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## **FBM INSIGHTS**

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## RECTOR'S MESSAGE



Congratulations and well done to Faculty of Business and Management of Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Kedah, Kampus Sungai Petani on the success indirectly with the publication of FBM Insights. Satisfaction in publishing the last FBM Insight bulletin has been the driving force behind the existence of the latest FBM Insight bulletin.

I hope this bulletin can provide an opportunity for Business and Management academic staff to produce more academic materials and develop their skills in academic and creative writing. I also hope that this bulletin will continue to receive full support and response from all UiTM Cawangan Kedah academicians. I'm very pleased to see that the university is actively involved in disseminating knowledge to the public. This is the spirit and attitude that should be shown and applied because we are all academics responsible for lifelong learning. Furthermore, seeking and sharing of knowledge are vital and more initiatives should be undertaken to support this life-long learning process.

Again, well done to the Faculty of Business and Management of UiTM Cawangan Kedah and those who were involved directly and indirectly the FBM Insights. I wish all the best and hope that this bulletin will move forward and extend its wings in the future.

**Prof. Dr. Mohamad Abdullah Hemdi**

Rector

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah

## FROM THE DESK OF THE HEAD OF FACULTY



Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakaatuh

Small is beautiful – E.F. Schumacher

Alhamdulillah with the grace of the Almighty FBM UiTM Kedah is delighted to issue the second edition of FBM Insights. This edition sees a submission of 22 writings of FBM's lecturers, topics ranging from finance, entrepreneurship, SME business, operations management, waqf, marketing, teaching and learning.

It is a challenging time for most of us. As educators, the most significant one was having to immediately get on the online learning bandwagon due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of technology was undeniable. As appropriately put by Satya Nadella, "We've seen *two years'* worth of *digital transformation in two months.*" However reluctant, all of us were roped into using technology in our daily lives.

We are very much humbled by the support given by fellow faculty members to this bulletin. The bulletin was started to provide a platform for everyone, both new and seasoned authors, to share ideas and opinions of matters relating to business management. I take this opportunity to thank all the contributors for your support and would also like to show appreciation to the committee members who have worked tirelessly in producing the bulletin. Here is to better days ahead!

**Dr. Yanti Aspha Ameira Mustapha**

FBM Insights Advisor

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# **SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE (SME) FINANCING: CREDIT EVALUATION METHOD**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The past literature on SME financing has discussed how the owners or managers of the firm preferred or choose sources of financing to finance their business. The preference of the sources of financing would change according to the business age (Hussain et al, 2006; Bhaird and Lucy, 2011), country (Hussain et al, 2006), owner's education (Haileselasie, 2009), or even gender (Kim, 2018). The internal fund or retained earnings is the most preferred sources of fund. Based on the SME Annual Report 2018/19, the external debt financing was ranked number two in sources of financing by Malaysian SME after sources of financing from own cash and retained earnings. The dependencies of SME over the external debt financing in some of the countries including Malaysia to finance their business operation is high. Apart from the commercial banks, there are other institutions such as Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) or agencies under various ministries offering to finance not only to SME but also to micro-businesses. With the abundant offers from the banking system as well as from the government-related agencies to finance the SME, the issue of the limited access to external debt financing should not be the reason hindering SME to grow. The main constraint impeding SME business growth is not difficulties in accessing sufficient financing but it was due to an increase in competition and fluctuations in consumer demand (SME Annual Report, 2018/19).

Insufficient documentation, insufficient cash flow, and unfeasible business plans are the main reasons Malaysia's SME loan applications were rejected (SME Annual Report, 2018/19). Every loan application received by the financial institution will go through some evaluation to determine the bankability and viability of the business. We cannot generalize any loan application without enough collateral would be rejected or any newly formed firm is not bankable. There is a scheme for start-up business; there is a loan from related agencies for borrowers that have inadequate collateral. Complete and sufficient information from both parties is very important as any information asymmetry between the lenders and the borrower may delay the evaluation and approval process (Abe, 2015). Thus, by reducing information asymmetry on both parties, it would widen the SME opportunity access to financing from the banking institution as well as other related agencies. The knowledge of how the loan application is being evaluated would help SME owners or managers to prepare all the relevant documents and information to secure the approval of the loan application.

## **CREDIT EVALUATION METHOD**

A loan application basically will go through a similar credit evaluation process and a depth credit analysis will be conducted on project- based business or highly automated industry, manufacturing, or any industry that needs special assessment based on the bank's current credit policy. Every financial institution or lending agency has its processing tools and approaches.

The most famous credit evaluation methods are 5Cs and CAMPARI. There are also 5Ps, LAPP, and Financial Analysis and Previous Experience (FAPE). Even though every method mentioned here has different dimensions, but all of them have many similarities. Abbadi and Abu Karsh (2013) had summarized the dimension of each method.

Table 1 : Credit Evaluation Dimensions

Method	Dimensions
5C's	Character, Capital, Collateral, Condition, Capacity
CAMPARI	Character, Ability to pay, Margin, Purpose, Amount, Repayment terms, Insurance
5P's	People, Purpose, Payment, Protection, Prospective
LAPP	Liquidity, Activity, Profitability, Potential
FAPE	Liquidity ratios, Profitability ratio, Operation ratios, Debt ratios, Character, Credit Record

Apart from the credit evaluation methods mentioned above, there is another supporting method known as credit rating or credit scoring. This method is used by the financial institutions to evaluate any programmed lending and also used as the auxiliary mechanism to enhance the credit evaluation for any non-programmed loan. The financial institution has its in house credit rating or scoring system. The system builds based on three 3 approaches which namely, parametric approach, artificial intelligence approach, and non-parametric approach (Bai et al. 2018). The quantitative credit risk scoring model would also save time and cost of the financing institutions (Shen et al. 2019). The system mainly used to facilitate the process, hence if there is a problem, it always back to the basic credit evaluation method.

## CONCLUSION

Every method has its dimension that addressed how risk can be mitigated by providing useful information to the evaluator and decision-maker. The evaluation process would not solely depend on just one method. It involves a combination of several methods by combining selected dimensions. In processing the business loan application, the financial institution will look at the *background of the borrower* which may come in a various business form such as sole-proprietor, partnership or private limited firm, the *management structure* of the firm where the business experience, level of education and the skill of the owner of the firm including the key personnel of the firm is very important, the *firm's financial indicators*, the *conduct of existing banking facilities* including the current account and personal loan of the owner of the firm, the *repayment capability* by looking at the firm's income, *amount of loan* requested versus proposed, the *prospect of the business*, and also the *legal status* of the potential borrower by doing the credit checking with the relevant authorities.

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SME Annual Report 2018/19

# **CREDIT GUARANTEE CORPORATION MALAYSIA BERHAD (CGC): AN OVERVIEW**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Berhad (CGC) has existed in Malaysia's financial system for half of a century. Forty-eight years to be exact. Monitored and supervised by the central bank of Malaysia known as Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM). CGC was established initially to support small businesses obtaining a credit facility, especially from the commercial bank by providing a loan guarantee. The loan guarantee is given to any eligible borrower in which the loan was packaged under specific CGC guarantee schemes by the participated financial institutions. Since the formation of the CGC, there are nearly fifty guarantee schemes have been introduced to the market. Some of the guarantee schemes have been discontinued over time and replaced by the new guarantee schemes which are more relevant to the need of the current market and the dynamic change of the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Currently, CGC offers eight guarantee schemes initiated by the financial institutions, four direct guarantee schemes which originated by CGC branches, and three government-backed guarantee schemes.

Since the inception of the CGC, all of the guarantee products are promoted and packaged by the financial institutions. As such, the CGC operating income and company growth is not substantially increased. Furthermore, there is an untapped market segment the CGC wants to look into and be paralleled with other financial institutions in providing credit facilities. After nearly three decades in operations, in the year 2000, the corporation started opening its branches nationwide including Sabah and Sarawak. Instead of fully depending on financial institutions, the CGC is able to mobilize its branches in promoting and generating more guarantees and subsequently creating more business opportunities. Currently, it has 16 branches nationwide.

## **MODUS OPERANDI**

CGC provides a guarantee cover to the eligible borrower based on the respective guarantee scheme. The guarantee cover amount is based on a pre-determined percentage on the total loan approved. This predetermined percentage is varies depending on the guarantee scheme. CGC generates loan guarantee in two ways; via financial institutions and its branches. The guarantee cover for any scheme that is directly initiated by the CGC branches would have higher percentage coverage compared to the guarantee scheme process by the financial institutions

### **Thru Financial Institution**

For this type of guarantee scheme, the loan application is processed, initiated, and evaluated by the bank's credit officer and packaged under the respective guarantee scheme based on the specific terms and conditions. The processed loan application will go through the bank's approval authority. Once approved by the bank's management, the bank will request for guarantee cover from CGC. CGC will evaluate the application. If approved by the CGC's management, the guarantee cover will be issued. The respective financial institution will do all the necessary documentation and disbursement of the loan is made once everything is in order.

Thru CGC Branches

As the loan application is originated from the branches, marketing, processing, and evaluation is done by the officer at the branch level. The application will be packaged based on the respective guarantee scheme and submitted for management approval. Once approved, the guarantee cover will be issued and send it to the financial institution. The respective financial institution will do all necessaries documentation and disbursement of the loan is made once everything is in order.

## **CGC AND COVID- 19**

Businesses in Malaysia especially the small-medium enterprises (SME) being severely affected following the Covid-19 pandemic. There were limited business activities permitted to open during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period. The instruction to close some of the business sectors resulted in losses suffered by the SME. The government has announced Economic Stimulus Package Prihatin Rakyat (PRIHATIN) worth RM250 billion on 27 March 2020 to address this issue. Another rescue package was then, announced on 6 April 2020 as additional measures for PRIHATIN or PRIHATIN PLUS seeing RM10 billion pumped in for the SME industry.

As a financial provider for the SME, CGC plays a vital role in ensuring the financial incentives provided by the government can be well absorbed by its customers. Following the announcement of BNM on a moratorium, CGC like other financial institutions has provided an automatic Moratorium on a 6-month deferred payment to all of its direct financing customers effective on 1 April 2020. The deferred payment will give ample time for the business operators to recover from a substantial loss they incurred recently. In addition to this, CGC has introduced a direct financing scheme, BizBina-i specifically to meet the need of businesses that are affected by COVID-19 pandemic. The working capital financing which ranges between RM20,000 to RM200,000 is offered to its existing financing customers. CGC is offering more financial assistance through BizJamin SRF and BizJamin-i SRF under its Special Relief Facility (SRF) financing package. The SRF financing facility offers up to RM1mil loan/financing with a maximum interest/profit rate of 3.5% per annum. The financing packages help the SME to ease their cash flow burden and to ensure their sustainability during this trying time.

## **CONCLUSION**

CGC had successfully performed its role and displayed such a high commitment in making itself visible for SME financing and to become a prominent guarantee provider in Malaysia. In the year 2018 alone, CGC had recorded a total income of RM471,572,000. Now it geared itself to become a high-performance organization. It is interesting to look at the post-pandemic performance of the CGC in one to three years to come.

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# PREPARING SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISE BUSINESSES FOR POST-COVID-19: LEAN MANAGEMENT APPROACH

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The spread of Covid-19 pandemic in Malaysia was confirmed on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 (Bernama, 2020). As the virus spread in all states and federal territories in Malaysia, in March 16<sup>th</sup>, the Malaysian government has enforced a partial nationwide curfew (known as the Movement Control Order or MCO) from March 18<sup>th</sup> to June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020 to curb the increasing number of positive cases in the country (Bernama, 2020). Consequently, the effects of Covid-19 have disrupted the economy, not only in Malaysia but also globally. The post-Covid-19 world economy is expected to bring down the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 0.4 per cent from its initial forecast of US 86.6 trillion for 2019. This loss counts for the global economic loss of US 3.5 trillion (Bernama, 2020a).

In Malaysia, Covid-19 has begun to disrupt business, particularly when the enforcement of MCO begins. For instance, tourism is one of the economic sectors hardest hit by the Covid-19, and is projected to be the last to recover (Bernama, 2020b). According to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin reported that the estimated total loss in the tourism sector from January to February 2020 is RM3.37 billion due to the transmission of Covid-19 (Adnan & Halid, 2020). Similarly, Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) businesses were also affected. Given the current situation, numerous economists such as Ramon Navaratnam and Smita Kuriakose predicted that SMEs business activities might not recover in the near future (Rawa, 2020). When the Malaysian government announced a massive stimulus package aimed at addressing the economic downturn, it is likely to cause high budget deficits above its target of 3.2 per cent this year (Rawa, 2020). It is predicted that the economic activity would need a long time to recover as usual once the pandemic is successfully controlled. SMEs need to accept the fact that the way entrepreneurs doing business is now changing, and most of the companies need to transform their business model from traditional business to digital business. The measure of business performance capabilities is no longer solely focused on profitability, but on how far SMEs entrepreneurs can cope with various challenges of post-Covid-19.

Therefore, a new mechanism or approach is needed for SME entrepreneurs to address business uncertainties, particularly when they need to prepare for the post-Covid-19. Also, the best ways to support SMEs and micro-enterprises is through new and advanced ideas and actions. Thus, it has been suggested that lean management as one of the approaches that SMEs entrepreneurs can utilise to combat business problems. Womack and Jones (1996) defined lean as a strategy to eliminate waste. It originated in the mass production setting of the automobile industry, specifically the Toyota Production System, the giant automobile industry in Japan. The benefits of lean implementation to organizations are undeniable whereby a wide range of benefits are obtained by organizations across the industries both in the manufacturing and service sectors. Lean implementation is useful and has become a topic of interest in small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Belhadi et al., 2018). Without a doubt, some of the approaches of lean management can be used to fight the crisis without flouting the two principles of lean; respect for humanity and

continuous improvement. These approaches were shared by a lean consultant Mr Harris Zahari during his talk on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2020 entitled 'Lead Your Business through Covid-19 with Lean Management' at webinar organized by Malaysian Productivity Corporation (MPC), whereby he proposed these four Japanese lean management approaches. The suggested approaches are as follows:

1. *Genchi genbutsu*

*Genchi genbutsu* is a Japanese term defined as Go and See. The point of *genchi genbutsu* is to demonstrate the significance of entrepreneurs to come and see the condition at the workplace as this act assists with distinguishing waste production value creation. *Genchi genbutsu* is a method of getting things done, a propensity that must be practised by everyone in the organisation routinely (Chiarini, Baccarani, & Mascherpa, 2018). Entrepreneurs need to act proactively in searching for improvement opportunities. Once instilled in an entrepreneur's organisation's way of life, representatives become mindful of their workplace and actions. This approach will empower entrepreneurs to help analyse issues and spot improvement opportunities. For example, in SME, entrepreneurs need to practice go and see by looking at every activity carried out in producing products and services. From there, entrepreneurs can evaluate whether their activities meet the standards set by the organization.

