maznina A. Manaf, Tengku Siti Aisha Tengku Azzman and Syed Arabi Idid—examine the factors that contribute to happiness at the workplace. They examine three contributing factors to employee happiness, namely; social media usage, individual well-being and working environment. In their survey of employees of manufacturing companies in Malaysia, they find that social media—Facebook, Instagram and YouTube—is not a significant predictor to employee happiness despite their high usage. Nevertheless, the other two factors—individual well-being and working environment—are proven to be the significant predictors to happiness at work.

This edition also features research notes (*Orientalism and the Globalised Muslim World: Decolonising “Exotic” Narratives of Eurocentrism in the Era of Post-colonial Studies*), written by Mohd. Irwan Syazli Saidin and Nadhirah Zainal Rashid. The authors emphasise decolonisation of history as important in post-colonial studies as a condition to achieve unbiased knowledge production. This article explores the origins of Orientalism, and applies the work of Edward Said to demonstrate that not only is Orientalism a field of study about the Eastern World, but it is also a critique of the biased views of the globalised Muslim World. This article argues that Said’s critiques on Orientalism produce an important foundation for post-colonial studies, namely: to identify the stereotypes in media, writing and literature; to unravel fictional narratives among Eurocentric scholars; and to debunk myths when researching the globalised Muslim World.

The publication of this edition would not be possible without the contribution of the authors, the anonymous reviewers, and the editorial team. On behalf of Danial Mohd. Yusof, the Editor-in-Chief, I would like to express our utmost appreciation to everyone who is involved in this publication.

Tunku Mohar Mokhtar
Editor

Mediation as an Alternative Mechanism to Resolve Family Disputes in Malaysia: A Comparative Analysis with Australia and New Zealand

Nur Ezan Rahmat*
Muhammad Ikhwan Mohd. Zain**
Hartini Saripan***
Daleeleer Kaur****
Muhammad Fikri Othman*****

Abstract: Settlement of disputes outside of the court is quite popular nowadays as it gives more advantages compared to litigation. Many mechanisms can be applied under the umbrella of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), including mediation. Mediation is a suitable dispute settlement mechanism for family issues, where it seeks to preserve the familial relationship. Family issues are sensitive, as they involve children, maintenance, and matrimonial properties. The reason for recommending family mediation is to avoid the glare of publicity and keep the family disputes low-key and private. Discussion between the parties is confidential as to the terms of the settlements. This article discusses and explains the principles and process of mediation and how it is best applied in the settlement of family disputes. It also highlights the need for a family court

* Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. Email: nurezan@uitm.edu.my

** Lecturer, Department of Law, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perak Branch, Tapah Campus, Malaysia.

*** Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

**** Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia.

***** Lecturer, Department of Law, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Sarawak Branch, Samarahan Campus, Malaysia.

in Malaysia. Applying qualitative research methodology, this article managed to gather and analyse the meaning, concept, historical background, structure and application of mediation. This article comparatively analyses family mediation practices in Australia and New Zealand. Family mediation as practised in these two countries can be a reference for the Malaysian government to learn from their experiences to establish a good and practical family mediation model in Malaysia.

Keywords: Mediation, Alternative Dispute Resolution, Family Disputes, Family Court

Abstrak: Artikel ini bertujuan untuk mempromosikan penyelesaian alternatif untuk menangani masalah atau perselisihan keluarga di Malaysia, yang dikenali sebagai mediasi. Mediasi adalah mekanisme penyelesaian alternatif yang paling sesuai untuk perselisihan keluarga, di mana objektifnya adalah untuk menjaga hubungan kekeluargaan. Isu keluarga adalah sesuatu yang sensitif, kerana ia melibatkan anak-anak dan harta hasil dari perkahwinan. Ini kerana peningkatan dari segi statistik mengenai konflik yang berlaku antara pasangan suami isteri di media sosial. Alasan untuk mengesyorkan mediasi keluarga adalah bagi mengelakkan publisiti dan perselisihan mereka diketahui umum. Perbincangan dan syarat-syarat penyelesaian pihak-pihak yang terlibat adalah sulit. Artikel ini membincangkan dan menjelaskan tentang prinsip dan proses mediasi dan bagaimana cara terbaik yang perlu diterapkan dalam penyelesaian perselisihan keluarga. Artikel ini juga menekankan perlunya keadilan perlu ditegakkan dalam menangani isu-isu keluarga. Dengan menggunakan analisis kandungan teks, artikel ini mengumpulkan dan menganalisis makna dan konsep, latar belakang dan sejarah serta struktur mediasi. Kajian ini membandingkan proses dan aplikasi mediasi keluarga di Australia dan New Zealand dengan Malaysia. Mediasi keluarga seperti yang dipraktikkan di negara-negara ini dapat menjadi rujukan bagi Malaysia bagi mewujudkan model mediasi keluarga yang praktikal di Malaysia.

Kata kunci: Mediasi, Penyelesaian Pertikaian Alternatif, Pertikaian Keluarga, Mahkamah Keluarga

Introduction

The two-year Covid19 crisis has caused numerous challenges, not just in the economy, social interaction, and politics but also in family relationships. A great, strong relationship between family members, in general, indicates love and respect between them and can help to maintain family peace (Nasrul et al., 2017). However, when the

government announced the Movement Control Order, it limited people from moving around and meeting each other, including their own families. Kamaruddin et al. (2020) stated that Malaysia is a country of people of many ethnicities, religions, and customs, all of which are used in family-related subjects. Understandably, the order was made to stop the virus from spreading but unfortunately has increased the number of disputes among the family members, to the extent that they wanted to sever and the husband-wife ties. Dissolution is often the result of conflict, which may lead to a slew of other difficulties, such as child custody, asset distribution, and all financial issues. While it is intended to be the last resort for couples, the divorce rate among Muslims and non-Muslims has been steadily growing in recent years, albeit the proportion varies significantly from one group to the next (Md Hashim et al., 2017). When there is a decrease in love and affection between the spouses, they tend to fight over even minor issues, which leads to the increasing number of divorce cases registered in court day by day. It is proven that the number of divorces in Malaysia grew by 12.0%, from 50,862 in 2018 to 56,975 in 2019 (DOSM, 2019).

Meanwhile, Australia, a country of paradox (Black, 2019), also had to face the same situation. Australia has a massive population of citizens; however, it is sad to know that relationship disputes, especially from young couples, are unpredictable, often arising, and financially disruptive in many situations (Whitbourn, 2018). Statistically, Australia had 113,815 weddings with a record of 49,116 divorces in 2019, but provisional data from January to June 2020 reveals a 31.9 per cent drop in marriages due to the COVID-19 restriction such as no wedding ceremonies, social distancing with all the standard operating procedures that need to be observed (ABS, 2020). From the data, it can be concluded that each couple wishes for a satisfying relationship filled with romantic gestures and conversations, culminating in a happy marriage. However, the never-ending conflict also may occur in reality. It is impossible to deny that disputes happen in every relationship. Although it is called a family, a small argument may lead to separation, resulting in terrible consequences.

There may be many reasons for having disagreements with one another, including child's welfare, relationship property, or any form of violence. As for New Zealand, the police investigated 118,910 cases of domestic violence in 2016. In more extreme cases, family violence

has resulted in death, with 92 Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) deaths reported between 2009 and 2015. Women were the principal victim in 98 per cent of mortality occurrences when there was a known history of abuse or mistreatment by their male partner with patterns of harmful behaviour (Family Violence Death Review Committee, 2017). Although family violence is a secret crime, occurring behind closed doors with only the victim and offender as witnesses, New Zealand is not exempted from the problem (Glazebrook, 2015). When two parties are disputing, it is understandable that they cannot even look each other in the eyes and converse pleasantly. The situation is quite stressful; therefore, no conversation is possible. The emotional and mental conditions were not conducive to making the best decisions.

After all, when conflicts exist, the court is no longer suitable for the spouse to settle it down, as it involves feeling and emotion (Ahmad & Abdul Hak, 2010), but the mediation centre should be fit. If ten years ago, the status of mediation in Malaysia was said to be not widely accepted by the people, unlike other developing countries (Norman Zakiyy Chow Jen-T'chiang, 2010), but nowadays, it can be said to be well known among the public, with many efforts done from the government to spread the awareness. For instance, it can be seen from the current practice when the government recently launched the Covid-19 Mediation Program in 2020, and it was a landmark moment for mediation (Abraham, 2021). The government specifically introduced the Mediation Centre for Covid-19 (PMC-19) to assist the public in resolving their dispute in respect of any inability to perform contractual obligations (PMC19, 2020). Instantaneously, it emphasised the importance of mediation in resolving disputes among citizens. The functions and advantages of mediation have also been continuously announced throughout the media so that people are more alert to the need for mediation to resolve disputes quickly and efficiently, being more accessible and less expensive for the parties involved in the conflict than going to court.

Therefore, this research would like to examine the current practice of family mediation in Malaysia as one of the alternative dispute resolutions while helping the court process be more efficient and effective in reducing backlog cases. In practising the best family mediation, the paper also will compare and analyse the method of other countries in handling family disputes through the mediation mechanism. As Australia and

New Zealand are well known for their efficient and excellent service in practising mediation, these two countries are referred to as benchmark countries to improve the process and procedures of mediation in Malaysia. Additionally, there is an excellent opportunity to promote the concept of mediation as the most suitable dispute settlement mechanism for family disputes, where it seeks to preserve the close relationship.

Mediation: History and Definition

Mediation is an out-of-court method of resolving disputes, acting as one of the alternative ways to solve the conflict. In recent decades, this subspecies of the broader Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) genus has gained global attention, gaining significance in legal practice and academics (Reza, 2017). Among the examples of contemporary ADR are arbitration, cooperation, negotiation, conciliation and ombudsman. The term “alternative” refers to a procedure in which disagreeing parties opt to resolve their disagreement outside of the courtroom, either voluntarily or in response to a court order (Ibrahim & Maidin, 2020).

Mediation is not a new concept; instead, it has been practised informally for so long since ancient times. In other words, mediation has been a familiar concept of dispute resolution in Asia since the older days. Surprisingly, many Eastern societies, such as the Chinese, Arabs, Indians, and Malays, have used mediation as a standard method of conflict settlement for ages (Abdul Hamid and Nik Mohammad, 2016; Ibrahim & Maidin, 2020). However, the current practice uses the modern mediation practice, which carries the influence of ADR movements and patterns from the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. There are numerous different types of ADR, but mediation appears to be the most prevalent.

The Oxford Dictionary of Law (2015) defines mediation as “a form of alternative dispute resolution in which an independent third party (mediator) assists the parties involved in dispute or negotiation to achieve a mutually acceptable resolution of the points of conflict.” In general, mediation is portrayed as the process of handling two parties in any dispute, and there is a middleman to resolve the disputes, known to be a mediator. Mediation is used to investigate the parties’ underlying interests and requirements. It works best when the disagreeing parties are ready to talk about their issues and work together to find a solution. Malaysian law recognises mediation as an alternative form of conflict

settlement under the Mediation Act 2012 [Act 749] (Ab Halim & Hambali, 2021).

Mediation is often involved in civil cases and not criminal matters such as financial disputes, landlord and tenant disputes, and company management. For this paper, the focus shall be on family disputes, be it arising from children, the divorce process, or other matters. Coleman et al. (2015) supported it when they identified that mediation might occur in various settings, including family mediation, higher education mediation, organisational mediation, labour mediation, community mediation, international mediation, and laboratory simulations. Negotiation is becoming an essential strategy for resolving conflicts within the family setting, as the essence of many family disagreements is self-assertion and compromise. As a result, as one of the most effective negotiating methods, mediation has much potential for resolving family conflicts (Ibrahim & Abdul Hak, 2017).

It is noted that mediation may be used in many sectors (Ambaras Khan & Abdul Hak, 2014), but when it comes to family conflicts, the third party should be an expert in family affairs, whether it is all about the interaction between husband and wife, children, parents, or any other issue that arises from the family conflict. Therefore, the problem may be resolved quickly, and disputing parties may be reconciled or separated in a good way. Mediation will result in a more organised and structured development of the civil justice system. Mediation will become more prominent as a means of progress (Abdul Hamid and Nik Mohammad, 2016).

The Enactment of the Mediation Act 2012 in Malaysia

The Malaysian Mediation Act 2012 (MMA 2012) was passed in the House of Representatives on 2 April 2012 and in the House of Senate on 7 May 2012. The royal assent was given on 18 June 2012, gazetted on 22 June 2012 and came into force on 1 August 2012. The long title is an Act to promote and encourage mediation as a method of ADR by providing for the mediation process, thereby facilitating the parties in disputes to settle disputes in a fair, speedy and cost-effective manner and to provide for related matters. There are a total of 20 sections and one schedule in this Act. There are seven parts: preliminary, the commencement of mediation, mediator, mediation process, the conclusion of mediation, confidentiality and privilege, and miscellaneous.

Section 3 of the MMA 2012 states that mediation is “a voluntary process in which a mediator facilitates communication and negotiation between parties to assist the parties in reaching an agreement regarding a dispute.” As mentioned in section 9, a mediator is responsible for facilitating mediation and determining how it will be done. A mediator can help the parties achieve an acceptable resolution of their disagreement and provide ideas for resolving it. The mediator must operate freely and impartially to accomplish these goals (Halsbury).

Interestingly, Malaysia chooses not to follow the other commonwealth countries such as Australia and New Zealand but instead takes a different approach for the government to legislate a statute on mediation. The fact that mediation falls within the ambit of ADR, it should be a flexible and not rigid process as it is based on the voluntariness of the disputing parties to refer their disputes to mediation, as compared to litigation. The Act can impose unnecessary limits on the mediation process, which contradicts the primary purpose of having alternative dispute resolution. Nevertheless, the Malaysian government believes that the Act was created and essential to raise awareness and keep up with global trends, as well as to offer a predictable legal framework, address the question of legitimacy, and promote Malaysia as an international conflict resolution hub (Lee, 2012). Furthermore, the application of mediation under this Act shall not prevent the commencement of any civil action in court or arbitration, nor shall it act as a stay of, or extension of any proceedings, if the proceedings have been commenced, as mentioned in section 4(2). This is very important to emphasise that it only acted as ADR but not for replacement of the court proceeding. Even the case of *Menaka Deivarayan v Pentadbir Tanah Daerah Bagan Datuk, Perak & Ors* [2021] 1 CLJ 577 noted that courts at all levels encourage parties to try to resolve issues through other mechanisms like mediation, with litigation being used only as a last option. In other words, mediation should be enforced and applied first in handling disputes.

Furthermore, the Act may protect a mediator’s liability by stating that a mediator shall not be liable for any act or omission in respect of anything done or omitted to be done in the discharge of his functions as a mediator unless the Act or omission is proven to be fraudulent or involves willful misconduct. These are some of the benefits of implementing the Act; it ensures that contesting parties cannot act as they like when a judgement is not made on their behalf.

Although this Act is a good move for the mediation process in Malaysia, flaws and shortcomings are inevitable. Until the present, no specific restrictions have been enforced by the Minister. The available mediation regulations are created by the Mediation Centre itself, such as the Malaysian Mediation Centre of the Bar Council, and the Putrajaya Community Mediation Centre created its own set of rules (Ab Halim & Hambali, 2021).

The Australian Legal Perspective

It is agreed that the state has a role in enacting family law in supporting relationships, creating conditions in which people can exercise their autonomy in relationships and protecting those who are disadvantaged or harmed as a result of relationships (Herring, 2014). Therefore, in governing the family matter, the Australian government enacted the Family Law Act 1975 (FLA 1975) to ensure that all families are governed by the same the legal system in administrating disputes. The passing of this national law abolished all previous laws from the ancient period in Australia. The relevant section can be seen in section 48(1), which states that the sole ground for divorce under the FLA 1975 is that the marriage has irretrievably broken down. However, a counselling requirement exists for parties who seek divorce within the first two years of marriage. This is because section 44(1B) of the Act emphasises that a divorce application cannot be filed within two years unless a prescribed counselling certificate accompanies the application.

Moving forward, in 2006, the Australian government introduced a series of changes to the family law system, which may bring generational change in family law and a cultural shift in the management of parental separation, away from litigation and towards cooperative parenting (Kaspiew et al., 2009). These included changes to the FLA 1975 and the family relationship services system. The 2006 reforms addressed such concerns by allowing for parenting orders to be granted in favour of non-parents and applications to be filed by anyone “concerned with the care, welfare, or development of the child” as stated under sections 64 B(2) and 65(C) of the Act (Black, 2019). The system also changed to include a number of 65 Family Relationship Centres (FRCs) around Australia, the Family Relationship Advice Line (FRAL) and Family Relationships Online (FRO), financing for new relationship services, and extra money for current relationship services. The 2006 family

law amendments had a beneficial impact, particularly in providing for children's voices in cases involving them since it will positively influence results for children and their parents. Also, the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006 codified the concept of shared parenting in Australia, updating the Family Law Act 1975. The new Act encourages separated parents to get involved and play a significant role in their child's life, with parents collaborating and agreeing on parenting arrangements outside of the judicial system to protect the child's welfare (Ali et al., 2017).

The New Zealand Legal Perspective

In the 1980s, New Zealand's substance and method for resolving family conflicts underwent significant changes. Previously, no particular legislation governing family matters, but numerous legislations have been established specifically to address concerns related to family law. Therefore, Kate (2018) agreed that New Zealand is entitled to clear, definite, and fit-for-purpose legislation, given the growing complexity of social and familial connections. The Family Proceedings Act 1980, among others, altered the whole approach to a family dispute with its emphasis on counselling, conciliation, and mediation (Henaghan et al., 2011) to promote the resolution of as many issues as possible by the parties themselves with the assistance of the third party.

The Practice of Family Mediation

Generally, family is defined as a set of relations where all persons are related by blood or marriage. Whether the person acted as the parent or a child to a spouse, all of them constituted family members and fundamental units in every society. Family ties are still solid in Malaysian society, and as such, when matrimonial disputes arise and marriages are on tenterhooks, parties often seek assistance from family members to save the marriage.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, a family consists of one or two parents, their children and close relations. A family is a long-term, exclusive connection in which individuals identified as related to one another, generally by lineage, marriage, or adoption, with emotionally and financially devoted to one another. The fundamental rights of a man and a woman to marry and start a family underpin the existence of family law, which may be found under Article 12 of the Malaysian

Federal Constitution, ensuring that such a right exists. In *Hyde v Hyde (1866) LR P&D 130*, the judge defined marriage as a voluntary union between a man and a woman for life to exclude all others. It consists of the formalities required to establish the relationship between a husband and a wife and the need for each party to have the legal capacity to marry.

It is not unusual for people of various origins, religious beliefs, or political allegiances to have significant misunderstandings and disagreements. However, in a strong connection such as a family, this issue cannot go unnoticed. According to Woods (2019), family disputes can be a type of mediated negotiation in which the parties directly negotiate with one another. By engaging directly with the parties, a neutral third-party mediator supervises and facilitates the mediation. Family mediation allows the parties to “exchange their perspectives in a safe environment.” In addition, Senija Ledic (2018) also noted that mediation by a third party has the potential to prevent or at least mitigate the negative consequences of parental conflict, particularly in terms of the children-parent relationship and the mutual relationship between the parents, as indivisible emotions and permanence mark these relationships.

Unlike other types of mediation, family mediation is essential since everyone in this world is likely to have a family, which later may be entangled with any form of dispute. Since a court is not an appropriate venue to address hurt and sensitive feelings, family mediation has become a more popular alternative (Ahmad & Abdul Hak, 2010). Md Hashim et al. (2017) agreed that when there is family conflict, there is a need for someone capable of coping with emotional stress and delicate interpersonal issues.

How far does Malaysian practice it?

In general, it is acknowledged by all that families in Malaysia abide by the law that is needed to regulate any arising matter that influences the family in general. Relating to issues on responsibility and rights, a few relevant Acts are referred which include the Law Reform (Marriage & Divorce) Act 1976 (LRA 1976), that is enacted particularly for non-Muslims in Malaysia, relating to civil marriage and matters incidental thereto, besides the Guardianship of Infants Act 1961, Child Act 2001, Married Women Act 1957, and some other relevant Acts too. Under

the LRA 1976, all marriages, other than Muslim and native customary marriages, may only be dissolved by the provisions under the LRA 1976. Referring to section 106 of the LRA 1976, the parties must go through the reconciliation process before any divorce petition is heard by the court (Ahmad & Abdul Hak, 2010), reflecting the mediation process's importance. Meanwhile, for Muslims, Part V of the Islamic Family Law (Federal Territory) Act 1984 has provided a few sections relating to the dissolution of marriage either through *khuluq*, *talaq* or *ta'liq*. These are the three types of divorce in Islam which are highlighted in the said Act.

Surprisingly, during the Covid-19 period, a huge number of divorce cases were reported. For instance, the Johor Islamic Religious Council (JAIJ) reported 2,625 divorces in the first six months of the movement control order (The Star, 2020). In 2019, according to Chief Statistician from the Marriage and Divorce, Department of Statistics, Malaysia, 45,502 Muslim divorces were registered, up 13.0% over the previous year's figure of 40,269 divorces (2018). Similarly, the number of non-Muslim divorces by 8.3%, from 10,593 in 2018 to 11,473 in 2019 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). The evidence indicates that family feuds do exist. If one partner believes that spending all their time together would lead to a happy relationship, this has not been the case for the others. Therefore, a third party or mediator is usually required to ensure their marriage does not end in separation. Their desire to maintain the connection and the mediator's expertise may aid in effectively resolving such conflicts.

The current scenario in Malaysia demonstrates that mediation is used in various situations since Malaysians are fairly adapting to it. In 1999, the Bar Council established the Malaysian Mediation Centre (MMC) to encourage Malaysians to settle disputes through mediation, including family disputes. When parties cannot designate a Mediator, MMC has allocated some conflicts to its qualified mediators. Family disputes, contractual disputes, construction disputes, and medical malpractice are among the disputes that the MMC mediates (Kamaruddin & Shawkat, 2021). Other organisations that provide mediation services include the Asian International Arbitration Centre (AIAC), the Malaysian Association of Architects, the Legal Aid Department and the civil courts.

In Malaysia, all marriages must be registered for them to be considered valid. This is provided by the Law Reform (Marriage and

Divorce) Act 1976 for non-Muslims and the respected Syariah state laws for Muslims. It is acknowledged that marriage is a sacred one, and even considered as the most elongated type of *ibadah* in the religion of Islam, but when there are factors that can disrupt the marriage, such as poor communication, financial problems, lack of commitment towards the wedding, or up to physical and mental abuse, divorce will take place. This is where the role of the mediator comes into play, to see whether both parties can resolve their differences peacefully without having to split and go through a divorce procedure in court. It is understood that not all cases are suitable to be solved through mediation, but for ongoing relationships, it is the most appropriate dispute resolution process in family disputes because its concern is to preserve the connection from being destroyed or at least to control the damage which the consequence of adversarial proceedings is inevitable. Ibrahim & Abdul Hak (2017) highlighted that the agreement between spouses is becoming quite prevalent in marital property issues. The parties may achieve an agreement or settlement through the mediation procedure. Mediation empowers the parties to decide on a fair and just solution to their marital property issues. With their abilities and expertise, the mediator will help the parties to reach the best possible settlement for both sides.

Mediation is a process that has many advantages. A mediated agreement can incorporate interests and outcomes beyond the strictly legal and be broader than a court-imposed solution. Therefore, it sits more comfortably outside than within the court process. Ideally, mediation is explained as a structured form of negotiation (Ibrahim & Maidin, 2020). Acted as a mediator, he should clarify that he is neither a judge nor an arbitrator but rather a neutral person who will help the parties to find a mutually acceptable resolution to their dispute (Goldberg et al., 2017). An experienced mediator will know by heart to balance the ideal and the reality that is taking place (Ibrahim & Maidin, 2020). Therefore, before going to the court proceeding, a third party must understand what underlies the disputes between them.

The current research has suggested proposing that mediation be conducted online, as it suits the digital era. With the present advancement of technology, it is proposed that online family mediation be used, considering the scenario when the parties are unable to meet face to face. Kamaruddin et al. (2020) stated that many other countries have applied the online method to solve family disputes, following the

current trend. It is a good approach for mediation to keep practising so that the postponement may be avoided and the matter of the dispute shall be resolved quickly. In this internet age, it is acknowledged that an online conflict resolution system would bridge the gap between family law specialists and disputants in Malaysia (Kamaruddin et al., 2020)

With the emergence of technology, mediation may be upgraded to conduct through online mechanisms. Besides having a normal mediation process, the online mechanism can enhance the procedure to be efficient and speedier. After all, Ahmad and Abdul Hak (2010) underlined that mediation functions significantly better in Syariah Courts than in Civil Courts. Thus, Md Hashim et al. (2017) suggested that there is no need for non-Muslim and Muslims to have separate family dispute mediators since the abilities required to manage family disputes are similar regardless of the couple's religion. The government might consider combining resources and referring discorded couples to any qualified reconciliation committee. It is supported by Ab Halim and Hambali (2021). They recommended that sulh regulating laws be harmonised and that the Mediation Act 2012 be used as a reference to handle various forms of such procedures to improve practicability.

Family Dispute Resolution in Australia

Since families have always been regarded as the foundation of society, separated parents may seek assistance from various sources, including legal representation, family court proceedings, family therapy, and family mediation (Morris et al., 2018), to keep their relationship from deteriorating. Unless there is a history of the spouse or child abuse, parents in a parenting dispute must seek mediation before proceeding to court (Morris & Halford, 2014). Most of the time, individuals do not go to legal court proceeding to settle family problems. However, mediation has the power and flexibility to respond to the relational complexity of family lives while also supporting the parties and children's autonomy (Armstrong, 2015). Taylor (2019) concluded that to have a constructive conversation in family mediation, parties are frequently obliged to communicate their feelings and emotions towards the other party, even when the subject is delicate, such as an affair.

At first, structured mediation was created to resolve civil and economic disputes rather than divorce and family disputes that concentrate on adults' problems (Parkinson, 2019). However, some

researchers have identified that family dispute resolution (FDR) produces better settlements than a legal method (Cleak, 2018; South West Sydney Legal Centre, 2010). FDR, or used interchangeably with the term 'family mediation' in Australia (Armstrong, 2015), requires the parties who could not agree on a post-separation parenting arrangement to attend the session. Through family mediation, Morris et al. (2018) believe that a professional mediator aids divorced parents in reaching an amicable co-parenting agreement. It has been defined under section 10F of FLA 1975 as a process for an independent FDR practitioner to help the person affected by the separation to resolve their disputes.

In Australia, one parent usually initiates mediation and attends an individual intake interview and assessment. The second parent is invited to participate in the mediation by the mediator and on an agreement to participate, attends an individual intake interview with the mediator. The intake interviews are an opportunity for each parent to independently describe their concerns about the co-parenting arrangement to the mediator and identify the areas of dispute between the parents (Morris et al., 2018). At the end of the session, the parties shall be given a certificate of attendance (Taylor, 2019) as proof of completing the session before they can proceed to the family court proceeding if needed.

Armstrong (2015) believed that it was necessary, particularly for people of minority cultures and faith backgrounds, to have a proper understanding of the needs of separated families, including children, so that mechanisms could be established to make it easier for parents to access family mediation for their children's best interests. In achieving that, some other organisations also help in preserving the family relationship. For instance, the Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators Australia (IAMA) is a national professional group that promotes and supports the settlement of disputes via arbitration, mediation, and other types of ADR. Second, the Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) is concerned with learning about real-life circumstances via Australian family research. The National Alternative Dispute Resolution Advisory Council (NADRAC) has also attempted to establish a uniform set of terms for dispute resolution in Australia, provided expert policy advice to the Attorney-General on the development of ADR, and promoted the use of interdisciplinary dispute resolution. Furthermore, with the current situation, in conjunction with Western Sydney Community Legal Centre and MacArthur Legal Centre, the relationship with Uniting Counselling

and Mediation has been expanded to provide legally supported mediation remotely through online video to its Parramatta and Sydney customers (South West Sydney Legal Centre, 2020).

The purpose of encouraging parties to make a serious effort to settle their parenting problems through mediation is understandable; it is meant to demonstrate the seriousness with which the state regards the need to seek FDR and urge parties to achieve agreement. Even parties' responses to the emotional stresses of family dispute resolution are subjective and personal, but the introduction of mandatory mediation has been made to improve the family law system, as in section 60I(7) of the Family Law Act, which states that a court cannot hear an application for a parenting order unless a certificate accompanies it from an FDR practitioner.

