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Kerjasama Pakatan Harapan–Barisan Nasional Selepas PRU15: Analisis dalam Konteks Pilihan Raya Negeri dan Pilihan Raya Kecil di Malaysia

(Cooperation between Pakatan Harapan and Barisan Nasional after GE15: An Analysis in the Context of State Elections and By-Elections in Malaysia)

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the electoral cooperation between Pakatan Harapan (PH) and Barisan Nasional (BN) after the 15th General Election (PRU15), focussing on state elections and by-elections.This study uses a qualitative approach and is analysed based on the theory of political consensus (Lijphart, 1969) and political realism (Morgenthau, 1948) to understand the dynamics and effectiveness of this cooperation.The study findings indicate that the PH-BN cooperation is more tactical in nature and does not reflect a deep form of consensus.DAP maintains strong support while UMNO experiences a decline, particularly in majority Malay areas.This cooperation also does not involve all BN component parties, as UMNO is the only BN component party that benefits from this cooperation.However, this cooperation plays an important role in ensuring short-term stability and providing competition to Perikatan Nasional.This study contributes to the academic discourse on the evolution of coalition politics in the increasingly complex Malaysian political landscape.

Keywords: Malaysian politics; consociationalism; political realism; electoral alliances; state elections

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini menganalisis kerjasama pilihan raya antara Pakatan Harapan (PH) dan Barisan Nasional (BN) selepas Pilihan Raya Umum ke-15 (PRU15) dengan memberi tumpuan kepada pilihan raya negeri dan pilihan raya kecil. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan dianalisis berasaskan teori permuafakatan politik (Lijphart, 1969) dan realisme politik (Morgenthau, 1948) bagi memahami dinamika dan keberkesanan kerjasama ini. Dapatan

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kajian mendapati kerjasama PH-BN lebih bersifat taktikal dan tidak mencerminkan satu bentuk permuafakatan mendalam. DAP mengekalkan sokongan kuat manakala UMNO mengalami kemerosotan, khususnya di kawasan majoriti Melayu. Kerjasama ini juga tidak melibatkan semua parti komponen BN, apabial UMNO sahaja sebagai parti komponen BN yang memperoleh keuntungan dalam kerjasama tersebut. Namun, kerjasama ini berperanan penting dalam menjamin kestabilan jangka pendek dan memberi saingan kepada Perikatan Nasional. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada wacana akademik tentang evolusi politik gabungan dalam landskap politik Malaysia yang semakin rencam.

Kata kunci: Politik Malaysia; konsosiasionalisme; realisme politik; kerjasama pilihan raya; pilihan raya negeri

PENGENALAN

Pilihan Raya Umum ke-15 (PRU15) yang berlangsung pada 19 November 2022 telah menterjemahkan keputusan yang tidak pernah berlaku dalam sejarah politik Malaysia apabila tiada satu gabungan politik berjaya memperoleh majoriti mudah untuk membentuk kerajaan di peringkat Persekutuan. Keputusan parlimen tergantung ini mendorong kepada perundingan antara pelbagai gabungan politik utama, dan akhirnya menyaksikan pembentukan Kerajaan Perpaduan di bawah pimpinan Anwar Ibrahim, melibatkan kerjasama Pakatan Harapan (PH) dan Barisan Nasional (BN) bersama beberapa parti lain termasuk Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS), Gabungan Rakyat Sabah (GRS) dan WARISAN (Welsh, 2023; Gomez & Lee, 2023).

Kerjasama antara PH dan BN, dua entiti politik yang sebelum ini menjadi seteru utama, menandakan satu dinamika besar dalam sistem politik di Malaysia. Sejak penubuhan Perikatan pada 1950-an hingga zaman dominasi BN yang berakhir pada 2018, politik Malaysia dibentuk melalui model permuafakatan antara parti-parti berasaskan etnik. Walau bagaimanapun, permuafakatan politik pasca-PRU15 memperlihatkan bentuk baru kerjasama rentas ideologi yang lebih pragmatik dan bersifat survival politik, daripada berasaskan prinsip kerjasama etnik semata-mata (Liow & Yong, 2020).