2. *Nemawashi*

*Nemawashi* is the basis to make any decision through communication in advance, mainly to gain consensus. The Japanese term *Nemawashi* originates from the cultivating movement of sustaining and setting up the ground to transplant. It says that without a legitimate *Nemawashi*, any plants are doomed to die (Sagi, 2015). Instead, precautions are taken for the survival of the tree during transplant, and eventually for its future to thrive. Entrepreneurs should prioritize their employees by discussing any issues in regards to business operations and activities or any other issues that relate to business. Looking back at SMEs, communication between entrepreneurs and employees is essential to reach consensus as to avoid any disputes in the future. For example, SMEs are relatively weak in terms of product promotion. It is the responsibility of entrepreneurs to discuss with employees who work in the marketing department by proposing some robust marketing strategies.

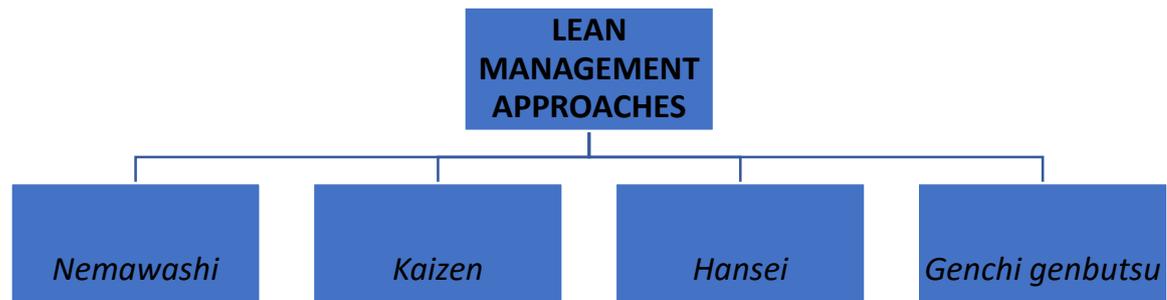
3. *Hansei*

*Hansei* is another lean tool for improving quality at a constant level is the reflection. "Han" means to change, turn over, or turn upside down while "Sei" means to look back upon, review, and examine oneself. In the *hansei* procedure, the accentuation is on what turned out badly and on making clear designs to ensure that it does not reoccur – and this is done continually and steadily. At Toyota, the principle is 'regardless of whether you do a venture effectively, there is as yet a *hansei-kai* (reflection meeting) to audit what went wrong'. *Hanseikai* usually consists of three components. In the first step, all team members analyse the task and compare the initial project plan to the actual performance. Following the first step, the performance of each team member is discussed, as they reflect on their performance and make suggestions on how they could improve it next time. Finally, there is a feedback round in which the group discusses the particular aspects that could be improved and considered for future projects (Haghirian, 2010). For instance, employees in SMEs need to have time to reflect on themselves by reviewing the performance appraisals obtained. A reflection meeting between employees and entrepreneurs is essential to ensure that things that do not meet the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) need to be discussed for better improvement.

4. *Kaizen*

*Kaizen* is a Japanese term that implies a constant or continuous improvement of all organization members, processes, products and any improvement activities, that involves generally low costs (Janjić, Todorović, & Jovanović, 2019). It endeavors to enable the

workers, increase worker satisfaction, encourage a feeling of achievement and in this way, to inculcate the sense of pride in work (Nam, Thi, & Anh, 2020). Continuous improvement is seen in the changes that occur over some undefined time frame. These can be in the reengineering procedure of products and ventures to serve consumers better. Similarly, in SMEs, continuous improvement perpetually is connected with congruity, in light of the fact that as SMEs enhance their quality frameworks after some time, it prompts a more bit of leeway over adversaries, subsequently an enduring organization. Indeed, SME entrepreneurs need to practice *kaizen* in their daily business activities as this ought to be assimilated in the organizational culture (Pakdil & Leonard, 2017).



Source: MPC Webinar

In conclusion, the implementation of lean management will be not fruitful if SMEs entrepreneurs do not show a high commitment during the post-Covid-19. It is important to note that lean management is a boundless journey to create a community of SMEs among entrepreneurs, managerial level, operational level and customers to continually improvise, pledge and form resolutions to solve daily problems at the SMEs setting. Eventually, SMEs must envisage what it wants to become, and SMEs should put an effort to understand the message of what it means to become lean management. Moreover, the spirit of challenge is required to inculcate the lean culture in SMEs organization. As a result, SMEs entrepreneurs will be better prepared to deal with any future crises, including Covid-19 as SMEs entrepreneurs are consistently applying lean management as a part of the cultural components of the organization.

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# **CAN AUTOMATION REDUCE WORKPLACE STRESS?**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid growth of technology has changed the way people does business. Many organizations have automated their operations to stay competitive in the market. Automation refers to a process or system that can be operated automatically, without the use of labour or manpower. Automation has proven to improve job efficiency and contribute to productivity improvement and cost reduction. Automation improves throughput, improves quality, improves process or product durability, improves output consistency, and reduces cycle time. In addition, it can replace hard, physical, or monotonous work. (Lamb, 2013)

Automation, which was derived from the word automaton, was not widely used before 1947 when Ford established the automation department. (Rifkin, 2004). However, today, automation has been widely practiced in almost all types of manufacturing and assembly processes.

The World Bank's 2019 World Development Report shows evidence that new industries and jobs in the technology sector outweigh the economic impact of workers being displaced by automation. Increased automation often causes workers to worry about losing their jobs because technology makes their skills or experience unnecessary. There is no doubt that automation has a positive and negative effect on workers. Studies have concluded that workers can be dismissed in part as a result of automation. However, this refers to those who are unable or unwilling to learn new things and perform new tasks, exercises, and revisions. They are represented by workers who show resistance to change and can cause tension and misunderstandings.

The growth of digital technology has exceeded society's expectations. The overload and pace of technological advances cause many individuals at the workplace or organizations to become exposed and prone to stress. (Vergragt, 2006). Automation requires workers to familiarize themselves with the new technology. According to Baqutayan (2015), stress occurs when a person incapable to cope with the observed pressure. Richard Lazarus (1966) commented that even though automation allows work to be done quickly and efficiently, there are many reports of users having negative views on new technologies; they expressed discomfort with the use of new technologies and had to struggle to adapt to changes in technology.

## **AUTOMATION AND WORKPLACE STRESS**

There was a study on the impact of automation on employees' stress which found that employees are becoming less stressed at work with the assistance of technologies like automation and artificial intelligence (AI). This study revealed that 72% of workers attributed their low levels of stress to technology (Bayern, 2019). With younger generations such as Generation Z and Millennials dominating the workforce, this result was found to be agreeable as these generations are comfortable and familiar with evolving technologies. They are always curious

about technology, would want to be part of technology and work with it. To them, technology helps a lot as they can generate productivity using it. 71% of the respondents said they are in favor of using technology to replace manual tasks and 69% said they believe automation will increase their job performance.

Some workers believed that automation may even have a relaxing effect. To them, automation technology helps to reduce the overloaded work and also stress. In fact, having access to technology is a key factor in how relaxed people are (McKendrick, 2019).

However, there were also studies that found the opposite. Among others, Suharti & Susanto (2014) stated that factors such as excessive workload due to the changes in technology that affect the work system has a significant and positive relationship with technostress. Technostress is a stress or psychological illness caused by working with computer technology. Due to this, employees showed reductions in performance such as increased absenteeism, increased number of employees who went to the company clinic, as well as the increased number of self-resignation percentage.

An excerpt in IOSH Magazine also agreed with the above findings. Automation like artificial intelligence scheduling is widely used in businesses including shops, call centers, and public services offices, resulted in an increased stress and workloads. It is true that automation may be a tool to enhance wellbeing and job quality, but there is also a risk that it will further pressurize those already under pressure in the workforce. Some workers felt they were being micromanaged as automation allows for higher levels of performance management.

In conclusion, automation does give an impact to workplace stress. It depends on how well the employees accept the technology and automation. Workers who favor technology might not have serious problems, however the older generation employees who are “scared” of technology and automation would have some difficulties and could make them suffer from high level of workplace stress.

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# MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY

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## INTRODUCTION

Quality of a service can be understood as a comprehensive customer evaluation of a particular service and the extent to which it meets their expectations and provides satisfaction. It is one of the crucial factors that determines the success of an organization by which the organization needs to integrate all business functions towards meeting every customer's expectations. To achieve these capabilities, the organization must be equipped with criteria and meet certain requirements as a facilitator in improving and maintaining the quality of service. (Berinyuy & Daniel, 2010).

## SERVQUAL MODEL IN MEASURING SERVICE QUALITY

Measuring service quality is undeniably vital. Although it's not the same as customer satisfaction, which has its own methods, there's a strong and positive correlation between the two.

In general, measuring service quality varies according to the industry. There are various service quality dimensions that can be applied for this purpose. However, the most widely-used model is SERVQUAL which was developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985. SERVQUAL is based on a set of five dimensions which have been consistently ranked by customers to be most important for service quality, regardless of service industry. Parasuraman et al. (1985, 1988) developed a SERVQUAL model as illustrated in Figure 1.

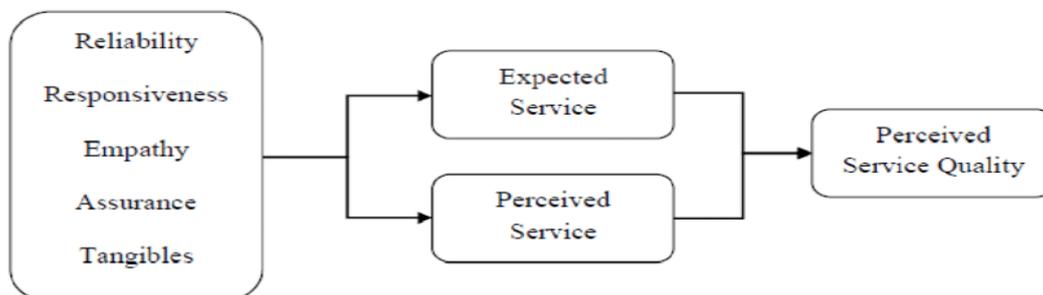


Figure 1: SERVQUAL Model

As mentioned earlier, SERVQUAL Model is applying five dimensions to measure service quality. These dimensions are as follows (Figure 2):

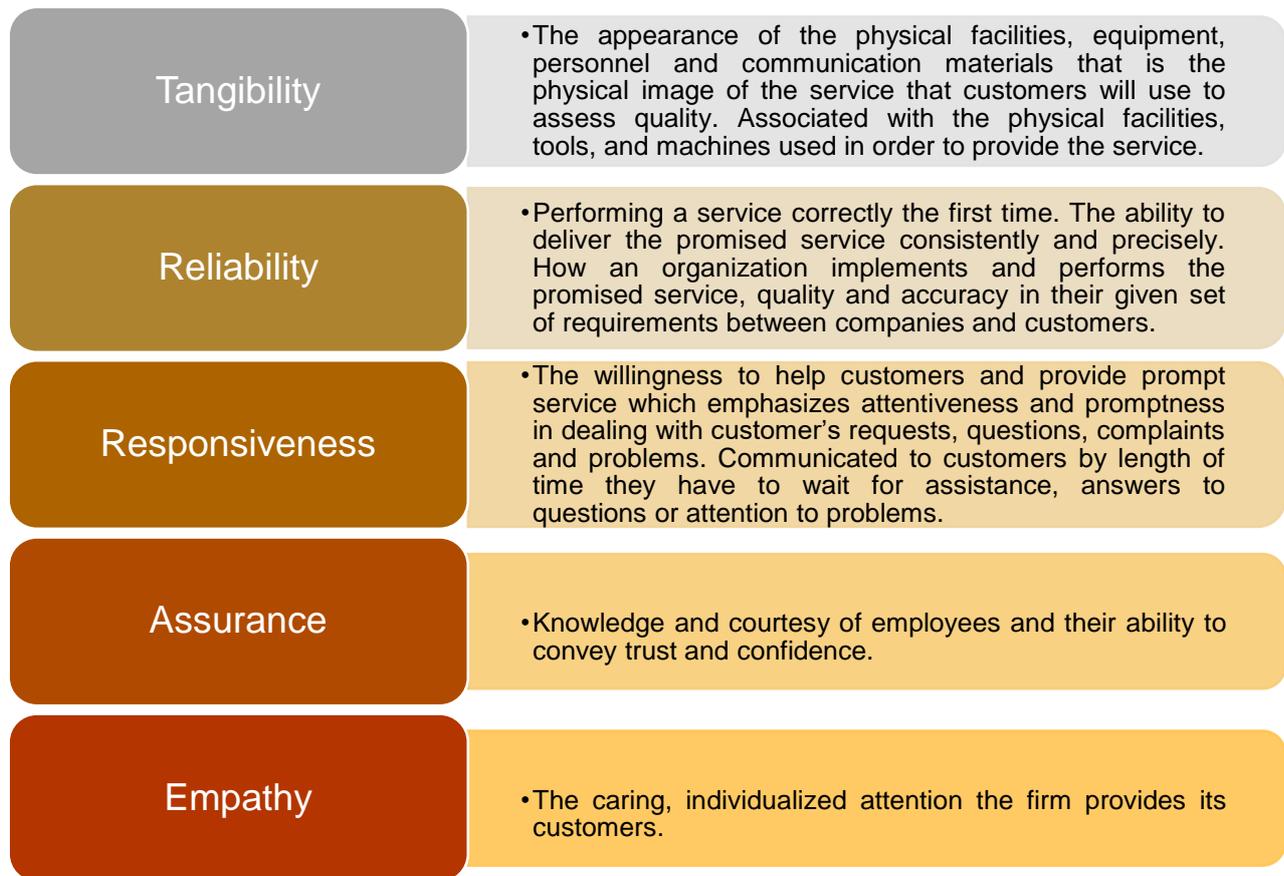


Figure 2: SERVQUAL Dimensions

SERVQUAL is using questionnaires to capture respondents' expectations and perceptions on the five dimensions of service quality. The questionnaire is to be responded in a face-to-face interview and requires a moderate to large size sample for statistical reliability. Due to this, together with a lot of items to be answered, it contributes to substantial costs in administration and data analysis.