New Zealand Approach to Family Mediation

In New Zealand, the FDR is a compulsory mediation service that further assists disputing parties in reaching an agreement with the children's other parent or guardian, except in urgent cases such as where family violence is involved. This is because each member of the family may experience the trauma of family violence both collectively and personally. If the trauma is not addressed, it is inherited by the descendants of those who witnessed it (Family Violence Death Review Committee, 2017). The unbiased mediator should facilitate the meetings, assisting them in identifying difficulties and ensuring that each participant has an opportunity to present their viewpoint. The mediator will assist in focusing on what is best for the children, but they will not be forced to agree to anything (Ministry of Justice, 2021).

The suggestions made by the Family Law Section of the Law Society of New Zealand are very practical, especially on matters related to mediation. In the researchers' opinion, mediation should not be within the court process as it is a non-compulsory dispute settlement mechanism. Since the New Zealand community consists of Maori, Pacific, Pakeha and other groups, some policies and rules have been made in different language to make the family court aborigines friendly.

During mediation, the mediator will assist the parties in resolving the disagreement by identifying the problems at issue and the interests of each party involved, particularly the interests of the children, which

are typically viewed as the most important. It may still be feasible to achieve a short-term deal or settle some concerns if an agreement is not reached. Following the mediation, a report to the court should be submitted as soon as feasible (Counsel-Led Mediation, 2011). Most of the time, mediation practice shows a high rate of successful cases. The ‘counsel-led’ mediation is much better than ‘judge-led’ mediation because lawyers are well-trained in mediation, whereas the judges, on the other hand, are trained to make decisions. After all, mediation is the best resort because only parties will make their own decisions, not the third party or stranger.

Does Family Court help?

Malaysia is a multi-cultural federation with a Muslim majority and a Westminster-style constitution. The country’s justice system reflects its pluralistic and diverse society (Nawi, 2011). Generally, if a spouse is unable to reach an agreement, a court of law will be approached. This is particularly frequent in divorce situations if both parties cannot agree on the terms and conditions of the divorce. Custody fights may be psychologically and financially draining if a child is involved. Therefore, while so many family difficulties occurred, such as divorce and other related concerns, it has highlighted the necessity for the family court to be established. Historically, many countries lacked a specialised family court that dealt with matters pertaining to the institution of the family. However, the necessity for a family court became apparent as other courts grew overburdened with family law issues.

Family Court Division in Malaysia

In Malaysia, Practice Direction No. 10 of 2010 was issued to encourage attorneys and judges to participate in civil court mediation. The Kuala Lumpur Family Court has been following the Judiciary’s “Guidelines for Family Law Practice” since September 2011. Mediation in marital cases was done by the parties voluntarily under these guidelines (Ibrahim & Abdul Hak, 2017).

The proactive case management and close monitoring by the Family Court have successfully cleared the backlog with 2650 cases registered from 1 January 2012 to 31 December 2012 (Malaysian Judiciary Yearbook, 2012). Then, Practice Direction No. 4 of 2016 (Mediation Practice Direction) was issued in 2016. Effective from 15 July 2016,

all judges of the High Court and their Deputy Registrars, as well as all judges of the Sessions Court and Magistrates and their Assistant Registrars, may issue pre-trial case management orders directing the parties to facilitate the settlement of the matter before the court through mediation (Ibrahim & Abdul Hak, 2017).

However, some cases are not suitable to be tried in the family court, such as *Shobana a/p Perumal v Ganesh a/l Guna* [2016] MLJU 1108, where the judge held that the family court is not the appropriate forum for a civil matter since it is not empowered to go beyond the LRA 1976. As a result, the legal status of the property must be decided by the civil court. Also, in *Mark Sia Eng Joo (L) v Ong Wei Wei (P) (Lim Poh Tin (P), joint respondent) (Sai Yee @ Sia Say Yee & Ors, interveners)* [2020] 9 MLJ, it was mentioned that the family court did not have the jurisdiction under the LRA to grant the interveners the declarations they sought under section 41 of the Specific Relief Act 1950 as it was a civil matter that did not pertain to the matrimonial proceeding before the court. It was intended to establish third-party ownership right over assets not yet determined as marital assets in this court. In such circumstances, it was a civil proceeding within the domain of the civil court as opposed to a matrimonial matter before the family court.

The features of a family court are proposed by Che Soh (2013) that it must be a specialised court with specialised and trained officers, it must promote less adversarial trial, it encourages harmonious effective dispute resolution through mediation, it must be equipped with a counselling unit and also collaborates with social and welfare organisations and shall be consistent with the existing models as practised in other jurisdictions. It is high time for Malaysia to have its family court within the judicial system.

In addition, according to the Chief Registrar of the Syariah Court of Federal Territories, the current status of Syariah Court is also to have a Family division focusing on *hadhanah* and child support. Since the proposals do not require any legislative changes and can be implemented administratively, they were approved at the Cabinet Ministers Meeting on 8 May 2019. A working visit to the Family Court of Australia (FCA) was done to improve knowledge of the family law process, learn about the child support system, and identify best practices in dealing with

family matters (Abdul Hak et al., 2020). It is hoped that the ideas can be materialised soon.

Family Court in Australia

It is noted that Family Court had been established under FLA 1975 to execute exclusive jurisdiction in handling matrimonial cases. As experts in child and family dynamics, the court's report writers are the most common source of expert evidence for parenting orders in family courts. According to section 62G of the Family Law Act 1975, these report writers are family consultants, not cultural experts per se, who are appointed by the family court to provide an assessment of the main issues concerning the child and parents for the first court hearing after which the judge may seek a more detailed family report. When the kid is indigenous or from an ethnic or religious minority, cultural expertise is added to their responsibility (Black, 2019). Under section 60CA, the "best interests of the child" criteria are used by the family courts to resolve disputes between parents. This idea was incorporated into Australian law by the Family Law Reform Act 1995, which was based on the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child. Following the paramount consideration in section 43C, the court must decide "in light of the unique facts and circumstances of the case," not "from the standpoint of the standards of certain parents or one sector of society" to establish what is in the best interests of the child (Harland et al., 2015).

In terms of shared parenting, Ali et al. (2017) discussed that if the court finds domestic violence or child abuse happened, the presumption of shared parenting may be rebutted since the child's welfare cannot be protected. In other circumstances, the courts will not provide shared parenting and instead award sole custody to the parent who the court feels is most equipped to obtain custody. Although shared parenting looks to be the best choice, courts will not hesitate to refuse it if it does not benefit the child; the court's primary concern is that the child's interests are appropriately protected.

The family court does not resolve all parental disputes. For the Muslim community in Australia, Black (2019) clarified that they would choose an Imam or a community-based tribunal of Muslim clerics to resolve conflicts based on Islamic principles, evading the Australian legal system. Some disputes, however, are so challenging to decide that they end up in court. When making parenting orders, the courts will

not apply Sharia law but will consider the parties' culture, religion, and customs as a factor to consider.

According to Kamaruddin et al. (2020), Australia has also employed online platforms to handle and resolve family issues. CoupleCARE, for example, is an online platform established in Australia. Couples are provided with a relationship education curriculum through this intervention programme, either through cassettes or guidebooks on themes about relationship development. Interestingly, Australia has traditionally used Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) to speed up divorce processes between divorced couples. During the divorce process, ODR techniques have been widely employed as a negotiating aid. Family Winner, Smartsettle, AdjustedWinner, and Split-Up are examples of online negotiation programmes used in Australia (Evered et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, the latest update reported by the news that the judge in charge of monitoring Australia's new family law system recently warned of a compliance crackdown in ex-partner disputes and promised to reduce the time it takes to deal with parents who disobey court orders. The federal government's long-held intention to merge the Family Court with the lower-level Federal Circuit Court, which also handles family law cases, has been realised. The new Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia will begin in September 2021 (Whitbourn, 2021).

Family Court in New Zealand

The contemplation of marital breakup is a serious matter as it leads to doubt, stress, sadness, mixed feelings, and confusion which hinder the parties from decision-making. When the parties are constantly involved in the argument, and there is often a long history between them, indicating that the conflict is firmly established, the court process shall be the best solution. Before applying to the family court for assistance in making choices regarding their children's care, the parties must generally complete the Parenting Through Separation course and attend mediation. If they still cannot consider these options, they can petition the family court to decide for them. A family court may process additional complexities such as a history of domestic violence, alcohol and drug addiction, power and control concerns, and, most significantly, parties who are still minors, such as the children and parents (Powell, 2013).

Section 4 of Family Court Acts 1980 states that the family courts were established as divisions of the District Courts. It was established in 1981 and is a separate court with 42 specialised judges. The Family Courts Act 1980 created a new division of District Court with its atmosphere, specialised services, specialist personnel and specialist judges to deal with family cases (Henaghan et al., 2011). However, due to the Covid 19 pandemic alert Level 1, starting from 6 October 2020, the Chief District Court Judge has decided that all family court cases scheduled would be handled by the District Court. The family court deals with various concerns, from making orders for unborn infants to older persons who require care and protection. Separated parents can seek assistance outside of the court system to help them agree on how to care for their children. If they are unable to reach an agreement, they may seek help from the family court. The courtroom is often set up differently so that participants can speak more freely. The atmosphere is pleasant and conducive to discussion and communication.

Family court judges have been selected based on their experience, personal suitability, and commitment to conciliation, mediation, and non-adversary resolution of family disputes (Henaghan et al., 2011). The Family Court Act 1980 further strengthened a new form of justice by the enactment in 1989 of the Children, Young Persons, and Their Families Act which had the Family Group Conference at its heart. The Family Court's primary legislation has been frequently amended, requiring constant changes in practice and approach. According to the speech made by Chief Justice (2021), the Family Court has had to cope with registry reorganisations that have only worsened rather than solved existing issues. The digitalisation that the court needs to carry out its supervisory obligations concerning minors subject to care and protection orders and to advance its total workload has yet to materialise. The courtroom is still littered with tons of boxes of paper. The Chief Justice still congratulates all parties that give help to families at times of crisis and acknowledges that the court was quickly viewed as a success, with the result that it was given broader jurisdiction, including the relationship property jurisdiction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Family disputes are very common in society, particularly one involving child or property. Thus, relevant laws should be introduced to allow the

application of family mediation in Malaysia. In western countries, family mediation is a common intervention used to help separated families establish parenting arrangements. A standard regulation should be developed to govern the practice of family mediation. Family mediation should be performed by appropriately certified and experienced mediators, necessitating mediation training. As it is agreed that the preceding court cases demonstrate that the court's decision in marital property distribution is not always to the parties' satisfaction. Hence, mediation should be made available to the parties to reach an amicable agreement. The functions and advantages of mediation have also been continuously announced throughout the media so that people are more alert to the need for mediation to resolve disputes quickly and efficiently, being more accessible and less expensive for the parties involved in the conflict than going to court. Malaysia may try to observe how China had advanced when they decided to boom into reality television by launching many mediation shows, which have gained widespread and intense ratings, with 38 local channels broadcasting mediation shows of 30 minutes to increase awareness of mediation (Zhang & Chen, 2017).

Compared to Australia and New Zealand, Malaysia should also establish a competent family mediation system through government-backed agencies or non-governmental organisations that can cater to married couples in Malaysia and ensure a more extensive public reach. As a result, the present endeavour to offer mediation skills to the disputed family member should be activated to train the individuals with the skills needed to maintain their relationship even after the divorce. In doing so, it seeks to contribute to the development of good practice in resolving family disputes which will be of interest to policymakers, researchers, trainers, and practitioners in the field of family mediation, as well as to a broad range of family law professionals working with families from diverse backgrounds.

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Understanding Factors Influencing Crime Prevention Information on Social Media

Nurzali Ismail*

Shuhaida Md Noor**

Jamilah Ahmad***

Mohamad Hafifi Jamri****

Abstract: Despite increasing attention on social media and policing research in recent years, not many that focused specifically on source factors of message design and their perceived impact on crime prevention information. This present study aimed to address the gap, by investigating public perception towards crime prevention information posted by the authority on social media. A survey was carried out involving 400 active Malaysian users of social media in the age range of 18-34. The findings revealed that, interest in crime prevention information on social media was primarily motivated by information seeking and sharing. Videos, written texts and infographics were found to be the most preferred social media content. The public in general, perceived the authority's crime prevention information on social media positively. Out of the three different factors tested, credibility was found to be the significant predictor that can influence public's perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media. It was also found that, public perception can influence behavior intention to access and share crime prevention information on social media.

* Lecturer, School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).
Email: nurzali@usm.my

** Associate Professor, School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). Email: shuhaida@usm.my

*** Professor, School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).
Email: jahmad@usm.my

**** Senior Lecturer, School of Communication and Media, College of Computing, Informatics and Media, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Melaka. Email: hafifjamri@uitm.edu.my

Keywords: Social media, crime prevention, policing, message design, persuasion

Abstrak: Walaupun terdapat peningkatan perhatian terhadap kajian media sosial dan kepolisian, tidak banyak yang memfokuskan kepada faktor sumber rekabentuk mesej dan impaknya kepada informasi pencegahan jenayah. Justeru, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menangani jurang sedia ada dengan meneliti persepsi publik mengenai informasi pencegahan jenayah yang dikongsikan oleh pihak berkuasa menerusi laman media sosial. Satu kaji selidik telah dijalankan dengan melibatkan seramai 400 orang pengguna aktif media sosial yang berumur dalam lingkungan 18-34 tahun. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan minat terhadap maklumat pencegahan jenayah dalam media sosial dimotivasikan oleh fungsi mencari dan berkongsi maklumat. Video, teks bertulis dan infografik adalah merupakan pengisian media sosial yang paling digemari. Persepsi awam terhadap informasi pencegahan jenayah yang dikongsikan pihak berkuasa menerusi media sosial adalah positif. Daripada tiga faktor utama yang diteliti, kredibiliti adalah merupakan faktor paling signifikan yang dapat mempengaruhi persepsi awam terhadap impak informasi pencegahan jenayah dalam media sosial. Kajian ini juga mendapati persepsi awam dapat mempengaruhi niat tingkah laku untuk mengakses dan berkongsi informasi pencegahan jenayah dalam media sosial.

Kata kunci: Media sosial, pencegahan jenayah, kepolisian, rekabentuk mesej, pemujukan

Introduction

In recent times, social media has been widely used for crime prevention, still, its effectiveness remains unclear (Beshears, 2016; Fernandez, Dickinson & Alani, 2017). For instance, in Malaysia, the authority has adopted social media mainly to share public safety information, and as a mean for community engagement (Isa, 2015; Sinar, 2015). However, according to Ahmad and Ismail (2016), youth's perception towards the usage of social media for crime prevention in Malaysia was only moderate. This raises an important question; how effective is the authority's use of social media for crime prevention?

Today, social media is used to serve different functions, including for information seeking and sharing, communication, education and entertainment (Ismail, 2014; Ismail, 2020). Social media multifaceted

usage has made it ubiquitous in public's daily routine, thus, making it one of the best mediums to reach them. Recognising the high penetration rate of social media, particularly among the younger generation, police authorities worldwide are increasingly incorporating social media in communicating crime prevention information (SAS, 2015; Ahmad & Ismail, 2016).

Malaysians are among the highest users of social media in the Southeast Asia region (Bernama, 2019; Murugiah, 2020). According to the recent statistics, social media penetration in the country was over 80% (Kemp, 2020). This was influenced by a steady increase in internet penetration and mobile connection in Malaysia (Kemp, 2020). In 2020, it was reported that the internet penetration rate in the country was at 83%, while mobile connection recorded a staggering 127% of the population (Kemp, 2020). Although such high penetration rate offers wider reach, it also suggests greater user sophistication and expectation, due to increased exposure and experience in using the internet.

In the Malaysian context, social media can be effectively utilised to encourage public's participation in civic engagement activities, as well as, to build trust towards government institutions including the police force. This can take place through sharing of news, images, videos and links of social related issues (Warren, Sulaiman & Jaafar, 2014), which in a way, help to enhance community participation in policing practices (Sulaiman et al., 2014).

Similar to elsewhere, the Malaysian authority also embraces new technologies and has started utilising social media since the last decade. As of 2022, Facebook continued to be the main social media platform used by the Royal Malaysian Police (RMP), with over 2.5 million followers. The RMP's Instagram account generated 480,000 followers, while on Twitter it had 181,500 followers. According to Salleh, Ekhwan and Salman (2019), the police force also uses WhatsApp messaging application to build relationship, promote interaction between police and the community and to combat crime.

Even though there has been increasing interest in studying crime prevention on social media, there has not been much emphasis on the message design aspects (Beshears, 2016; Fernandez et al., 2017). This gap has to be addressed to understand the characteristics that can help to make crime prevention information on social media more impactful.

Hence, in this study we first investigated the purpose for accessing crime prevention information on social media and preference of the types of content. Next, we examined public perception on the design of crime prevention information on social media. We also analysed the impact of crime prevention information based on the three factors which were, credibility, argument quality and attractiveness. Last, the study predicted users' behavioural intention based on the perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media.

Social media for crime prevention

According to Hu and Lovrich (2019), police authority continues to experience difficulty in communicating with the public. The strategic usage of the social media has been suggested as one of the ways to facilitate the police in communicating with the public (Ruddell & Jones, 2013; Williams et al., 2018; Salleh et al., 2019). The police authority is increasingly using social media to share information related to crime, accident, criminal incidents and for community engagement (Boateng & Chenane, 2020). It not only helps them to improve communication with the public (Beshears, 2017) and promote public safety (Hu, Rodgers & Lovrich, 2018), but also allows gathering of security intelligence information (Fallik, Deuchar, Crichlow & Hodges, 2020).

However, effective social media usage for policing is not as easy as it seems. For instance, Crump (2012) reported that the police in the United Kingdom (UK) have been utilising the social media since 2008 to tap on to its potential to engage with the public. Yet, this proved to be difficult, due to the conservative police culture that hindered effective communication with the targeted public on social media (Crump, 2012). Based on past studies, it was argued that, advancement in new technologies have not significantly contributed to improved policing practices (Chan, 2003, Manning, 2008). According to Bullock (2018), utilising social media for policing is difficult due to lack of leadership and strategic guidance. A mismatch between the police culture and the social media culture also proves to be a barrier of effective usage of social media for policing (Dekker, Brink & Meijer, 2020).

While social media has without doubt redefines the way how police communicate with the public, it presents great challenges, including those that are related to police own integrity, reputation and effectiveness (Goldsmith, 2015). Police own reputation is at stake due to the high

visibility that is shown to the public on social media (Dekker et al., 2020). This, can negatively affect public perception towards the police. In addition, every communication form that police has on its social media account, is subjected to open records requests, investigation and litigation (Cruz, 2020).

Social media for policing has been both good and bad. The new media era has changed policing practices, as it provides opportunity for the police to construct its own narratives and to demonstrate to the public what it wishes, in a manner that has never happened before (Schneider, 2016). But this is not always a good thing, as there were occurrences in the past when the police wrongly presented itself to the public and had their social media policing strategy backfired (Ross, 2016).

In some instances, social media have failed to improve communication between the police authority and the public as how it is expected to do. This is contributed by the structural and cultural barriers experienced by both the police and the public such as, lack of technological infrastructure, digital inequalities, and ineffective technology mediated communication (Dekker et al., 2020).

Beyond adoption of social media, it is necessary for the authority to transform its organisational values and practices to ensure that the use of new technologies can be optimised for crime prevention purposes (Bullock, 2018). For instance, there are several strategies that the police can adopt with regard to their usage of social media, including the push strategy, a combination of push and pull strategy and the networking strategy (Meijer & Thaens, 2013). Since each of these strategies serve different purposes, it is important for the police to decide on its social media objectives before choosing the appropriate strategy. In addition, improved perception towards the police and increased engagement with the public on social media can be achieved through two-way asynchronous and synchronous interpersonal communication (Beshears, Beshears & Bond, 2019).

One of the most important criteria of sound social media usage for policing is to have a strategic plan that takes into consideration the message design aspects (Ruddell & Jones, 2013). Effective crime prevention information on social media should take into account demographic characteristics such as age, gender and education level (Ruddell & Jones, 2013). According to Tiry, Oglesby-Neal and Kim

(2019), police should also adopt a well-defined social media plan for crime prevention that is goal-oriented, with a proper weekly schedule, and uses a variety of media elements including images and video footages.

While social media for policing covers a wide range of themes such as communication and community relations, this study was carried out mainly on crime prevention. Specifically, our interest was on how the public perceived the authority's crime prevention information on social media.

Evaluating the impact of crime prevention information on social media

In general, public acknowledges the important roles of social media for crime prevention (Israni, Erete & Smith, 2017). This, despite public concerns particularly pertaining to issues of privacy, social norms which relate to the way how people use the technology and misuse of information (Israni, et al., 2017). One of the main reasons why police authority continues to utilise social media is due to its unlimited potential to engage the public, particularly youth (Wright-Myrie et al., 2016).

However, information overload requires content creators to craft social media messages that stand out from the crowd, and more crucially, to be able to influence behavioural engagement (Ashley & Tuten, 2014; Coursaris, Osch & Balogh, 2016; Tafesse & Wien, 2018). In relation to crime prevention, putting emphasis on the message design aspect can help to ensure that, the information gets the necessary attention from the public, and more importantly, achieve the intended objectives.

There are several factors that should be taken into consideration to ensure effective social media message design strategy for crime prevention. In regard of this study, three source factors in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) were employed to examine the effectiveness of crime prevention social media information. According to the literature, the three factors which are source credibility, argument quality and source attractiveness can influence public's reception of social media information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Kim & Benbasat, 2006; Yi, Yoon, Davis & Lee, 2013; Teng, Khong & Goh, 2014).

Source credibility is a crucial factor to determine the success of crime prevention media campaigns. According to Mendelsohn and

O'Keefe (1982), the public in general, evaluate the credibility of crime prevention sources based on expertise and trustworthiness. Cherney (2016) added, crime prevention information that originates from those with expertise and trustworthiness can help make communication more credible, persuasive and effective.

More importantly, messages that are perceived as being credible can influence public's attitude and behavior (Cherney, 2016). In regard to social media, Li (2013) and Shah and Wei (2022) added, source credibility also can positively influence individuals' perceived benefit of the information system. Hence, based on the source credibility factor, the following hypothesis was tested:

H1: Source credibility has significant effect on perceived impact of crime prevention information.

Argument quality is another important factor that can influence the effectiveness of crime prevention information on social media. According to O'Keefe and Jackson (1995), the quality of messages differs so as the level of persuasion, depending on the arguments provided. Based on the literature, it is evidenced that argument quality is an important factor that could influence persuasion and acceptance of social media information (Teng, Khong, Goh & Chong, 2014).

According to Chu and Kamal (2013), strong argument can have great impact on individuals' attitude. Similarly, Ha and Ahn (2011) also argued that, the quality argument of a message may influence the information sharing behaviour on social media. Hence, based on the importance of the argument quality factor, the following hypothesis was tested:

H2: Argument quality has significant effect on perceived impact of crime prevention information.

Source attractiveness is also a crucial factor that could also influence the effectiveness of crime prevention information on social media. As an important source of message, attractiveness can be viewed based on different perspectives including physical and desirable features (Li & Yin, 2018). According to Smith and Houwer (2014), a message that is attractive and likeable is deemed to be impactful. Taking into consideration the source attractiveness factor, the following hypothesis was tested:

H3: Source attractiveness has significant effect on perceived impact of crime prevention information.

The basic premise in any communication process, is for the sender to be able to successfully deliver an intended message to the receiver (Keyton, 2011; Cheney, 2011). While the importance of social media is evidenced, organisations should emphasis on the message design aspect, to ensure that it is carefully planned and structured in order to achieve the intended impact (Agnes, 2012).

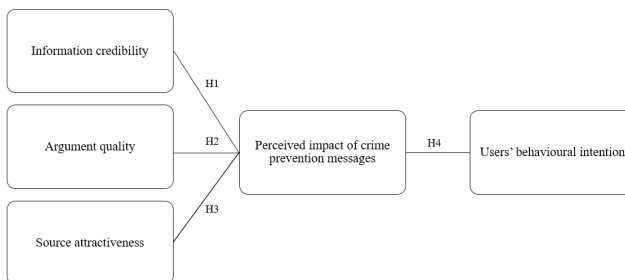
In this study, the impact of crime prevention information on social media refers to its effectiveness which is delivered through social media. This, according to Keshavarz (2021) and Sun (2021), takes into account users' own perceptions which are guided by different considerations including information source, presentation, credibility and decision-related.

Social media can be utilised effectively as a medium to promote positive behavioural change (Foster & Lawson, 2013; Laranjo, 2016; Simeon et al., 2020). This is evident in actions such as information sharing, likes and retweet (Simeon et al., 2020). Therefore, in regard to this study, we also analysed behavioural intention such as continuous access and sharing of information based on perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media. Hence, the following hypothesis was tested:

H4: The perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media has significant effect on users' behavioural intention.

Figure 1 below shows the conceptual framework of the study based on the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the study



Research methodology

This study employed a quantitative research approach due to its ability to reach and describe a huge population (Barbie, 1998). Specifically, a survey was administered to measure respondents' perception, preferences and the antecedent factors that can influence the impact of crime prevention information on social media.

The sample

The survey was conducted online, involving 400 Malaysian respondents who were between the ages of 18-34. The decision to include respondents in this age category was made based on the literature (Mahadi, 2013; Ismail, 2014; Ahmad & Ismail, 2016; Anderson & Jiang, 2018), that reported, avid users of social media in Malaysia and elsewhere are mainly youth. Using sampling calculator, the sample size was deduced from over 33 million Malaysian populations, based on 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error.

This study, which was conducted as part of the main research project that aimed to theorise crime prevention on social media, adopted a convenience sampling technique. This sampling technique allowed any individual who fulfilled the criteria of the study to be recruited as respondent (Fricker, 2008). The convenience sampling technique was adequate for this study, as it meant to identify issues and provide theoretical underpinning related to effective usage of social media for crime prevention.

The instrument and the procedure

The survey questionnaire instrument consisted of both categorical variables and continuous variables. The survey questionnaire instrument was adapted from past studies related to source factors, crime prevention and social media (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Chen & Lee, 2008; Cheung, Luo, Sia & Chen, 2009; Li & Suh, 2015; Cyr, Head, Lim & Stibe, 2018).

The unrestricted self-selected online survey (Fricker, 2008) was conducted for three months period, from January-March 2021. Respondents were recruited through advertisement on social media. Survey Monkey Social Media Collector helped to segment potential respondents based on the Malaysian nationality between the ages of 18-34. The survey was made open to the public to participate. Filter

questions was asked at the beginning of the survey to ensure that the respondents are Malaysians, aged 18-34 and have at least ONE (1) year of experience using any kind of social media.

The close ended survey questionnaire took approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Each respondent can only participate once in the survey. This was ensured through the technical setting of the online survey. Participation in this study was voluntary and respondents may decide to quit the study at any time before submitting their survey responses. Prior to the data collection, ethical approval was sought from the Human Research Ethics Committee, Universiti Sains Malaysia.

Findings and discussion

Measures

This study had four categorical variables – age, gender, social media experience and ethnicity; and five continuous variables – perceived impact, source credibility, argument quality, source attractiveness and users' behavioural intention. The categorical variables were numerically coded, while the continuous variables were measured based on the five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = not sure, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

Even though, in the beginning 400 respondents participated in this study, only 380 were included in the analysis. The excluded respondents did not fully complete the survey questionnaire.

Demographic characteristics

The findings of the study showed that 56.6% of the respondents were in the 25-34 age category, while the remaining 43.4% of the respondents were between 18-24 years old. The study had more female respondents (65.5%) than male respondents (34.5%). In terms of their ethnicity, 61.6% of the respondents were Malay/indigenous, 28.2% Chinese, 7.4% Indian and the remaining 2.9% comprised of those from other ethnicities. This reflected the Malaysian population by ethnic groups (DOSM, 2021).

A huge percentage of the respondents (91.8%) reported that, they had more than 5 years of social media experience, 6.8% had between 3-4 years of experience and only 1.1% had 1-2 years of experience. This indicated that, most of the respondents have substantial experience

using social media. The demographic characteristics of this study is summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics

Variables		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18-24	165	43.4
	25-34	215	56.6
Gender	Female	249	65.5
	Male	131	34.5
Social media experience	Less than 1 year	1	0.3
	1-2 years	4	1.1
	3-4 years	26	6.8
	More than 5 years	349	91.8
Ethnicity	Malay/ indigenous	234	61.6
	Chinese	107	28.2
	Indian	28	7.4
	Others	11	2.9
Total (N=380)			

Purposes for accessing crime prevention information on social media

The findings of this study indicated that the most important purpose for the respondents to access crime prevention information on social media was to get the latest information (53.9%). This was followed by other purposes including the urge to learn something new related to crime prevention (28.2%), to share information with family and friends (16.6%) and others (1.3%). This is shown in Table 2 below.