Kerjasama yang dirintis pada penghujung 2022 dalam pembentukan kerajaan perpaduan di Persekutuan tidak terhenti di situ sahaja apabila PH dan BN, khususnya di Semenajung, melakukan banyak eksperimen politik dalam siri pilihan raya negeri dan pilihan raya kecil. Dalam konteks ini, pilihan raya negeri (PRN) dan pilihan raya kecil (PRK) yang diadakan selepas PRU15 menjadi medan ujian kritikal terhadap keutuhan kerjasama PH-BN. Kejayaan atau kegagalan kerjasama ini bukan sahaja akan mempengaruhi kedudukan Kerajaan Perpaduan di peringkat Persekutuan, malah berpotensi mencorakkan semula trajektori politik Malaysia pada masa depan. Oleh itu, analisis terhadap bagaimana kerjasama ini diterjemahkan di peringkat pilihan raya negeri dan kecil adalah penting untuk memahami dinamika sebenar permuafakatan politik baharu ini.

Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan teori permuafakatan politik seperti yang dihuraikan oleh Lijphart (1969) yang menekankan perkongsian kuasa dalam masyarakat majmuk, di samping mempertimbangkan elemen realisme politik (Morgenthau, 1948) yang menegaskan kepentingan survival dan kuasa sebagai asas tindakan politik. Kedua-dua kerangka ini akan digunakan untuk memahami motivasi serta corak interaksi antara PH dan BN dalam mengurus kerjasama pasca-PRU15.

Di samping itu, kajian ini juga mengambil kira literatur terkini yang mengkaji perubahan dinamika politik Malaysia selepas PRU14 dan PRU15 (Weiss, 2020; Ufen, 2022; Chin, 2021; Welsh, 2023). Kajian-kajian ini telah menggariskan bagaimana krisis keyakinan terhadap elit politik, ketidakstabilan kerajaan, dan penjajaran semula kuasa politik telah membentuk satu era baharu dalam politik Malaysia yang lebih berpecah-belah, tetapi juga lebih terbuka kepada eksperimen bentuk-bentuk kerjasama baharu.

Sejarah politik Malaysia menunjukkan bahawa permuafakatan antara parti politik bukanlah sesuatu yang asing. Model awal kerjasama UMNO-MCA-MIC melalui Perikatan selepas kemerdekaan adalah manifestasi pendekatan konsosiasionalisme klasik, yang memperlihatkan parti-parti mewakili komuniti etnik yang berbeza berkongsi kuasa untuk menjaga kestabilan negara (Von Vorys, 1975; Funston, 1999). Namun begitu, perubahan demografi, tuntutan rakyat terhadap reformasi, dan perkembangan parti-parti pelbagai kaum telah menuntut adaptasi terhadap model permuafakatan tersebut. Kerjasama PH-BN pasca-PRU15 boleh dilihat sebagai satu evolusi bentuk permuafakatan ini — dengan lebih penekanan kepada pragmatisme politik berbanding perkongsian kuasa berasaskan etnik semata-mata.

Dalam analisis ini, fokus akan diberikan kepada PRN 2023 serta beberapa PRK yang diadakan selepas itu. Dengan itu, kajian ini diharap dapat memberikan gambaran yang lebih jelas tentang keberkesanan dan ketahanan kerjasama PH-BN dalam konteks politik pilihan raya pasca-PRU15. Secara keseluruhannya, kajian ini bertujuan menyumbang kepada diskusi akademik tentang evolusi permuafakatan politik di Malaysia, serta menilai sejauh mana bentuk kerjasama baharu ini mampu bertahan dalam menghadapi realiti politik yang kian mencabar dan dinamik..

KERANGKA ANALISIS

Teori permuafakatan politik (*consociational democracy*) diperkenalkan oleh Arend Lijphart (1969; 1977) dalam usahanya memahami bagaimana masyarakat yang berpecah dari segi etnik, agama, atau budaya boleh mencapai kestabilan politik melalui perkongsian kuasa. Menurut Lijphart (1969), terdapat empat ciri utama konsosiasionalisme; kerajaan gabungan besar (*grand coalition*), perwakilan berkadar (*proportionality*), kuasa veto kepada kumpulan minoriti (*mutual veto*), dan autonomi segmen (*segmental autonomy*). Model permuafakatan ini bertujuan memastikan semua kumpulan utama dalam masyarakat mempunyai suara dalam pemerintahan, sekaligus mengurangkan risiko konflik diketengahkan secara terbuka. Dalam

konteks Malaysia, banyak kajian awal telah mengaitkan sistem politik Perikatan dan Barisan Nasional sebagai bentuk aplikasi permuafakatan berasaskan etnik (Von Vorys, 1975; Funston, 1999).