Even though SERVQUAL Model is widely used to measure service quality, there are some arguments and critics on this model. First, some researchers argue that measuring the gap between expectation and perception, psychometrically cannot obtain better assessment of service quality. Many academics also had similar arguments that stating that using expectation scale may be a problematic of biased results (Kirubashini & Williams, 2016).

Next argument is on the ambiguity of expectations construct: SERVQUAL is designed to be administered after respondents have experienced a service. They are therefore asked to recall their pre-experience expectations. However, recall is not always accurate, because consumers are continually modifying their expectations as they gain experience with a service.

Lastly, a number of researchers have argued that the research instrument actually captures *satisfaction* rather than *service quality*. Even though service quality is not the same as customer satisfaction, which has its own methods, there's a strong and positive correlation between the two, thus causing confusions (Souca, 2011).

As a conclusion, despite the arguments, SERVQUAL could be inferred as a very subjective and complex model but really useful for companies to improve its services and compete. A business with high service quality will meet or exceed customer expectations, at the same time continuing to be economically competitive.

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# **HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSIONS: AN INSIGHT TO THE PRACTISE OF POWER DISTANCE IN MALAYSIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper provides an insight to the theory of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and how it gives effect to an organization's working culture. Discussions of the theory then further concentrated on one of the dimension that is the practise of power distance in Malaysia and how it specifically affect the working culture and the relationship between supervisor and the subordinates.

**Keywords:** globalization, Hofstede's cultural dimensions, power distance

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization has brought about great difference to the way people work and do business nowadays. We understand that with the impact of globalization, in which countries has become smaller in terms of linkage has made interactions between people across borders becomes richer. From the impact of globalization, Geert Hofstede has come out with a study on cultural dimensions to look at how diffences in culture gives effect to the way people do business across the globe.

The Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions has been conducted from the year 1978 - 1983 to hundreds of IBM employees in 53 countries. From the data gathered and through standard statistical analysis, he developed the five dimensions of culture that has become reference to companies trying to undertand the cross culture way of doing business. The five (5) dimensions are power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, feminity vs masculinity, and long term vs. short term orientation.

## **POWER DISTANCE**

Power distance highlight on the issue of inequality among individuals in organizations. It is associated with the inequality of distribution of power and authority. According to Hofstede (1983), "the level of power distance is related to the degree of centralization of authority and the degree of autocratic leadership". Countries practicing high power distance in their work norm are normally related to an autocratic style of leadership and practice centralization decision making. In countries practicing low power distance societies, decentralization of power is said to be highly practiced. Based on Hofstede (1983), examples of countries with a high power distance level are Malaysia, the Philippines, Mexico, Singapore and South Korea, whilst low power distance level societies include Austria, New Zealand, Norway, the USA and Germany.

## **INDIVIDUALISM**

Individualism dimension as described by Hofstede (Hofstede, 1984) is the relationship between an individual and its group within the society to which they belong. The extreme of this two dimensions can be look in the practice of individualism vs. collectivism. The USA, Australia, Britain, Canada and the Netherlands are examples of individualist countries (Hofstede, 1983). In contrast, those who practice collectivism emphasize on the importance of group and they are tightly integrated societies (Hofstede 1983). Examples of these societies include Pakistan, Colombia, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia (Hofstede, 1983).

## **UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE**

Uncertainty avoidance is related to the uncertainty of the future. Since events occurring in the future cannot be exactly known at the present, the way to cope with uncertainty depends on the particular society. Uncertainty orientation can be look from two (2) extremes that are uncertainty avoidance and uncertainty acceptance. Societies with strong uncertainty avoidance are not willing to undertake risk in their decision making, emotional, security-seeking and intolerant; while societies with a high level of uncertainty acceptance are risk takers, less aggressive and are relatively tolerant (Hofstede, 1984). Countries with high uncertainty avoidance include Portugal, Japan, Belgium, France and South Korea and those in high uncertainty acceptance include Singapore, Hong Kong, Jamaica, Sweden and Denmark (Hofstede, 1983).

## **MASCULINITY**

This dimension can be divided into two (2) extreme that is the masculinity and feminism way of doing thing. The masculinity dimension concerns about the male and female values and their impact on social activities (Hofstede, 1984). In a masculine culture men is expected to be assertive, dominant and to strive for material success and women to focus on interpersonal relationships and “to serve and care for non-material quality of life and for children” (Hofstede, 1984). These societies limit the roles that should be occupied by men and women. At the other extreme, feminine culture permits both men and women to serve many different roles. This culture places more value on relationships and the quality of life. Hofstede (1983) considered countries with a masculine culture to include Japan, Austria, Mexico, Switzerland and Italy, while countries with feminine cultures include Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands and Costa Rica.

## **LONG TERM VS. SHORT TERM ORIENTATION**

Long term is related to the orientation attached to the future versus the past and present or short-term orientation. The values that reflect future orientation include “persistence (perseverance), ordering relationships by status, thrift and having a sense of shame” (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). For those societies whose emphasis is on the past and present orientation, the values include personal steadiness and stability, protecting one’s face, respect for tradition, and reciprocation of greetings, favors, and gifts (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Some examples of countries with a high score (future orientation) on the Confucian dynamism scale include Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Brazil; while countries that score low (past and present orientation) on the scale include Pakistan, the Philippines, Canada, Britain and the USA (Hofstede & Bond, 1988).

## **POWER DISTANCE IN MALAYSIA**

From the five (5) dimensions highlighted by Hofstede, the practice of power distance was found to be highly practiced in Malaysia. An article in The Star dated 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 stated that Malaysia ranked the highest Power Distance Index (PDI) of 100, according to study by Professor Geert Hofstede cited by Iclif Leadership & Governance Centre’s Asian Leardesip Index 2014. The study also showed that Malaysia’s rating was also in line with the trend performed in Asian countries with usually high levels of power distance.

As mentioned by Hofstede, practice of high power distance means in working culture they practice autocratic style of leadership and centralization decision making. Status linking power is highly appreciated in the society thus making those with no status having lower self-esteem in voicing their opinion in an organization. These people tend to respect superiors right to that power. People at all levels in a firm accept the decisions made by their superiors because of the belief that higher level positions carry the right to make decisions and subordinates can never go against it. Similarly, in a study made by Ji et.al (2015), in exploring the effect of supervisors' power orientation towards 311 employees working in 12 Chinese firms found that power distance orientation had a significant negative impact on employees on their emotions as well as trust towards the supervisor. Meaning high level of power distance may result in negative emotions and reducing good relationship between the supervisor and the subordinate. Another study by Haleblian and Finkelstein, 1993 also found that high practice in power distance reduces information sharing among employees. The feelings of reluctant from employee towards the supervisor may lead to low performance effectiveness if not being taken care of. Additionally, a study conducted by Lu et.al (2020) towards 219 practitioners in the Chinese construction industry also found that bargaining power is found to be negatively associated with compromising behavior when the organization practice high power distance orientation. Meaning, the higher is the power distance, tendency to compromise between the supervisor and the subordinates tend to be lower.

From the findings from other researchers, we understand that the high power distance practice may affect the overall performance of a firm. Malaysia as reported practicing high power distance may see a high level of frustration from employee towards the superior as they believe they are not being given the freedom to voice out leading them not willing to share information. This is normally the outcome found in countries practicing high power distance. The high power distance also lead to the feeling of not willing to accept opinion from lower level employee, making the gap between them becoming wider and superior practicing the autocratic style of leadership. Thus, in the era of globalization where more multinational companies making their entry into the country, it is hoped that the new way of working can lower down the power distance level and leading to a better performance and satisfaction in the relationship between the superior and subordinates in Malaysia.

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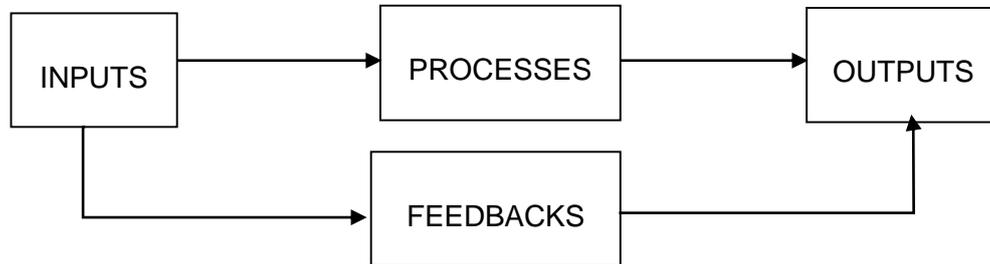
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# THE GENERAL SYSTEMS THEORY (GST)

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*Objectives of the paper:* The aim of this paper is to introduce an interdisciplinary theory called as the General Systems Theory and give a brief explanation of its application in the field of business.

The General Systems Theory is developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy, a biologist in 1928. This is an interdisciplinary theory that proposed a complex system shared several basic principles in order to function properly. At first, the theory is developed to describe the natural processes or nature of a complex system such as the human body functions. However, later, the theory has been applied to the business field. In the business field, the system theory is a framework to investigate and describe any group of objects that work together to produce some result. It focuses on the relations between the parts and connect them into a whole system. The GST also promises to offer a valuable concept for evaluating the human interrelation. In the studies of perception, system theory is able to model human interactions that include intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup. It provides the basis for interpreting human experiences and the actual phenomenon.

Generally, the theory is proposed driven by the needs to understand the system's complex nature. In business for instance, the GST explains how a part of an organization interacts with the organizations, market and industry. Across the years, the theory has continued to become an approach to explain the organizational perspectives especially related to team effectiveness. The GST agreed upon an aspect that "input" will lead to the formation of "output". The components of the theory include inputs (raw materials, labour, finance and commitment), system/processes (operations, methods, employee activities, management activities), outputs (goods and services, information), feedback and environment (consumers, competitors, government, suppliers). Based on the theory, inputs can be represented by the resources held in either an individual level, group level or environment level. Individual' skills, personalities and attitudes are the example of factors to represent the individual level, work structure and group characteristics capture group level factors and organizational structures such as culture, task and reward system explain factors at environment level. These factors can be manipulated throughout the process and output stage. The second component is process. The process is designed as the mediating mechanism that will convert inputs to outputs. It explains a range of group interaction process such as communication, motivation and information exchange that is influenced by inputs in hand and will affect the outputs later. On the other hand, outputs refer to the group's outcome. It can be measured in either group performance or member reactions. Group performance measured the degree of achievement set by the group while member reactions capture the perception of satisfaction with the group processes.

As a conclusion, the theory suggests that a system belongs to an interaction of parts and it assumes that a system has some properties in common. The system implies the relationship between components in the system and not the nature of its individual component that affect its properties.

# SHARIAH SCREENING METHODOLOGY

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## INTRODUCTION

Shariah-compliant securities are among the earliest Islamic Capital Market products available in Malaysia and were initially introduced to meet the demands of domestic institutional and retail investors for Shariah-compliant investments. The Shariah Advisory Council (SAC) of the Securities Commission has developed a methodology for screening the Shariah status of securities listed on the stock exchange. The screening process for Shariah compliance, leads to the issuance of the Shariah-compliant list in May and November each year which provides certainty and clarity on the status of securities listed on the stock exchange and has encouraged greater investor participation in the Islamic equity market.

The existence of a Shariah screening process in the financial market enables investors to invest in companies that operate permissible business activities in accordance to fair Islamic principles. However, as the current business environment is dynamic and complex business process, it is implausible to eliminate all the impermissible activities from a company's core activities, hence, to find fully Shariah-compliant equities is extremely impossible. As such, the existence of Shariah screening process allows companies to operate business activities within the boundary of Shariah principles. From the Muslim investor's viewpoint, the introduction of Shariah screening process is essential to detect prohibited activities and avoid companies from embarking onto a non-Shariah compliant investment (Derigs & Marzban, 2008). Consequently, individual or fund manager in the equity investment market has to continuously monitor the market to make decision, whether to buy newly added stocks and sell those that have been removed each time the Shariah-compliant list is announced.

## THE PRACTICE OF SHARIAH SCREENING

In Malaysia, SAC is a special body that deals with Shariah-compliant issues. SAC produces a Shariah-compliant list and the list is updated twice a year. The Shariah screening methodology developed by the SAC provides both quantitative and qualitative assessments to determine the Shariah status of listed stocks. The SAC has also established specific benchmarks to determine the tolerable level of mixed contributions from permissible and non-permissible activities. Furthermore, the qualitative assessment focuses on public perception and the image of the companies to the Muslim community and the country. In line with the global competitive markets and to foster the robustness of screening procedures, the SAC has revised its screening methodology effective on November 2013, by introducing the financial ratio benchmarks in addition to the existing business activity benchmarks. The summary of the financial ratio benchmarks is shown in figure 1.0 below. Meanwhile, the business activity benchmarks which have been developed since 1995 that consisted of 5%, 10%, 20% and 25% benchmarks have been reduced to only 5% and 20% benchmarks in the revised screening methodology.