Proliferation of news and information on social media influences the public’s information seeking behavior, including those related to crime prevention (Ahmad & Ismail, 2016). This presents opportunity for the authority to take control of its own communication and to feed the public with the right crime prevention information. As explained by Davis,

Alves and Sklansky (2014), the power of publication and conversation provided by social media enables the authority to disseminate any information swiftly and to engage the public.

Table 2: Purposes for Accessing Crime Prevention Information on Social Media

Purposes for accessing crime prevention information on social Media	Frequency	Percent (%)
To get the latest information related to crime prevention	205	53.9
To learn something new related to crime prevention	107	28.2
To share information with family and friends	63	16.6
Other	5	1.3
Total	380	100

Types of social media content preference

In relation to the preferred types of crime prevention information content on social media, this study found that, video content was preferred the most (25.8%). This was followed by written content (24.5%), infographic content (22.9%), video story (11.1%), image (8.4%), external link (3.7%), live video (2.9%), contest (0.3%) and others (0.5%). This is summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Preferred Types Social Media Content for Crime Prevention

Preferred social media content	Frequency	Percent (%)
Video	98	25.8
Written content	93	24.5
Infographic content	87	22.9
Video story	42	11.1
Image	32	8.4
Link to external content	14	3.7
Live video	11	2.9
Other	2	0.5

Preferred social media content	Frequency	Percent (%)
Contest	1	0.3
Total	380	100

The findings of this study suggested that, there was no one type of content that was superior over others. The fact that the respondents chose video, written and infographic content indicated preferences for both visual and verbal elements. It should be noted that, types of social media content preference are also influenced by users’ personality traits (Mwaba, Saini & Abratt, 2017). Different messages which aim to invoke emotion or to provide mental stimulation may require different types of social media content (Mwaba et al., 2017). Hence, it is important for the authority to use variety of content types to ensure the effectiveness of crime prevention information on social media.

Perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media

This study found that, the respondents in general had a positive perception towards the impact of crime prevention information on social media (M = 3.80). Breakdown of findings revealed that, relevance of information recorded the highest score (M = 3.89), followed by reliability of information (M = 3.83) and accuracy of information (M = 3.69). This is shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Perceived Impact of Crime Prevention Information on Social Media

Perceived impact	Mean	Std. Dev
Accuracy of information	3.69	0.781
Reliability of information	3.83	0.700
Relevance of information	3.89	0.654
Total (N=380)	3.80	0.620

Echoes Bayerl, Horton, Jacobs and Akhgar (2014) study on the importance of perceived trust or reliability of information, our findings also highlighted the need to focus on relevancy of crime prevention information on social media. As explained by Baloushi (2019), police should provide relevant information on social media to ensure genuine interest among the public. This is in line with expectation of the authority’s utilisation of social media, which is to keep the public informed on crime related issues and public safety (Israni et al., 2017).

Factors influencing perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media

Utilising the three source factors posited by the ELM, this study investigated how source credibility, argument quality and source attractiveness have significant effect on perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media. Correlation and multiple linear regression analyses were carried out to predict relationship. This is summarised in Table 5-6 below.

Table 5: Correlations Analysis

Correlations matrix of perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media and the source factors				
Correlations	Classification			
	Perceived impact	Credibility	Argument quality	Attractiveness
Perceived impact	1.0			
Credibility	.576**	1.0		
Argument quality	.350**	.469	1.0	
Attractiveness	.261**	.333	.594	1.0

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Based on the findings of the correlations analysis conducted, it was evident that source credibility, argument quality and source attractiveness had significant positive relationship with perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media (Table 5). However, it should be noted that the strengths of relationship varied between weak and moderate. Source credibility recorded moderate positive correlation ($r=0.576$), while argument quality ($r=0.350$) and source attractiveness ($r=0.261$) had weak positive correlations. It should be understood that, perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media can be influenced by various determining factors. Hence, even though argument quality and source attractiveness recorded weak positive correlations, they were still statistically significant.

The result of the multiple linear regression analysis conducted (Table 6) showed that, source credibility was a significant predictor ($p<.001$, $\beta=.526$). Argument quality ($p=.145$, $\beta=.081$) and source attractiveness

($p=.468$, $\beta=.038$) were found not to be significant predictors. Therefore, based on the result of the multiple regression analysis, Hypothesis 1 of this study was accepted, while, Hypothesis 2 and Hypothesis 3 were rejected.

Table 6: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression analysis of perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media				
Variables	Perceived impact			
	B ^a	β^b	Sig. (p-value)	VIF statistics
Credibility	.544	.526	<.001	1.289
Argument quality	.094	.081	.145	1.770
Attractiveness	.043	.038	.468	1.554
R ²	.341			
Adjusted R ²	.336			
F	64.97			

While argument quality and source attractiveness continue to be important considerations on social media (Shu & Scott, 2014; Lee, 2017; Li & Yin, 2018; Winter, 2019), we argued that, source credibility has significant effect on perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media. The credibility factor which is related to authority, credential and expertise is influential towards improving public’s perception on social media (Lin, Spence & Lachlan, 2016).

Taking into consideration the importance of source credibility, it is necessary for the authority to improve its relation with the public as well as to gain their trust and confidence (Schaap, 2020). The authority needs to ensure that they gain public’s trust as the credible crime information provider on social media (Walsh & O’Connor, 2019). In addition, credibility on social media can also be improved through recency of social media updates and cognitive elaboration (Westerman, Spence & Heide, 2014).

Predicting behavioral intention

Using correlation and simple linear regression analyses, this study analysed behavioural intention based on public’s perceived impact of

crime prevention information on social media. The correlation analysis in Table 7 indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media with users' behavioural intention ($r=0.235$). The simple linear regression analysis in Table 8 revealed that, perceived impact of crime prevention messages on social media was significant predictor for behavioural intention ($p<.001$, $\beta=.235$).

Table 7: Correlation Analysis

Correlation matrix of behavioural intention and perceived impact of crime prevention messages on social media		
Correlation	Classification	
	Behavioral intention	Perceived impact
Behavioral intention	1.0	
Perceived impact	.235**	1.0

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 8: Simple Linear Regression Analysis

Simple Linear regression analysis of behavioural intention				
Variable	Behavioural intention			
	B ^a	β^b	Sig. (p-value)	VIF statistics
Perceived impact	.209	.235	<.001	1.0
R ²	.055			
Adjusted R ²	.053			
F	22.18			

This finding in particular suggested that public's intention to access the authority's crime information on social media and to share it with others is influenced by their perception towards the authority. Good positive perception enables police to engage with the public effectively on social media (Cartwright & Shaw, 2020). As proposed by Hu et al. (2018), the authority needs to develop good image and perception on

social media which can be achieved through strategic planning and execution.

Discussion and conclusion

The usage of social media for policing is not straight forward due to multiple complexities including issues related to privacy, misuse of information and reputation management (Davis et al., 2014; Israni et al., 2017). Nevertheless, taking into consideration how communication has revolutionised, it is necessary for the police to improve on its present usage of social media (Hu et al., 2018). While the authority has without doubt makes its presence felt on the social media sphere (Salleh, Ekhwan & Salman, 2019), it is important to move beyond visibility and to emphasise on strategic usage. One of the areas for improvement is to ensure impactful crime prevention information on social media.

Based on the findings of this study, information seeking was found to be the main reason for accessing crime prevention related information on social media. In term of information content types, the respondents of this study indicated varied preferences, including both visual and verbal. Apart from utilising different types of content (Mwaba, et al., 2017), it is necessary for the authority to thoroughly understand each content type in term of its usage and influence (Aydin, Uray & Silaharoglu, 2021). It should also be understood that, strategic social media practices differ, often influenced by the context (Aydin et al., 2021).

Even though this study reported positive perception towards the authority's crime prevention information on social media, there are still areas for enhancement. As evident in this study and also supported by the literature, actions such as access and sharing of crime prevention information on social media are influenced by trust towards the authority and its perceived performance (Bayerl, Horton, Jacobs & Akhgar, 2014). Perception towards the authority on social media is dynamic and changes overtime, shaped by chain of events and narratives that take place in the surrounding (Oglesby-Neal, Tiry & Kim, 2019).

Out of the three source factors examined, credibility was found to be the only significant predictor for perceived impact of crime prevention information on social media. This finding indicated the need for the authority to attain credibility on social media. This, can be achieved by demonstrating credential and expertise online (Lin et al., 2016).

According to Li and Suh (2015), credibility dimensions on social media are divided into two – medium and message. Medium credibility is influenced by interactivity and transparency, while message credibility is influenced by argument strength (Li & Suh, 2015).

The importance of source credibility factor also highlights the need for the authority to put greater emphasis on the message design aspects. This includes the need to understand different message appeals on social media and when to use them. As Li and Suh (2015) argued, credibility can be further enhanced with persuasion. This includes using different appeals such as informational appeal that emphasises on facts and functional benefits, while, emotional appeal focuses on emotions and relationship (Ashley & Tuten, 2014; Swani, Milne, Brown, Assaf & Donthu, 2017). As studies on social media message design are mainly in the area of marketing (Ashley & Tuten, 2014; Kusumasondjaja, 2018; Pan, Torres & Zuniga, 2019), it is necessary for future studies on crime prevention to explore this further.

While the findings of this study provided some useful insights for the authority to strategise its usage of social media, particularly in disseminating crime prevention information, it is always important to keep up with the latest social media strategies and trends. This is crucial due to the nature of social media that is constantly changing (Sutherland, 2021).

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Examining the Effects of News Frames as a Risk Factor of Radicalisation

Nurul Miza Mohd Rashid*
Noor Aqsa Nabila Mat Isa**

Abstract: The present study conducted an online experiment to examine whether news frames could cause radicalisation. In the study, 248 participants (age: $M = 22.89$, $SD = 6.77$) read and summarised news articles which contained either positive news frames (depict Islamist extremist groups as avengers of the Muslim communities), negative news frames (depict the groups as barbaric), or neutral news frames (news unrelated to Islamist extremism). The analysis revealed an effect of the positive news frames on the acceptance of Islamist extremism, specifically on the attitudes toward Muslim violence by others. The results indicate that news-framing content that narrates the goodness of Islamist extremist group could be a factor in the radicalisation process through media. It is recommended news content regulation is improved especially during times of crisis which could increase the public's vulnerability to extremism.

Keywords: media effects, news frames effect, psychological experiment, radicalisation, violent Islamist extremism

Abstrak: Kajian ini telah menjalankan eksperimen di atas talian untuk mengkaji sama ada bingkai berita (*'news frame'*) boleh menjadi faktor berlakunya proses radikalisasi. Seramai 248 peserta direkrut (umur: $M = 22.89$, $SD = 6.77$) dan mereka diarahkan untuk membaca dan meringkaskan artikel berita yang mengandungi sama ada bingkai berita positif (menggambarkan kumpulan ekstremis Islam sebagai wira penuntut bela umat Islam), bingkai berita negatif (menggambarkan kumpulan itu sebagai kejam dan tidak

* Department of Psychology, International Islamic University of Malaysia. Email: mizarashid@iium.edu.my (corresponding author).

** Faculty of Languages and Linguistics, Universiti Malaya. Email: aqsanabila@um.edu.my.

berperikemanusiaan), atau bingkai berita neutral (laporan berita yang tidak berkaitan dengan ekstremisme Islam). Analisis statistik mendedahkan bingkai berita positif boleh meningkatkan penerimaan ekstremisme Islam, khususnya terhadap sikap terhadap penggunaan keganasan oleh orang-orang Islam. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa kandungan bingkai berita yang menceritakan kebaikan kumpulan ekstremis Islam boleh menjadi faktor proses radikalisation melalui media. Hasil kajian boleh memberi maklum cara penerbitan berita di masa krisis supaya masyarakat di Malaysia tidak mudah terpengaruh dengan agenda ekstremis.

Kata kunci: kesan-kesan media, kesan bingkai berita, eksperimen psikologi, radikalisation, keganasan ekstrem Islam.

Introduction

Radicalisation refers to the process of change in the attitude and mindset towards support for violent extremism (extreme use of violence for ideological values) (Bott et al., 2009; McCauley & Moskalkenko, 2008). Is it possible that the contents of a newspaper potentially be a precipitant of support for violent extremism, hence an element involved in the process of radicalisation? Baugut and Neumann's (2019, 2020b) research work demonstrates this possibility, as they found that convicted Islamist extremist prisoners perceived the negative media coverage of Islam, leading to a feeling of rejection, and this further influenced them to accept radical Islam. Moreover, other studies have highlighted that propaganda and extremist messages disseminated via mediated technology are likely to be the contributing factor drawing to vulnerable individuals supporting extremist groups (Awais et al., 2020; Cottee & Cunliffe, 2020; Gråtrud, 2016; Pieslak et al., 2019).

Historically, the connection between media, radicalisation and violent extremism is a phenomenon that has received coverage in academic research for decades (Wilkinson, 1997). There is a likelihood that the exposure to the media news either indicating positive or negative viewpoints on Islamist extremist groups could either increase or decrease the support for violent Islamist extremism. The process is parallel to how individuals decide on societal issues (Asad et al., 2019) because the public's knowledge and general attitude about controversial events such as violent extremism are highly dependent on the perfunctory precedence set up by the mainstream media (Powell, 2011). Research

has found that variation in news depiction of social and political issues could shape how consumers of the media, i.e., the audience, perceive an issue which could ultimately form a mindset endangering social harmony (e.g., Croteau & Hoynes, 2014; Powell, 2011). However, studies examining the effect of publicly accessible news content on popular Islamist extremist movements, for instance, Daesh (also known as ISIS, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria), on attitudes toward violent extremism are limited thus far. Additionally, the connection between the news frames' effect on the radicalisation process is yet to be established in empirical studies.

The news framing effect originated from the framing theory and the agenda-setting theory (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Price & Tewksbury, 1997) specifies that an individual's mindset and attitudes towards social and political issues could be framed through the consumption of news frames (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018). Following the theory, the present study hypothesised that the consumption of online news content regarding Islamist extremist groups and their respective ideology could affect Muslim's attitudes towards violent extremism. To test it, the present study examined the effect of news frames that differ in content based on how they portray prominent Islamist extremist groups, including Daesh which was active during the peak of the Syrian Civil War, and their violent activities. The portrayal of the group in either positive and sympathetic light or barbaric and betrayed human rights was expected to have two opposing reactions: support for or rejection of violent extremism. The study further examined the differential effects of news framing across age, gender, and personality as the radicalisation process could vary due to individual differences (Holmer, 2013).

Radicalisation Process Through Media

The media's ability to influence public opinion could be attributed to the public's high dependency on media for information related to general knowledge and public events (White, 2020; Williamson et al., 2019). During times of uncertainty and crisis, the society's dependence on mass media increases rapidly to cope with the unfolding circumstance and those who actively seek information through the news to declutter the uncertainty are likely to be affected by the content (Ball-Rokeach, 2010; Lin et al., 2020; Zhong et al., 2021). There are identical situations related to extremist threats. For instance, individuals would rely on the

media to make informed decision regarding extremist groups (Traugott & Brader, 2003; Williamson et al., 2019). However, studies examining the effect of news frames related to Daesh and the Syrian Civil War on attitudes towards violent extremism are somewhat limited. Moreover, studies on radicalisation and violent extremism have found that adopting an attitude or mindset that accepts violent extremism may vary due to individual differences, including age, personality and thinking patterns, such as cognitive distortion or the tendency to confirm personal bias (Rashid et al., 2020). Thus, it necessitates the present study to examine the effects of news frames based on individual characteristics.

Agenda Setting and News Framing Theories

The agenda-setting theory hypothesised that the media directs consumers to be attentive to particular parts of an issue, which sets the agenda for what the public should deem critical to forming their thoughts and attitudes towards societal issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). An extension of the agenda-setting theory is the framing theory which looks at frame variation (Wanta & Alkazemi, 2017). Frame refers to the media content that draws attention to selected aspects of reality and makes other elements ambiguous or vague (Entman, 1993). Parallel with the agenda-setting theory, the framing theory theorised that variations of frames could further construct or strengthen various thoughts and attitudes among consumers of media (Price et al., 1997; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007). The actual effects of framing could include changing an individual's attitudes from positive to negative, strengthening opinions and attitudes towards the extreme end, adding new knowledge, or modifying existing knowledge leading to opinion formation (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018).

How issues or objects of the issue are depicted becomes a significant focus in the studies of framing and the effect of frames (Weaver, 2007). In a frame, how a story unfolds, informing the audience of the details of the who, what, where, why, how, and when forms the message that illicit particular emotions among the audience, allowing them to connect at a deeper level (Bennett & Edelman, 1985). Personalising the story allows consumers to identify and feel more attached to the unfolding events in the frame. For example, in the case of the Syrian Civil War and the group Daesh, highlighting the suffering of the Muslim community is a form of personalising the message for Muslim readers (Abu Bakar &

Aslam, 2019). The personalised message as news frame content will be examined further in the present study to assess its effects on forming either positive (supportive) or negative (rejection) attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism.

The Psychological Effect of Radicalisation Via News Frames

The efficacy of radicalisation frame narratives that connect with the audience could be explained by understanding basic human needs and motivations (Kruglanski et al., 2014a). Abraham Maslow proposed that individuals are motivated to ensure their basic needs are met to avoid deprivation and cultivate self-growth towards self-actualisation (Maslow, 2012). When basic human needs are unmet, they seek explanations and solutions to the problems at hand, and selected individuals may seek out extremist groups for answers (Kruglanski et al., 2014b; Kruglanski et al., 2019). The need for explanation is further accentuated in times of crisis, and the media provides relevant answers through the news. Studies that have analysed extremist ideological narratives found that the narratives would likely demonstrate the ingroup members as being deprived of needs or victimized, and violence is the most effective means of retribution (Baugut & Neumann, 2020a, 2020b; Chan, 2020). In addition, case studies and analyses of extremist groups, both alive and demise, found that the supporters and members of the groups are motivated either by the desire to fulfil those unmet needs or avenge for it (Baugut & Neumann, 2018, 2019; Horgan, 2014; Post, 2007).

Two existing theories could explain why the messages created by extremist groups are attractive among targeted demographics – the relative deprivation theory and the social identity theory. The relative deprivation theory specifies that individuals' dissatisfaction over perceived or actual deprivation of basic needs could build up frustration, causing them to act violently or support violent extremists fighting for a similar cause (Gurr, 2016). Studies have shown that when individuals or a group of individuals feel that either they or members associated with their group are deprived of social and psychological needs, the need to avenge and reclaim their rights motivates extremists' thoughts and actions (Agbibo, 2013; Nivette et al., 2017). On the other hand, the social identity theory posits that every individual needs to categorize or identify themselves with a social group to form an identity (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 2004). In support

of the theory, several studies have shown that support for extremist ideology could also be attributed to the need to feel that fellow extremist supporters or members validate one's beliefs regarding Islam (Rieger et al., 2019; Doosje et al., 2013; van Bergen et al., 2015). Some Malaysian Muslim youths expressed that their identification with Islam perpetuates conflicting personal urges on the need to fight to protect their religion (Yusof et al., 2021).

In the 21st century, the media, especially the social media, is like a bloodline for the society, ensuring ongoing streams of communication and emotional content that provide social validation, e.g., the importance of preserving group members or religious values from extinction due to perceived threat (Kashima et al., 2019). Humans detect emotional cues presented in media content and become gravitated towards it. This further accentuates the connection between extremism and media as extremism news is quintessential of "breaking news that is watched by record audiences and far transcends the boundaries of theatrical events" (p. 28, Nacos, 2003). The media are quick to cover violent extremist attacks due to their desire to provide the public with a sensational story and nearly every extremist attack fits into the category of sensational news (Matusitz, 2015; White, 2020). Extremists are aware of the power of the media, and they prioritise achieving public awareness of their existence to gain legitimacy and recognition which in turn would allow an increase in supporters and followers to their cause (Archetti, 2013; Nacos, 2016; Ross, 2007). As Laquer mentioned, "journalists are terrorists' best friends, because they are willing to give terrorist operations maximum exposure." (p. 44, 1999). This connection between media and extremism could be referred to as a symbiotic relationship, a "product of the convoluted interrelationship between the methods used by terrorism (extremist groups) and the main priorities of the media." (Matusitz, 2015, p. 54).

Extremist groups want their deeds to be publicised, as stated by the Former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, "publicity is the oxygen of terrorism" (Nacos, 2016, p. 24). The likely reasons could be that media coverage of extremist attacks may portray or draw the public's attention towards the government's incompetence and vulnerability (Bassiouni, 1981). Additionally, the coverage of extremist groups in publicly accessible media constructs the perceived legitimacy of the group among the audience (Bassiouni, 1981; Jenkins, 1974).

The use of unnecessary and barbaric violence by extremist groups may draw supporters away from their cause because violence could be perceived as threatening, and the media coverage of extremist attacks would likely cause fear rather than admiration (Hoffman, 2006). Nevertheless, a more sympathetic response may be incurred with the right audience and frame that portrays the group as avengers of oppressed members. The role of the media is to inform or reaffirm the idea among the targeted demography that their community is suffering and needs to be protected or avenged, and reveal the group that is responsible for their sufferings (Baugut & Neumann, 2020a, 2020b; Weirman & Alexander, 2020). For instance, the media portrayal of Muslims as terrorists may incite anger towards perceived “enemies of Islam”, which could increase support for violent extremism (Baugut & Neumann, 2019). The present study tested the personalisation story by incorporating the relative deprivation theory and social identity theory application specifically relating to its use among members of Daesh who advocated that their fights are meant to avenge the Muslims who were victims of the attacks from Western nations (Baele et al., 2019; Ingram, 2017; Weirman & Alexander, 2020). Therefore, the selection of participants was restricted to Malay Muslims as they make up the majority of the communities that resonate with the Islamist extremism movement due to perceived religious obligation, i.e., to protect the religion and their believers (Jaafar & Akhmetova, 2020; Jaafar et al., 2020; Yusof et al., 2019).

Conclusively, the main objective of the present study is to ascertain whether it is possible that the content of news frames that purportedly depict notorious extremist groups in a positive light could potentially change the attitudes of Malaysians towards violent Islamist extremism. A search for news frames on the Syrian Civil War and extremist groups that portrays the oppression of Muslims and the Islamist extremist groups as avengers of the Muslim communities was conducted. In addition, news frames that depict the groups as barbaric were searched and the news content was included as the main independent variable of the present study which will be further explained in the method section. The news frames’ effects on support for violent extremism were examined. The hypotheses of the present study are specified below:

1. There is a significant effect of exposure to news frames on attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism.

2. The scores of attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism are significantly different among participants in the control (neutral) condition, positive news frame condition and negative news frame condition.
 - a. Participants in the positive news frame news condition would show higher scores of attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism
 - b. Participants in the negative news frames condition would show lower scores of attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism
 - c. The covariates of the present study may significantly influence the effect of news frames.

Method

This study employed experimental design, combining between-subjects and within-subjects designs. The between-subjects design allows observation of possible effects from different news frames on individuals' support for violent extremism. In addition, the repeated measures design allows the study to account for changes in attitudes, pre-and-post exposure to news frames, and differences across various news frames positive, negative, and neutral (also known as a control condition).

Sampling Procedure and Data Collection

The inclusion criteria for the participants include adults with a minimum age of 18 years, Malay, and Malaysian citizens, who identify as Muslim and are fluent in the Malay language. The underlying reason for selecting Malay Muslims who are fluent in the Malay language is that the items used in the research are all written in the Malay language and adapted to be suitable for the cultural values of Malay individuals residing in Malaysia. Additionally, cultural context is crucial to address the process of radicalisation, and in this case, the selection of articles focuses on the process of radicalisation that insinuates the suffering of Muslims and depicts the bravery and heroism of Muslim extremists in avenging the Muslim victims. As indicated in past research, this is a common persuasive message used by Islamist extremist groups to convince Malaysian Muslims to be sympathetic to their activities (Jaafar &

Akhmetova, 2020; Jaafar et al., 2020; Yusof et al., 2019; Yusof et al., 2021).

Initially, 399 participants were recruited via the convenience sampling method. Accessibility to the participants was mostly restricted due to the presence of the Covid-19 threat. Additionally, systematic random sampling was non-optional due to limited manpower and access to details of all Malaysians is restricted due to fear of privacy breaches. Thus, the convenience sampling method was the best option to allow any users of social media to encounter the advertisements by chance and demonstrate keen interest without feeling obliged or forced to participate. Nearly half of the participants ($n = 151$) dropped out halfway through the experiment (during the reading of the news frames section) because they felt that the experiment took a significant amount of their time. The final number of participants was 248 (age: $M = 22.89$, $SD = 6.77$). There were 83 male participants (33.5%). Most of the participants recruited were also young adults between 18 to 29 years old who have obtained or are currently completing higher education. The youngest participants were 18 years old, and the oldest one was 57 years ($M = 22.21$, $SD = 4.6$).

Research Materials

Sociodemographic Variables

The sociodemographic variables were gender, age, employment history, the highest level of education, religion, and race.

Covariates

In a study by Rashid et al. (2020), it was found that activity and impulsive sensation-seeking personality traits have a positive predictive value to support the use of violence for ideological reasons. Additionally, the study found that self-centeredness is also predictive of a similar mindset. Therefore, the present study included the three measures to examine whether the three psychological predictors could covary with the primary outcome of the present study.

- Personality traits: activity and impulsive sensation seeking

The measure of activity and impulsive sensation-seeking personality traits used the Malay-adapted version of the scale (Mohammad Rahim et al., 2013a) based on the Alternative

Five-Factor Model which was originally founded by Zuckerman (2002). Activity personality trait refers to an individual's tendency to constantly seek out activities as remaining idle may cause impatience and feelings of restlessness (Zuckerman, 2002). Meanwhile, the impulsive-sensation-seeking trait score reflects a combined tendency to act quickly and impulsively with little planning and a personal preference for excitement, thrills, unpredictability, constant change, and novelty in life. For activity traits, items 9 to 16 from the scale by Mohammad Rahim et al. (2013a) yielded a .80 reliability value, while for impulsive sensation seeking, items 33 to 40 from the scale yielded a .74 reliability value.

- Self-serving cognitive distortion: self-centredness

The last covariate predictor was self-centeredness of the self-serving cognitive distortion, which was assessed by the Malay-adapted version (Mohammad Rahim et al., 2013b) of the original scale known as How-I Think (HIT) Questionnaire by Barriga et al. (2001). Self-centredness self-serving cognitive distortion could be referred to as the tendency to interpret environmental situations in an unrealistic, inflexible, or extreme manner centring towards personally owned views, expectations, needs, rights, immediate feelings, and desires while disregarding views of others, regardless of their legitimacy and logic (Crick & Dodge, 1996). Schemas from distorted thoughts could lead to justifying and enforcing antisocial and violent behaviours to possibly reduce internal tension caused by conflicting moral values and personal actions (Gibbs, 2019). The items taken were items 1 to 6 from the adapted scale (Mohammad Rahim et al., 2013b), which yielded a .75 reliability value.

Independent Variable

Six articles (three for each frame condition, neutral/control frame, negative frame, and positive frame) from online news sites which had great trust among readers based on Reuters' analysis in 2019 (Nain, 2019) were selected for their salient depiction of the frames due to the language used, and the information provided related to the issue perpetuating either positive or negative viewpoint for the violent

extremism movement. The positive frames contain stories about violent extremist groups and their motivation as valuable and essential to the Muslim community, while the negative frames describe the groups and their activities as barbaric and inhumane. Therefore, it is expected that the exposure to positively and negatively framed content would cause an increment and a decrement respectively in the score of attitudes towards violent extremism from pre-exposure to post-exposure

It is recommended to have a baseline or control condition to ascertain the effects of news frames (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018). Therefore, a neutral frame (alternatively referred to as the control condition) was set up. In this frame, three news articles were selected from the most recent news published from July to August 2020 sourced from the same news outlet. The articles mainly covered news related to technological advancement and the most recent global event, Covid-19. Therefore, it was expected that repeated exposure to this news article would cause no effect from pre-exposure to post-exposure in the score of attitudes towards Muslim violence by others measured using the newly adapted scales.