Kerjasama PH-BN pasca-PRU15 boleh dianalisis melalui kerangka permuafakatan ini. Walaupun tidak semestinya berasaskan etnik secara eksklusif seperti Perikatan dahulu, kerjasama ini melibatkan rundingan kuasa antara pelbagai aktor politik utama yang mewakili kepelbagaian segmen pengundi — sama ada dari segi ideologi, geografi, mahupun etnik. Elemen pakatan besar jelas dilihat melalui pembentukan kerajaan perpaduan yang menggabungkan 19 parti dari pelbagai latar belakang, manakala prinsip veto kumpulan minoriti dan rundingan dapat dilihat dalam pembahagian jawatan serta agihan kerusi pilihan raya. Walupun pembentukan gabungan kerajaan perpaduan itu melibatkan 19 parti politik, parti-parti politik ini sudah pada asasnya memiliki gabungan tersendiri seperti dinyatakan di atas. Maka, gabungan kerajaan perpaduan ini merupakan sebuah permuafakatan dalam permuafakatan atau gabungan dalam gabungan. Kajian ini juga tidak membincangkan semua gabungan tersebut tetapi memfokuskan kepada kerjasama PH-BN yang dijajarkan ke dalam arena pilihan raya kecil dan pilihan raya negeri.

Di samping itu, teori realisme politik menawarkan satu sudut pandang tambahan yang penting untuk memahami dinamika kerjasama ini. Berakar dalam pemikiran Hans Morgenthau (1948) dan Kenneth Waltz (1979), realisme politik berpandangan bahawa negara (dan dalam kes ini, parti politik) bertindak berasaskan kepentingan survival, kuasa, dan pengaruh — bukan semata-mata ideologi atau nilai bersama. Dalam konteks Malaysia pasca-PRU15, kerjasama antara PH dan BN boleh dilihat sebagai satu tindakan survival politik. Kedua-dua gabungan, setelah gagal mencapai majoriti, menghadapi ancaman ketidakstabilan politik, kehilangan kuasa, dan potensi dominasi oleh pihak ketiga seperti Perikatan Nasional (PN). Dalam keadaan ini, pertimbangan utama bukanlah kesepadanan ideologi, tetapi keperluan praktikal untuk membentuk kerajaan dan mengekalkan kedudukan masing-masing dalam struktur kuasa nasional.

Realisme politik juga membantu memahami mengapa kerjasama PH-BN di peringkat pilihan raya negeri dan kecil kadangkala menghadapi kesukaran. Dalam konteks persaingan tempatan, survival politik parti di peringkat negeri atau kawasan pilihan raya tertentu mungkin mengatasi komitmen kepada kerjasama nasional. Oleh itu, ketegangan, sabotaj dalaman, dan persaingan calon antara PH dan BN dalam beberapa PRN/PRK adalah manifestasi logik realisme politik pada peringkat mikro. Dalam erti kata lain, walaupun secara makro kerjasama diperlukan untuk mengekalkan kerajaan pusat, secara mikro parti-parti tetap beroperasi berdasarkan perkiraan survival masing-masing dalam ruang persaingan politik yang bersifat *zero-sum*.

Kombinasi teori permuafakatan Lijphart dan realisme politik membolehkan analisis yang lebih nuansa terhadap dinamika kerjasama PH-BN. Teori konsosiasionalisme menerangkan struktur asas kerjasama dan prinsip agihan kuasa manakala realisme politik menjelaskan turun naik, cabaran dalaman, dan ketidakseragaman dalam pelaksanaan kerjasama tersebut. Secara prinsip, gabungan dua kerangka ini membolehkan kajian ini mengelakkan

pandangan yang terlalu normatif tentang kerjasama (sebagai ideal konsosiasional) ataupun terlalu negatif (sebagai semata-mata perhitungan kuasa). Sebaliknya, ia membolehkan penilaian realistik terhadap sejauh mana kerjasama ini mampu bertahan dalam menghadapi tekanan pilihan raya dan tuntutan akar umbi.

TINJAUAN LITERATUR

Literatur mengenai politik Malaysia pasca-PRU14 dan PRU15 memperlihatkan minat yang mendalam terhadap fenomena penjajaran semula politik, kejatuhan gabungan pemerintah, serta bentuk-bentuk baru permuafakatan antara parti politik. Dalam konteks ini, penulisan akademik yang mengkaji hubungan antara Pakatan Harapan (PH) dan Barisan Nasional (BN) selepas PRU15 masih relatif baharu, dan kajian ini bertujuan mengisi jurang tersebut dengan memberi tumpuan khusus kepada dinamika kerjasama dalam PRN dan PRK.