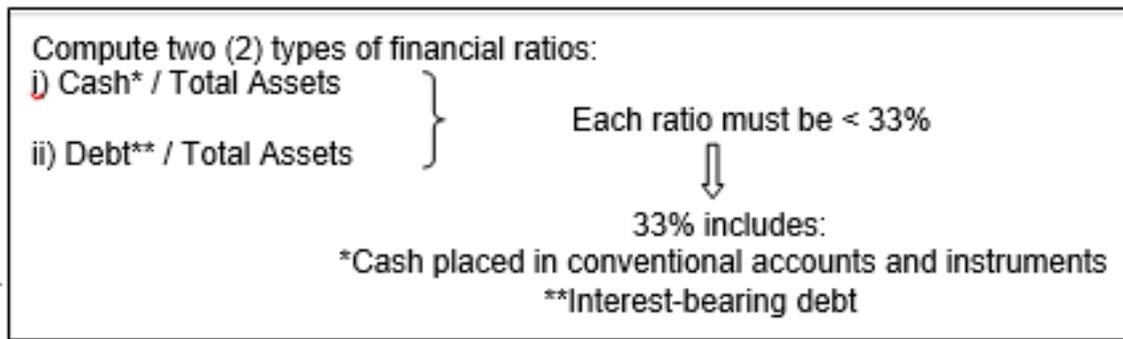


Figure 1.0. New quantitative assessment introduced in revised Shariah screening methodology  
Source: Jamil, Hassan and Bujang (2020)

Major Islamic indices, namely Dow-Jones Islamic World Market (DJIM), Morgan-Stanly Compliance Islamic Index (MSCI) and Standard and Poor (S&P) Shariah Index have developed their own screening methodology, which differs from each other (Wee, 2012). According to Abdul Rahman, Yahya and Mohd Nasir (2010), SAC and other indices have adopted a similar view on the core activities of a company that do not contravene the Shariah, as the general principle in determining whether the company could or could not be included in the index. However, each index uses different additional criteria in determining a permissible company. Kasi and Muhammad (2016), categorized DJIM as very stringent Shariah-compliant users because the index will reject companies that are, in one way or another involved in non-Shariah compliant businesses in the first round of qualitative screening. In addition, Wee (2012) summarized that the Malaysian Shariah-compliant stocks undergoes less rigorous screening in Malaysia's stock exchange than elsewhere. However, this study utilized benchmarks from the previous screening methodology which excluded the financial ratio benchmarks, as part of the screening.

The process of Shariah-compliant screening differs not only due to different jurisdictions of different countries but also practiced by different objectives sets of users: portfolio managers, providers of market intelligence and regulators (Catherine, Masood, Abdul Rehman & Bellalah, 2012). As such, some prominent scholars have suggested that there is a need to standardize the screening methodology in order to obtain global Shariah-compliant stocks. By having a standard stock screening methodology, investors from all over the world can trade without the need to check the compliant status for every stock exchange. This will encourage foreign investments and thus, expanding the world economy. In this light, Derigs and Marzban (2008) have criticized that the use of different criteria set by different stock exchanges certainly has brought confusion among investors, which may lead to insecurity, distrust and the lack of confidence in investing in Shariah-compliant stocks.

## CONCLUSION

The screening process is designed to identify the elements that violate the rules and guidelines of Shariah law, which is rooted from Al-Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. Shariah law prohibits elements such as usury (*riba* or interest), gambling (*maysir*) and uncertainty (*gharar*) which are present in many conventional financial activities. For a Muslim, this means getting indirectly involved in prohibited practices, which is considered as grave sin. Therefore, in developing the Islamic finance ecosystem, Shariah compliance and governance have been the utmost priority and consideration since the onset of the industry during the 1980s and 1990s. The fundamental distinction between Shariah-compliant and conventional securities is in the former's adherence to the principles of Shariah, which is applied in the process of screening.

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# **WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP: CHALLENGES AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The involvement of women in entrepreneurship needs to be supplemented with support from a spouse, family, friends, and entrepreneurial support systems. Women who decided to conduct entrepreneurial activities should have a strong spirit to face challenges so that they can achieve entrepreneurial success. These challenges sometimes lead to a good work–life balance.

Challenges are also referred to as obstacles, barriers, conflicts, and problems faced by women entrepreneurs in every economic sector. Ilhaamie, Siti Arni, Rosmawani, and Hassan Al-Banna (2014) reported that the most prevalent type of challenges faced by Muslim women entrepreneurs in Malaysian small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are lack of finance, low demand, and location issues.

Meanwhile, work–life balance is the state of equilibrium where a person puts equal emphasis on the demands of one’s profession and one’s personal life. While the struggle is real for some women entrepreneurs, some women entrepreneurs are able to set their priorities and boundaries, thus leading to satisfactory work–life balance.

## **CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Today, women are making substantial advancements in various fields, including entrepreneurship. More than ever, gender equality is being talked about and discussed but many things are yet to be clearly defined. In addition to the issue of gender equality, women entrepreneurs are facing various rising issues in every aspect, especially concerning their choices and society expectations.

A study conducted by Alam, Senik, and Jani (2012) found that women in transition economies tend to suffer from traditional perceptions about women’s roles in society which have persisted to the present days. For instance, many women’s career still depends on the decision of their spouse instead of their own decision. If the absence of mutual understanding and with little support, if any, women might face a work–life imbalance in their quest to achieve entrepreneurial success. Hence, it can be inferred that family conflicts are one of the challenges that women entrepreneurs have to face.

Given the prevailing challenges confronting women entrepreneurs, it is not surprising that they are still struggling to survive in the business environment. Increased women participation in entrepreneurship creates challenges for them to balance work and family obligations in their entrepreneurship journey while formulating strategies to sustain amidst global competition. Family support is crucial in assisting women entrepreneurs to handle their stress and health

issues (Verma, Chaturvedi, & Arora, 2019). Discovering the challenges and understanding them is key towards empowering women in the business sphere. Women should be encouraged to start their own business with moral and financial support from their family members, providing the necessary nudge at the beginning of their entrepreneurial journey.

## **WORK–LIFE BALANCE**

Various factors, including work–life balance, can influence the decision to become a woman entrepreneur. Kalliath and Brough (2008) identified six common conceptualisations of work–life balance definitions. They further defined work–life balance as an individual’s perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth based on that individual’s present life priorities (see Table 1)

Table 1: Women entrepreneurs work life balance

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(1) multiple roles
(2) equity across multiple roles
(3) satisfaction between multiple roles
(4) fulfillment of role salience between multiple roles
(5) a relationship between conflict and facilitation
(6) perceived control between multiple roles

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The six conceptualisations of the definition of work–life balance are:

(1) Multiple roles

Everyone has multiple life roles, including those posed by family demands or personal demands (non-work) that may interfere with their work, which might impair the individual’s health and work performance.

(2) Equity across multiple roles

Work–life balance is the level to which an individual is involved in and equally satisfied with both their work and family roles.

(3) Satisfaction between multiple roles

Campbell (2000) looked at individual satisfaction based on the ‘work/family border theory’ and defined the elements of work–life balance as comprising satisfaction and proper functioning both at work and at home, with minimal role conflict. This theory explains why conflicts occur and offers a framework that encourages individuals to achieve a better balance between work and family.

(4) Fulfilment of role salience between multiple roles

Achieving individual satisfaction requires acknowledging that individuals place different levels of importance or salience on their various roles.

(5) A relationship between conflict and facilitation

Conflict and facilitation are the main psychological constructs that compose work–life balance. According to Grzywacz and Bass (2003), balance refers to the combination of measures consisting of subtracting work–family conflict and family–work conflict from work–family facilitation and family–work facilitation, respectively.

(6) Perceived control between multiple roles

Work–life balance may be perceived as the extent to which an individual perceives themselves to have power over the demands of their multiple roles.

Role overload, child care issues, health status, time management issues, and inadequate proper social support have substantial influence over the work–life balance of women entrepreneurs (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2011). It is challenging for women entrepreneurs to achieve a well-balanced life. They may be torn between the attention required of them by young or elderly family members and the focus demanded by their ongoing projects. These conflicting demands impair their ability to prioritise their responsibilities. Thus, their mental, physical, and financial positions need to be in a commendable condition. Work–life balance will lead to a satisfactory quality of life for everyone, including their dependants, close family members, as associates. Thus, it has been suggested that working or running a business from home allows women some flexibility that will enable them to achieve work–family balance (Walker, Wang, & Redmond, 2008).

## CONCLUSION

Women entrepreneurs face numerous challenges in managing company cash flows, balancing competing priorities, and working beyond the regular office hours, among others. They have somehow learnt to set priorities and boundaries between work and other tasks such as exercise, sleep, and family activities, which have allowed them to minimise stress and meet their needs. Despite the daily challenges confronting them, the future remains encouraging to these women entrepreneurs. For one, women entrepreneurs seem to be strong and capable of achieving success. It is recommended that further research looks into women entrepreneurs' support systems, family dependence, and the different views of single and married women on entrepreneurs' work–life balance in the initial and growth stage of the business. Hopefully, the findings of these studies will provide some insight to the policymakers in the establishment of a system that provides support to women entrepreneurs.

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## QUALITY OF LIFE: AN OVERVIEW

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The attention on the issue of the quality of life had started in the 1900s. This continued in the 1960s and 1970s which saw the increasing attention towards issues on quality of life, particularly in countries like the United States and Sweden. This indicates that the world's interests on the quality of life have been continuously renewed since the 1900s.

Historically, the term quality of life is used in diverse disciplinary settings, such as in medical research, life satisfaction, economy and psychology. In psychology, the first study on quality of life was conducted in 1949, and then in 1960, studies from the mental health field began to appear. Medical research related to the quality of life started in the late 1980s and it began to gain attention in the field of economy in the 1990s. Subsequently, quality of life has become a topic of interest in social sciences in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, the growth of quality of life is simultaneous in almost all the social sciences. In this light, Ruta, Camfield, and Donaldson (2010) study mentioned that starting from the middle of the twentieth century, issues related to the quality of life have captured many researchers' interest from different areas, such as economics, health service, social policy, medicine and psychology. Similarly, as reported by Cummins, McCabe, Romeo, and Gullone (1994), studies on the quality of life have been done in many different areas such as economics, sociology, political science, medical sciences, philosophy and psychology.

For centuries, researchers have proposed their own definition of quality of life and it has challenged the synergies of many researchers, philosophers and practitioners throughout history. Vesan and Bizzotto (2011) stated that many researchers have their own definition of quality of life that fit into different normative, religious or ideological assumptions.

In this regard, there are several terms that have been used to clarify the meaning of quality of life. Ruta et al. (2010) stated that the terms wellbeing, utility, and quality of life are often defined with reference to each other and frequently used interchangeably. Veenhoven (2000) argued that there are many noticeable terms which refer to the quality of life. Veenhoven (2000) added that the words 'happiness' and 'welfare' were more commonly used in the past, and presently, the words 'quality of life', 'satisfaction', and 'wellbeing' are used to represent the same meaning.

Moreover, Rahman, Mittelhammer and Wandsheider (2005) in their study stated that there are many studies focusing on wellbeing, while Veenhoven (2004) defined wellbeing as something that is in a good state. However, literally, there is no clarification made to specify what that something means and to what 'good' is referring to. Veenhoven (2000) also claimed that the term of wellbeing is applied generically to all the good things in both the social system and for individuals. The term is synonymous with quality of life (Veenhoven, 2000). Therefore, as wellbeing is similar with the quality of life, the term can be used as an approach in understanding an individual's quality of life.

Moreover, Emerson (1985) defined the quality of life as “the satisfaction of an individual’s values, goals and needs which could be actualised by their abilities or lifestyle” and described the “quality of life as individual’s own impression on the achievement in individual’s value recognition, goals and needs” which are always actualised accordingly by one’s abilities and lifestyle. On the other hand, Hagerty et al. (2001), described the “quality of life is the quality of a person’s whole life”. Therefore, if the quality of life is divided into different segmented domains, the combination of those domains itself must represent the whole life of that person. Thus, the quality of life is to be valued based on a quality of a person’s whole life which cannot be segmented and analysed separately. On the other hand, Veenhoven (1999) noted that the quality of life reflects a balance of benefits and costs while Veenhoven (1996) argued that both benefits and costs must be considered where the benefits could not be considered without looking at the costs.

By looking at how researchers define the term of quality of life across time, it is noticeable that there were differences in the definition of the term. Consequently, the differences in the definition of the term of quality of life imply a shift in the proactive attempt to define the quality of life. Therefore, the researcher should be able in the first place to clear up with the definition before furthering any discussions. This is supported by Rojas (2009) who stated the term of quality of life must be clarified before continuing any effort in its measurement. The underlying reason is when the researchers inadequately theorize the term of quality of life, consequently, later, this will lead to the debate on the measurement problems instead of on what defines the quality of life (Rojas, 2009). For this reason, it is therefore important for the researcher to debate the definition of quality of life to provide in-depth information before furthering any discussions. Despite the common concerns on having the exact definition of quality of life, researchers are still arguing that there is a need for conceptualization and measurement to determine what constitutes as a good life.

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# **CHALLENGES OF OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) AMONG ENT530 STUDENTS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The global crisis due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 has delayed conventional teaching and learning. Still, it has made the lecturer's task more challenging as they have to adapt new norms that require the teaching and learning process by implementing Open and Distance Learning or so-called ODL. ODL is any learning activity within formal, informal, and non-formal learning activities facilitated by information and communication technologies to lessen distance, both physically and psychologically, and increase interactivity and communication among learners, lecturers, and learning sources (IGI Global, 2020). Similarly, as defined by Kaplan and Haenlein (2016), distance education offers participation in open access through the internet and other networks, and it is also known as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). In other terms, it could be a virtual classroom, online learning, e-learning, etc. According to Kim and Bonk (2006), technology has played and continues to play an essential role in the development of online education. The way technology is being used for teaching and learning has enhanced people's knowledge and also proved to have a positive impact on the education process.

While technology can consistently help with teaching and learning, some challenges and obstacles need to be met among lecturers and students throughout the ODL. UiTM itself has decided to implement ODL due to the massive attack of COVID-19 in Malaysia effective 13th April 2020. As a consequence, it has brought many impacts to the lecturers, staff, as well as the students. For instance, some examinations were postponed and all assessments were rescheduled according to the requirements of every course, including Principles of Entrepreneurship subject or ENT530. This subject is a non-final course, and students are 100% assessed by the projects and assignments. All assessments for this course have been changed, and lecturers need to give instructions for new assessments through online. With new arrangements being made on this subject, it has impacted students to meet the challenges of implementing this ODL. Therefore, ENT530 lecturers have taken the initiative to conduct a survey to identify some of the difficulties and challenges facing by students.