Primary Outcome Variable

A scale was identified and adapted for the Malaysian Muslim population's use. It was developed by Doosje et al. (2013) in their study of the radicalisation process. The scale measuring the support for violent extremism and willingness to use violence only contains seven items. These items are under the sub-factor of potential predictors of radicalisation determinants. Specifically, the items selected include the four items assessing "attitudes towards Muslim violence by others" and "own violent intentions". The items were adapted and translated into the Malay language during the pilot study, prior to the conduct of this research. The translated items were tested among Malaysians ($N = 363$, Age: $M = 22.21$, $SD = 4.57$) fluent in the Malay language. The principal component analysis depicted two factors with at least three items with primary loadings above 0.5. The two factors were retained and respectively labelled, "own violent intentions" (sample item: "I would be prepared to disturb the order and peace in order to get something done that I think is very important.") and "attitude towards Muslim violence by others" (sample item: "What is your opinion on radical extremist members that murdered Western politicians who are

against and criticises Islam?”). The participants rated each item on a scale of 1 to 5 (from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree). The internal consistency for each of the factors was calculated and Cronbach’s alpha for “own violent intentions” ($\alpha = .804$) and “attitude towards Muslim violence by others” ($\alpha = .732$) were found to be satisfactory. Collectively in this paper, they are referred to as attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism.

Ethical Consideration

The present study was approved by the IIUM Research Ethics Committee (IREC). The briefing section of the survey form indicated participants’ rights, including the right to withdraw from the study without consequences. The study procedure utilized equipment and measures which were non-invasive and should not have induced harm to any of the participants involved in the study. However, the light from the computer screen could cause eye strain due to prolonged exposure. Therefore, participants were encouraged to take a short break between reading the articles in the briefing and instruction sections.

The participants were not given full disclosure regarding the purpose of the study before completion of the study, specifically on the nature of this study which is to examine the effect of news frames on attitudes towards violent extremism. Instead, they were informed only of the study’s partial purpose of assessing their thoughts and opinions after reading specific news articles. In addition, debriefing was sent via email to ensure that they were not fully concealed from the complete objective of the study. It is noted that there is a risk of manipulation. However, the manipulation is deemed necessary to prevent the greater risk of the experimenter effect, which could lead to false-positive results, Type II error.

To ensure that the confidentiality and privacy of the participants were maintained, access to their private details, specifically their email address/contact number was only given to the main researcher in an online secure file which is password-protected. The data and the email exchange were later deleted after the completion of data collection to remove traces of their participation in the research in order to prevent exposure of confidential information to a third party.

Data Collection

Recruitment

During the early recruitment process, the invitations to participate in the survey were circulated via email and several social media applications, including WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. Alternatively, posters were printed and placed in several places at a local university, containing the QR code linking to the pre-exposure online survey form.

Pre-Exposure to Frames Survey

Interested participants gained access to the first survey form via a link. In the form, they were requested to provide their email, and basic sociodemographic details, and complete the scales containing the items measuring covariates and the items for the primary outcome variable. The participants took approximately 30 minutes to complete the first survey form.

Exposure to Frames and Post-Exposure Survey

Once the participants had completed the first survey form, they were then sent an email containing the link to the second survey form comprising either the positively framed, negatively framed, or neutrally framed news articles. To ensure the process of random assignment, the link sent to the participants alternated after every five participants. The first five participants received the neutrally framed news articles, the next five received positively framed articles, and the next five received the negatively framed news articles. This process repeated itself for two months, which was the time allocated for the data collection. Participants were required to read the news articles and summarise them to indicate they have read and understood the content in the form. Until all articles were read and summarised, the participants were tasked to complete the attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism scales again available in the second survey form. Approximately, 30 – 45 minutes were required to complete the second part of the survey. Upon completion of the second survey form, another email was automatically sent. The email contains debriefing information and an additional document requesting their details to transfer a token of appreciation.

Both the pre- (responses from the first survey form) and post-exposure (responses from the second survey form) to the news frames

data were downloaded and combined into one Excel sheet. Next, the data were screened, and composite scores were calculated to be used for analysis using IBM SPSS. The composite scores calculated include the mean score for the personality traits of impulsive sensation seeking, activity, self-centeredness, cognitive distortion, and the two assessed factors of attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism (attitudes towards Muslim violence others and own violent intentions).

Data Analysis and Results

The present study used factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) to assess the variance in means of three outcome measures of attitudes to violent Islamist extremism. The use of factorial ANOVA is recommended as it accounts for individual main effects for each variable and the interaction effect between each variable towards the change of the dependent variable (Field et al., 2012).

During data preparation for analysis, selected personality traits and self-centeredness cognitive distortion variables were calculated for their mean scores. The mean scores for personality traits and self-centeredness cognitive were relabelled as *high*, *low*, and *moderate* to indicate individuals' standing on the selected factors. Individuals with a mean score above '3.2' or a mean score below '2.8' were labelled as *high* or *low* standing on the factor. The others were labelled as *moderate*.

Although the procedure included random assignment of participants to either neutral ($n = 85$), negative ($n = 80$), or positive ($n = 83$) conditions, not all participants that received the link completed the entire experiment, thus causing an imbalance in the total number of samples recruited per condition. The final number of samples per condition did not vary above five samples variation. Thus, the variation is negligible.

Table 1 provides a summary of the participants' demographic characteristics and distribution across frame groups. The mean composite score and standard deviations for measures of the primary outcome variables of the experiment are summarized in Table 1. The differences in scores across conditions and between time (pre-and post-exposure) to news frames were analysed to assess the effect of the frames.

The data were screened for outliers and missing values using IBM SPSS. The screening results show that there were no missing variables

or extreme outliers. Levene's test results indicated that the error of variance is equal across group conditions 'Attitude towards Muslim Violence by others' (ATV), and not for 'Own Violent Intentions' (OVI). The measure of OVI was found to be positively skewed, thus the log value of the mean scores were calculated and used for the main analysis. Mauchly's Test of Sphericity also indicated that the data are spherical.

Table 1. Summary of Participants' Demographic Characteristics

	Neutral (n = 85)		Negative (n = 80)		Positive (n = 83)		Full Sample (n = 248)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Gender								
Male	32	37.65	25	31.25	26	31.33	83	33.47
Female	53	62.35	55	68.75	57	68.67	165	66.53
Age								
18 – 19 years	7	8.24	2	2.5	4	4.82	13	5.24
20 – 25 years	75	88.24	69	86.25	79	95.18	223	89.92
≥ 30 years	3	3.53	9	11.25	0	0.00	12	4.84
Education Attained								
Higher Education	80	94.12	75	93.75	81	97.59	236	95.16
Others	5	5.88	5	6.25	2	2.41	12	4.84
Personality Traits								
Impulsive-Sensation Seeking								
<i>(High)</i>	8	9.41	6	7.5	10	12.05	24	9.68
<i>(Moderate)</i>	40	47.06	33	41.25	42	50.60	115	46.37
<i>(Low)</i>	37	43.53	41	51.25	31	37.35	109	43.95
Activity								
<i>(High)</i>	36	42.35	39	48.75	41	49.40	116	46.77
<i>(Moderate)</i>	39	45.88	29	36.25	32	38.55	100	40.32
<i>(Low)</i>	10	11.76	12	15	10	12.05	32	12.90
Self-Serving Cognitive Distortion								
Self-Centredness								
<i>(High)</i>	6	7.06	16	20	15	18.07	37	14.92
<i>(Moderate)</i>	29	34.12	17	21.25	30	36.14	76	30.65
<i>(Low)</i>	50	58.82	47	58.75	38	45.78	135	54.44

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS, and the variables include Condition, Time and two measures of changes in attitudes towards violent Islamist extremism (mean scores of ATV, and log value of mean score of OVI to correct for normality distribution). First, the condition is set as one of the main effects and the categorical variable with three levels, Control, Positive and Negative. The scores for the different frame types were compared between the randomly assigned participants. Next, time is another main effect and the categorical variable with two levels, pre and post. The means were compared with the participants' scores of ATV and log OVI across two different time points, pre-exposure to news frames and post-exposure to news frames.

Results Of ANOVA

Results of ANOVA revealed that the scores of ATV were significantly different across conditions, $F(2, 242) = 3.69, p = .026, \eta^2 = 0.03$. The scores of ATV were significantly higher for participants in the positive condition ($M = 2.26, SE = .84, 95\% CI [0.68, 0.83]$) than for control ($M = 2.22, SE = 0.86, 95\% CI [0.63, 0.78]$) and negative conditions ($M = 2.06, SD = 0.82, 95\% CI [0.52, 0.67]$). Post hoc test results, using Tukey HSD, revealed that the score is significantly lower for the negative condition compared to the positive one (Mean difference = $-.28, p = .02, CI [-.53, -.03]$). There was no significant score difference between control with either negative (Mean difference = $.18, p = .19, CI [-.07, .43]$) or positive condition (Mean difference = $-.10, p = .60, CI [-.34, .14]$). The main effect of Time was also significant, $F(1, 245) = 3.47, p = .029, \eta^2 = .019$. The post hoc test results further revealed there was a significant difference between pre- and post-exposure to news frames ($p = .04$) indicating that there was a significant effect of exposure to news frames with greater ATV in the post ($M = 2.21, SE = .05, 95\% CI [2.11, 2.31]$) than pre-exposure to news frames ($M = 2.09, SE = .05, 95\% CI [1.99, 2.18]$). However, there was no significant interaction effect between Condition and Time, $F(2, 245) = 0.08, p = .92, \eta_p^2 = 0.001$. Additionally, the covariates' influence, gender ($F(2, 240) = 0.08, p = .92, \eta_p^2 = 0.001$), personality ($F(2, 240) = 0.08, p = .92, \eta_p^2 = 0.001$), and age ($F(2, 240) = 0.08, p = .92, \eta_p^2 = 0.001$) revealed no significant influence for the effect of Time. The covariate influence for Condition was not run as the variation of each covariate was not equally distributed across each condition.

Robust tests of one-way repeated-measures ANOVA revealed that the log scores of OVI depicted insignificant results for both main effects of Time ($F(1, 149) = 0.001, p = .97$). Additionally, the main effect of Condition also revealed no significant difference on the log scores of OVI ($F(2, 244) = 1.19, p = .30$). Therefore, there was no significant influence of news frame exposure to the intention to commit violence among the participants of the study.

Discussion

The main objective of the present study was to examine the effect of news frames on the formation of either positive (supportive) or negative (rejection) attitudes toward violent Islamist extremism. The analysis revealed that participants exposed to news content framed to support violent extremist groups have a higher score for ATV than the other groups. The results indicate that variations in news frames affect support for violent Islamist extremism. The result from the present study is aligned with the findings of past studies that had conducted experiments on the effect of extremist narratives on support for extremism (Frischlich et al., 2019; Schmuck & Tribastone, 2020; Shortland et al., 2020). Frischlich et al. (2019) and Shortland et al. (2020) looked at the effect of extremist ideological narratives in video format or the original online extremist material to ascertain the effect of extremist narratives. Meanwhile, Schmuck & Tribastone (2020) examined the effect of political messages resonating with anti-Islamic messages. The uniqueness of the present study is that it uses excerpts of online news published in refutable news sites to examine the effect of frames on support for violent extremism.

The mainstream media, such as news platforms, have been examined for their crucial role in not only informing the public but also forming individuals' perceptions and attitudes related to political and social topics (Croteau & Hoynes, 2014). The media's ability to lure public support or hate for specific groups could be attributed to the general public's high dependency towards media for information especially related to general knowledge and public events (White, 2020; Williamson et al., 2019). Especially during times of uncertainty and crisis, society's dependence on mass media increases rapidly to cope with the unfolding circumstance and those who actively seek to declutter the uncertainty are likely to be affected by the media (Ball-Rokeach, 2010). Therefore, extremist groups acknowledge the power

of media in ensuring their presence and knowledge in the public eye is optimised. Since the media continuously revolutionise itself that nearly every aspect of human culture is mediatised (Marcinkowski, 2014; Nygren & Niemikari, 2019), the extremist group are quick to adapt to technological advancement and continue to ensure a continuous radicalisation process via the media (von Behr et al., 2013).

The case of the present study, highlights another relevant key aspect of media influence towards radicalisation, indicating a potential process in the change of individuals' attitudes towards violent extremism. The experiment outcome only captured the attitudinal change in the support for attitudes towards Muslim violence by others. The change in this specific attitude captures the radicalisation process through the positive portrayal of Islamist extremist groups such as Daesh in online news. There is a lack of support for the willingness to commit to violent extremism. The willingness to use violence for socio-political causes may be a relatively rare characteristic in Malaysia. This potentially explains why a very small minority of Malaysians have been convicted for an offence related to violent extremism (Weintraub, 2017). Malaysia is well-known for its peaceful and diverse community, though the country remains threatened by the Muslim community's rising support for religious extremism (Jaafar & Akhmetova, 2020; Jaafar et al., 2020). The present study is another subsidiary evidence supporting the use of violence, and this remains a concern in Malaysia and could potentially be influenced through Muslim-personalized news frames.

However, the triggering factor changing from mere support to willingness to actively endorse and participate in violent extremist movements requires further investigation. The support for extremism remains to be an issue for the nation, and on rare occasions, a selected number of individuals have committed extremism acts and travelled to foreign nations to join extremist groups (NST Online, 2019; Zack, 2019). The present study has assisted in providing additional evidence to indicate how media news could influence individuals to perceive whether violence by others is acceptable or otherwise. It is highly recommended that future studies investigate individuals' motivational readiness in committing violent extremist activities.

It is an individual decision and aside from various factors that could cause attraction, there are additional personal traits that may

have a stronger influence towards the willingness to use violence. The thought of their in-group being outcasted or oppressed would lead to feeling a sense of belonging to a group with an established identity (Doosje et al., 2013; Rieger et al., 2019; van Bergen et al., 2015). Changes in group entitativity could mediate the changes in support for extremist groups such as Daesh which places emphasis on collectivistic movements. Vulnerable young Muslims with doubts over their identity and belongingness are more prone to seeking out extremist groups that promote a sense of unity (Harris, 2011; Harris et al., 2011). A study by Effron and Knowles (2015) indicated the potential influence of enhanced group entitativity towards the expression of prejudice. However, its potential influence in the Muslim radicalisation process requires future studies to investigate enhanced group entitativity as a mediator for the effects of news frames on radical extremist mindset.

Limitations

The results of the present study must be taken with caution. Although the analysis revealed differences across time and condition, there was no interaction effect between the two. This indicated that, although random assignment was conducted, the difference in the score was noticeable across groups prior to the exposure to news frames. The underlying cause behind this is uncertain. The differences may be merely coincidental as it is observable that even after exposure, the scores between positive and negative frames were noticeably different. Nevertheless, it is recommended that more studies are conducted to examine the effects of news frames' on attitudes towards violent extremism to ascertain whether the changes were unique to the present study, or if the news frame is applicable to the radicalisation process.

Additionally, this study is exclusive to examining the radicalisation process for Islamist extremism. It should be noted that there are various forms of extremist ideologies and movements both within the Southeast Asian region and globally. Future studies need to examine news frames in other forms of extremist ideologies to prevent biased representation in academic research.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings suggest that news reports on violent extremism have the potential to radicalise readers. The present study shows

that varied news frames have differing effects on attitudes towards violent extremism. This indicates that news frames that justify violent extremism could pose a factor in the radicalisation process. In the meantime, news frames that do not propagate extremist movements or refute their legitimacy could also lower individuals' support for violent extremism. Therefore, media regulation requires improved policies to limit public support for violent extremism

Careless reportings may lead readers to support an extremist cause rather than encourage them to avoid it. For instance, they may sympathise with the actors reported in the news or there may be a risk of bias in reporting which may cause them to think that the news producers are projecting stereotypical views on a particular community. The findings can serve as an eye-opener, especially for news reporters working in the field of violent extremism in terms of the importance of appropriate and sensitive media reporting practices so as to get the readers to reject violent extremism rather than side with it. It is also recommended that the public is educated on the harms of violent extremist groups to prevent them from identifying with their movement.

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The PRC'S Military Strategies on the Security Architecture of East and South China Sea under President Xi Jinping

Lokman Karadag*

Abstract: This paper analyses the four main military strategies of the People's Republic of China towards the security architecture of East and South China Sea under President Xi Jinping. These strategies cover a region that has been under the US alliance system's security umbrella since the Cold War. This paper demonstrates that the People's Republic of China, under the current leadership, seeks to reorder the regional security architecture to its favour by leveraging military modernisation, influence operations and diplomatic-economic power to remove the influence of the US and its allies over the East and South China Sea. The present study argues that the successful conclusion of the rising power's strategies over the East and South China Sea will translate the current geopolitical rivalry into a power transition to the detriment of the established power.

Keywords: China, Xi Jinping, East China Sea, South China Sea, power transition

Abstrak: Kajian ini menganalisis empat strategi ketenteraan utama Republik Rakyat China ke arah seni bina keselamatan Laut China Timur dan Selatan di bawah Presiden Xi Jinping. Strategi ini meliputi wilayah yang telah berada di bawah naungan keselamatan sistem perikatan Amerika Syarikat (AS) sejak Perang Dingin. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa Republik Rakyat China, di bawah kepimpinan semasa, berusaha untuk menyusun semula seni bina keselamatan serantau untuk memihak kepada mereka dengan memanfaatkan pemodenan ketenteraan, mempengaruhi operasi dan

* Lokman Karadag is a Ph.D. candidate at Department of Political Science, AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. Email: karadaglokman@windowslive.com.

kuasa diplomatik-ekonomi untuk menghapuskan pengaruh AS dan sekutunya ke atas Laut China Timur dan Selatan. Tinjauan semasa ini menyimpulkan bahawa kejayaan strategi kuasa meningkat China ke atas Laut China Timur dan Selatan akan menterjemahkan persaingan geopolitik terkini kepada peralihan kuasa sehingga menjejaskan kuasa yang sedia ada.

Kata kunci: China, Xi Jinping, Laut China Timur, Laut China Selatan, peralihan kuasa.

Introduction

The military strategies of the People's Republic of China (PRC) towards the country's most critical flank, the East and South China Sea, have undergone tremendous changes since President Xi Jinping came to power in 2013. The fundamental strategies towards the security architecture covering the East and South China Sea, which had long been dominated by the security umbrella of the US alliance system, began implementation after President Xi's authority was fully established over all critical positions at military ranks and government levels. Since the US's decision to pivot to Asia during the Obama administration in 2012, the region consisting of the East and South China Sea has become an area where the current global hegemon US and the rising power PRC come face to face, and where rivalries and frictions are deepening day by day (De C., 2013, pp. 331–349). The East and South China Sea region is vital to the PRC for several reasons. First and foremost, the region has become an area where China's greatest enemies are deploying their military assets at the highest level, posing a direct threat to its national security and territorial integrity. Moreover, almost all of the country's energy supply and vital sea lines of communication pass through this region; Taiwan and the strategic ports of the country, which have also become a matter of national security, are also located here. The region, which has become an area of enduring rivalry and friction, leaves the PRC with many security perils in the East and South China Sea, including pressure and military threats from the US alliance system, conflicts, and claims with neighbouring countries in the territorial sea and maritime zones. Without fully controlling and dominating the East and South China Sea, the PRC will not be able to secure its national

security and territorial integrity and break the first island chain to open the Western Pacific.

The geo-economic and geostrategic importance of the region, which is rich in natural resources, further complicates the nature of conflict and rivalry between the parties. The oil transportation of East Asia through the East and South China Sea, which is the centre of East Asia's energy corridor, is more than six times the amount passing through the Suez Canal and more than 17 times the amount passing through the Panama Canal. About two-thirds of South Korea's energy supply, about 60 percent of Japan's and Taiwan's energy supply and about 80 percent of China's crude oil imports pass through the East and South China Sea. It also has 7 billion barrels of proven oil reserves and an estimated 900 trillion cubic feet of natural gas (Kaplan, 2011). The deepening crisis between the two great powers in such an area brings global effects far beyond the regional consequences. Losing or winning the struggle by any of the parties in this region will result in losing or seizing global supremacy.

Essentially, the failure of the US to contain the rising PRC will lead to the loss of its global supremacy, and the loss of the PRC will mean that its quest for global leadership will be imprisoned behind the first island chain. The PRC implemented the following strategies under the leadership of Xi Jinping to turn the security architecture and the regional dominance in its favour in the East and South China Sea, where tensions have reached a global dimension, and many great powers are already involved.

The present article discusses and analyses the four main military strategies of the PRC towards the East and South China Sea under Xi Jinping. These strategies include the militarisation of the South China Sea and the nine-dash line, the establishment of an air defence identification zone over the East China Sea, the reunification of Taiwan and the breach of the first island chain. Here, I argue that the successful implementation of the rising power's strategies over the East and South China Sea will translate the current geopolitical competition into a power transition to the detriment of the established power.

Militarisation of the South China Sea and Nine-Dash Line

The militarisation of the South China Sea, especially with artificial islands, is one of the overall and comprehensive pillars of the PRC's military strategies towards the East and South China Sea. The breaking of the US influence in Asia and the Pacific, as well as the rise of the PRC as a global superpower by securing its national sovereignty against external interventions, depends entirely on the success of this strategy. For this purpose, the PRC is militarising the South China Sea as much as possible. Although the PRC's claims over the South China Sea and the foundations of the nine-dash line strategy date back to the early 1900s, China's maritime policy has been very consistent since the leadership of Deng Xiaoping; however, China is now more capable and determined than ever to safeguard its maritime rights. Overall, China has not changed its shelving disputes and national defence policies (Bo & Yanpei, 2019). Besides rapid economic growth and military capabilities, PRC's practical applications of military strategies towards the South China Sea have changed tremendously since Xi Jinping came to power in 2013.

PRC has followed much more centralised policies over the South China Sea from 2013 onwards. Apart from administrative buildings, hospitals, and sports complexes, some runways can land fighter jets equipped with defensive systems, radar antennae, and radio systems intended to monitor the area around them. Beijing has established such installations on Spratly Island and other massive artificial islands. Moreover, China has built hidden submarine tunnels on the country's south coast since 1990. The facilities with several entrances can house large vessels and nuclear submarines. To this date, People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) submarines, such as the 094 Jin-class submarines, visited the Yulin base on Hainan Island, where centres of naval and air communication with remote island in the South China Sea (Kanwa Intelligence Review, 2006). The PRC's military construction of dual-use facilities, including missile shelters on the Spratly Islands, Fiery Cross, Mischief, and Subi Reefs, started quickly after Xi Jinping came to power. The missiles and defence systems, including anti-ship missiles deployed on the Spratly Islands groups, will allow PLAN to operate over nearly the entire South China Sea and further sophisticate its power

project capability within the region. The radar and missile deployment on the island group would extend People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s A2/AD capabilities in the South China Sea and strongly deter the US and allied forces from interference in the Taiwan Strait. Additionally, radar systems would detect any missiles fired from the US military assets in the East and South China Sea or the Pacific, or any other US bases in the region. The military construction in the South China Sea was not limited to naturally emerged islands; for instance, the PLA expanded the Fiery Cross Reef over two square kilometres in order to construct an airstrip and harbour between 2014 and 2017 (AMTI, 2017). On the other hand, satellite images show that from at least early 2016, the PLA has deployed the HQ-9 (Hongqi-9) missile defence system and landed its J-11 fighter jets on Woody Island, which is the largest feature of the Paracel Islands group, on which the PRC claims full and undisputed sovereignty, unlike the Spratly Islands (The Diplomat, 2016). Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence (MND) spokesperson has also confirmed the PLA's deployment of advanced surface-to-air missile systems to Woody Island (Focus Taiwan, 2016).



Figure 1.1: Satellite Images of the Military Installation of the PRC in the South China Sea (AMTI, 2017).

Despite all efforts by PRC, the South China Sea is still an area that poses severe threat to its national security and territorial integrity and is a region that contains many obstacles to becoming a global superpower.

Ensuring the security of maritime communication and trade routes through the South China Sea, the vulnerability of national security over Taiwan, disputes with stakeholders of the South China Sea and the significance of breaching the first island chain are among the most urgent issues for PRC.

The safety of the trade routes used by the PRC – whose economy is fundamentally dependent on its economic rise – for its oil imports and goods export depends entirely on the security situation in the South China Sea. In times of war, if the maritime trade routes and sea lines of communication in the South China Sea are blocked, PRC's economy will face a complete standstill (Keyuan, 2021). On the other hand, Chinese aircraft carriers, nuclear-warhead attack submarines, and other littoral combat ships sailing to the north, central and west Pacific via the South China Sea are vulnerable to Taiwan's intelligence and surveillance. Due to its geopolitical location, Taiwan, located both within the South China Sea and only 100 miles from the mainland, stands as a highly strategic and threatening asset for the PRC. A Taiwan fully-integrated within the US regional alliance system is in a highly deadly base position to hit the mainland in case of war. Such national security issues, formerly strictly defined as defence issues between China and Taiwan, have gradually expanded to include the defence dimension and turned into a paradox for the parties (Clark & Chan, 1991). On the other hand, Taiwan stands as a strategic buffer belt in front of the PRC to breach the first island chain, push the US's influence towards the Pacific and become a global superpower.

The history of the dispute between the PRC, its neighbouring countries, and the colonial powers over the South China Sea goes back a hundred years. Admiral Sa Zhenbing, the Commander-in-Chief of Qing China's post-1900 navy, even led a naval expedition to the waters of the South China Sea in 1907 to enforce China's claim. In the beginning of 1909 and 1910, modernised Qing navy conducted several operations in the South China Sea and formally annexed many islands to Guangdong province and sent a ship every year to the South China Sea to maintain contact with overseas Chinese living in these islands (Holloway & Swanson, 1982). In the 1930s, many of these islands were occupied by the Japanese. Many strategic islands, including Paratas Island

and Taiping Island, remain under Taiwan's control despite China's protests. These conflicts continued before and after the Second World War, during the Cold War and at the beginning of the 21st century; it even evolved into armed conflicts from time to time. Although China and ASEAN-affiliated countries agreed in 2002 to try to resolve all outstanding disputes peacefully, no results could be reached because the PRC reiterated its claim to the entire Spratly Islands group, and Taiwan was not invited to sign the agreement (Bateman & Emmers, 2008).

By rapidly expanding the number of aircraft carriers and strengthening the submarine fleet, PLAN increasingly puts pressure on ASEAN-affiliated stakeholders such as Vietnam, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Indonesia in the South China Sea (Hong, 2013, pp. 27–43). At the same time, military friction keeps getting worse with the United States, which is rapidly increasing its air and naval capacity around the South China Sea. The PLA's A2/AD capability, which has been further consolidated since Xi Jinping came to power, enables PLAN to engage in more ambitious activities in the South China Sea and challenge the United States (Permal, 2014).

The ongoing competition and frictions in the South China Sea are an area of strategic rivalry beyond the efforts of two superpowers and their allies, where there is a fierce battle to steer the new world order. From ideology to political history, hundred years of experience from both sides in the sea and land geopolitics has been included in all dimensions of this rivalry. As Kaplan, based on Spykman's idea, argues, the East and South China Sea for China is similar to the Caribbean Sea for the United States (Kaplan, 2019). As Mackinder and others note, the inner seas close to a rising power are contested by great powers, and they are a springboard for a rising power to become a world power (Kaplan, 2009). The United States recognised the presence and claims of European powers in the Caribbean but nevertheless sought to dominate the region. The closure of the American frontier in 1890 coincided with Mahan's publication of the *Influence of the Sea Power Upon History* (Mahan, 1890).

Moreover, domination of the Greater Caribbean Basin gave the United States effective control of the Western Hemisphere. This tilted the balance of power in the Eastern Hemisphere to the US. It will be

likewise with China. China's position vis-à-vis the South China Sea in the twenty-first century is akin to America's position vis-à-vis the Caribbean Sea in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Under Xi Jinping, PRC has extended its control not only over the South China Sea but also over the entire seas off China's coast, including the East China Sea. In his summit with President Obama at the White House in 2015, Xi promised that PRC would never militarise the artificial islands being reclaimed in the South China Sea. However, it was later discovered that the islands had been militarised. Okuyama argued that Xi Jinping felt that President Obama and Washington were still in a weak position after the 2008 Global Financial Crisis because President Obama enlisted the help of Beijing to rebuild America's financial markets. Since then, the PRC has moved on to establish inner sea dominance, and such practice has been the most significant change in terms of altering the status quo in favour of the PRC in the near seas, especially in the South China Sea, under the leadership of Xi Jinping (Okuyama, 2021).

All soft and hard power dynamics that would trigger a power transition have been combined and put into practice by PRC during Xi Jinping in the South and East China Sea (Stashwick, 2019, paras 1–7). PRC heavily concentrated on the militarisation of both seas and fought to push the US and its ally's military assets beyond the first island chain. For the time being, the US cannot deter PRC alone. In case of war, if it cannot successfully defend Taiwan or the Philippines, the US will lose its decades-long hegemony in East Asia and Pacific Region.

Establishment of Air Defence Identification Zone Over the East China Sea

The Chinese Government first announced the establishment of an air defence identification zone (ADIZ) on November 23, 2013 (Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union, 2013). The new ADIZ was announced eight months after Xi Jinping had come to power and underestimated the existing ADIZ in the region, established by the United States in 1950, to reduce the risk of a surprise attack from the Soviet Union. The ADIZ covers a significant part of the East China Sea contiguous to the east and north coastline of the PRC and overlaps in some areas with the ADIZs of South Korea, Japan and Taiwan. It also includes the airspace above several islands, rocks and reefs currently

disputed by Japan and South Korea, including the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and the Suyan Jiao/Ieodo Rock, respectively (Swaine, 2014). ADIZ gained strong opposition from the regional countries. Japan demanded evacuation while the US ignored PRC's ADIZ and continued its air operations over the East China Sea. South Korea expressed "formal regrets". Australia summoned the Chinese ambassador to voice its "opposition," and the Philippines criticised the Chinese threat to safety and national security as well as future control over the South China Sea while Germany and the European Union voiced similar concerns over the armed conflict in the region (Michael, 2014). PRC's response claimed that establishing an ADIZ over the East China Sea is legal, not a threat to any neighbouring countries, safeguards state sovereignty, territorial land, and air security, maintains flight order and has always respected the freedom of over-flight with respect to international law (Mission of the People's Republic of China to the European Union, 2013).

There are various rationales behind the declaration of the Air Defence Identification Zone over the East China Sea by the Chinese People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) in 2013. First and foremost, the reason behind the declaration of ADIZ is an effort to push US and allied forces away from PRC's near seas and areas of core interest by consolidating air and naval operation areas in the South and East China Sea. Secondly, by establishing an ADIZ over the East China Sea, PRC aims to strictly integrate its air and sea commands under Northern Theatre and thwart any possible adversary challenge to the PRC's growing anti-access/area-denial capabilities (A2/AD). Another crucial reason behind the declaration of ADIZ over the East China Sea is the Japanese Government's nationalisation of the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands in Okinawa. The ADIZ provides a legal framework for PRC's complaints about US- and Japanese-led intelligence-gathering flights near the Northern Theatre borders of the PRC and for radar tracking and harassment of adversary aircrafts that fail to report flight plans to PRC authorities. Although the US and its allied countries declare that they did not recognise ADIZ declared by the PRC, ADIZ's framework will allow PRC to better monitor and restrict foreign military activity in what it defines as its immediate seas.

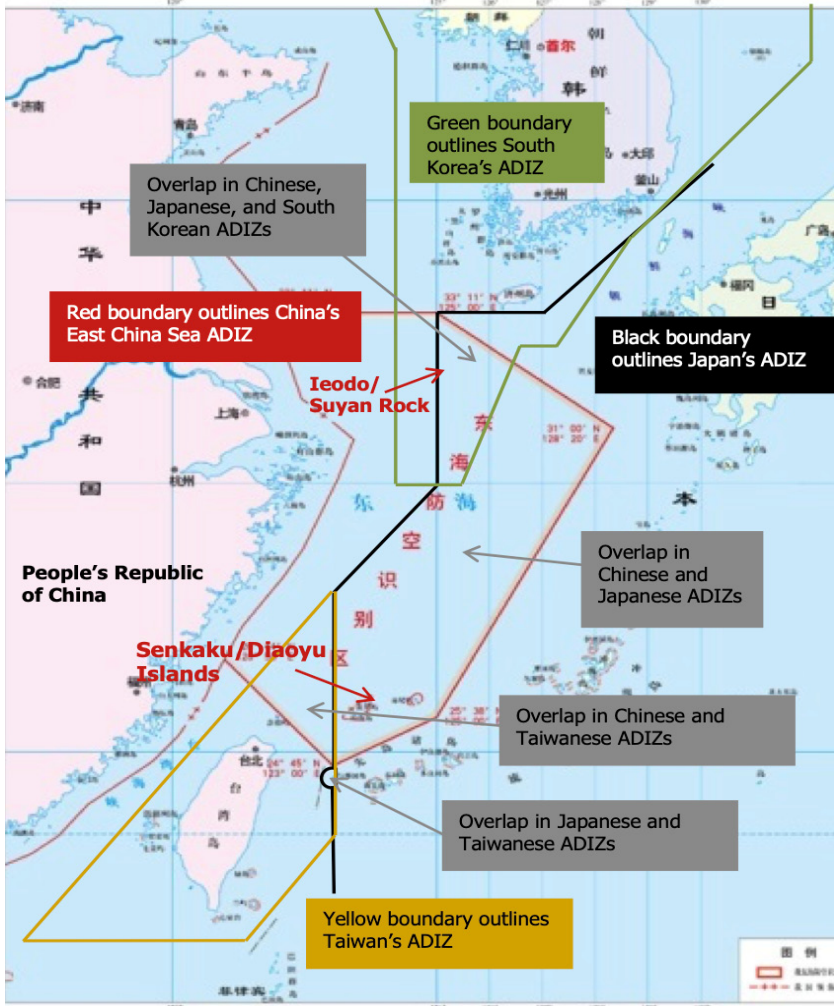


Figure 1.2. Map of country ADIZs around the East China Sea, showing overlapping areas and disputed territories. Modified from “Statement by the Government of the People’s Republic of China on Establishing the East China Sea Air Defense Identification Zone,” Xinhua, November 23, 2013. Zone illustrations and English annotations by Audrye Wong.

PRC’s ADIZ, established in 2013, includes the Senkaku Islands within its scope, and its intention seems to be to strengthen control in the East China Sea and China’s position regarding the Senkaku Islands. From a legal point of view, the ADIZ is set up over international

airspace and thus allows “freedom of overflight,” which does not give the setting country grounds to take coercive action against foreign aircrafts. However, PRC has stated that it can take “defensive and emergency measures” within the ADIZ, which is understood to include the implementation of military measures, which may not be consistent with the principles of international law concerning freedom of flight over the high seas. Concerning Japan’s security, it is believed that by setting up this ADIZ, China intends to scramble its fighter jets against aircraft approaching the Senkaku Islands, which may result in an accidental conflict (Yoshihiro, 2021).

Although the PRC could not effectively employ the ADIZ, which it has established over the East China Sea since 2013, it provides a significant opportunity for the PLAN to track aircraft and submarines belonging to the US, Japan and partially Taiwan and ensure the integration of naval and air domains. The combination of the East China Sea ADIZ with a similar one to be established over the South China Sea will doubly increase the manoeuvring capability of the PLA and PLAAF in controlling, tracking and denying enemy incursions from the East China coast to the first island chain.

Reunification Of Taiwan

The Taiwan dilemma is a centrepiece of all the other four strategies of the PRC identified here. Due to its close relationship with the United States, the Taiwan issue plays a primary and complementary role in the success of other related PRC strategies. The geostrategic location of Taiwan, which is only at 100 miles distance from the east coast of mainland China, can upset all the strategic calculations of the PRC. First and foremost, Taiwan gives a platform for all kinds of military activities to the US in a war scenario. By using the military bases on the independent island, the US will be able to strike the PLA’s most strategic commands on the mainland, which maintains its mobile, ground-based and all other kinds of hypersonic, ballistic and nuclear silos. Furthermore, even in peacetime, Taiwan’s significant geostrategic and technological advancement to track the PLA, PLAN and PLARF’s activities in all military theatres and share the intelligence outcomes with the US and allied countries leave the PRC’s ambitions in the East and South China Sea in significant uncertainty. Since the 1980s, the decision-makers in Beijing have been busy devising strategies and

military plans to counterbalance and counterattack the adversaries' attack on PRC. However, under Xi Jinping's decisive leadership, the capabilities of the PRC match for the first time in its history with its strategies and military-economic capacity to invade Taiwan and unite the independent island with the mainland PRC. Apart from being an obstacle to the PRC's power projection into the region, Taiwan still stands as a diplomatic burden and political hindrance before the PRC due to its democratic structure and relations with other like-minded democratic countries around the world. For the first time in PRC's history, Beijing's capabilities have reached a level that aligns with its long-standing intentions to 'reunify' Taiwan during Xi Jinping's reign. Xi Jinping has demonstrated little patience for the vague cross-strait status quo and sees Taiwan's question as a dangerous threat to the PRC's national security and territorial integrity.

Jin Canrong argued that if China successfully takes over Taiwan, it will replace the US as the world's 'Big Boss'. According to Canrong, the first gain is that if PRC takes over Taiwan, PRC will face the Pacific Ocean directly, and therefore their geopolitical position will instantly improve. Second, if the Taiwan issue is settled, the PRC's century-old national humiliation will be entirely overturned. Taiwan is the last chapter in PRC's century-old national humiliation. Turning this page will be like turning over a century of humiliation. Third, the resolution of the Taiwan issue will cement the definition of Xi Jinping's Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in a new era.

Fourth, since all previous battles of the PLA in the past 72 years since the founding of the PRC are self-defence counterattacks when the enemies are at the gate, the reunification of Taiwan by resisting US supremacy will raise the status of the PLA to a higher level. Canrong further argued that Taiwan is the source of all kinds of colour revolutions in mainland China. Moreover, Taiwan pays democratic activists and separatists in Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet behind the door. Therefore, resolving the Taiwan issue will bring political and domestic stability to the PRC. According to Canrong, several other economic, geopolitical and geostrategic issues relate to the Taiwan issue. Therefore, the Taiwan issue is PRC's top military priority. PRC has invested many resources in solving the Taiwan issue; many military bases are deployed, starting from Shandong, then Jiangsu, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong

and Hainan Island. All these military facilities between Taiwan and mainland can be significantly reduced when the Taiwan issue is resolved.

Moreover, related to the military friction between PRC and the US in the East and South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, military reasons cause 70% of civil flight delays. As soon as the planes from Taiwan, Japan, the US and Australia take off, Chinese jets are scrambled, affecting civilian flight schedules. The country's flight on-time rate will significantly improve by resolving the Taiwan issue. The last point of Canrong is that the Taiwan issue is a diplomatic burden for PRC. According to the statistics from Tsinghua University, they spend about 30 billion RMB on maintaining this pledge yearly. With the Taiwan problem resolved through unification with the mainland, no country or country leader can bully and demand extortion from the PRC over the democratic island anymore (Jin, 2021).

In PRC's Military Strategy documents, the Taiwan question has always been evaluated under the National Security title with PRC's other domestic issues, such as the separatist movements in Tibet and Xinjiang. The 2015 China's Military Strategy document identified the "Taiwan independence" separatist forces and their activities as the biggest threat to the peaceful development of cross-strait relations. Additionally, the document mentioned that the PRC faces the difficult task of maintaining political security and social stability, and the root cause of instability has not been eliminated yet because of the de facto situation on the democratic island (The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 2015).

The current geostrategic dilemma of Taiwan turned into a blind knot and has numerous drawbacks and vulnerabilities against PRC. Although geographical positioning has advantages, such as its mountainous terrain and practicality for implementing multi-layered defensive strategies that make it difficult to conquer Taiwan, this does not mean that the PRC lacks the military capability to invade and reunite the Island. The PRC has numerous superiorities over Taiwan. In economic aspects, Taiwan has been bearing the brunt of being exposed to the PRC's economic coercion. Moreover, such coercions have led Taiwan to find alternatives for many years, such as diversifying its relations and going to other countries and the Go South policy (Simona, 2022). Another domestic issue to be mentioned in Taiwan is

the political divisions. Taiwan is politically divided between the DPP (Democratic Progress Party) and The Kuomintang (KMT). The KMT is the second largest party on the Island, and it is known for its close ties with the PRC. However, recently there is a significant decrease seen in the popularity of the KMT, especially among the new generation, primarily because of the suppression of the protests in Hong Kong by the PRC, the implementation of National Security Law in Hong Kong, PRC's attitudes towards Taiwan and the party's close stance to the PRC. Moreover, the intricacies and impediments of Taiwan make the democratic island a weak link in the US competition with the PRC in East Asia and the Pacific (Ellis, 2016)

The democratic island has always been in crisis with the mainland over time. The anti-secession law in 2005, and before that, PRC fired missiles towards the Taiwan Strait in 1995 (Ross, 2000, pp. 87–123). However, since Xi Jinping came to power, present crises have become almost routine, and Taiwan's military airspaces began to be violated by PLAARF unprecedentedly in provocative and persistent ways (Trent, 2020). Since January 2019, there has been an increase in speeches and rhetoric about Taiwan under Xi Jinping's administration, equating Taiwan with the Chinese dream and national rejuvenation. Although the history of accusations against Taiwan dates to the discourses in PRC's communication and political documents in 1979, the allegations against Taiwan turned into a much harsher tone in 2019. For the first time, the independent island has been accused of preventing the PRC from achieving its national goal and national rejuvenation. The US entered a strategic competition with the PRC and the simultaneous western countries raising their voices on Taiwan brought the PRC under Xi Jinping to a much more nervous level about Taiwan. Therefore, the PRC hardened its actions against Taiwan at an unprecedented level in PRC history because it perceived the developments in Taiwan had the potential to lead to a temporary separation and become a permanent divorce of Taiwan from the PRC (Simona, 2022).

The successful reunification of Taiwan with the mainland will turn the strategic game totally in favour of the PRC. Especially in its strategic competition with the US, it will further expand its military capability to target the US military assets in the East China Sea, South China Sea, and military bases in the Pacific. The negotiations are complex with Democratic Progressive Party President Tsai Ing-Wen in

power. Cross-strait relations can improve if the opposition candidate of Kuomintang wins the election in 2024, but Kuomintang has not had enough support and popularity to resist DPP. Since the PRC believes that the ways to unify Taiwan with the mainland peacefully are entirely over, all its strategies focus on removing the US and its allies' military assets from the South and East China Sea as much as possible. Canrong said that once the National Congress of the Communist Party of China is over in the fall of 2022, the scenario of armed unification will move towards becoming a reality. The leadership will likely move towards armed unification by 2027, the 100th anniversary of the PLA's founding (Tsukasa, 2022).

Aims To Breach the First Island Chain

In its broadest definition, the first island chain, starting from the Japanese archipelago and ending southward in Borneo and Natuna Besar, are island chains with strategic and geographical definitions. Chinese scholars trace the origins of the first island chain concept to US strategic thought during the early years of the Cold War. To them, the archipelagic framework was the most concrete indication of American belligerence towards the newly founded PRC. Chinese commentators also quote Dean Acheson, US Secretary of State under President Harry Truman, who in 1950 sketched a "defence perimeter of the Pacific" that ran along the Aleutians, Japan, Okinawa, and the Philippines. MacArthur argued that control of "a chain of islands extending in an arc from the Aleutians to the Marianas" would enable the United States to dominate with sea and air power every Asiatic port from Vladivostok to Singapore and prevent any hostile movement into the Pacific (Yoshihara, 2012).

Chinese sources offer various perspectives on the island chains' operational and strategic significance. In particular, various Chinese scholars maintain that the island chains are

1. Barriers that the PRC must penetrate to achieve freedom of manoeuvre in the maritime domain,
2. Springboards for power projection by whoever controls a given island chain, and
3. Benchmarks for advancing PRC's maritime and air force projection in the Asia-Pacific.

The Chinese military sources differentiated the geographical definition of the first island chain. Some dwell on the overall geographic descriptions of island chains while others deal with the strategic value of critical links in island chains. In this regard, while some Chinese sources define Taiwan as a Strategic Puncture Point, others see Japan as a critical position due to its close relations with the US, and some see the Philippines as the most vulnerable position on the island chains. The waterways and straits within the first island chain are other strategic points in PLAN activities. There are almost 140 waterways within the first island chain, but only 20 or more passages frequently are used by PRC's vessels or warships to access beyond the first island chain (Erickson & Wuthnow, 2016). The geographical and strategic definition of the first island chain leads to determining the tactical and operational capability level of PLAN and PLAAF over the first island chain in historical and ideological rivalry perspectives.



Figure 1.3: Island Chains in PLA Navy Handbook (PLAN, 2012)

The first island chain, which can be defined as a line drawn in front of the rise of communism in Asia during the Cold War, has become visible again in the academic field, with the US-PRC rivalry reaching the global level. These two superpowers are putting forward various strategies to control these island chains. Gaining one of the military build-ups and competition accumulated on these island chains will be one step closer to global domination. The PRC, which thinks it is surrounded by the US and its allies and incarcerated in the first island chain, carries out a sum of all other designs to break the first island chain.

The strategy of breaking the first island chain is the conclusive step of all other component strategies of the PRC to upend the US dominance in East Asia completely, turn the status quo entirely in its favour in the near seas and move towards the second island chains and the western Pacific without facing any threat (Tkacik, 2018, pp. 321–344). The first island chain simultaneously is a two-way street in the US-PRC engagements. The PRC pushed the US and its allies beyond the first island chain while the US and its allies worked hard to keep PRC's military assets behind the island chains. To sail towards the Pacific, become a global naval power, and push the US from the region, the first island chain is mainly defined as the destiny line for China. Countries such as the US, Japan, Australia, and even India constantly hold exercises in this region. In this respect, Japan recently announced that it would deploy missile defence systems on the first island chain, which is seen as absolutely will prevent China from crossing the first island chain and opening to the Pacific. The first island chain is a baseline for Japan to contain China's power in the East China Sea and prevent it from expanding into the Pacific Ocean. For this reason, Japan plans to deploy its Self-Defense Forces' surface-to-air and surface-to-ship missile units to islands in the first island chain (Louise, 2021). This case is considered an essential element of the A2/AD against China. Even today, China frequently sends many warships and military aircraft beyond the first island line into the Pacific Ocean, but this is a peacetime event and not much of a problem. However, in wartime, such actions by the Chinese side would be very problematic because they could lead to attacks on Japan's military facilities on the Pacific side of the ocean or even on US military bases such as Guam. Therefore, Japan could probably practically blockade the first island chain in wartime. For example, it might deploy mines and submarines in

the major straits, including the Miyako Strait, and control the sea and air space with surface-to-ship and surface-to-air missiles in coordination with US forces (Yoshihiro, 2021).

The strategic importance of the first island chain has an exceptionally complex map. The geolocation of the island chains consists of the adjacent waters of the East and South China Sea. The maritime lifeline that Japan depends upon for its imports and exports is also the only waterway for PRC's eastward entry into the Pacific, the United States' westward entry into East Asia, and Russia's southward movement (Yoshihara, 2012, pp. 293–314). Moreover, PRC's strategies face the technological advancement of the island country Japan. In a war case, the Japanese MSDF's advanced submarine capabilities still have enough power and technological advancement to block the chokepoints along the Miyako Strait and Ryukyus through which PLAN warships and submarines try to pass to break out of the first island chain. In this respect, Japan played a critical role in pushing PLAN behind the first island chain barrier through offensive mine warfare, electromagnetic warfare technology, and missile units deployed across the Ryukyu Islands chain with ballistic and cruise missile strikes, among some other significant challenges that the PLA/N faces in its way to breach the first island chain and open the western Pacific. With the agreement of the US to transfer nuclear submarine technology to Australia under the AUKUS agreement, another US ally in the region will be able to deploy a nuclear-powered submarine fleet to the East and South China Sea (Peter, 2022). However, despite the military and technological superiority of the US and its allies, pushing the PRC, which has reached a high military and technological capacity, behind the first island chain with military approaches would bring the possibility of a hot war breaking out with high costs.

Those four military strategies mentioned above and implemented in the South and East China Sea are planned under the Northern, Eastern, Southern, and Central Theatre Commands, which were established under the chairmanship of Xi Jinping

in 2016. The PLA formally abandoned the seven decades-old military regions in 2016 and replaced them with five operational commands (North, South, East, West, and Central regions) responsible for regional defence. The PLA, PLAAF, PLARF, and the PLA Strategic Support Force (SSF)'s power projection capability has grown tremendously (Ziyu, 2021). The PRC's overall strategy aims to achieve "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" by 2049 to match or surpass US global influence and power, replace US alliances and security partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region, and alter the international order to be more advantageous to Beijing and PRC's national interests. Achievement of these goals and replacing the US as a global superpower depends entirely on neutralising the presence of the US and its allies in the East and South China Sea, pushing them beyond the first island chain, and opening to the Pacific Ocean. In this context, since Xi Jinping came to power, significant successes have been achieved in military modernisation, navy, air force, rocket forces, and strategic support forces, which are ways to achieve these successes. An enormous economic boom also supports these achievements of the PRC. Furthermore, these four strategies are tightly interconnected and intertwined with each other. Unification of Taiwan with the mainland is impossible unless the status quo in the South and East China Seas changes entirely in favour of the PRC through militarisation methods and strategies. The PLA cannot set up military platforms and break the island chains without unifying Taiwan with the mainland. Taiwan is the cornerstone target among these strategies. Because air, sea, and submarine fleets of the PRC on their way to the Pacific Ocean must pass under surveillance and track by the Taiwanese military. Although ADIZ, which was established on the East China Sea in 2013, seems like the weakest link among strategies, it was activated against Japan, which played the most critical role in the US's containment and deterrence strategies against PRC, and since Japan is the most powerful country in East Asia after PRC. Threats from Japan can be eliminated much more quickly through the established ADIZ over the East China Sea and

disputed areas such as Senaku/Diaoyu Islands. ADIZ will give much more comfortable manoeuvring space for PLAN's Aircraft Carriers and submarines around Miyako Strait and Ryuku Islands through island chains. The latest "Indo-Pacific Strategy Report" published by the US claimed that the Indo-Pacific region is facing increasing challenges, especially from China, which is seeking a sphere of influence in the region by combining its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power. The United States encourages Japan to strengthen cooperation with allies and partners to meet these challenges and compete with China. The report also mentioned that the United States would strive to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, including by supporting Taiwan's self-defence capabilities (The White House, 2022).

In response to the PRC's rapid militarisation of the East and South China Sea through various ways and strategies, the United States is strengthening and deepening its presence in the region with a much broader perspective. Forward deployment of strategic bombers, nuclear-armed aircraft carriers, nuclear-armed ballistic submarines, air defence systems, and intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition, and reconnaissance among the main strategic components of the warfare capabilities has been almost fully activated throughout the region to contain PRC's activities. In addition to the technical stuff, the US is in a great deal to re-strengthen the US's military bilateral, trilateral and multilateral alliance network across the Indo-Pacific region (Colby, 2021), establish Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) with Australia, India, and Japan, and establish the AUKUS, a trilateral security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States for nuclear-powered submarine and nuclear technology sharing with Australia established to target the PRC directly. China has described the military grouping led by the US as closed and exclusive "cliques" targeting other countries, (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, 2021). Furthermore, the United States has increased its support for Taiwan, both for sophisticated military

equipment and for the modernisation of Taiwan's military to the highest level in history (Defense News, 2022). In addition to the technical support, the visit of Nancy Pelosi, the third most senior government official of the US, to Taipei, despite all the objections of Beijing, was a formidable commitment of the US to support Taiwan against any attempts of invasion from the PRC, (Arms Control Today, 2022).

PRC equated the Taiwanese-related sections in the Biden administration's newly published 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy with the playing with fire and stated that these contents constitute a significant intervention in the PRC's internal affairs and a violation of the one-China principle and the basic norms regulating international relations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of China, 2022). Relatedly, PRC is also strictly angry with military activity between US-Japan and Taiwan in the South China Sea. Such activities are perceived by the PRC as a direct intervention in Beijing's internal affairs, seriously threatening peace, and stability across the straits, violating international rules, violating the sovereignty of other countries, and causing regional turmoil (General of the Information Office of the Ministry of National Defence, 2022).

The recent Russian invasion of Ukraine has created some golden opportunities for Beijing in its struggle with the US and allied countries in Asia and the Pacific region. The crisis has demonstrated in several ways that the US-led liberal international order is in a much weaker position vis-à-vis the PRC for several reasons. First and foremost, the similarities between Ukraine and Taiwan and the inability of the US, EU, and NATO to physically intervene in war vis a vis Russia and the fact that the pressures against Russia were limited to sanctions only further strengthened the desire of the PRC to reunify Taiwan with the mainland. Decision-makers in Beijing follow and observe the Ukraine crisis, which unleashes all the military, diplomatic and economic potentials of its previous rival very closely to learn lessons for their Taiwan question. The Ukraine crisis, which has emerged

as a new front, distraction area, and financial burden for PRC's rivals, simultaneously offers Beijing an opportunity to combine its economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to create a more robust sphere of influence in the East and South China Sea, where its similar issue with Taiwan is located. From the first days of the invasion, Beijing blamed the US and NATO for the Ukraine crisis since Russia's invasion of Ukraine was a front opened against the US global hegemony where the PRC was fighting to destroy from another side. In China's Five-Point Position on the current Ukraine issue, State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that the reasons behind Russia's invasion of Ukraine were that NATO followed five consecutive eastward expansion tours and Russia's legitimate security demands were not taken seriously. Beijing further claims that NATO's involvement in Ukraine is a Cold War mentality instead of serving peace and stability in the region and fuelling the tension between parties (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, 2022).

Secondly, another situation that emerged with the Ukraine crisis is that the US and the EU need Beijing to solve the Ukraine crisis (South China Morning Post, 2022). The US and EU leaders called on Beijing due to its close relations with Russia in the ongoing war and asked Beijing to pressure Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine (Gabriel, et al., 2022). Such weak demands from NATO allies provide more alternative platforms for the PRC to further increase its negotiating power with the United States over Ukraine. CIA's director William Burns in his appearance at the annual House of Representatives Intelligence Committee claimed that although PRC has been unsettled by the difficulties Russia has faced since it invaded Ukraine, Chinese leader Xi Jinping's determination regarding Taiwan should not be underestimated. Burns believed that Ukraine's resistance vis a vis Russia's invasion impacted the PRC's calculus regarding Taiwan (David & Michael, 2022). Though there are significant differences between Ukraine and Taiwan, existing military relations between PRC

and Russia can further strengthen when Russia is under massive sanctions from more than 140 countries worldwide. NATO's long-term preoccupation with Russia's expansion in Europe can turn the PRC's invasion of Taiwan into a *fait accompli*. Such a case will lead to the PRC breaching the first island chains much more quickly and ending the US hegemony in East Asia and the Pacific and Pacific Region.

Although some analysts claim that the Ukrainian War will have severe consequences for the PRC, Peking has not made any restrictions on its activities in the East and South China Sea, the main front of the encounter with its main rivals. Moreover, it has surrounded Taiwan more violently than in previous years, especially after Pelosi's visit. Furthermore, it conducted critical military training and patrols with Russia surrounding Japan, the biggest ally of the US in the region, (USNI NEWS, 2022). Meanwhile, at the initial of the Ukraine War, several analysts predicted that the Ukraine War would have harsh consequences on the PRC's market, energy, and economic development, (Scott, 2022; Alicia, 2022; Yimei, 2022). However, the latest Statistics released by the National Bureau of Statistics show that PRC's GDP expanded 3.0% YoY in the first three quarters of 2022 to top 87.02 trillion yuan (about \$12.01 trillion), Total imports and exports expanded 9.9% YoY to 31.11 tln yuan (about \$4.29 tln) per capita, and disposable income stood at 27,650 yuan (about \$3,812.06), up 5.3% YoY in nominal terms (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2022).

Conclusion

Compared to the past two decades, the PRC's efforts to challenge and overthrow the global hegemon US and attain a position of international supremacy has evolved in a more realistic direction. The article highlighted that the PRC's growing power projection capability in the East and South China Sea and beyond the first island chain bring serious security challenges to the established power and its allies' circle in East Asia and the Pacific region. Moreover, the assertive military expansionism of the rising power in the East and South China Sea and

the establishment of military blocs and alliances by the established hegemon to contain the PRC make the scenarios of peaceful power transition even more impossible. On the other hand, the full politico-military authority of Xi Jinping in Beijing, the diminished power of the mainland-friendly KMT among the new generation, and the strengthened popularity of the pro-independence DPP has left almost zero room for agreement in cross-strait relations. Contrary to early claims that the Ukrainian War would negatively affect Beijing, the PLA's strategic applications in the East and South China Sea versus its main competitor potentially reached a more advanced level. This article aims to help illuminate the possible consequences of the current military confrontation between the two superpowers in the East and South China Sea in the context of power transition, although some data are limited and inaccessible. Nevertheless, the context was enriched through original Chinese sources and interviews with experts of China and Taiwan from different parts of the world. The finding suggested that the US-PRC competition that has started in the South and East China Sea, and considering the modern warfare capabilities, will become more chronic and spread over the years. As friction between the two opposite superpowers gets worse, the region's countries will be forced to choose sides more drastically. Thus, since this competition bears an existential threat and turns into a matter of life and death for both sides, it can only result in the complete defeat and subordination of one of the parties.