## **CHALLENGES OF ODL**

In line with the Movement Control Order (MCO) implemented by the Malaysian government to curb the spread of the COVID-19 outbreak, online learning is a must. Most local universities, both public and private, including schools in Malaysia, have no choice but to use online teaching and learning methods to ensure that the syllabus of teaching is best delivered and that learning sessions are not delayed. This includes UiTM itself, where lecturers and

students are directed to perform ODL throughout the semester. However, students face some challenges in implementing ODL based on a survey conducted by ENT 530 UiTM Kedah lecturers. Below are some of the challenges students have to face:

i) Limitation of Internet Coverage

From 18 March 2020 to 30 June 2020, the learning process has always become an obstacle for their studies because of the geographical area and digital divide. The digital divide in Malaysia refers to the gap between people who access certain technologies (Merriam Webster, 2020). Hence, the survey shows that not all students have good internet access in their homes, especially in the villages and in the rural area. Malowa (2009) also supported that the underdeveloped areas face challenges in accessing information technology as a result of poor infrastructure. Other situations encountered are adverse weather conditions such as heavy rain, lightning, and floods that have affected the internet connection. Therefore, the lecturer is responsible for ensuring the best method to be used for students throughout the ODL process.

ii) Platform of Communication

The communication platform is also one of the barriers during the process of ODL. This method of learning meets with an application for both sides to interact between lecturer and students. Mostly, the platform of communication is utilized by using WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom, Google Classroom, etc. Reinforced by Mansbach (2015), online lecturers can use multiple technologies and activities such as Google Docs, Discussion Forum, and Blackboard to develop students' critical skills. With the variety of e-learning processes, the ODL becomes more enjoyable rather than using the same method. However, some students have difficulty in operating some types of applications or platforms for ODL learning. This trouble has caused students to miss many things and have problem understanding the subject taught especially when using live chat. Supposedly, students must be provided with training opportunities such as the method of using loom, zoom, Google meet, Google classroom or any other platform that is used throughout the ODL. However, due to some of the constraints, students were forced to learn and master the technology skills throughout the ODL process.

iii) Overflow of Assignments

Additional issues arise among students throughout the ODL is when dealing with the overflow of assignments that focus not only on ENT530 assignments but also on assignments for other subjects. Since final exams are postponed and students are fully assessed based on ongoing assessments, students are facing difficulties in time management because they need to meet the overflow of assignments. Consequences of this situation prompting the changes of the university education and syllabus. Students are instructed to complete the assignment given since this subject does not have final exams. Subsequently, the overflow of assignments has demotivated students to complete the tasks because some of them have a problem managing their time wisely. Supported by Raaheim et. al. (2019), uncertainty about the procedure of administration outstanding assignments, projects, and other continuous assessments increased the difficulty level for students and university.

iv) Disturbance In-Home Learning

Students indicated that they are having trouble when learning at home since they are still in culture shock using this new norm of education style. Washing, cooking, and taking care of younger siblings for their mothers are among the students' reasons that are affecting their participation in the ODL class. Having these activities and at the same time attending online courses, causing them not to focus on the topic presented by the lecturer. The majority of the students agreed that they have convergence problem in handling house chores and at the same time to concentrate during the ODL class. Taking into account the challenges of whether students are still on campus or have been at home, demanding students to be more disciplined and have high resilience. Alternatively, students need to organize the schedule more systematically as to ensure there is no redundancy between house duties and ODL classes.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, four challenges in implementing ODL have been identified despite the fact that there are other unknown problems. Thus, it is of utmost importance both students and lecturers should always be prepared to meet new norms in unprecedented situations. In this regard, students and lecturers need to be more creative and innovative in using various methods to enable ODL implementation to run effectively and efficiently. Undeniably, there are some benefits of using technology for online teaching and learning. First, learning at your own pace. Hegarty (2006) mentions, students report benefits of using learning technologies such as the opportunity for them to learn at their own pace, learn independently and have fun. Second, it promotes interaction. Hyo-Jyeong (2010) stated that the use of interactive technology with two ways of the communication might provide more interactions for online learners, leading to enhanced learning outcomes. Third, promote higher-order thinking skills. Various researchers in their studies found that technology can develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students. Although the implementation of ODL is the first time being fully applied to all subjects, there are certainly some shortcomings that need to be improvised, especially in the subject of ENT530 where students have been active in online and offline businesses. Nevertheless, due to the announcement of MCO by the government, students have had to find other alternatives to run their businesses completely online. Therefore, lecturers and students need to take this matter positively and openly by not taking COVID-19 as a reason for lecturers and students to complain about the ODL.

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# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON BUSINESS

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COVID-19 has been declared as a deadly, infectious disease globally. It has triggered chaos in many parts of the world, impacting individuals, businesses, and governing bodies in almost every country. COVID-19 has posed immense challenges on most businesses worldwide, including in Malaysia. Nonetheless, some businesses have risen to turn threats into opportunities such as by carrying out online businesses and delivery services while adhering to the standard operating procedures (SOP) endorsed by the government. In Malaysia, all businesses were forced to close down temporarily during the early phases of the Movement Control Order (MCO) period except for those involved in essential services such as banking, basic utilities supply, and food and beverage supply. Employers were encouraged to pay full salary to employees, regardless of whether they were working from the office or from home. However, when business stability is threatened, employers tend to reduce employees' salary or working hours to prevent dismissal (Donovan & Ho, 2020).

During the early phases of the MCO, which involved almost a total lockdown on the country, the government required Malaysians to stay at home. Employees and businesses were forced to work and operate from home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to the general population. Thus, most businesses struggled to survive, especially those operating on a brick-and-mortar basis. Some business premises were ordered to close down temporarily, while others were allowed to operate within limited business hours. Brick-and-mortar business operators found it challenging to run their business from home due to inadequate knowledge and capability in communicating using online technology.

Apart from that, the pandemic has caused some businesses to experience revenue losses of up to 80 per cent, forcing them to close down permanently due to insufficient operating cash and escalating operating costs (Muhammad, 2020). In addition, businesses that can continue to operate as usual may record dwindling numbers of walk-in customers and supplies, especially if their suppliers are affected by the lockdown.

On the bright side, to a certain extent, most businesses have been forced to operate online, leaving behind their conventional or brick-and-mortar way of doing business. This phenomenon has promoted the growth of online home-based businesses. Businesses that were already operating both physical and online stores before the MCO period have an advantage as they can ride on the situation to fulfil customers' needs and wants. Techno-savvy business operators benefit the most as they already have online tools in place for their business transactions, allowing them to multiply their sales despite operating from home.

Moving forward, Malaysia in general and businesses in particular must strategise their action plans so that the impacts of COVID-19 on businesses could be minimised. Businesses need to rise above the challenges by formulating effective action plans in ensuring that they can sustain and grow, thus turning the threats of COVID-19 into opportunities. The Malaysian

government, on its part, has provided robust stimulus packages for businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, in ensuring their sustainability and growth.

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# ONLINE SHOPPING: WHAT MAKE CONSUMER'S PREFER TO IT?

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## INTRODUCTION

Electronic Commerce has experienced a rapid growth in the last few decades and the advancement of Internet provides a prospect for online shopping and changed the way consumers buy goods and services (Anitha, 2017). With the ever-growing impact of the internet on the lifestyles of consumers, the internet has been becoming both a tool and a segment of cyberculture (Macek, 2004), and a more significant marketing medium.

The Internet has transformed the lifestyle of the people across the world due to which a rapid change in the lives of people seems remarkable. This situation has increased the trend of online shopping and thus changed the traditional way to shop where people used to physically visit the store, have the feel of the product, negotiating the prices and thus the final purchases happen. Online shopping has altogether changed this form of shopping by allowing the customers an easier and riskier form to picky and pay for their products (Nazir and Haq, 2018). Research done by IBISWorld (2012) indicates that the e-commerce and online auctions industry has experienced exceptionally rapid growth since the beginning of the decade, outperforming most retail sectors due to the fact that internet use becomes more commonplace and consumers are more comfortable with making purchases online. Also, internet payment systems have made buying online more easy and secure. (Jayawardhena, 2004).

Some study found that consumer's shopping preferences are strongly influenced by demographic factors such as age, income, marital status, number of family members and gender. In addition, the presence of online store applications on smartphones can make the experience of using the internet to access online shopping easier. Ease of use is the basis in choosing to shop online (Richa, 2012). With this concern, marketing professionals and academics are still searching for the factors that influence consumer preference for shopping on the Internet.

## FACTORS INFLUENCE CONSUMER PREFERENCE

### Convenience

Most of the studies on shopping orientation has repeatedly shown that the major reason for online shopping is convenience and time efficiency. Convenience ensures saving the time, and the physical and the mental energy spent on shopping because the convenience-oriented shoppers usually asses the time and effort required for the shopping process, from the time it takes them to get to the store, to how long the lines usually are and how long it takes to finish the buying process. The ability to shop online without leaving the home and to have the products and/or services delivered to the door is one of the great interests to many online shoppers (Beck and Lynch, 2001). Empirical research shows that convenient of the internet is one of the impacts on consumers' willingness to buy online (Wang, Zhang, and Nguyen, 2005). Online shopping is available for customers around the clock comparing to traditional store as it is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Furthermore, Zhou, Dai, and Zhang (2007) identified that the internet provides solutions for the requirements that convenience shoppers have which is fast access to information for a

significant number of stores, search engines and price comparison opportunities, no checkout lines, no need to even leave the house and no closing hours. Thus, consumers with more positive convenience and information attitudes towards online shopping had higher online searching and purchasing behavior. Korgaonkar, Petrescu, and Becerra (2014) conclude that consumers who are convenience oriented have a positive outlook towards online purchase intention

### **Variety-seeking orientation**

In the context of shopping orientations, variety-seeking represent consumer's willingness to try new products, take chances and buy diverse products, instead of sticking with a single preferred product or brand. Variety of choice offered by the internet environment is wider than the one offered by regular shops and can be attractive to consumer at a lower cost (Huang and Yang, 2010). This factor makes variety-seeking consumer get satisfaction in buying and trying different things because the internet offers them fast access to a variety of goods.

Furthermore, online shopping also allows customers to choose products based on their own needs and preferences. Through the internet, they can get multiple sources of information that are useful and can help them to make decision whereby they can compare product offerings, learn more about product features, customer preferences and pricing. Huang *et al* (2010) identified that choice offered by the internet environment is wider than the one offered by regular shop and can be attractive to consumers. Online shoppers always want to seek information within few clicks and reach to the most relevant information according to their requirements such as competitive brands, best price offers, product specification and consumer word-of-mouth (Gao, 2012).

### **Price Consciousness**

Price consciousness is the degree to which a consumer focuses exclusively on paying low prices. This type of consumers is more likely to purchase online when they can find a lower price for product/service (Koyuncu and Bhattacharya, 2004). Comparing prices and intention to saving money by purchasing discounted item through online are an important factor that motivate consumers to prefer online shopping. This might be the cause of the presumption that in general, it is cheaper to purchase of product online because of lower cost regarding the staff and physical store.

Furthermore, this market segment is also known to be more knowledgeable and "thrifty" in their spending patterns. Therefore, price-conscious consumers are more likely to purchase online when e-shopping sites offer a lower price or financial benefits (Koyuncu *et al*, 2004). These online savings in the form of an online deal is likely to generate some type of purchase satisfaction resulting in the likelihood of repeat purchase behavior and possibly over time, the compulsive buying of e-deals (Dholakia, 2011). This is why some researchers consider that economic consumers, who are price oriented, are more likely to buy online (Zhou, Dai, and Zhang, 2007).

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the discussion above, most of previous studies found that consumers prefer online shopping because of convenience, variety-seeking orientation, and price consciousness. In this era online shopping is a viable preference to consumers as the internet has become an essential tool for communication and business worldwide. As a marketer, they need to realize that information technology nowadays enhanced the consumers towards online shopping whereby it can provide all types of good available in the virtual world and customer can access these shops anytime without stepping out of their home.

To cope with this situation, company need to make sure the marketing strategies that they develop must be in line with this current trend. By providing the detailed information about the price and features of products in their online channel it can attract more customer to explore,

analyses and compare the similar products and services with other outlet and can help them to make their purchase decisions. Company also need to prepare themselves to move in traditional markets as well as expanding into the online market by setting target consumers and market segments accordingly so that the products offered are more targeted and are able to increase the sales.

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## **THE NEW NORM: GOING ONLINE**

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The year 2020 has been marked with an unprecedented pandemic, known as COVID-19. This pandemic has far-reaching impacts on countries, economies, businesses, and societies. It has caused many private and public sectors to stumble, leading to severe threats to the macroeconomy as a whole.

This pandemic has affected customers' online behaviour as most retail outlets were compelled to close down temporarily, including in Malaysia. On 16 March 2020, the Prime Minister of Malaysia Muhyiddin Yassin declared a partial lockdown or also known as the Movement Control Order (MCO) across the country, effective from 18 March 2020. The early phases of the MCO implementation involved practising several standard operating procedures (SOP), including limiting only one person per family that could go out to buy necessities items and only essential private and public companies were allowed to open within certain business hours. Due to these restrictions, consumers turned to online transactions and purchasing activities.

Some research studies have indicated that due to the pandemic, the patronage of online business based on web technology has increased tremendously. In addition, the numbers of online users, including active and new users have surged since March 2020 (Nadia, 2020). Given the massive demand for online and delivery services, most companies have created websites, WhatsApp links, and other platforms to facilitate customers' online purchasing. In the food delivery context, for instance, online demand in the Food and Beverages sector has expanded radically in Malaysia (Nurafifah, 2020). Countries in South East Asia, such as Malaysia, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, and Hong Kong have recorded increased online traffic on food delivery websites (Mojgan et al., 2020). Lazada also observed an increase in its website traffic, including website visits and online purchases. Thus, it is high time for businesses to think innovatively and creatively by optimising their operations with both offline and online transaction capabilities (Kay Tan, 2020) to survive and prosper, especially during pandemics.