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Mental Well-Being and Religious Values Among Muslims Across Four Cities

Nik A. Hisham Ismail*

Mustafa Tekke**

Ismail Fatah***

Shazmin Rafeeq****

Abstract: Mental well-being as a subject is much integrated with other fields of knowledge. Thus, in this study, chosen variables common to other constructs in different fields of knowledge such as self-development, self-acceptance, personal goal, resilience, piety, hope and social interest were used as significant constructs to correlate positively with mental well-being. The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (W-EMWS) was mainly used to gauge mental well-being among respondents in this study. The focus of the study was to investigate the mental well-being among the diverse Muslim groups in selected cities in different countries with differences in nationalities, cultures, and values. The study was to determine whether religiosity values among the different Muslim groups contributed to their mental well-being. A sample size of 989 respondents was selected from Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Lagos, Nigeria; and London, United Kingdom. The results from this study indicated that several factors such as self-acceptance, social interest, and self-development significantly correlated to mental well-being among Muslim respondents. As predicted, the study shows varying degrees

* Professor, Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia. Email: nikahmad@iium.edu.my

** Associate Professor, Department of Psychological Counselling and Guidance, Duzce University, Republic of Türkiye. Email: mustafatekke@gmail.com

*** Counselling Unit, Directorate of Students' Affairs, Lagos University of Technology, Ikorodu, Lagos, Nigeria. Email: abdulfunmi@gmail.com

**** Assistant Professor, Psychology and Social Sciences, Arden University, Tower Hill, London, United Kingdom. Email: shazminrafeeq@gmail.com

of correlation among the Muslim groups selected in different cities. However, religious values, such as piety and hope were moderately correlated with mental well-being among the Muslim groups. The findings show promising results and future studies should expand into investigating the exploratory modelling of mental well-being and differences in the potential means of religious values across other Muslim countries from different backgrounds.

Keywords: Mental Well-Being, Mental Health, Cross-Culture, Religious Values and Muslim.

Abstrak: Kesejahteraan mental merupakan satu bidang ilmu yang berkait rapat dengan bidang-bidang ilmu lain. Justeru itu, dalam kajian ini, pilihan angkuabah kajian yang biasa ditemui dalam konstruk-konstruk kajian daripada pelbagai bidang ilmu lain seperti pembangunan diri, penerimaan diri, matlamat peribadi, daya tahan, taqwa, harapan dan kepentingan sosial diguna pakai sebagai konstruk signifikan yang dapat menunjukkan korelasi secara positif dengan kesejahteraan mental. Instrumen asal “the *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (W-EMWS)*” digunakan dalam kajian ini untuk mengukur kesejahteraan mental responden kajian. Fokus kajian adalah untuk menyiasat kesejahteraan mental responden Muslim dari pelbagai latar belakang seperti negara, kewarganegaraan, budaya dan nilai-nilai kehidupan. Kajian juga cuba mengenalpasti sama ada faktor keagamaan menyumbang kepada kesejahteraan mental responden dari pelbagai negara tersebut. Sampel kajian seramai 989 responden dipilih dari Istanbul, Republik Turkiye; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Lagos, Nigeria; dan, London, United Kingdom. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan beberapa faktor kajian seperti penerimaan diri, kepentingan sosial dan pembangunan diri berkorelasi secara signifikan dengan kesejahteraan mental responden Muslim dalam kajian ini. Seperti yang telah dijangkakan, kajian juga menunjukkan variasi korelasi antara kesejahteraan mental dan responden dari pelbagai bandaraya pilihan. Walau bagaimanapun, nilai keagamaan, seperti taqwa dan harapan berkorelasi secara sederhana dengan kesejahteraan mental responden dalam kajian ini. Kajian juga menghasilkan dapatan yang menjanjikan peluang terbaik untuk kajian susulan seperti kajian penerokaan model kesejahteraan mental dan potensi nilai-nilai keagamaan di kalangan Muslim dari pelbagai latar belakang.

Kata kunci: Kesejahteraan Mental, Kesihatan Mental, Silang Budaya, Nilai Keagamaan dan Muslim.

Introduction

There is a broad spectrum of mental well-being studies conducted by relevant scholars and practitioners in their intellectual discourses. Yet, there is a slight hindrance to integrating all the intellectual discourses to represent mental well-being studies. Most researchers still view mental well-being and mental health as illnesses of the mind which is a subtle and indirect expression of mental disorders and diseases (Netchitailova, 2022). Meanwhile, Hernández-Torrano et al. (2020) posit that studies on mental health and mental well-being have experienced a steady growth since 2010 in interdisciplinary studies in different field of studies such as behavioural sciences, biomedical sciences, positive psychological well-being, mental health, and mental well-being. In general, mental well-being could be seen as a phenomenon that ranges on an endless continuum from one end that expounds mental illnesses, to the other end that elaborate mental well-being.

Mental well-being also subscribes to a state of mind that allows an individual to function normally within an environment. According to World Health Organization Report (2022) mental health is a premise of mental well-being where individuals are able to recognise and utilise their abilities, potentials, coping strategies, productivity and contributions to their communities. Ruggeri et al. (2020) also express mental health as to embrace biological, psychological and social well-beings of an individual which could extend into positive feelings such as happiness, satisfaction, responsibility, optimistic attitudes, and constructive functioning. Furthermore, Fountoulakis (2022) defines mental health as a dynamic state of internal equilibrium which enables individuals to harmonise their capabilities and functions within universal values of a society. Galderisi et al. (2015) clarify state of internal equilibrium is possible through basic cognitive and social skills that enable an individual to recognise, express and modulate one's own emotions, to empathise with others, to have flexible mind set, to cope with adverse life events, to function in social roles, and to sustain harmonious relationship between body and mind.

In a simple way, mental well-being discourses may include all dimensions of human development such as biological, intellectual, emotional and spiritual. First, from biological point of view, the study investigates the functions of mental health and mental well-being of

an organism to live and survive; second, from emotional perspective, the study probes feelings and emotions that symbolises the organism's ability to express feelings toward oneself and others; third, from intellectual position, the study examines that represents the organism ability to develop and grow in its sphere; and fourth, from spiritual paradigm, the study examines the connection between organism and to the meaning and purpose of life. Thus, aspects such as of harmonisation between body, mind and soul; and harmonisation between capabilities and functions; and harmonisation between universal and religious values of an organism can be translated into constructs of this research such as social interest, resilience, self-development, personal goal, piety, and hope within mental well-being parameter.

In this study, mental health is also viewed as a process of adjustment for a Muslim as an individual in the environment in dealing with life circumstances (Chen et al., 2021). Adjustment to life is a continuous process of an organism in its relationship within the personal, interpersonal and societal spectrum. As such, every individual must adjust and guide oneself in personal matters, interpersonal affairs, and social responsibilities. Therefore, there is a complex relationship between an individual's mental health and life from different perspectives, such as psychological, sociological and religious needs and values. Indeed, in many instances, the rational and logical approaches in mental health, on how an individual deals with contradicting elements concerning his or her psychological and emotional well-being are supreme. For example, an individual will identify and select his or her potential abilities to adjust to a stressful life according to his or her strength as a person. According to the literature, many factors in the environment are affecting an individual's mental health. However, in this study, factors affecting mental health such as social interest, resilience, self-acceptance, self-development, personal goal, and hope will be the main variables in the study.

According to Joshanloo (2018), in a comprehensive study of 166 nations, there is a significant correlation between individual and country-level development variables such as life satisfaction, quality of life, prosperity, and Gross National Product to mental health. In addition, another study Pedrosa et al. (2020) indicate that maintaining the mental health of an individual can also promote the ability to be happy (individual), the ability to care about others (interpersonal

relationship), and to commit to productive works (inter-groups/societal relationship). Studies on spiritual and religious values (Abdel-Khalek et al., 2019; Tekke et al., 2018) identify mental health and lifestyle of a Muslim are very much related to religious values and its teaching. Both studies have also shown the potential of religiosity values as an effective way to alleviate mental illnesses.

On the other hand, there is still a caution in including religiosity in mental health studies. It has been established in research that cultural domains such as religious values could not scientifically gauge and evaluate social rationality (Lux et al., 2021). Joshanloo et al. (2019) stress that in a society such as a Muslim community, cultural values, faith, Islamic behaviours, and etiquette are essential for achieving mental well-being and mental health. Hence, Islamic dimensions such as faith, hope, behaviours, and etiquette encompass the proposed Western mental health theories. Indeed, adopting the communal-based constructs, as in this study of a Muslim community, need adjustment and justification in current theories and models (Eric et al., 2019)

Psychologists prefer to explain the religiosity phenomena more from a social interest dimension; as many studies have shown that individuals with social interest are more tolerant in dealing with others (La Sablonnière, 2017). In addition, it is also recommended that mental health services integrate religiosity and spirituality values in their daily services offered to their clients (Sabry et al., 2013). With numerous well-being scales available and a relatively large sample size, the present study provides an excellent opportunity to examine the mental health and well-being of selected Muslim samples. This study investigates the mental health and religiosity values among Muslim respondents in an attempt to incorporate mutual dimensions of the mental health and religious constructs such as social interest, resilience, self-acceptance, self-development, personal goal, piety, and hope among Muslim groups in Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos and London.

Methodology

Respondents in The Study

Data for this research came from four separate samples across four cities in four countries. The sample size of 989 respondents for the four groups consisted of 211 Turkish (67 % female; 33% male; M

age=20.34; SD=1.86); 301 Malaysian (49.8 % female; 50.2 % male; M age=22; SD=1.76); 213 Nigerian (51.2 % female; 48.8 % male; M age=23; SD= 1.92); and 264 British Muslim (78 % female; 22 % male; M age= 19; SD=1.63). The participants were selected randomly among Muslim university students in different campuses in Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos, and London.

Measures

All scales appeared in a single questionnaire booklet. The instrument for measurement, W-EMWS, appeared with clear guidelines for respondents to follow. Responses to all items occurred along a 1 to 5 Likert scale (from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). Statistical procedures were used to compute the response to each measure in terms of the average response per item. Mental well-being constructs in the study are Mental Well-Being, Social Interest, Resilience, Self-Acceptance, Self-Development and Personal Goal. Whilst, the religious values constructs are Piety and Hope.

Constructs in The Study

Mental Well-Being: The construct, mental well-being, was adopted from (W-EMWS) Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being (Tennant et al. 2007). The 14 items capture mental well-being such as: “I’ve been feeling optimistic about the future”; “I’ve been dealing with problems well”; and, “I’ve been able to make up my own mind about things”. The Cronbach Alpha reliability for the construct for this sample were found to be from .85 to .90.

Social Interest: The construct, social interest, was adopted from (SIC) Social Interest Scale (Crandall, 1980) assesses the attempts of the individual to contribute to the welfare of humankind. Some examples of the 10 items in this instrument are: “I think I am tolerant in dealing with others”; “I think I am generous towards others”; and, “I think I am helpful to others”. The Cronbach Alpha reliability were found to be from .82 to .90.

Resilience: The construct, resilience, was adopted from (BRS) Brief Resilience Scale (Smith et al. 2010) represents challenges in his or her life in overcoming the difficulties. It includes six statements, and one

was eliminated during the factor analysis process, so the total became five items. Among the items are, “I tend to bounce back quickly after hard time”; “I usually come through difficult times with little trouble”; and, “I take life as it is”. For this sample, the Cronbach Alpha reliability were found to be from .77 to .84.

Self-Acceptance: The construct, self-acceptance, was adopted from (SAS) Self-Acceptance Scale (Bernard et al. 2013) consisted of five items. For example, “I possess positive attitude towards myself”; “I acknowledge and accept multiple aspects of myself ”; and, “I accept myself as I am” represent the development of one’s identity and establishing a healthy relationship. The Cronbach Alpha reliability in the present sample were from .66 to .84.

Self-Development: The construct, self-development, was adopted from (SDS) Self-Development Scale (Robitscheck et al. 2012) includes six statements expressing dynamic self-change and personal growth. Some of the examples are, “I see myself as changing in ways that reflect more self-knowledge and effectiveness”; “I think I am open to new experience”; and, “I think I have sense of realising my potentials”. The Cronbach Alpha reliability were found to be from .79 to .89.

Personal Goal: The construct, personal goal, was adopted from personal goal a sub-scale of (PWBS) Psychological Well-Being Scale (Ryff , 2013). The factor consisted of six items, for example, “I have concern for competing with the standard of excellence”; “I have concern for developing self-worth”; and, “I have concern for personal success in life”. The items refer to individual search for meaning and purpose of life. The sample obtained the Cronbach Alpha reliability scores from .71 to .92.

Piety: The construct, piety, was adapted and amended from (ROS) Religious Orientation Scale (Gorsuch et al. 1972) to suit the Muslim-Sunni group. The seven items instrument were to reflect God-conscious, God-fearing, piety and self-restraint on Islamic teachings. Some of the items are, “I try as much as possible to follow the commandment of Allah”; “I try as much as possible to prepare myself to the hereafter”; and, “I try as much as possible to move away from sin”. The Cronbach Alpha reliability were found to be from .87 to .90.

Hope: The construct, hope, was adapted and amended from (ROS) Religious Orientation Scale (Gorsuch et al. 1972) and the (RCS) Religious Commitment Scale (Pfeifer et al. 1995) to suit the Muslim-Sunni group. The seven items instrument operationalises explicitly the items for self- confidence and to elevate the feelings of self-worth. The examples are, “Faith in Allah helps me not to lose hope in difficult periods”; “I hope for peace and happiness in my prayer”; and, “I hope my suffering will be rewarded”. The Cronbach Alpha reliability in the present study were from .91 to .93.

Procedure

All procedures as in the institutional guidelines to conduct ethical research were observed. Student participation in the study was voluntary. The researchers administered the questionnaire booklets to participants in the university’s classroom setting (physical or face to face sessions). The researchers were allowed to conduct the study by their respective lecturers in different campuses in Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos and London with different researchers representing the Republic of Türkiye, Malaysia, Nigeria and the United Kingdom (see Table 1.) Participants from Kuala Lumpur, Lagos and London used the English versions of the scales, while participants in Istanbul used the Turkish version. In Istanbul, the items for the questionnaire were translated using the back-translation method, respectively.

Demographic	Istanbul	Kuala Lumpur	Lagos	London
Variables	(n=211)	(n=298)	(n=213)	(n=264)
Age (years)				
M	20.34	22	23	19
SD	1.86	1.76	1.92	1.63
Gender (%)				
Male	33	50.2	48.8	22
Female	67	49.8	51.2	78

Table 1. Frequency of Demographic Characteristics.

The present study investigated the correlation and regression of mental health and religious values across the four cities. These group of participants were selected because of their remarkable differences in language, geography, social and economic status, and political perspectives. As a general indicator, the researcher referred to the Human Development Index (measuring life expectancy, education, and income), of the United Kingdom (0.92), Türkiye (0.81), Malaysia (0.80) and Nigeria (0.53) scoring the lowest (UNDP, 2022).

Results

For the sake of simplicity, we report and discuss the results from the bi-variate correlations between mental health and religious values (i.e., social interest, resilience, self-acceptance, self-development, personal goal, piety, and hope). Table 2 shows the bi-variate correlations of the mental health dimension with religious values. As expected, mental health, social interest, and self-development variables were positively correlated to resilience, self-acceptance, piety, and hope in all samples. In the Istanbul sample, resilience was not significant with piety and hope but was highly correlated with mental health, social interest, self-acceptance, and self-development. In the London sample, self-acceptance was not only significant with piety, but its relation to mental health, resilience, social interest, self-development, and hope was significantly positive.

Among the correlation of mental health to other dimensions across samples, self-acceptance is one of the most robust variables of mental health in the Istanbul sample; social interest is one of the most robust dimensions in the Kuala Lumpur sample; self-development is one of the strongest mental health associations in the Lagos sample; and resilience is one of the strongest correlates of mental health in the London sample. Among religious values, piety and hope are the moderate mental health correlates in all samples.

Table 2: Bi-variate Correlations Mental Well-being, Social Interest, Resilience, Self-acceptance, Self-development, Piety, and Hope

	Mental health	Social interest	Brief resilience	Self-acceptance	Self-development	Personal goal	Piety	Hope
Istanbul (211)								
Mental health	1							
Social interest	.539**	1						
Brief resilience	.483**	.163*	1					
Self-acceptance	.565**	.318**	.502**	1				
Self-development	.550**	.482**	.374**	.514**	1			
Personal goal	.512**	.409**	.315**	.345**	.625**	1		
Piety	.364**	.308**	.125	.178**	.245**	.374**	1	
Hope	.341**	.396**	.064	.144*	.254**	.393**	.835**	1
Kuala Lumpur (298)								
Mental health	1							
Social interest	.522**	1						
Brief resilience	.585**	.436**	1					
Self-acceptance	.622**	.593**	.581**	1				
Self-development	.580**	.568**	.568**	.637**	1			
Personal goal	.437**	.532**	.410**	.500**	.588**	1		
Piety	.413**	.445**	.400**	.520**	.524**	.414**	1	
Hope	.441**	.425**	.360**	.487**	.528**	.388**	.558**	1
Lagos (213)								
Mental health	1							
Social interest	.557**	1						
Brief resilience	.512**	.521**	1					

Self-acceptance	.561**	.627**	.388**	1				
Self-development	.633**	.643**	.878**	.878**	1			
Personal goal	.374**	.463**	.486**	.486**	.551**	1		
Piety	.453**	.584**	.599**	.599**	.634**	.559**	1	
Hope	.248**	.429**	.402**	.402**	.472**	.450**	.583**	1
London (264)								
Mental health	1							
Social interest	.513**	1						
Brief resilience	.588**	.390**	1					
Self-acceptance	.548**	.431**	.632**	1				
Self-development	.477**	.421**	.546**	.613**	1			
Personal goal	.175**	.136*	.379**	.515**	.241**	1		
Piety	.309**	.329**	.333**	.120	.393**	.230**	1	
Hope	.205**	.307**	.283**	.289**	.418**	.217**	.676**	1

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

Table 3 presents the multiple regression results in which mental health was the dependent variable across the four cities for the Muslim-Sunni group. With reference to Table 3, the models were highly significant ($p < 0.0001$); *F-ratios* ranged between 31.6 and 170.75. The four models accounted for 51 % (Istanbul), 49 % (Lagos), 50 % (Kuala Lumpur), and 47 % (London) of the total variance in the dependent variable, mental health. The main predictors of mental health were commonly social interest and resilience among Istanbul and London groups. There was similar resilience among Kuala Lumpur and Lagos groups in different combinations. In addition, self-acceptance predicted mental health as well for Kuala Lumpur group. Of these variables, social interest makes the most significant unique contribution ($\beta = .32, .14, .34$) among Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur and London groups. In contrast, resilience makes the Lagos group's most significant contribution ($\beta = .34$).

Table 3 Multiple regression for predicting mental health in four different Muslim groups

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	
Istanbul	(Constant)	-.012	-	-.047	.962
	<i>R</i> ²	-	0.51		
	<i>F-ratio</i>		55.98		.000
	Social Interest	.332	.323	5.142	.000
	Resilience	.259	.322	3.937	.000
	Self-acceptance	.218	.249	4.211	.000
	Self-development	.220	.234	1.220	.224
	Piety	.112	.168	1.798	.074
Kuala Lumpur	(Constant)	.583	-	5.71	.611
	<i>R</i> ²	-	0.50		
	<i>F-ratio</i>		73.75		.000
	Social Interest	.142	.148	11.312	.000
	Resilience	.225	.266	6.341	.000
	Self-acceptance	.255	.269	3.626	.000
	Self-development	.146	.174	5.039	.000
Lagos	(Constant)	.790	-	2.715	.007
	<i>R</i> ²	-	0.49		
	<i>F-ratio</i>		70.04		.000
	Resilience	.267	.348	5.316	.000
	Self-acceptance	.190	.211	2.180	.030
	Personal Goal	.038	.044	.703	.483
London	(Constant)	.056	-	.207	.432
	<i>R</i> ²	-	0.47		
	<i>F-ratio</i>		32.98		.000
	Social Interest	.406	.346	6.290	.000
	Resilience	.291	.312	5.059	.000
Self-acceptance	.183	.190	2.347	.020	

Discussion

The mental health of Muslim groups in four different cities in Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos and London show positive correlation with religious values such as social interest, resilience, self-development, personal goal, piety, and hope. The results also show some variance between the constructs in the study. This is to be expected as the groups were different in their ethnicity, language, culture, socio-economic status, and political dimensions. In the aspect of religious values, the findings also indicated some differences in terms of the significant constructs for different groups in this study. Some groups have shown significant constructs of religious values more than the other groups. Again, the differences could be addressed further in the following discussion.

Ann-Marie Yamada et al. (2020) in a study in California found that more than 80% of the 2,050 participants agreed or strongly agreed that religious values were important to their mental health. The researchers elaborated rituals and religious practices are prayers, meditations, attending religious services, spending time in nature, and reading sacred texts or spiritual self-help books; these are some of the activities that define religious values embedded in rituals and practical practices. Attitudes toward these spiritual and religious practicality are also defined in the integration religious practices and rituals as determinant of religious values to mental health in this study. The findings in this research lead toward rituals and practical practices as religious values. Chen et al. (2018) show that active religious participation during adolescence correlated positively with psychological well-being, character building, and lower peril of mental illnesses and behavioural risks. These findings were compatible with this study, where the W-EMWS measures also established positive correlations between religious values and mental well-being among Muslim groups. These are shown in the piety and hope items. In a study by Friedli (2009) demonstrates that religious values such as resilience was positively correlated with mental health and concluded that religious values are essential for the quality of life. Equally, religious values such as resilience, self-development, and personal goals are found to enhance mental health status (Coelho-Júnior et al. 2022). There is also a positive correlation between religious values and psychological well-being as discovered by Awad et al. 2015.

Religiousness attendance as part of religious values such as resilience, self-development, and personal goal are correlated to higher well-being (Jokela 2022). Dunbar (2021) points that the rate of attendance of an individual at religious services is associated with higher rate of group sympathy and a greater sense of bonding to congregation members. Therefore, attendees of religious services may feel that they can easily count on the emotional support of congregational members than their friends. Another study also show that religious values are found to be a protective factor for depression and anxiety (Misran et al. 2021). These findings emphasise that the positive correlation for mental health and religious values is consistent with the measure for well-being among Muslims as pointed out in this study.

On another note, the relationship between mental health and resilience provides positive results among Muslim groups in this study. Resilience with respect to adverse events such as facing difficult times and stressful events demonstrated that its effects are specific to reducing adverse outcomes such as anxiety, depression, negative affect, and physical illness symptoms. Previous studies equally confirmed a positive correlation between resilience and mental health (Foster et al. 2020; and, Schultze-Lutter et al. 2016). In this study, the Muslim group in London displayed a higher correlation of resilience with mental health. This reflects the challenges and difficulties among the Muslim group in London as a minority group in the United Kingdom. Martinez et al. (2022), posit that developing a positive attitude toward one's ethnic identity and having a support system within one's own community can assist an individual in finding healthy coping strategies, such as resilience.

The correlation between self-acceptance and mental health also indicated a positive result in this study. Previous studies confirmed that unconditional self-acceptance significantly predicts psychological well-being (Bingol et al. 2018). Kim Jeunseung et al. (2021) conclude that individuals with strong interpersonal relationships and high self-transcendence are more likely to function well in their life. This could be translated into self-acceptance, self-development and personal goal variables that are represented in this study. One of the variants in the construct for self-acceptance, self-development and personal goal is the interpersonal relationship. Whereas, self-transcendence defines individual ability to overcoming limitations of an individual self and its

desire in religious contemplation and realisation that could strengthen his or her personal goal, self-development and self-acceptance. In this study, the constructs such as self-acceptance, self-development, and personal goal measured such variants of the interpersonal relationship of an individual to his or her Creator, family, relatives, and friends. In a way, this interpersonal relationship and self-transcendence could be a mechanism in strengthening individual self-acceptance, self-development, and personal goal. Thus, this study is also compatible with a study that indicated that interpersonal relationships were systematically placed among essential aspects to achieve one's goal and target for a good life a world over. Venulo et al. (2022) suggest in their research findings that individuals with low self-transcendence wisdom might have found it difficult to maintain their well-being, mentally or psychologically, and seemed to be slipping into self-distraction and escapism such as loneliness and negative perceptions of well-being.

Lipson et al. (2019) find that constructs of personal development of an individual positively correlated to subjective well-being and are crucial factors contributing to well-being, health and quality of life. Thus, this significantly affects mental health and happiness. In this study, the constructs in personal development such as self-acceptance, self-development and personal goal established healthy mental, psychological, and emotional well-being. Personal goals related to becoming part of purpose in life among the Muslim groups in the context of this study was correlated positively with mental health.

Social interest, which measures meaning and purpose in life by participating in endeavours beyond oneself abilities and capabilities, has a positive result in this research. Lin (2019), stresses that stronger values of openness to change as the opposite to conservative and rigidity values, such as religion contributes to active individual participation in civic issues as in comparison to society which live in a lower self-empowerment of thinking, behaviour and emotion. In this study, the findings also show that the Muslim groups such as in Kuala Lumpur and London show correlation between mental health and religious values, in particular, social interest due to the dynamic of society they were in. The result could indicate that the Muslim participants who were living in multi racial societies, residents of urban areas and exposed to openness values show correlation between social interest and mental

health as compared to conservative and rigid society of homogeneous society, rural dwellers and rarely exposed to non-openness elements.

In another study, Muller et al. (2014) show that income inequality has the strongest impact on religious socialisation effects. The study was conducted in different cities and countries and the majority of the Muslims who participated in this study were from middle and lower income such as those in Istanbul and Lagos. In this view, some of the participants could not participate in religious socialisation due to their lower socio-economic status. This is another interesting aspect that shows the impact of socialisation and mental health from the religiosity spectrum.

The socialisation aspect such as social interest in terms of thinking, behaviours and emotion, correlated better with mental health among Muslim groups in this study. According to Adler, social interest is “an internal feeling of connectedness to others and their well-being, and to the well-being of the individual. To Adler, social interest includes sense of belonging and ultimately striving and participating with others to improve one’s community and the world” (as cited in Chan et al. 2015, pp. 207). Thus, this study indicates how religiosity values are essentially viewed as influencing individual’s mental health. Socialisation, as shown in this study within the religiosity values spectrum, is essential for an individual to experience his or her religion privately and openly. This implies that experiencing religious values individually and socially is important for achieving mental health and good mental well-being.

Klingenberg et al. (2019) mention that the process of character building for religious socialisation the underpinning of social patterns for religious attitudes is to occur more during adolescence and young adulthood than during other life stages in human development. Individuals who have a tendency to help others may experience better mental well-being. The social interest scale on helping others assesses individual contribution to the welfare of humankind in the real sense (Law et al. 2021). In addition, Sherkat (2003) believe that the influences of the environment are mirrored in personal beliefs of the individuals. Thus, there is a positive relationship between effect of the environment to belief or religious values of the participants with different variations measured in different cities in this study. Klingenberg et al. (2019) caution that the end goal of religious socialisation is not about religious

preferences, since religious preferences narrow down religious socialisation to those individuals who prefer religion. Instead, religious socialisation results in “preference in relation to dimensions understood as religious.” This could be seen in two constructs such as piety and hope as new religious dimensions measured in this study. However, both piety and hope found to be moderately correlated to mental health among Muslim groups in this study.

Conclusion

This study has unexpectedly indicated that piety and hope as part of religious values spectrum were merely supportive in explaining Muslims mental well-being. This contradicts with other findings from similar research on hope and piety for mental well-being. Laranjeira et al. (2022) sum up that optimism and hope are important adaptive phenomena to foster well-being. Being optimistic and hopeful will help individuals to adapt to adversity and lower the possibility of developing mental disorders. Studies also have shown that piety or faith do not directly influence one’s religious value to mental well-being. Some studies have shown that hope usually goes in hand-in-hand with higher subjective well-being, however, not all types of hope are equally or strongly correlated with subjective well-being. Subjective well-being includes the appreciation of one’s personal well-being and one’s personal enjoyment in life (Pleeging et al. 2021). In this study, the meaning of appreciation of one’s personal well-being and one’s enjoyment in life equates to the meaning of hope and piety among the faithful and devoted believers in contemplating their existence and relationship with the Creator. On the other hand, Murphy et al. (2022) express that individuals who were familiar with the concept of hopelessness, had a ready-to-hand meaning of “having no hope” and used this by default to inform what hope meant vis-a-vis, and those who were familiar with the concept of non-believer, had a ready-to-hand meaning of having no faith and no piety and used this by default to inform what piety and faith meant.