There is another tremendous potential for online businesses in Malaysia besides increasing their sales. Companies that utilise the online business mode can vastly improve their market reach and simultaneously perform mass customisation that suits the needs and inclination of individual purchasers. Online business permits companies and consumers to develop a better relationship between both parties. Furthermore, organisations can utilise online business to redesign and improve their selling and distribution process, which will eliminate some of the intermediary activities and encourage direct contact with consumers, thus enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Directly, this strategy will facilitate businesses in building up their credibility, improving relationships, and securing customers.

The MCO that has been imposed by the Malaysian government has changed the online business scenario in Malaysia. It has impacted both businesses and consumers, especially in

their selling and buying patterns by moving both parties from the conventional way of doing business towards online selling and purchasing. The online platform offers enormous benefits in terms of creating new channels and providing ease and convenience, which are valuable for both parties. This change indicates that Malaysians are adjusting to the new norm of the online environment.

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# STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT REALIGNMENT IN TANDEM WITH IR 4.0

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## WHAT IS IR4.0

IR4.0 or Industrial Revolution 4,0 refers to the current automation trend and data sharing practices in businesses. IR 4.0 is characterized by Internet of Things, Big Data and Analytics, Augmented Reality, Autonomous Robots, Additive Manufacturing, Cognitive Computing, and Cloud Computing (Vaidya, Ambad, & Bhosle, 2018). Strategic management processes involve strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluating strategies to achieve company goals (Osborn, 2019). As IR4.0 revolutionizes the business industry, company strategic processes should be realigned with the wave of revolution. This paper determines whether strategic management processes should realign with IR4.0.

The industrial revolution started in the 1780s with steam and water production followed by mass production of goods and automation through the digitalization and rise of information systems. Industry 4.0 is the fourth wave of the industrial revolution that has impacted modern industrial production processes, data flows, control structures, and functional operations (Tay, Chan, Aziati, & Aizat-Ahmad, 2018). The central concept behind IR4.0 is that data, embedded software, and the internet should be able to drive intelligent products and machines to create and achieve value. These systems can generate problems such as disruptions of company operations due to network misconfigurations, cyber-threat attacks, and malfunctioning devices or software (Anderson, 2019). However, IR4.0 is not about business technology but a way of rethinking business models.

A study conducted by PwC in 26 countries of different industrial sectors, including the construction companies, defense, aerospace, electronics, forest, and paper industry, the packaging industry reported that one-third of the companies had reached advanced levels of digitalization and IR4.0 integration within their companies. 72% of the other respondents hoped to reach an advanced level of digitalization by 2020 (Geissbauer *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, IR4.0 is expected to create additional revenues of 22.6% and a cut down costs in the manufacturing industry by 17.6%. In Logistic services, the additional revenues by IR4.0 are expected to hit 33.6%, while cost reductions should reach 34.2%. In retail, the additional revenues are expected to rise to 33.3%, while cost reduction should hit 7.8% (World Economic Forum, 2017).

## STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT PROCESS

A strategic management process is a continuous management process that encompasses formulation, implementation, and evaluation of activities tailored towards attaining desired goals. These processes guide companies in developing goals and the course of action that should be taken to achieve these goals; they determine where a business is going, how it will get there, and the success indicators that will help a company know when they have achieved their goals. Strategic management processes help companies to maintain a competitive advantage in the market (Sammut-Bonnici, 2015).

## REALIGNMENT OF STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Businesses in retail, manufacturing, construction, logistics, etc. are implementing integrating IR4.0 systems in their production processes, value-chain management, and supply management (World Economic Forum, 2017). How are IR4.0 systems being used in core business activities? A value-added chain is a set of vertically linked activities that a firm operates on to produce and distribute a product ("Farlex Financial Dictionary," 2020). IR4.0 has influenced the development of new business models that control a product's entire lifecycle in the value chain through connectivity and communication (Vaidya, Ambad, & Bhosle, 2018). They influence global chain configuration by allowing knowledge transfers from developed countries to emerging countries and developing countries (Hernández & Pedersen, 2017). Additionally, connectivity creates new collaborative relationships between companies at different stages in the value chain (World Economic Forum, 2017). IR4.0 transforms value chains of the product's lifecycle through influencing the production of services and goods in the manufacturing industry, which is done through connectivity and communication systems (Tay *et al.*, 2018). Effective integration of horizontal, vertical, and end-to-end engineering integration can lead to the autonomous optimization of a product's service (Tay *et al.*, 2018).

Another application of IR4.0 in business practices is through the Internet of Things, IoT. Businesses have to combine locations and governance to define their value chains (Hernández & Pedersen, 2017). Internet of Things allows communication and data sharing across businesses through enabling advanced connectivity of ICT infrastructure and physical objects by detecting and identifying their location through IPv6 addresses (Patel, Patel, Scholar, & Salazar, 2016).

Internet of Services (IoS) is a concept that utilizes the internet to provide services and control a product's behavior. Internet of data is an approach where data is generated, managed, and shared using the internet (Reis & Gonçalves, 2018). Businesses can provide services to consumers' on-demand through a range of digitization services. These services have been used to make data transfers easy and safe. IoT systems in smart enterprises are used to control and assess performance management through IoT software Applications. Devices that are connected through IoT facilitate the geographic distribution of business operations hence increasing the efficiency of these processes and reduce operational and management costs (World Economic Forum, 2017).

Augmented reality promotes reliable reduction in production errors and it increases quality assurance. According to Alaloul Liew, Zawawi, and Kennedy (2020) augmented reality can also help to reduce waste production, which consequently facilitates the significant reduction in environmental pollution and promotes safety production. Furthermore, they have high predicting power and are cost-effective. Augmented reality can also be used to predict a product's performance degradation; this, according to Alaloul *et al.* (2020), can aid in reducing potential errors, consequently minimizing the number of maintenance procedures that ought to be performed for a particular product or service.

Big Data and analytics have played an integral in helping financial firms gain a competitive advantage in the market. The Zurich Life insurance company currently uses Artificial Intelligence and Big Data to help their customers reduce the risk of exposure to business interruptions (Zurich Inc., 2018). This is highly valuable for businesses with complex supply chains. Big Data software helps such firms to create an end to end visibility of their supply chain through mapping, identifying and assessing internal and external data sources to evaluate the extent of dependencies of suppliers and buyers (Mizgier, Kocsis, & Wagner, 2018). The IR4.0 through automated purchases, sourcing, tracking, and inventory modeling has helped to increase visibility across the various supply chains (World Economic Forum, 2017).

A business using IR4.0 can track every product they produce while upgrading and modifying these products after being sold to consumers e.g., software updates. While construction companies have been slow to implement IR4.0, these systems can enhance their competitiveness

in the global industry (Sivah, 2019). They promote an innovative working environment and can improve partner collaboration and influence a sound workforce by influencing innovative work behavior (Sivah, 2019). The integration of IR4.0 into business practices allows employees to control, regulate, and configure resource networks with the manufacturing process. Employees can focus on other value-adding activities, while the IR4.0 systems take over routine activities.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, firstly, IR4.0 is making a major transformation in various businesses in the world. As more businesses integrate IR4.0 into their business practices, business leaders and managers should realign their strategic management processes with the industrial revolution. Secondly, these strategic management processes should be realigned with IR4.0 because they promote innovative work environments, efficient production processes, and timely distribution of production. They can help organizations develop clear measures and monitor business practices at the operational level.

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## **ODL oh! ODL**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The pandemic of COVID-19 somehow has not come to its end yet even after almost 6 months of the struggles and brawls of the world combating this deadly virus. Since the end of December 2019 up to now, the world is struggling hard to lower the number of recorded cases in each country from time to time. COVID-19 is not only an issue of sustaining the best level of citizens' health status but also, an issue that is related to economics, well-being, education, and other aspects as well. On January 24, 2020, the first case of COVID-19 was recorded in Malaysia thus the World Health Organization Country Office in Malaysia has been working closely with the Ministry of Health to respond to this outbreak (WHO, 2020).

However, the COVID-19 case went up sharply or exponentially in Malaysia on March 15, 2020 with 190 cases as compared to March 14, 2020 which were only 41 cases. (Malaysiakini, 2020). Thus, this has led to the implementation of Movement Control Order (MCO) that was announced by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on 16 March 2020. MCO was effectively implemented on March 18 to March 31 nationwide as a mean to curb the spread of COVID-19 (Bernama, 2020). Malaysia's Movement Control Order (MCO) has been extended until August 31, 2020 and it is now entering the recovery phase which is called as the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) (Wong, 2020). Due to MCO's extension, Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) recommends that all Public Universities (UA) to continue the semester by using e-learning mode for classes and postponing out-of-campus activities (MoHE, 2020). Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has moved all classes to open and distance learning (ODL) mode effective on April 13 until the end of the semester for all its campuses nationwide (Karim, 2020).

### **DISCUSSION**

Stress is an adaptive response to a situation that is perceived as challenging or threatening to the person's well-being (McShane & Glinow, 2018). Majority of students could not adapt with the ODL approach since all group work have been converted to individual work and final exam and replacing by new assessment. Most of students said that ODL is a stressor for them during MCO. Stressor is any environmental condition that places a physical or emotional demand on the person (McShane & Glinow, 2018). This is because they must learn new method of e-learning, poor internet access (Rayyan Rafidi, 2020; Ida, 2020), improper gadget, lack of academic resources, and other many workloads (Ida, 2020; Pradifta & Subudi, 2019). Moreover, students experienced poor time management in order to manage a lot of assignments, quizzes, tests and online class hence they are becoming the their stressors (Henriksen & Kaup, 2011). Research by Dushkevych et al., 2020 found that majority of students were unprepared for online distance learning.

Certain subject requires students to work in group. Stress emerges when they have difficulties to discuss on completing assignment due to poor internet access, different ample time and non-face to face meeting that lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding among them. Computer-mediated communication is seen to be less effective as it lacks body language, facial

expression, and tone (Rayyan Rafidi, 2020) consequently, and has led to conflicts among team members (Martínez-Moreno et al., 2009). Frequent quarrel triggers group members' conflict and turn it to be stressor for them.

Since ODL is conducted at home, too much distraction from family members also made students becoming stress. As stated by Rayyan Rafidi (2020), domestic or home factors can render students to unable placing focus during classes or feel guilty for choosing studies over family obligations. Instead of focusing on e-learning process, students also need to help family members with house chores such meal preparations, assisting their sibling to do homework, take care of unwell parents and many more. Some of them are responsible to be the family leader since their parents have passed away and some of them are incapable to carry out the duty due to illness. They have to buy groceries and manage their family members. Stress obviously leads to conflicts and argument between students and their family members. This work-family conflict will decrease students' academic performance (Pradifta & Subudi, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Therefore, academicians and students need to choose a platform for online learning that will maximize the convenience, confidentiality and quality of the gained knowledge (Dushkevych et al., 2020). It is to ensure that no one will be left behind. In addition, corporation and support from family members are also important in order to make students focus and perform in their academic. Team members' conflict should be quickly resolved to avoid delay on project submission and to ensure the project quality assurance. ODL, team members' conflict and too much distraction are student's stressors that will manifest depression. Thus it will give negative impact on student's academic performance (Araújo et al., 2020).

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# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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In early 2020, the world has been shocked with the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) which has generated an unprecedented impact in most countries of the world. The virus has affected all 213 countries, include countries in Asia, in Europe (mainly in Italy, Spain, France and UK), in Africa and America (mainly in the United States) spread to more than 2 million people, and caused around 130, 000 deaths until categorized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (World Health Organization, 2020). Currently, there still no viable vaccine and therapy found to stop the virus from spreading except to follow the standard advice which is to avoid close contact with those infected, practise good hygiene and social distancing. In addition, most countries have opted to implement lockdown to stop the spread of COVID-19. This pandemic does not only affect the human health, but also triggers socio-economic and political crises as well as environmental degradation in the infected countries. On the other hand, the lockdown has also created a ground for renewal of the environment, especially with the closure of factories and the reduction of both private and public transportation vehicles used. COVID-19 has increased the air quality in many parts of the world with the lockdown imposed during the pandemic process. This is supported by Chakraborty and Maity (2020), who emphasized that the lockdown has both environmental and economic impact on countries. However, this paper attempt to discuss the impact of COVID-19 to environment in several places around the world conceptually.

Zambrano-Monserrate et.al (2020) found that social distancing adopted in few countries such as China, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain affected the country's main economic activities when power plants and industrial facilities halted their production as well as decreased in the use of vehicles led to reduction in the concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>). Meanwhile, air pollution has dramatically reduced in Europe since governments ordered citizens to stay at home to contain the spread of the new coronavirus. Similar result noticed in China, USA, Italy, Spain, France and several American countries have reported a NO<sub>2</sub> reduction ranging between 20 and 30% (Muhammad et al. (2020), Wang and Su (2020) and Dutheil et al. (2020)). While, based on study from K. D Kanniah et.al (2020) found that the pollution level decreased in few countries like Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Philippines especially in the industrial and urban areas. Additionally, the reduction in NO<sub>2</sub> in some countries such as Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore was strongly linked with the countries' effort to restrict the movement of people within and across countries, control the industrial and business activities, as well as enacted aggressive measures, including border closures, prohibiting mass gathering, restricting religious activities and partial lockdowns enforced by the military. Additionally, the measure of social distancing caused many beaches around the world to get cleaned up resulted the reduction in waste generated by tourists who visit the beaches. Likewise, noise levels commonly generated by anthropogenic activities (for instances, industrial or commercial activities) have fallen significantly in some countries such as China, USA, Italy and Spain due to decreasing in the use of private and public transportation, as well as commercial activities (M.H. Shakil et al, 2020). This resulted to decreasing in the use of private and public transportation significantly plus commercial activities have stopped almost entirely. All these changes have caused the noise level to drop considerably in most cities in the world.

Nonetheless, the spreading of COVID-19 has also impacted the environment in negative side. Some cities in USA suspended recycling programs because authorities have been concerned about the risk of spreading the virus in recycling centers. Recycling is a common and effective way to prevent pollution, save energy, and converse natural resources (Varotto and Spagnolli, 2017; Ma et al., 2019). During the implementation of lockdown policy in most countries, consumers tend to increase their demand for online shopping for home delivery. Consequently,

it leads to increase on organic waste generated by household that can be harmful and potentially transmit diseases to others unless appropriately treated. There also has increase in inorganic waste when most of food purchased online is shipped packed. The increasing in waste also occurred for medical waste when hospital in Wuhan produced an average of 240 metric tons of medical waste per day during the outbreak, compared to their previous average of fewer than 50 tons. Meanwhile, there has been increase in garbage for personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves in USA (Calma, 2020).