Jeppsen et al. (2022) draw attention to the concept of closeness to God which can be interpreted as faith and piety in their study from three monotheistic religions’ view namely, Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Their findings show that closeness to God mediated the relationship between prayer and meditation to mental well-being among Christian

and Islam devotees but not Judaism. Their findings also indicate that prayers and meditation were always related to closeness to God but closeness to God was not consistently related to mental well-being. Bradshaw et al. (2022) show that accountability to God is positively associated with measures for well-being such as meaningfulness, happiness, mattering to others, and dignity with religious controls are excluded. The study also indicate that these positive relationships are found among those who prayed frequently as compared with those who do not. These findings show that faith and piety as part of religious values correlate positively with mental well-being, however, in this study the findings have shown that there is a moderate correlation in all Muslim groups.

As a conclusion, these promising results encourage researchers to propose further analysis of mental well-being and religious scales further in different studies. Overall, the findings were limited to Muslim groups across four cities namely Istanbul, Kuala Lumpur, Lagos, and London only as intended in this study. Therefore, future studies should expand the study by investigating an exploratory modelling difference in latent means of mental health and religious values across different locality, ethnicity, culture, and sects.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest: The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval: All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed Consent: Informed Consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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Unravelling the Roles of Social Media Usage, Individual Well-Being, and Working Environment on Happiness at The Workplace

Aini Maznina A. Manaf*
Tengku Siti Aisha Tengku Azzman**
Syed Arabi Idid***

Abstract: Employee happiness at the workplace has become an increasingly popular topic among researchers and scholars in the past two decades due to the rising support over its role as one of the determinants of organisational outcomes. Despite the availability of vast literature on employees' happiness, no conclusive findings have been established to the contributing factors that influence happiness at workplace. This study examined the factors that contribute to happiness at workplace. Three contributing factors, which are social media usage, individual well-being, and working environment were examined. A survey was conducted among 475 employees of manufacturing companies in Malaysia. The results revealed that social media usage was not a significant predictor to employees' happiness despite their high usage in Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Nevertheless, individual well-being and working environment were found to become significant predictors to happiness at work. The study's findings enrich the literature on employee happiness in organisations.

* Associate Professor, Department of Communication, Abdul Hamid A. AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. Email: maznina@iium.edu.my.

** Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, Abdul Hamid A. AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia.

*** Professor, Department of Communication, Abdul Hamid A. AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia.

Keywords: Happiness, individual well-being, manufacturing, social media usage, working environment.

Abstrak: Kebahagiaan pekerja di tempat kerja mereka adalah topik yang semakin popular di kalangan penyelidik dan sarjana sejak dua dekad yang lalu disebabkan oleh peningkatan sokongan terhadap peranannya sebagai salah satu penentu hasil organisasi. Walaupun terdapat literatur tentang kebahagiaan pekerja, masih tiada penemuan konklusif terhadap faktor penyumbang yang mempengaruhi kebahagiaan di tempat kerja. Kajian ini menganalisis faktor-faktor yang menyumbang kepada kebahagiaan di tempat kerja. Tiga faktor penyumbang, iaitu penggunaan media sosial, kesejahteraan individu dan persekitaran kerja telah diperiksa. Satu tinjauan telah dijalankan di kalangan 475 pekerja syarikat pembuatan di Malaysia. Hasilnya mendedahkan bahawa penggunaan media sosial bukanlah peramal penting kepada kebahagiaan pekerja walaupun penggunaannya adalah tinggi, terutamanya media Facebook, Instagram dan YouTube. Namun begitu, kesejahteraan individu dan persekitaran kerja didapati menjadi peramal penting kepada kebahagiaan di tempat kerja. Dapatan kajian ini dapat memperkayakan literatur tentang kebahagiaan pekerja dalam organisasi.

Kata kunci: Kebahagiaan, kesejahteraan individu, pembuatan, penggunaan media social, persekitaran pekerjaan

Introduction

Adults spend most of their lifetime at work. Consequently, it is important for managers to determine employees' happiness to promote a harmonious working environment and employee well-being at the workplace. Happiness at the workplace influences the overall productivity and well-being of employees (Wok & Hashim, 2014). Employees' happiness determines job satisfaction (A.Manaf, Tengku Azman, & Idid, 2021). Research shows that employee dissatisfaction at work may lead to negative organisational outcomes such as lower production, delayed growth, high attrition rate, and a lack of creativity and innovation (Sony, Chawla, & Sengar, 2016).

Unhappy employees may suffer from stress, anxiety, and depression, which may result in low productivity, a lack of motivation, absenteeism, and termination (Gadhavi & Taker, 2021). Hence, providing a

harmonious workplace and motivating employees have become essential tasks for employers nowadays. Happy employees and healthy working environments lead to positive outcomes in organisations, such as increased productivity and sales, customer satisfaction, creativity, innovation, adaptation, flexibility; reduced stress; and lower absenteeism among employees (Rahmi, 2018).

Despite many studies focused on workplace happiness, the influencing factors of employee happiness at work are still debatable, as organisations provide scope of happiness differently (Merdeka, Isa & Wafa, 2020). Gangwani, Alhalawany, and Sheikh (2020) concluded in their study that no single factor could create happiness at the workplace. They found work environment, family environment and living condition, genetic and personality factors, social interaction, organisational factors, leader/supervisor behaviour or attitude, spirituality, and emotional wellness as contributing factors to workplace happiness.

Apparently, the contributing factors to employee happiness are not confined to organisational aspects but include other external factors such as faith, fitness, family, and friends (Ng, 2022). In addition, individual factors such as self-satisfaction and self-development at the workplace are found to be pertinent determinants of job satisfaction and happiness among academics in a higher educational institution (Isa, Jaes, Damin, & Latiff et al., 2019). Individuals' well-being or good feeling about themselves determines their satisfaction at work (A. Manaf et al., 2019).

Social media usage as an everyday routine is positively associated with different health outcomes, such as social well-being, positive mental health, and self-rated health (The Big Three, 2020). Social media usage at the workplace leads to positive outcomes. Communication via social media makes employees happy, inducing them to support their organisation and colleagues (Labban & Bizzi, 2021). Social media platforms have a unique ability to connect users, resulting in better emotional well-being (Graciyal & Viswam, 2021), and hence, happiness among employees. Pittman (2018) asserts the more one uses social media, the more likely he or she will believe those platforms are a good way to connect with others (perceived intimacy), thereby increasing the likelihood that satisfaction and social connection will result from its usage. Staying connected through social media with friends and family

is among the greatest sources of happiness at the individual level (Ng, 2022).

Workplace happiness has become a prominent domain of research and a major concern among organisations. However, researchers and scholars have not reached a consensus regarding which factor is the most significant determinant of employees' happiness at the workplace, and yet is still a debatable issue (Rao, Vijayalakshmi & Goswami, 2018). Therefore, to better understand the factors that contribute to employee happiness, this study was carried out. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which social media usage, working environment, and well-being serves as the contributing factors towards workplace happiness. Additionally, literature on happiness and well-being reveal that previous research was conducted mainly among non-work samples such as parents, students and teenagers (Aboramadan & Kundi, 2022). This study filled this gap by using employees in manufacturing companies as the sample.

Literature Review

Happiness at the workplace

Happiness refers to positive attitudes or pleasant experiences, for instance, positive feelings, moods, and emotions at the workplace (Omar et al., 2018). In other words, satisfaction is inter-related with other emotions such as family-work balance and individual well-being.

Happiness at the workplace is defined as feelings of positivity when an employee can maximise their performance and provide satisfaction for themselves (Agustien & Soeling, 2020). Naturally, every employee will feel a sense of comfort and happiness when they are satisfied with their job performance and have a positive work environment.

Happiness at the workplace is crucial because when employees are happy, feelings of happiness will drive them to perform their jobs better. Hence, it is crucial for organisations to provide a positive environment. The implications of a hostile working environment include frustrations, missed deadlines, and poor job performance (Jong et al., 2020).

Wesarat, Sharif, and Majid (2015) define happiness in the workplace as employees' satisfaction, who are content with both their work and their personal lives. According to this viewpoint, satisfied workers are

individuals that feel well about their personal circumstances and hence are content with their jobs.

The level of happiness among employees is a key factor in creating a positive work environment. According to Štreimikienė and Grundey (2009), contented workers would be happy in their jobs. Their contented lifestyle in some generates pleasant emotions that inspire them at work. As a result, positive workplace outcomes predominate, such as rising productivity, quality, sales, customer satisfaction, creativity, innovation, adaptation, and flexibility, and falling employee stress, losses, and absences (Štreimikienė & Grundey, 2009). According to Veenhoven (2006), 'happiness' is a term that is synonymous with one's well-being and quality of life. According to him, there are four aspects of life one might strive towards, in order to be happy: the environment's ability to support life, a person's ability to support life, the utility of life, and satisfaction of life.

Individual well-being and happiness at the workplace

Researchers have discovered a relationship between happiness and subjective well-being. Happiness at the workplace correlates with individuals' satisfaction. Satisfaction can be divided into two interrelated types, which are work satisfaction and life satisfaction. There is a strong link between job satisfaction and overall happiness. In other words, job satisfaction influences life contentment, which in turn influences job satisfaction (Saari & Judge, 2004). Therefore, individual well-being is important for sustaining workplace happiness. According to Wesarat, Sharif, and Majid (2015), happiness in the workplace refers to employees' satisfaction not only in their work but also in life. In this perspective, happy employees can be described as those who have positive feelings about the conditions of their life, thus are happy with their personal life.

Individual well-being as defined by Fisher (2010) is the feeling of personal satisfaction that influences a person to feel happy. This means that organisations that attend to employees by creating a positive work environment, which will help improve job satisfaction, will also create happiness at the workplace because all these concepts interrelate with one another.

Working environment and happiness at the workplace

The environment at the workplace is a crucial component of the working life because employees spend most of their time at work, and this component influences other aspects of the work life. Researchers have noted that a comfortable working environment have a direct and positive work outcome by helping employees to be more focused (Hafeez, Yingjun, Hafeez, Mansoor, & Cheema, 2019). A good and positive environment is an environment that is employee-centred (Awan & Tahir, 2015). Additionally, it provides employees with the tools to perform their work efficiently. This type of environment is also described as a supportive environment.

Furthermore, researchers have contended that workplace environment such as workload capacity, overtime schedule, travel, air quality, and lighting condition can all influence employees' happiness (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013). On another note, Hafeez et al. (2019) remarked that a healthy and comfortable working environment would increase employees' productivity, and this kind of environment has a positive relationship with workplace happiness because it allows employees to achieve their organisational goals.

Social media usage and happiness at the workplace

The usage of social media to facilitate job-related tasks has increased employees' job performance (Jong, Chen, Ruangkanjanases, & Chang, 2020). Further, employees use social media as a tool of escapism by surfing sports-related content or music. By doing so, their individual well-being increases, which creates a healthy working environment and results in overall workplace happiness.

Among the popular public and personal social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn have been utilised by organisations to improve employee engagement, knowledge sharing, innovation, customer service, marketing, and talent recruitment (Song, Wang, Chen, Benitez, & Hu, 2019; Dong & Wu, 2015). For this reason, employees are also becoming more active on social media, and in the workplace setting, social media can be used for either social or work-related purposes.

Notably, using the different types of social media alternately at the workplace seems to ease employees' work, especially for urgent

matters. Social media facilitates the execution of tasks such as emailing colleagues and superiors to communicate on official matters, using WhatsApp to convey urgent matters, watching YouTube to learn new things, and using Facebook and Google to find participants for events (Mohamed, Sidek, Izharudin, Kudus, Hasan, & Noor, 2019; Dora, Sidek, Hassan, Mohamed, Kudus, Mustaffa, & Mokhtar, 2017; Mustafa & Hamzah, 2011). Another study explained that social media facilitates employees in communication, knowledge sharing, and decision making, leading to increased job performance (Radhakrishnan, Basit, & Hassan, 2018). Mustafa and Hamzah (2011) found that at least 55% of employees used the social network at least once a week regardless of the type of organisation. This notion is supported by Adebo, Adekunmi, and Daramola (2013), who found that employees spent most of their time during working hours using social media in order to gather task-related information.

Since social media is often used to facilitate job-related tasks. Mohamed et al. (2019) deduced that there is little difference in the pattern of social media usage at the workplace between male and female employees. Adebo et al. (2013)'s research shared the same conclusion and added that male and female employees surf social media for slightly different purposes during the working hours. While the most prevalent result is for networking and job facilitation, male employees are also seen to use social media to access sports resources during working hours while female employees use social media for music resources. Both activities serve as escapism for the employees. This finding shows that the two genders have slightly different patterns of social media usage during working hours.

Social media usage also differs across job positions. Song et al. (2019)'s research explored social media usage between team leaders and team members at the workplace. The research revealed that team leaders or managers use social media to communicate work-related information and boost team members' morale by enhancing their sense of belonging. Meanwhile, team members use social media mostly for work-related purposes.

Additionally, regardless of the job position, employees use social media at the workplace for similar purposes (task-related) but in different patterns (job scope). Team leaders or managers use social media to screen job applications, for example, through LinkedIn (Kaur,

Arianayagam, & Singh, 2020). In contrast, other employees tend to use social media to communicate with colleagues. Therefore, given the different patterns of social media usage between male and female employees as well as employees occupying different job positions, it can be concluded that there are differences in social media usage between employees in high- and low-income groups. Hence, this study hypothesised that social media usage at the workplace differs across gender, job position, and income, as follows:

H_{1a}: Social media usage differs significantly between genders

H_{1b}: Social media usage differs significantly across job positions

H_{1c}: Social media usage differs significantly across income groups

Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratification (U&G) theory emerged in the late 1940s with the aims to explore the rationale behind using the media to gratify one's needs and to comprehend the motivation behind individuals' media usage (Hossain, Kim, & Jahan, 2019). This theory assumes that individuals are perceptually aware of their needs, motivations, and what they expect from the projection of the media (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 2019). This awareness leads to the subjective choice of the media and gratification. For instance, while most of the population might use social media for networking, others might use it primarily for gaming and sharing media content. Therefore, U&G theory conceptualises media usage as a means of satisfying individuals' social and psychological needs.

Previous U&G studies explored the motivations for using different types of media such as newspapers, television, and smartphones. More recently, in the contemporary environment of rigorous social networking services (SNS), U&G theory was used to investigate the motivations behind people's usage of Facebook, WeChat, Twitter, social virtual worlds, and social networking games. Hossain, Kim, and Jahan (2019) used U&G theory to understand the Facebook liking behaviour, which is likely to boost continuous usage intentions among Facebook users. In another study, Teng and Ju (2017) utilised U&G theory to

understand how the elderly used social media and how they cope with this technology in their lives.

Therefore, this study uses U&G as a premise to suggest that social media usage among employees of manufacturing companies will satisfy their needs for social interaction with families, friends, and colleagues, hence enabling them to attain happiness at the workplace.

Based on the literature on the precursor of happiness, this research hypothesised that social media usage, working environment, and individual well-being influence happiness. Therefore, the following hypotheses were postulated:

H₂a: There is a positive relationship between social media usage and happiness

H₂b: There is a positive relationship between working environment and happiness

H₂c: There is a positive relationship between individual well-being and happiness

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

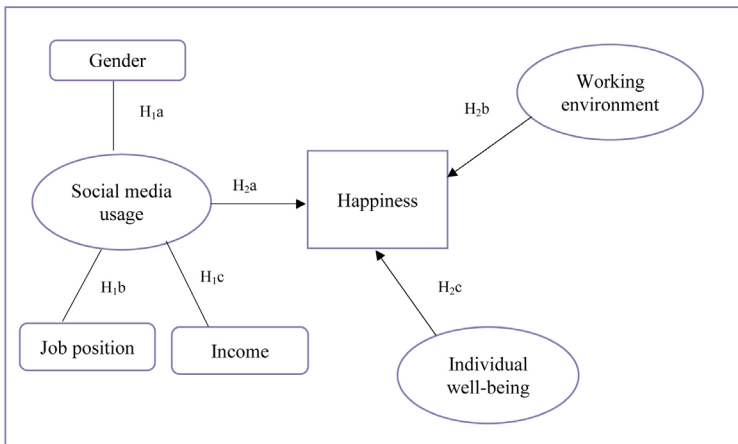


Figure 1 is the conceptual framework of this study. The figure illustrates the relationships between the three variables (social media usage, individual well-being, and working environment) and happiness. Social media usage, working environment and individual well-being are the independent variables of the study, while happiness serves as the

dependent variable. Based on this framework, this research sought to achieve the following research question:

RQ: What is the best predictor of happiness among manufacturing employees?

Research Methodology

Sampling and Data Collection

To answer the research question of the study, a quantitative methodology was employed. Data were collected using a survey research design where 475 factory workers were approached and verbally interviewed by trained enumerators regarding their usage of social media, their well-being and perception about their working environment and their happiness at the workplace. Stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents. Data collection was conducted within the period of three months, and it was carried out in industrial areas in Selangor, Perak, Pahang, and Kedah in Malaysia.

The manufacturing employees who participated in the survey consisted of various races, including the Malays, Chinese, and Indians, regardless of their religion. The respondents consisted of manufacturing employees, including line workers, operators, engineers, supervisors, and administrative officers. The collected data were analysed using the SPSS program.

Research Instrument

A set of survey questions was constructed as the main instrument for data collection. It consisted of eight sections. However, data from only five sections were analysed for this paper: (a) respondent's background, (b) social media usage, (c) happiness, (d) individual well-being, and (d) working environment.

Respondent's background. In the first section, the respondents were asked about their demographic background encompassing gender, race, age, current position at the factory, and monthly salary.

Social media usage. In this section, respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of their social media usage in a day. Social media usage was defined by answers to the following question, "In average, how frequent do you use social media?" Respondents were asked to

indicate their frequency of using different types of social media, such as WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram. They were asked to indicate the frequency of usage based on the following scale: 1) *more than 5 times*, 2) *6–10 times*, 3) *11–15 times*, and 4) *more than 15 times*.

Happiness. This scale was adapted from A. Manaf et. al. (2021). This section consisted of four items concerning respondents' perceptions of their levels of happiness in life. For two items, happiness was measured using a five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 = *very unhappy*, 2 = *unhappy*, 3 = *moderate*, 4 = *happy*, and 5 = *very happy*. For the remaining two items, respondents were required to rate their levels of happiness regarding others' situations. The scales given were 1 = *never*, 2 = *it does not portray myself*, 3 = *it portrays myself a little*, 4 = *it does portray myself*, and 5 = *it really portrays myself*.

Individual well-being. This section aimed to find out the employees' perceptions of their self-condition and their family. The well-being scale used in A. Manaf et. al.'s (2019) research was adapted in this study. This life quality section consisted of eight questions concerning employees' satisfaction with their job, health, relationship with their neighbours, family living condition, housing area, family income, social life, and ambitions. The responses used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 = *very dissatisfied*, 2 = *dissatisfied*, 3 = *moderate*, 4 = *satisfied*, and 5 = *very satisfied*.

Working environment. The fourteen-questions scale adapted from A. Manaf et. al. (2019) was used in this research to explore respondents' perceptions on their working environment. The questions asked concerned their work instruments, facilities provided, work atmosphere, safety at the workplace, their relationship with the management and other workers, the reward and benefit system practised by the factory, salary, allowance, overtime pay, comparison of the salaries received between local and foreign workers, and the future of factory workers. A five-point Likert scale was used with responses ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *moderate*, 4 = *agree*, and 5 = *strongly agree*. The next question asked was also regarding their overall job satisfaction. A five-point Likert scale was also used, where 1 = *very dissatisfied*, 2 = *dissatisfied*, 3 = *moderate*, 4 = *satisfied*, and 5 = *very satisfied*. Lastly, an open-ended question was included to seek

the respondents' suggestions on how to improve the current working situation within the factory where they worked.

The independent variables for this study were social media usage, working environment, and individual well-being; and the dependent variable was happiness. A reliability test was performed to check the consistency and accuracy of the measurement scales. High values of Cronbach's alpha coefficients were obtained, ranging from .95 to .99, indicating the questions in each construct measured similar concepts and they were internally consistent (Cronbach, 1951). Specifically, the Cronbach's alpha in the present study for working environment was .95 while for individual well-being, the value was .98. This indicates that both constructs had high internal consistency.

Statistical Analyses

Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c were tested using crosstab and chi-square analyses. Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c were analysed using hierarchical regression analysis. Specifically, the crosstab and chi-square analyses were used to identify the relationships between social media usage and gender, income, and job position. Cramer's V was calculated to measure the strength of the relationships, and its values indicated small ($V = .06$), medium ($V = .17$) and large ($V = .29$) strength (Cohen, 1998). Additionally, a stepwise hierarchical regression was run to analyse the relationships between social media usage, working environment, and individual well-being and to identify which predictor influenced happiness more.

Findings

Demographic profile of respondents

From the total of 475 respondents, 63% were females and 37% were males. The Malays constituted 72.5% of the respondents, making them the majority race of the manufacturing employees who participated in this study. Overall, the respondents were rather young, with 42.4% of them belonging to the 19–30 years old age group.

A large proportion of the manufacturing employees who participated in this study were operators and technicians (33.5%), followed by those in managerial positions (14.1%), administrative/human resource/

support staff (13.9%), marketing/finance/sales staff (10.9%), engineers (5.1%), drivers (4.8%), and security staff (3.2%).

More than half of the respondents (59.2%) earned more than RM2000 monthly. Next, 36.5% earned between RM1000 and RM2000 per month, while the smallest group (4.3%) comprised those earning less than RM1000 monthly. The summary of the respondents' demographic profile is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

Demographic variables		Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	63.0
	Female	37.0
Race	Malay	72.5
	Chinese	16.5
	Indian	10.0
Age	19–30	42.4
	31–40	24.6
	41–50	23.1
	51 above	9.9
Job position	Operator and technician	33.5
	Managerial	14.1
	Administrative/HR/Support	13.9
	Engineers	5.1
	Marketing/Finance/Sales	10.9
	Security	3.2
	Drivers	11.4
Income	Others	
	Less than RM1000 (Low)	4.3
	RM1000–RM2000 (Moderate)	36.5
	More than RM2000 (High)	59.2

Pattern of social media usage among employees in the manufacturing sector

Crosstab and chi-square of independence tests were performed to assess the relationships between social media usage and gender, income, and job position (see Table 2). The results showed no significant relationship between gender and social media usage, indicating that men and women use social media equally every day.

Table 2: Percentage of social media usage by gender

Gender	WeChat Use (%)	YouTube Use (%)	Instagram Use (%)	WhatsApp Use (%)	Facebook Use (%)	Twitter Use (%)
Male	30.3	60.5	59.3	87.5	74.3	24.9
Female	34.1	52.9	70.8	89	73.3	30.6

In addition, the chi-square analysis revealed significant a relationship between WeChat usage $X^2(6, N = 325) = 19.78, p < .001$ and income. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V , was moderate, $V = .17$. In addition, a significant relationship was found between YouTube usage and income, $X^2(6, N = 424) = 25.8, p < .001$. The effect size based on Cramer's V was also moderate, $V = .17$. Similarly, a significant relationship was found between Instagram usage $X^2(6, N = 371) = 29.85, p = < .001$ and income. The effect size for this finding, Cramer's V , was moderate, $V = .20$.

As Table 3 shows, manufacturing employees who were in the moderate-income group (79.8%) used Instagram more than those in high (55%) and low (61.8%) income groups. Regarding YouTube usage, employees in the low-income group (66.7%) used it more than those in moderate (60.6%) and high (45.6%) income groups. As for WeChat usage, about the same percentage of employees from high (39.7%) and moderate (37.6%) income groups used it, but only 21.3% of the employees from the low-income group used it.

Table 3: Percentage of Social Media Usage by Income Group

Income group	WeChat Use (%)	YouTube Use (%)	Instagram Use (%)
High	39.7	45.6	55
Moderate	37.6	60.6	79.8
Low	21.3	66.7	61.8

The results showed that employees earning high incomes used WeChat more than those earning moderate and low incomes. On the other hand, low-income employees tended to use Instagram and YouTube more than moderate- and high-income employees.

Meanwhile, another chi-square analysis performed found significant differences between Facebook usage and job position, $X^2(28, N = 434) = 58.12, p = <.001$. The effect size, Cramer's V , was moderate, $V = .18$. In addition, a significant relationship was found between Instagram usage and job position, $X^2(21, N = 362) = 63.17, p = <.001$. The effect size, Cramer's V , was moderate, $V = .24$. Table 4 shows that employees who were in marketing/finance/sales used Facebook (86.6%) and Instagram (85.7%) more than other employees.

Table 4: Percentage of Social Media Usage by Job Position

Job Position	Facebook Use %	Instagram Use %
Operator/Technician	78.6	67.9
Managerial	64.6	38
Administrative/HR/Support	83.6	74.2
Engineers	83.4	49.9
Marketing/Finance/Sales	86.6	85.7
Security	71.4	30

Relationships between social media usage, individual well-being, working environment, and happiness

This study examined the variables predicting employees' happiness by using the hierarchical regression analysis (see Table 5). In Step 1, social media usage was entered into the equation. In Step 2, working environment was entered into the equation. Finally, individual well-being was entered in Step 3. Employee happiness was the dependent variable in this analysis.

In Step 1, WhatsApp usage, WeChat usage, Facebook usage, Twitter usage, YouTube usage, and Instagram usage did not emerge as significant predictors of happiness. This finding indicated that social media usage by manufacturing employees did not determine their happiness at the workplace. Therefore, H_{2a} was not supported. In Step 2, working environment emerged as a significant positive predictor of employee happiness ($\beta = .27, p < .01$). Therefore, H_{2b} was supported. Additionally, in Step 2, social media usage remained an insignificant predictor of happiness. However, working environment only accounted for an additional 0.8% of the variance, and the *F* change was significant ($p < .01$).

In Step 3, when individual well-being was entered into the equation, it emerged as a significant positive predictor of happiness ($\beta = .42, p < .01$). Therefore, H_{2c} was supported. In this step, working environment remained as a positive and significant predictor to happiness ($\beta = .15, p < .001$). On the other hand, individual well-being emerged as the main predictor to happiness and accounted for an additional 23% of the variance explained, and the *F* change was also significant ($p < .01$). Therefore, both H_{2b} and H_{2c} were supported, but H_{2a} was not supported. The final equation accounted for 23% of the variance explained in employee happiness. Finally, based on the hierarchical regression analysis, individual well-being emerged as the best predictor of happiness. This result answered the research question of this study.

Table 5: Summary of Regression Analysis for Predicting Happiness among Manufacturing Employees

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β
Step 1			
Usage of WhatsApp	.12	.08	.13
Usage of WeChat	.10	.10	.08
Usage of Facebook	.08	.07	-.08
Usage of Twitter	-.14	.13	-.10
Usage of YouTube	-.11	.09	-.10
Usage of Instagram	.02	.08	.02
Step 2			
Usage of WhatsApp	.11	.08	.12
Usage of WeChat	.08	.09	.06
Usage of Facebook	.09	.07	-.10
Usage of Twitter	-.07	.14	.07
Usage of YouTube	-.08	.13	-.07
Usage of Instagram	-.02	.07	-.02
Working environment	.19	.05	.27**
Step 3			
Usage of WhatsApp	.05	.07	.05
Usage of WeChat	-.03	.09	-.03
Usage of Facebook	.08	.06	.09
Usage of Twitter	-.14	.12	-.08
Usage of YouTube	-.01	.08	-.01
Usage of Instagram	-.05	.07	-.05
Working environment	.10	.04	.15**
Individual well-being	.37	.06	.42**

Note. Step 1: $R = .23$, $R^2 = .05$, $p < .001$; Step 2: $R = .29$, $R^2 = .08$, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $p < .01$; Step 3: $\Delta R^2 = .16$. Total $R^2 = .24$, $p < .001$, Total Adj. $R^2 = .23$. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

Discussion and conclusion

The study's findings indicate that manufacturing employees use WeChat more than other types of social media. WeChat is commonly used by young people, and they use it mainly for entertainment. Gong, Liu, and Cheng (2019) positioned WeChat as the dominant medium of social media communication in China, as 79.6% of the total population were reported to be frequent users of the app. While WeChat was established to incorporate the basic function of communication, amongst others, the findings indicate that gratifications from entertainment significantly affect the daily usage of WeChat (Montag, Becker, & Gan, 2018). Further, based on the findings, social media usage is not an important predictor of happiness among employees in the manufacturing sector. This is possibly due to the nature of their jobs, especially those in the production division which demands high commitment to the task, which leaves them with little time to use social media (A. Manaf, Idid, & Buyong, 2018). Similarly in another study, Veldeman, Van Praet, and Mechant (2017) discovered that social media acceptance among industrial employees was significantly hampered by their lack of technology affinity and a conservative mindset. Nevertheless, this study's findings on gratification highlight that social media usage does not contribute to happiness among manufacturing employees. Therefore, these findings appear to lend partial support to the assumptions of uses and gratifications theory, where gratification is obtained when using certain social media.

Further, the findings point to the importance of working environment and individual well-being as predictors of happiness. A conducive working environment makes employees happy. These findings are in line with the statements of previous researchers who contend that workplace environment determines employees' happiness (Baumeister, Vohs, Aaker, & Garbinsky, 2013).

In addition, the findings indicate that individual well-being serves as a more important factor than working environment that determines employees' happiness at the workplace. Apart from the working environment, employees who are satisfied with their own lives will also be happy at work since they often carry their joy from home to the workplace and vice versa. Individuals' relationships with their neighbours, their good feelings, and perceptions as well as satisfaction

with their family's living condition, housing area, family income, and social life contribute to their satisfaction in life, which makes them happy at the workplace. Hence, personal happiness and life contentment are the most crucial determinants of employees' happiness at the workplace, as discovered in past studies (Gadhavi, Parikh, Patel, Joshi, & Thaker, 2021; Gangwani, Alhalwany, & Sheikh, 2020).

Overall, the findings indicate that individual well-being and working environment are significant determinants of employees' happiness. Employees always transfer their happiness from home to the workplace and vice versa (Gadhavi et al., 2021). Therefore, this study's findings suggest that employers must look after their employees' welfare to ensure that they have a good life, which will lead to their satisfaction at the workplace. In addition, employers should provide a safe, healthy, and conducive working environment to increase employees' levels of happiness at the workplace.

This study has several limitations. The major limitation is related to the relatively small sample which was restricted to employees of manufacturing companies in selected states in Peninsular Malaysia. The results, therefore, cannot be generalised to all manufacturing employees in other states in Malaysia, especially in East Malaysia. Additionally, the findings of this study are solely based on the quantitative methodology; future studies could use the qualitative or mixed-mode approach to further explore social media usage and the gratifications arising from it among manufacturing employees in Malaysia. In addition, this study only examined social media usage, individual well-being and working environment as the contributing factors towards happiness at work. Other variables could be considered in future studies. Furthermore, this study utilised Uses and Gratifications theory to understand the studied phenomenon. Further studies may also use other relevant theories such as Herzberg's two factor theory to further understand factors which contribute to workplace happiness.

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Research Notes

Orientalism and the Globalised Muslim World: Decolonising “Exotic” Narratives of Eurocentrism in the Era of Post-colonial Studies

Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin*
Nadhirah Zainal Rashid**

Abstract: This paper explores the origins of Orientalism and how it came into existence in the discourse of post-colonial studies. This paper utilises the work of Edward Said to demonstrate that Orientalism is not solely a field of study about the Eastern world, but rather critiques the biased nature of views towards the globalised Muslim world. This paper will examine some of the major events where Orientalism has shaped the realm of Muslim affairs as well as international history and politics - such as during the Algerian War of Independence, the polemics of Iran’s Nuclear Crisis, the global war on ‘Islamist’ terrorism and the British government’s response to the 7/7 London bombings. These case studies are chronologically ordered to demonstrate the pervasiveness of Orientalism across time. Ultimately, this paper argues that Said’s critiques on Orientalism produce an important foundation for post-colonial studies namely: 1) to identify the stereotypes used in media, writing and literature; 2) to unravel fictional narratives among Eurocentric scholars;

* Visiting Research Fellow, Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, School of Government and International Affairs, Durham University & Senior lecturer, Centre for Research in History, Politics and International Affairs, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Email: mohammed.i.saidin@durham.ac.uk.

** Postgraduate candidate, Department of Political Science, School of Public Policy, University College London. Email: nadhirah.rashid.19@ucl.ac.uk

and 3) to debunk myths when researching the ‘globalised Muslim world’—as Orientalism is still very much apparent in the contemporary foreign and domestic policy realm, especially policies towards Muslims. Hence, this paper concludes that decolonisation of history is important in post-colonial studies in order to achieve unbiased (new) knowledge production.

Keywords: Orientalism, Eurocentrism, Edward Said, Muslim world, post-colonial studies

Abstrak: Artikel ini meneroka latar belakang dan kemunculan Orientalisme dalam wacana kajian pasca-kolonial. Artikel ini memanfaatkan kajian Edward Said untuk menunjukkan bahawa Orientalisme tidak hanya sekadar bidang penyelidikan berhubung dunia Timur tetapi juga adalah kritikan kepada penyimpangan sudut pandang terhadap dunia Islam sejagat. Artikel ini meninjau beberapa peristiwa penting di mana Orientalisme telah membentuk perspektif kepada hal-ehwal Muslim di samping kesannya terhadap sejarah dan politik antarabangsa, antaranya adalah seperti peristiwa Perang Kemerdekaan Algeria, polemik krisis nuklear Iran, peperangan global terhadap keganasan ‘Islamis’ dan reaksi kerajaan Britain terhadap peristiwa pengeboman 7/7 di London. Kesemua kajian kes ini secara kronologinya dikupas untuk menunjukkan implikasi Orientalisme dari masa ke semasa. Secara dasarnya, artikel ini berhujah bahawa kritikan Said terhadap Orientalisme telah membuahkan asas penting terhadap kajian pasca-kolonial seperti : 1) untuk mengenalpasti stereotaip yang sering digunakan di media dan penulisan; 2) untuk mendedahkan naratif-naratif tidak berasas oleh pengkaji Barat; dan 3) untuk memaparkan segala kepalsuan dalam penyelidikan berkaitan dunia Islam sejagat - memandangkan Orientalisme dilihat masih membayangi dasar luar dan tempatan kontemporari di Barat, terutamanya berkaitan dasar-dasar melibatkan Islam. Justeru, artikel ini menyimpulkan bahawa penyahjajahan sejarah adalah mustahak dalam era pasca-kolonial untuk mencapai sudut pandang yang adil dalam penghasilan ilmu-ilmu baru.

Kata kunci: Orientalisme, Eurosentrisme, Edward Said, dunia Islam, kajian pasca-kolonial

Introduction

This paper explores the origins of Orientalism and how it came into existence in the discourse of post-colonial studies. This paper utilises the work of Edward Said to demonstrate that Orientalism is not solely a field of study about the Eastern world, but rather critiques the biased

nature of views towards the globalised Muslim world. This paper will examine some of the major events where Orientalism has shaped the realm of Muslim affairs as well as international history and politics - such as during the Algerian War of Independence, the polemics of Iran's Nuclear Crisis, the global war on 'Islamist' terrorism and the British government's response to the 7/7 London bombings. These case studies are chronologically ordered to demonstrate the pervasiveness of Orientalism across time. Ultimately, this paper argues that Said's critiques on Orientalism produce an important foundation for post-war era studies namely: 1) to identify the stereotypes used in media, writing and literature; 2) to unravel fictional narratives among Eurocentric scholars; and 3) to debunk myths when researching the 'globalised Muslim world' - as Orientalism is still very much apparent in the contemporary foreign and domestic policy realm, especially policies towards Muslims. Hence, this paper concludes that decolonisation of history is important in post-colonial studies in order to achieve unbiased (new) knowledge production.

Defining Orientalism from Edward Said's perspective

Orientalism is a Western scholarly discipline that dates from the period of European post-Enlightenment (Said 1978). The study emerged when the European powers focused their understanding on East Asian societies through their communication, arts, writings, beliefs and body of laws. The colonial British administration and scholars in India adhered to Orientalism as a 'school of thought' as they believed that India's traditions and laws should be the centrepiece of ruling rather than the standard British traditions and laws - this practice is called "Anglicanism". Therefore, it is clear that a huge part of Orientalism is a product of Western colonial powers studying the subjects of their conquered territories in the East and thus making the history of international politics Eurocentric. This will be elaborated upon in the next section of the paper.

When one thinks of Orientalism, the immediate thought that comes to mind would be the European-constructed fantasies of this "other" world with "exotic beings." However, that is not entirely true. According to Edward Said in his work *Orientalism*, there are three definitions of Orientalism. Firstly, Said (1978) stated that any person who studies and researches the Orient is an Orientalist. Historians or sociologists who

write or teach about the Orient are thus teaching/researching Orientalism. There are a number of institutions that exist today focusing on the study of this region such as the School of Oriental and African Studies located in the heart of London. However, the term “Orientalism” is contested. As Said (1978) stated, the term implies the negative connotation of the imperious administrative attitude of European colonialism during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Hence, Orientalism, through this generic definition, suggests a kind of “Western” field of academic enquiry of the Orientalists so as to understand their subjects, the Orientals in the East.

Secondly, Edward Said describes Orientalism “as a style of thought that is produced by the ontological and epistemological distinction between the Orient and Occident” (Said 1978, p. 2). Since Orientalism came into existence, there are many writers who have recognised the fundamental differences between the East and West in their literary and scholarly works that describe the Orient and its identity (Said 1978). This meaning implies that Orientalism provides a dichotomous discourse to separate two different regions of the world. The words included to describe the Occident are often superior and foreign, while the Orient is often associated with words such as inferior and native. Moreover, the Orient is seen as more feminine than the Occident which is seen as more masculine. Orientalism, then, also contributes to this invisible line that divides the world into the Global North and the Global South. That being said, Orientalism is constituted of a language where there exist two different kinds of world, where the Orient is a mirroring image of what is inferior and alien when compared to the West. In simpler words, the Orient is almost everything that the West is not, according to Western consciousness.

Edward Said’s third definition of Orientalism is that it can be considered a type of “corporate institution” (Said 1978, p. 3) with its main function to manage the Orient through producing expressions of the “other” and to authorise Orientalist notions. In other words, it is a Western study in which the ultimate aim is to understand Eastern parts of the world in relation to their Western identities to further strengthen them. According to Said (1978, p. 24), the Orient is “Europe’s greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the “other”. The aim of the Western colonial powers was to gather

information on the Orient so as to understand their subjects well enough to rule them - which is related to the saying “knowledge is power.” Without the Orient to rule, Western identity would not exist today. Hence, it is evident that Orientalism is a Western style of domination to invent depictions as a way to establish the East as the “other” and maintain Western superiority.

As these definitions suggest, Orientalism is not just a Western field of study that aims to understand the East. Said suggested in his book that European culture achieved and constructed a Western identity through mirroring itself against the inferiority of the Orient (Said 1978). This study established a Western set of basic differences between the West as the “Occident” and the “East” as the Orient, for the West to gain authority, identity and ultimately, power. Edward Said emphasised that definitions of Orientalism remain important in studies of post-colonialism and he unpacked the stereotypes - and what we see in the media today mostly pertains to people in the Middle East. In the next section, this paper will demonstrate how Orientalism has shaped the realm of International Politics and how it contributes to our understanding of global policies towards particular states and peoples.

Orientalism and post-Colonialism debates: Rethinking the “Battle of Algiers”

As Orientalist ideas came from the West’s efforts to understand the East, one of the main contributions of this style of thought is the push for modern academia and historians to deconstruct Eurocentric narratives through the process of decolonisation of mainstream history. A lot of the history of the Orient was a product of the interaction between the Occident and the Orient, and not so much the other way around. Said’s work on Orientalism is influential in such a way that academics nowadays retain it in the back of their minds when doing research on post-colonial studies. Besides Edward Said, the main post-colonial studies’ authors to whom this paper will refer are Erik Ringmar, Tarak Barkawi, Mark Laffey and Meera Sabaratnam. These contributions are important as the main struggle for the Orient is their representation. Additionally, Orientalism also helps scholars of International Politics underscore the relations between power and knowledge, as described by Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and also *Discipline and Punish* (Said 1978). In addition, Orientalism allows the community

of academia to understand the power relations between a hegemon and other states. In this section, this paper will demonstrate the influence of Orientalism within major events of International Politics from the time of French Algeria to the London bombings in the 21st Century and the efforts to decolonise mainstream narratives of these events.

In 1830 the French invasion of Algeria began and it lasted for 132 years before Algeria gained its independence. The French authorities in Algeria imposed *Le Système Bugeaud* (Ringmar 2013: 270) as a way to fight the Arabs to fully conquer Algeria. This method suggested by the French Governor-General involved the raiding of resources in Arab society included crops, orchards and cattle (ibid). Not only did the French colonial powers deprive civilians of their resources, but French soldiers were also allowed to commit other brutal acts such as rape, torture and slaughter of civilians in order to control the Algerians until Abd al-Qadir surrendered (Ringmar 2013). Going back to Said's point about Orientalism as a "style of thought," is there really a difference between the Orient and the Occident when the French soldiers declared war on Algerian civilians? The French Colonial Empire was definitely not civilising Algeria through these "barbaric" methods, which is problematic as they were supposed to be the guardians to improve the backwardness of the society. In addition, Palestinian-American anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (2002) also quoted sociologist Marnia Lazreg's claim that French women were saving Muslim women during the French occupation of Algeria. The ceremony that involved French women unveiling Algerian women was a symbolic event that manifested the liberation of Algerian women (Abu-Lughod 2002). It is contradictory that while their troops were committing acts of torture on civilians, French women claimed to be "liberating" Arab females. Moreover, the veil might have been a choice for some Algerian women as part of their identity.

One of the best examples of the use of Orientalism as a lens to decolonise history through cinematic production would be the film "Battle of Algiers" where the director, Gillo Pontecorvo, produced a film that portrays the Algerian resistance of the National Liberation Front (FLN) against the French colonial powers during the Algerian War of Independence from 1954 to 1962. This film stars Saadi Yaacef who was involved with the FLN in the Kasbah of Algiers during the actual war (Tunzelmann 2009). Pontecorvo received help from the FLN

in gathering stories from the activists during the struggle to create a film that favoured the Algerians (Whitaker 2006). When “The Battle of Algiers” was released, it sparked significant controversy and it was not shown in France for a couple of years after its release (Tunzelmann 2009). Through this film, Pontecorvo is giving subalterns a voice to speak about their experiences. Having said that, this film is aligned with Meera Sabaratnam’s (2011) decolonising strategy challenging the Western perspective as the mainstream view of history. Since this film involved Algerians, it was also a way to narrate the history of the Algerian War of Independence through the voices of the subalterns, which is the fourth decolonising strategy mentioned by Sabaratnam (2011). This film ‘decolonised history’ by challenging the notion of the West being more civilised than the Orient by showing their methods during the war. However, Eurocentric and Orientalist assumptions remain the mainstream understanding of world politics even after the Algerian War of Independence.

Orientalism and the polemics of the Iranian Nuclear Crisis: Is Iran today a threat to the Middle East region and world peace?

Another important event with mainstream narratives that was influenced by Orientalism was the Iranian Nuclear Crisis. Many narratives only involved two blocs - the West, led by the United States of America, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The implications of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 completely changed Iranian-Western relations (Saidin 2018). It replaced the days of bilateral cooperation with a war of rhetoric and sanctions between Iran and the USA in particular - and in the eyes of many it ‘threatened’ global peace. Laffey and Weldes (2018) argued that the implementation of nation-state structure creates international hierarchies which leads to the marginalisation of subaltern perspectives of world politics. The nuclear issue dominates this question. Iran’s history with nuclear technology began in 1959 and was accelerated in the 1970’s, aided by cooperation with the United States, after signing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Ansari 2006: 6). However, the revolution plunged Iran’s nuclear programme into secrecy and debate has raged ever since, with little evidence ever being produced. Iran had two sites which strongly suggested the ability to make nuclear weapons, making it easy to argue that Iran threatened peace.

In the case of the Iran Nuclear Crisis, policymakers and scholars missed out on crucial dynamics and features of the crisis as the Iranian experience was omitted from a Eurocentric narrative. Even after a number of political gatherings involving the central participants in the Iran Nuclear Crisis, the assumption of the Iranians was that they were unable to go beyond a “national-political approach”. Following this event, Orientalism created a dividing line between nations that were rational and those that were not. It was evident that the practices of scholars and states created a hierarchical international order where Iran was not significant to a crisis that was named after their own country. Laffey and Weldes (2018) state that in order to create a critical oral history, it is necessary for a postcolonial intervention in the literature to allow the voices of subalterns like Iran to challenge mainstream views of the Nuclear Crisis. Laffey and Weldes are also in the process of decolonising history through Sabaratnam’s (2011) fourth strategy of analysing global political events through the perspectives of the subalterns. It is crucial to point out an example of a population from the Global South, as in the case of the Iranians, who were distinctly marginalised from the global knowledge production of the crisis that happened within their own territory.

Despite the ambiguity surrounding Iran’s nuclear intentions, it is clear that Iran is not part of a threatening ‘Axis of Evil’, as the Islamic republic shows no capability, or even intent, to launch attacks on foreign countries. Ironically, Israel, having not signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), continues to threaten Iran and looks most likely to initiate conflict (Axworthy 2008, p. 296). Besides, if Iran was to acquire nuclear weapons it is doubtful it would initiate a conflict with Israel, instead using them as a deterrent like other nuclear armed nations (Axworthy 2013, p. 394). Nevertheless, it is clear that Iran’s development of a nuclear programme displeases Western powers, especially Israel and the US (Ayoob 2014). Israel insists that it is the target of Iran’s nuclear programme, whilst Iran asserts that it is only for civilian purposes as is its right under the 1968 NPT treaty. Better relations will help convince Americans that Iran is not the threat it once was. Furthermore, Rouhani’s election in 2014 has paved the way for a new start in Iranian-Western relations by replacing the conservative Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, under whom the nuclear issue worsened considerably.

Orientalism and the ‘global war on terror’ on Muslims

Fast forward to the early 21st century and one of mass media’s most-used terms would be “terror”. Terror is usually associated with the feeling initiated by those who are labelled terrorists - and unsurprisingly, these terrorists are almost always people of colour and the majority of them are Muslims with United States as the opposing hegemon; it was not a “Global War on Terror” but a war - and still ongoing - on Muslims. President Bush’s war was supposed to be a war between the civilised Occident against the uncivilised Orient. However, the methods that were used by the American government were otherwise as they were against international conventions and domestic laws (Ringmar 2013). These “savagely” methods were allowed as Elbridge Colby explained because the standard rules of international law “do not apply in war with uncivilised States and tribes” (Ringmar 2013, p. 269) as they can reduce the number of deaths and end the conflict sooner. The Global War on Terror illustrates that Orientalism is still dominant in discourses on global politics. As mentioned by Sabaratnam (2011), studies of international relations and politics strengthen the notion of “subject-object relationships” between former colonial powers and colonies even after the legalisation of decolonisation has taken place. There is a distinction between wars against “civilised” and “uncivilised” enemies where international laws only apply to the former (Ringmar 2013). Since the word “terror” has been used in that context, any forms of atrocities committed by a perpetrator who is not Muslim, will not fall into the “terrorist” category. The framing of the word “terror” is a significant issue as it is associated with a particular group of people based on the acts of some. Note that less mainstream global media called the perpetrator of the mosque shooting in Christchurch, New Zealand on 15 March 2019 a terrorist because he was white when he caused 52 casualties (Lazreg, 2019; Kaskelėviciute & Matthes, 2022).

The response of the British government to the 7/7 bombings in London is also proof that Orientalism is still very much influencing the realm of international politics. This bomb attack on public transportation in London on July 7th 2005 caused 56 deaths including the bombers (Elliot 2017). Although the bombers were British-born citizens and the attack happened in London, the government’s response was to work on democracy promotion in Pakistan. It is perplexing that the measure taken by the British Government had nothing to do with the community

in London, but rather focused on another continent. The justification from the Prime Minister was that although the bombers were British born, the ideology was foreign. Reports on the bombers' travels to Pakistan for two and half-months in 2004 were used to legitimise the British government's interventions in Pakistan (Elliot 2017). This event reinforces the relationship between power and knowledge as the British government's aim was to educate the "other" on democracy. Nations who do not comply with liberal democratic values are considered barbaric and thus cannot be part of a modern civilised global society. To challenge this, scholars and researchers must deconstruct the notion of the West to represent the "other" as objects as mentioned by Sabaratnam (2011). Having problematised the existence of Orientalism in International Politics, it is important for scholars to bury the notion of the West's position as the East's guardian in the process of civilisation after so many years of post-colonialism.

Conclusion and Reflection: Future of Orientalism

This paper has demonstrated that Orientalism is an important foundation for post-colonial studies and it can be used as a lens for scholars and students to unpack the stereotypes of the "other" in mainstream media, writing and literature and reconstruct Eurocentric narratives and challenge them. It is also crucial to remember that Orientalism is not just purely a construct of the West, imposing certain traits to the East and labelling the Orient as the "uncivilised other". It is a style of thought that contributes to post-colonial identities of the Global North and the Global South and shapes the landscape of global politics and policies today, especially towards Muslims. This paper has also demonstrated that it is crucial to study global history, politics and international relations with multiple lenses and perspectives, and not just through the mainstream theories. Orientalism is important to understand hegemony and how power relations are interconnected with knowledge. As the case studies of different major political events have suggested, Orientalism is not a stagnant theory and neither is the study of politics/international affairs as there is still a big chunk of history to deconstruct. There are many ways that can be implemented to decolonise history. States play an important part as they can encourage academic freedom, invest in education policies and provide funding for research. As the world is becoming more globalised and interconnected, it is important to remember that there is a voice inside the Orientals that wants to be

heard in order to decolonise the exotic narratives of the “other” and seek to achieve equality in knowledge production.

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Conference Reports

Report on the first International Conference on Islamic Spiritual Care: Conceptualising Spiritual Care Between Traditional Guidance and Modern Practices

Online via Zoom, 27 – 28 December 2021

Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil*

With the aim to explore concepts of spiritual care adopted or envisioned by Muslims in the modern time, the Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies at the International Islamic University Malaysia collaborated with the Islamic University of Applied Sciences, Rotterdam in organising the first ever international conference to address the subject of Islamic spiritual care. The online conference was attended by more than one hundred participants from several countries namely Malaysia, the Netherlands, Indonesia, Turkiye, United Kingdom, Denmark and the United States of America. The conference was preceded by an international pre-conference webinar several months earlier which was intended to spark the conversation and attract outstanding proposals for the actual conference. All proposals received went through a review process by two reviewers prior to being accepted. Approximately 50 proposals were shortlisted, of which 32 were accepted for presentation. During the conference, 21 papers were presented and all but one of them were published in the e-Proceedings of the conference. On the whole, the conference presented a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted concepts of Islamic spiritual care as well as the current interests and areas of emphasis among academics and practitioners of Islamic spiritual care.

* Assistant Professor, Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, AbdulHamid A. AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. Email: husaini@iium.edu.my.

The conference featured two keynote and five main speakers from several regions and continents. The first day of the conference was vibrating with energy as the first keynote speaker, Professor Dr Recep Şentürk, the former rector of İbn Haldun Üniversitesi, Istanbul invited the attendees to consider the concept of the self, the multiplex human ontology, the concept of human action, the multiplex theory of human action, and the multiplex psychotherapy from the Islamic tradition. Şentürk argues that “by employing the multiplex conception of the self and theory of action, we can integrate psychology and Islam and bring them into dialogue.” The session continued with the main speech by the director of the conference, Arnold Yasin Mol of Islamic University of Applied Sciences, Rotterdam. Mol proposed a new concept of ‘urbanised theology’ as a framework to engage with issues and problems affecting contemporary society in the new urbanised context. In relation to this, Islamic spiritual care can be seen as a form of urbanised theology of care. Pursuing the narrative of care, the next main speaker, Dr. Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil highlighted the concept of *ri‘āyah* (care) in Prophetic traditions. He underlined the confused understanding and consequential neglect of care as the cause for increased relationship issues and pervasive individualism in postmodern societies. Bin Jamil proposed the concept of *naşīḥah* that encompasses any endeavours of Islamisation, Islamicisation, relevantisation and integration as the underlying philosophy for Islamic spiritual care.

The second day of the conference was graced by Dr Rania Awad, Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the Stanford University School of Medicine and Director of the Muslim Mental Health Lab and Wellness Program. In her keynote speech, Awad alerted the attendees to the problem of suicide among Muslims in the West. Muslims reported higher suicide attempts compared to other faith groups (almost two times more than Protestants) and other Muslim majority countries regardless of their self-reported religiosity. In face of this situation, Awad and her team introduced an initiative called “Maristan” following the traditional Muslim idea of “Bimaristan,” the mental health centres in medieval Islamic civilisation. The attendees were also enthralled by the presentation of the other main speaker, Yunus Dudhwala who shared his experience as Head of Chaplaincy and Bereavement Services to Barts Health NHS Trust, United Kingdom. Dudhwala does not only engage with spiritual care among Muslims, but also successfully managed

multifaith chaplaincy. His sharing well exemplified the importance of integrating Islamic epistemological and ontological framework with empirical truths in psychology that is believed to lead to an integrative model of mental health care as expounded by the earlier main speaker, Dr Hooman Keshavarzi, the Executive Director/Founder of Khalil Centre, United States.

Managing an online conference that involves participants from several continents proved to be quite a challenge due to different time zones. Due to this, the speech by the Director of Darul Qasim Institute, Chicago, Mohammed Amin Kholwadia was rescheduled to the end of the first day of the conference. For the operational framework of spiritual care, Kholwadia suggested for Muslims to intimate Divine name theology and he gave the example of the divine names *al-Ra'ūf* and *al-Raḥīm* which reflect affection and compassion. Also, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the presentation on the master programme of Islamic spiritual care at IUASR was done by a representative. Other presentations, however, went extremely well and they touched on a wide range of subjects including exchanges between Islamic spiritual care and Christian spiritual care, spiritual care in Germany and Turkey, the spiritual journey of man, concepts such as justice, contentment and effort, death remembrance and death readiness quotient, spiritual care in hospitals and prisons, spiritual care during the time of pandemic, the pedagogy of spiritual care, Islamic art and the enhancement of spirituality, anger management in adult care centres, managing depression amongst young adults, and spiritual care for children with special needs.

As the first ever conference hosted not by a dedicated centre or association for Islamic spiritual care, the conference could be said to have achieved more than what it aimed for and received laudatory praises and reviews from several international institutions, particularly in Muslim majority countries. Some have also offered to sponsor the next conference on the subject. The conference concluded that the understanding of human ontology is crucial for an integrative model of Islamic spiritual care and that this concept is undeniably multifaceted. The conference has also proposed for the establishment of a research centre for Islamic spiritual care. There was also enthusiastic support to explore more avenues for exchanges between Islamic spiritual care and the global engagement with spirituality.

In This Issue

Note from the Editor

Research Articles

**Nur Ezan Rahmat, Muhammad Ikhwan Mohd. Zain Hartini Saripan,
Daleleer Kaur & Muhammad Fikri Othman**

Mediation as an Alternative Mechanism to Resolve Family Disputes in
Malaysia: A Comparative Analysis with Australia and New Zealand

Nurzali Ismail, Shuhaida Md Noor, Jamilah Ahmad & Mohamad Hafifi Jamri

Understanding Factors Influencing Crime Prevention Information on Social
Media

Nurul Miza Mohd Rashid & Noor Aqsa Nabila Mat Isa

Examining the Effects of News Frames as a Risk Factor of Radicalisation

Lokman Karadag

The PRC'S Military Strategies on the Security Architecture of East and South
China Sea under President Xi Jinping

Nik A. Hisham Ismail, Mustafa Tekke, Ismail Fatah & Shazmin Rafeeq

Mental Well-Being and Religious Values Among Muslims Across Four Cities

Aini Maznina A. Manaf, Tengku Siti Aisha Tengku Azzman & Syed Arabi Iddid

Unravelling the Roles of Social Media Usage, Individual Well-Being, and
Working Environment on Happiness at The Workplace

Research Notes

Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin & Nadhirah Zainal Rashid

Orientalism and the Globalised Muslim World: Decolonising “Exotic”
Narratives of Eurocentrism in the Era of Post-colonial Studies

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