For a significant decline in environmental degradation, the authorities have to ensure long-term structural change in the countries' economies. This result can be achieved through full support and commitment from all parties; government, firm and household as well. The authorities have to practise safe management of domestic waste. Other than that, the medical waste such as contaminated masks, gloves, used or expired medications, and other items can easily be mixed with domestic waste. Furthermore, these type of waste must be collected by specialized municipal operators or waste management operators (UN, 2020). In nutshell, it concluded that COVID-19 has both positive and negative impact on the environment. Decreasing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) concentrations during a short period is not a sustainable way to clean up the environment. It will be more challenging to manage the environmental problem if countries neglect the impact of the epidemic on the environment.

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# HEALTH-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE (HRQoL) OF LECTURERS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES, MALAYSIA

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## PURPOSE

The focus of education nowadays is no longer teaching-oriented but has been shifted to research-oriented with the aim of producing more studies of high quality on behalf of the institutions (Toker, 2012). Paired with the increasing cost of living in Malaysia and workloads, this phenomenon is believed to affect the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) of lecturers (Naslina, et. al., 2012). Given the important role played by lecturers in the higher institutions, it is essential to evaluate their Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) to find doors for improvement. This is an empirical paper aims at presenting findings from a study conducted to determine the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) of lecturers in selected public universities in Malaysia. The primary objective of the study was to compare the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) index of the lecturers with the key indicators recommended for general Malaysian population norms taken from Azman, et al. (2003).

## METHODOLOGY

The study was designed as a descriptive and cross-sectional study. A structured e-mail survey was created and sent to all respondents of randomly selected public universities using formal organizational e-mail. Ethically, the e-mail included a statement of consent to be the respondents of the study and a link to the validated Short Form (SF-36) items, a type of survey that commonly used to gather information related to Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL). The survey has been indicated as reliable, valid, and responsive for multiple types of populations and fields (Wuemei, et al., 2003). There are eight health domains that aggregated into two clusters designed in the survey. The first cluster is the Physical Health that include Physical Functioning (10 items), Role-Physical (4 items), Bodily Pain (2 items), and General Health (5 items). While the second cluster is Mental Health that include Vitality (4 items), Social Functioning (2 items), Role-Emotional (3 items) and Mental Health (5 items.)

## FINDINGS

The analysis of findings indicated that, the response rate was 34.55%. Only 1235 respondents voluntarily involved in the study while, the remaining 65.45% were either refused to do so, cannot be reached, or ignored the e-mail. The overall mean score of the Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) in the study was compared with the overall mean score of the recommended Malaysian general population norms of 65.0. The accumulated score was 50.60, which is lower than the recommended value. Mean scores of all eight-health domain were also lower than recommended mean scores of the general Malaysian population for each health domain. These findings suggested that, the lecturers experienced insufficient Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL). Moreover, gender analysis indicated that male academicians had higher Health-Related Quality of Life (HRQoL) for all the health domains except for Role-Physical (RP) and Social Functioning (SF).

## CONCLUSION

It is very crucial to retain a good quality of life among academician. The findings call upon the intervention from the government to formulate strategies in handling the strains and pressures at work among academicians, specifically the lecturers. This is important to ensure that both

physical and mental states of the lecturers can be improved for the benefits of education in the future.

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# WAQF IN MALAYSIA: THE POWER BEHIND IT

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The waqf institutions' situation in Malaysia long before independence is very different from today's scenario. Back then, many Muslims concentrated on preserving their religious customs from being contaminated by the British nonspiritual procedures. During this colonial era, the waqif personally and directly appointed many highly reputed individuals such as the village head, religious school teachers, mosques and suraus to manage the waqf. The original owner did not make any official ownership transfers with the mutawalli; there was only verbal agreement between the two parties (Mahamood, 2006). Therefore, there was no proof as to the right of the waqf for the intended purpose when the founders normally left it to the trusted individuals to fully manage the waqf as long as the trusted mutawalli deliver the intended purpose accordingly. To overcome this situation, the State Islamic Religious Council (SIRC) of each state in Malaysia is given the power and trust to administer the waqf, replacing the old ways in the appointment of trusted individuals by the founders. The SIRC was set up way back in 1916 where it was originally established merely for the supervision of mosques in Kelantan. As the sole trusteeship of the waqf, each SIRC in each state in Malaysia is given the authority to supervise, manage and develop all the waqf (Mahamood, 2006).

Legally, Section 25 of the Civil Law Act 1956 governs the SIRC in the administration of waqf (Kamaruddin, Masruki & Hanefah, 2018). Each SIRC is unique in its own way. The formation of the SIRC of each state was not done simultaneously and it was done stage by stage. Although the interpretation functions of the SIRC differ from each other, its main function is the same. It is important to know that the Sultan of each state has full authority on the SIRC in his state. For those states without the sultanate system, the Governor of each state holds the power on the SIRC. Although the SIRC hold the same function, there is no standard or centralized regulation governing the management of waqf by these SIRC. As such, they are free to practice their own individual enactment. Interestingly though, these SIRC share the same issues to manage and develop the waqf under their jurisdictions. Some of the well-known issues are the size of land and its location; distance of the waqf from the population and nearby infrastructure; insufficient manpower to manage all of the waqf; insufficient funds to develop the waqf; unlawful occupation of the waqf land; incompetency of managing the waqf and poor recordkeeping of the proclaimed waqf (Mohd Salleh & Muhammad, 2008).

In addition, the laws governing the management of the waqf in Malaysia vary from one state to another. Except for the state of Selangor, Malacca and Negeri Sembilan, the rest of the states have provisions for the waqf which are not centralized and do not have specific jurisdiction pertaining to the creation of waqf. Most of the enactments as provided in most of the states focus on the administrative and implementation of the waqf. According to Mahamood (2006), the enactments cover:

1. The appointment of the SIRC as the sole trustee of the waqf in Malaysia.
2. Giving the SIRC the right to the waqf including the general and specific waqf.
3. The creation of the waqf based on the one-third rule regardless of voluntary or not.
4. The income and capital treatment of the general and specific waqf.
5. The SIRC authorization to make decisions on the general waqf if there is no provision indicated in the legislation.

6. The permission for the SIRC's to seek the advice of the Mufti if there is any uncertainty in the creating of the waqf.
7. The rate exemption which only applicable to the Johore Enactment (14) 1978.
8. All the mawquf (assets/properties proclaimed as waqf) and any investments related to them.
9. The vesting power of the SIRC's as the sole trusteeship of the state mosques and their rights to create new mosques.

As to date, the management of waqf in Malaysia still remains the same as it is years back. There are no indications that there will be any changes in the structural management of the waqf. As such, the waqf management still has no centralized regulation to govern it. There were a few suggestions of having a centralized waqf system in Malaysia. Nevertheless, none of the suggestions were successful due to the empowerment in the decision making falls into the approval of the sultan or governor of each state. Hence, the Department of Waqaf, Zakat and Haj (JAWHAR) and Malaysia Waqf Foundation (YWM) were set up in 2004 and 2008, respectively, to foresee standardized administration of waqf in Malaysia. It is expected that with the inclusion of these two federal agencies, the SIRC's will become more systematic and efficient in managing the waqf.

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# AN OVERVIEW ON PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL PARADIGM TO INNOVATION: BACK TO BASIC

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHICAL PARADIGM

Kuhn is an early scholar who pioneered the terms of paradigm and research and its relationship with society. According to Kuhn, paradigm is "... as the entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques shared by the members of a given community" (Kuhn, 1970, p.175; 2015). A research requires different approaches and methods in accordance with the principles of paradigm differences which do not prevent something that is done to meet the objectives of the research. The differences do not determine which one is right or wrong, but these paradigm differences focus on the comprehensive understanding of the target audience when dealing with research involving societal issues including studies related to innovation.

Researchers may only be held with their worldview, respectively, but they actually understand the underlying of a paradigm on which knowledge is developed and its ability to identify the potential and limitations of the research design even the research itself is full of diversity. Therefore, a paradigm which is literally in nature contains the elements of belief towards knowledge and also the researchers' worldview from their own perspective. These will create a variety of views and approaches towards the principles of philosophy and various paradigm of multiple disciplines (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Anderson & Baym, 1996, 2004).

According to Anderson and Baym (2004), the term *Philosophy of Communication* is a concept that is often associated with the principles and belief system that touches on the pragmatism of professional practices. Communication is said to be rich in terms of philosophy. The philosophy of communication is often recognized as the basis of the formation of core issues on a variety of disciplines.

The result of research in philosophy in various disciplines such as communication and its relationship to technology acceptance, innovation and human behavior, have outlined four (4) major issues, namely ontology, epistemology, axiology and praxeologi (Anderson, 1996; Littlejohn, 2002), respectively related to the question of "existence", "knowledge", "value" and "practices and actions". Generally if we examine the question of ontology, epistemology, axiology and praxeologi as proposed by Anderson (1996) and Littlejohn (2002), it can be linked directly to the question of the sociological paradigm (Burrell & Morgan; 1979), namely "ontology, "epistemology", "human nature", and "methodology"; as well as the question of paradigm on a set of fundamental beliefs based on an assumptions of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). At the same time, all these philosophical questions have relatively addressed the sociological paradigm as proposed by Burrell and Morgan (1979).

The above statements show that all organizational theories appear to be established on philosophy of knowledge and theories of sociology. Based on this understanding it further creates the sociological assumptions such as the ontological supposition which emphasize on the notion of the existence of a phenomenon or event. The question led to numerous assumptions that

describe the phenomenon as an absolute truth to an individual or only as an attribute upon the individual's perception of things.

Moreover, some arguments of philosophy and sociology have highlighted the questions of realities arising as a product of the mind; should the experience directly relate to the question of understanding?; whether human beings are "free to act or choose" or are they controlled and determined by their vicinity?; and the question of humans achievement either based on a scientific method or through direct experience?

## 2.0 THE PARADIGM OF SOCIOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Sociology is a study related to the nature and the development of society and community life. Various opinions and arguments have been discussing the sociological paradigm, generally or specifically. For instance, the debate has centered on the questions of reality and development of mind to interpret an event or phenomenon; the human needs in connection with their experience of an event in order to understand related phenomenon; question of how people feel themselves "*independently determined*" to do something or subject to any conditions and requirements and its vicinity; or the understanding and acceptance are based on scientific methods or direct experience.

Hence, any innovation and transformation that involve the cooperation and participation of the community should narrate the concepts of sociological thinking. According to Burrell and Morgan (1979) for the last 20 years, the sociologist seeks to categorize the various trends and assumptions of meta-sociology in their independent school of thought.

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), two scholars of sociology, Lockwood (1956) and Dahrendorf (1959) have attempted to categorize the social science approach based on the "*order*" and "*conflict*" model in the community. This view is understandable as "*Order-Conflict Debate*". At that time, the "*order*" theory supporters outnumbered the "*conflict*" theory supporters (Burrell & Morgan; 1979, 10). The essence of the "*Order-Conflict*" model is based on the thought of sociologists such as Durkheim, Weber, and Pareto who supported the view of "*order*" and Marx who is supporting the views on "*conflict*" as a driver of change in society (ibid.12). The "*order*" model insists on the principle of regularity, stability and unity as the basis of various phenomena that occur in the community whereas the "*conflict*" model is more likely aligned to elements of change, conflict and discordance as the basis of various phenomena in society. However, another sociologist, Cohen (ibid.11), has criticized Dahrendorf's opinion and of the view that the "*order*" and "*conflict*" in "*Order-Conflict*" model is not completely detached. He holds the views on "*order*" and "*conflict*" which is not contradictory in nature, but actually both are progressing to function in the social sciences and community development.

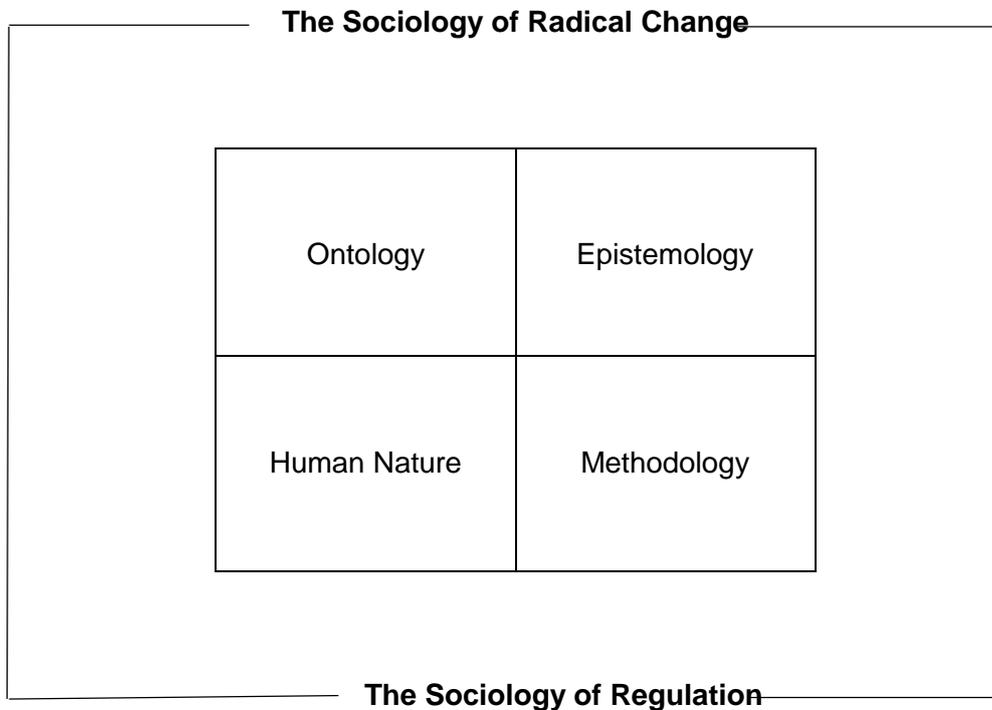
Therefore, Burrell and Morgan (1979) finally proposed the "*Sociology of Regulation*" and the "*Sociology of Radical Change*" to categorize the various opinions and views of sociologist within the framework of "*Order-Conflict*" model. The "*Sociology of Regulation*" is used to describe the narrative and mode of thinking of the society consisting of unity, integration and cohesiveness as the basis of social phenomenon. The "*Sociology of Radical Change*" describes the narrative and mode of thinking of the society consisting of a radical change, a fundamental conflict, domination and structural reform which becoming the features of a modern society. These characteristics of changes are directly related to the elements of innovation in society.

## 3.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, any form of transformational innovation in innovation research should move in line and well adapted to the sociological paradigm whether on the regulatory aspects of "*Sociology of Regulation*" or to the drastic changes of "*Sociology of Radical Change*". Concurrently it also needs to address the philosophical paradigms related to "ontology, "epistemology", "human nature", and "methodology" which also known as ontology,

epistemology, axiology and praxeology respectively related to the question of "existence", "knowledge", "value" and "practices and actions". Table 1 summarized key terms for these philosophical and sociological paradigms.

Table 1: The Philosophical and Sociological Paradigms



Source: Burrell dan Morgan (1979)

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# **INTERACTIONAL INJUSTICE & INTERPERSONAL DEVIANCE IN A WORKPLACE**

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## **INTERACTIONAL INJUSTICE & WORKPLACE DEVIANCE DEFINED**

When the employees feel that they were treated inequitably, no respect and concern by the employer, they tend to retaliate, and it is a common cause of workplace sabotage (Shim, 2008). A good manager will effectively exercise open, consistent, fair, and direct interaction with employees. According to Burton et al., (2005), interactional injustice occurs when the enactment of formal procedures or the explanation of such processes to employees was conducted unfairly to each different employee. Violation of interactional justice in a workplace happens in leader-member relationships when they promote or treat an employee not based on merit and performance but merely social connections and ties (Gonthier, 2002). Abusive supervision from the leader created all sorts of employee deviance which influenced the willingness of the employees to show negative behaviours (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007). Unfortunately, many among us had faced such interactional injustice in the workplace. Some are due to the fact of different racial status, religions, and sexual orientations. What is being more concerned is that even the slightest diversity could lead to problems in workplace such as being born in a certain race, having different skin tone and just because one prefers to speak in another language than the rest. Based on Gilligan's (1996), employees with lower positions in an organisation have a higher possibility of having deviant acts. Not limited to that, negative relationships also happened in member-organisations relationships (Gonthier, 2002). Supported by (Mitchell & Ambrose, 2007), abusive supervision will influence the retaliation from both, supervisor directed deviance and displaced deviant behaviours which targeted other co-workers.

Adversity is expected in the workplace if the issue of interactional justice is not appropriately confronted. Even worse, it might lead to foster deviant behaviour among employees in the workplace. Kaplan (1975) highlights that workplace deviance refers to an employee's voluntary action that either he/she lacks the motivation to conform to the organisational norms, and/or becomes motivated to violate normative expectations of the social context. In addition workplace deviance also refers to voluntary employee behaviour, of his or her own accord violating the workplace institutional norms to cause harm or threaten the well-being of an organisation or to a specific person in the organisation (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). The organisational patterns are such basic moral standards, traditional community standards, formal and informal corporate policies, rules, and procedures (Feldman, 1984); and other related guidelines that either impliedly or directly communicated by the organisation to their workers. The workplace deviance can be divided into organisational deviance and interpersonal deviance

(Robinson, 2000). According to her study, some measures of interpersonal deviance is made fun of someone, said something hurtful to someone, made an ethnic, religious, or racial remark, cursed at someone, played a mean prank on someone, acted rudely toward someone and publicly embarrassed someone while at work. In short, Interpersonal deviance includes gossiping, going against superior's order and decision, verbal and non-verbal abuse, bullying and aggression that may harm the organisational well-being (Brady, Brown & Liang, 2017; Robinson & Bennett 1995; Pearson, Andersson & Wegner, 2001; Rayner & Keashly, 2005).

Other examples of organisational deviance include taken property from work without permission, spent too much time fantasising or daydreaming instead of working. Worst-case scenario the employees also falsified a receipt to get reimbursed for more money than they spent on business expenses. Moreover, some might take an additional or more extended break than is acceptable at the workplace, come in late to work without permission and littered at the work environment. In some cases, they even neglected to follow boss's instructions, intentionally worked slower, discussed confidential company information with an unauthorised person, used an illegal drug or consumed alcohol on the job, put little effort into work and dragged out work to get overtime. The repercussion of workplace deviance, if not managed right, may cost additional problems and money to organisations. Based on statistics by the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (2020), a staggering number of complaints were recorded from 329 (2012) to 970 (2019), which is equivalent to 294.8% complaints made on the enforcement agencies in Malaysia. The number of investigations carried out in conjunction with the charges also rose from 60 (2012) to 197 (2019). The National Anti-Drugs Agency (2020), statistics proved an average of 27272 employees caught with abuse drugs both in public and private sectors from 2014 to 2019. Next, 1218 employees, specifically 257 male and 961 female were harassed at work from the year 2013 to 2017 (Berita Harian, 2019), over a third or 36% of Malaysian women have experienced sexual harassment, compared to one in six (17%) men (The New Straits Times, 2019).

Based on a survey involved 230 organisations, representing a combined workforce of 17,595 employees in Malaysia, it is found that 16% of employees have low or deficient levels of engagement at work. On the other hand, 20% employees affected by workplace bullying which overall contributes to their workplace stress and organisations lose a total of 73.3 days per employee due to absence and presenteeism (being at work when unwell), which cost each employer RM1.46 million per year (The New Straits Times, 2019). Thus, based on the facts and figures, it is not shocking that the intensification of workplace deviances may contribute to a severe economic risk either in local or global economics.

## **THE CAUSE**

Feeling discriminated and often not listened to by the bosses and co-workers led to dissatisfaction at the workplace and may also lead to workplace deviance if it is not remedied as soon as possible. Thus, the company needs to set standards of conduct on how employees should be treated. For instance, a manager should be able to create a safe and productive work environment to fully exercise interactional justice to the employees. As for the co-workers, they need to treat each other with respect and be ready to give a little to maintain workplace harmony. Often procedures and rationale for decisions were not thoroughly explained to employees, leaving them with big question marks as to why specific methods were implemented, what were the consequences of such decisions, why particular measures were taken but not the others. Such injustice experiences have the potential to escalate emotional intensities that last for hours, days, weeks, or even months if it is poorly defined at the beginning phase. Accordingly, employees' enhanced commitment to their bosses and organisation is healthy only when interactional justice occurs in the workplace as employees see themselves as someone that is taken seriously by their superior and co-worker and feeling attached to the organisation where they work. Unjust treatment in the organisation could not only lead to workplace deviance but also withdrawals from the organisation. In today's world, organisational success should not only be measured by financial performance and productivity levels but also to take interpersonal relations and communication effectiveness into considerations. Some studies have found that

interactional justice leads to better work performance. Besides, interpersonal deviants also displayed different levels of behaviour, and according to Anwar, Sarwan, Awan and Arif (2011), female staff are less deviant at the workplace as compared to the male staff counterpart. The study by Fagbohungebe, Akinbode & Ayodeji, (2012) also agreed that gender did influence deviant behaviour among staff. In contrast, the research shows that female staff deviants' behaviour was higher than that of their male counterparts.

## **IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES EMOTION & PRODUCTIVITY**

Perceived interactional injustice in a workplace may result physiological strain like emotional stress amongst employees in the organisation. The severity of psychological stress has been linked to various negative consequences for instance, decreased work motivation and commitments, depleting job performance, workplace bully, call-off duty due to health problems and finally turnover intentions. To better understand the root cause of stress, stress researchers elucidate three terminologies to explain the study of stress in general namely stressor- refers to external factors such as work environment, interpersonal relationships, job design & job scope. Stress- is an individual response to a stressor, and the consequence of long-term exposure to stress is called strain (Smith & Smith, 1999). Negative emotional states rooting from unfavourable treatment in a workplace also cause the employees to engage in unhealthy lifestyles and stress-related behaviours such as smoking, massive alcoholic consumptions and drug abuse to manage their stress level (International Labour Organization, 2016). Such injustice can induce adverse emotional reactions like anger, anxiety and constantly worrying over things for no apparent reasons as well as frustrations. All these behavioural, emotional reactions will lead to organisational failure in the long run.

Employees who are experiencing interactional injustice may resort to counterproductive work behaviour, especially if the person is experiencing significant fairness violations in the work settings. The response can be of as aggressive as unscrupulous workplace sabotage. These include; intentionally not following instructions, performing given task slowly and deliberately failing to correctly complete the task to less aggressive actions like taking longer breaks and withdrawals-without the intentions to cause the inefficient functioning of an organisation or causing harm to other employees. Fairness in interpersonal treatment has been viewed as one of the critical aspects affecting the well-being of an organisation. Inadequate support, favouritism, stereotypes and bias in judgement and evaluation has had a significant influence on employees' disruptive behaviour as they are most likely to engage in retaliation and restoration of the unjust interactional treatment in a negative way (Tobergte & Curtis, 2013).

## **REMEDIES**

Therefore, it is undoubtedly crucial to measure ones' organisational success and well-being not by only the set objectives and key performance indicators but also to acknowledge interactional treatments to find the most efficient way to ensure just and fair treatment to each and everyone in the organisation. Such measures can be taken by establishing and championing fair standards and guidelines as well as training and counselling interventions.

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# **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ODL METHOD FOR ENT530 DURING THE PANDEMIC OF COVID-19**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The pandemic of Covid-19 and execution of lockdowns like Movement Control Order (MCO) since March 18, 2020 in Malaysia have impacted many people, industries and institutions. There are many things or new norms needs to be adapted by Malaysians such as practising social distancing, wearing face mask, hand sanitizing, cleaning surfaces regularly and avoiding crowded places. Besides, this coronavirus outbreak has also affected the operation of education systems in Malaysia and the government had to take drastic action by closing schools and universities that involved millions of pupils and students. Approximately 1.2 million students in higher education institutions (HEIs) (across public and private universities, polytechnics, and community colleges), including all campuses of Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) across Malaysia were affected by this closure (Daniel Rahman, 2020, March 24).

Before the outbreak of Covid-19 in March 2020, teaching and learning in HEIs including UiTM was focused primarily on traditional classroom learning method or face-to-face learning. One of the common subjects that offered to the degree courses in UiTM is Principles of Entrepreneurship (ENT 530). This course is important with the purpose to nurture the basic knowledge of entrepreneurship among degree students. However, due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and the implementation of Movement Control Order (MCO), the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) had instructed all universities in Malaysia including UiTM to conduct online classes and lectures by using Open and Distance Learning (ODL) method. ENT 530 was also affected and some modifications had to be made by the resource person to make sure that the process of learning among students would still be as effective as traditional method of learning (Norfazlina Ghazali, 2020).

There are approximately 464 students from UiTM Kedah who have registered for ENT 530 course for March – July 2020 semester. Six lecturers have been required to use ODL method when conducting classes and lectures throughout the semester starting from April to June 2020. The lecturers are using different tools of online teaching such as social media (WhatsApp, Telegram, WeChat, Facebook, Instagram and etc), video conferencing (google meet, zoom, webinar, skype, facebook live and etc), google classroom and many more.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the level of effectiveness when adopting ODL method for teaching the ENT 530 course.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The primary objective of the study is to know the effectiveness of ODL method in teaching of Principles of Entrepreneurship (ENT 530).

## **EFFECTIVENESS OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL)**

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) can be defined as teaching and learning process delivered through a technology platform and doing communication using the internet (Hoic-Bozic, Mornar, & Boticki, 2009; Jacobson, Chapman & Van, 2017). According to Clark and Mayer (2011), ODL is not focusing solely on learning through the website or using the internet, but it can also be delivered by recording the audio or video, satellite transmission and interactive television. In addition, the term ODL is often used in different terminology and interchangeably such as e-learning, blended learning and distance learning (Zulfikar et al., 2019).

There have been several studies has been conducted regarding the effectiveness of online distance learning especially among higher educators (Dzakiria et al., 2013; Kintu, Zhu & Kagambe, 2017) Based on a study on final semester students of Ugandan University has measured three aspects of online learning effectiveness which is perspective of students characteristics, design features and learning outcome (Kintu, Zhu and Kagambe, 2017). Meanwhile, Selim (2007) has mentioned three main factors that affect ODL effectiveness including instructor characteristics, technology and student characteristics. These studies indicate that there are few important approaches that can influence the effectiveness of ODL namely, student's commitment, teacher's role and teaching method.

The effectiveness of ODL can be influenced by the students' characteristics through their commitment in every session of teaching and learning and supported by computer and internet application. Having necessary technology gadgets (computer, laptop, tab, smartphone, software, apps and hardware) and accessibility of internet could be the main factors that highly influence the effectiveness of ODL. According to Shraim and Khlaif (2010), the success of ODL was dependent upon how students can manage and use their skills in ICT. This is supported by the study of Kintu, Zhu and Kagambe (2017) which indicates that effectiveness of ODL is closely related to ability in their computer competence and the quality of technology during the teaching and learning session. Therefore, students must be well-versed in the usage of technology gadgets and able to operate various types of apps to make sure the process of ODL can be implemented effectively and smoothly.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study is a quantitative research using descriptive research design. A set of questionnaires was developed to measure the level of effectiveness of teaching and learning using ODL method. The questionnaires will be distributed online to 464 students who registered for ENT 530 course for March – July 2020 semester. The data collected will be analyzed by using statistical software known as Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 26.

## **CONCLUSION**

Covid-19 pandemic has forced higher education institutions (HEIs) to use ODL method in conducting online classes and lectures as to ensure uninterrupted of study plans among university students in Malaysia. However, the availability and accessibility of internet post the challenges to the educators (teachers and lecturers) and universities especially during the movement control order (MCO) period. The findings of this study would provide evidence on the level of effectiveness for ODL method and identify the better ways to improve the process of teaching and learning particularly for the course of Principles of Entrepreneurship in the future.

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