Sejak awal kemerdekaan, sistem politik Malaysia telah dibentuk berdasarkan kerjasama antara parti-parti politik yang mewakili pelbagai kumpulan etnik. Model awal ini diwujudkan menerusi pembentukan Parti Perikatan yang melibatkan kerjasama antara UMNO, MCA dan MIC. Permuafakatan ini berasaskan prinsip konsensus etnik, dan menjadi asas kepada kestabilan politik sehingga ke era 1969 (Von Vorys, 1975; Milne & Mauzy, 1999). Selepas rusuhan 13 Mei, permuafakatan ini diperluas menjadi Barisan Nasional (BN), dengan kemasukan parti-parti dari Sabah dan Sarawak serta parti pembangkang utama ketika itu seperti Gerakan dan PAS.

Model permuafakatan ini sering dikaitkan dengan teori demokrasi konsosiasionalisme (Lijphart, 1977) yang menekankan perkongsian kuasa dalam masyarakat berpecah. BN menjadi satu bentuk ‘pakatan elit politik’ yang mewakili kepelbagaian etnik di Malaysia, walaupun dalam amalannya UMNO memainkan peranan yang dominan (Case, 1995). Bagaimanapun, sejak awal 2000-an, cabaran terhadap dominasi BN semakin ketara, khususnya dengan kemunculan gabungan alternatif seperti Barisan Alternatif (1999), Pakatan Rakyat (2008) dan kemudiannya Pakatan Harapan (2015). Penurunan sokongan terhadap BN memuncak dalam PRU14 apabila gabungan tersebut tewas buat kali pertama dalam sejarah kepada PH. Kejatuhan BN mencetuskan perubahan mendalam dalam corak permuafakatan politik Malaysia. Mulai saat itu, politik Malaysia menjadi lebih cair, dengan penjajaran dan keruntuhan gabungan berlaku dalam kadar yang pantas (Welsh, 2020).

Beberapa kajian penting telah membincangkan dinamika politik penjajaran semula pasca-PRU14. Chin (2021) dan Weiss (2020) menggariskan bagaimana ketidakstabilan dalam gabungan PH, terutamanya perbezaan antara komponen utama seperti DAP, PKR dan Bersatu, menyumbang kepada kejatuhan kerajaan PH melalui episod Langkah Sheraton pada awal 2020. Langkah ini menyaksikan tertubuhnya kerajaan baharu pimpinan Perikatan Nasional (PN) yang disokong oleh UMNO, PAS dan Bersatu.

Kajian-kajian seperti Liow dan Yong (2020) serta Ufen (2022) menekankan bahawa kejatuhan PH bukan sahaja disebabkan oleh konflik dalaman, tetapi juga oleh faktor struktur

seperti kerapuhan institusi parti, ketiadaan budaya perkongsian kuasa yang mendalam dalam kalangan elit politik baharu, dan kegagalan untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan landskap politik pasca-etnosentrik.

Pengalaman PH sebagai kerajaan selama 22 bulan telah memperlihatkan had keupayaan sebuah gabungan yang longgar untuk mengekalkan kuasa dalam sistem politik yang kompleks. Kejatuhan ini telah mencetuskan persoalan tentang masa depan politik gabungan di Malaysia dan membuka jalan kepada pendekatan lebih pragmatik dalam membentuk kerajaan iaitu satu tema penting dalam kerjasama PH-BN selepas PRU15.

PRU15 menjadi titik perubahan yang sangat bermakna dan unik dalam politik Malaysia. Tiada satu gabungan yang berjaya memperoleh majoriti mudah, sekali gus memaksa parti-parti politik untuk membentuk satu bentuk kerjasama baharu demi mengelakkan ketidaktentuan politik yang berpanjangan. Kajian oleh Welsh (2023) dan Gomez dan Lee (2023) menegaskan bahawa pembentukan kerajaan perpaduan pasca-PRU15 bukan semata-mata satu kompromi politik, tetapi merupakan satu keperluan sistemik untuk mengelakkan kegagalan fungsi negara.

Kerjasama antara PH dan BN yang dahulu merupakan musuh ketat dilihat sebagai tidak terjangka, namun bukan tanpa duluan (*precedence*) dalam sejarah politik Malaysia yang pragmatik. Case (2023) berpendapat bahawa kerajaan perpaduan ini mencerminkan satu bentuk rundingan elit (*elite bargain*) baharu yang lebih bersifat taktikal berbanding ideologikal, walaupun pada masa yang sama mencetuskan cabaran legitimasi dalam kalangan penyokong akar umbi.

Walaupun terdapat beberapa penulisan awal mengenai pembentukan kerajaan perpaduan, terdapat jurang ketara dalam kajian yang mengupas bagaimana kerjasama ini dilaksanakan dan diuji dalam pilihan raya seterusnya — khususnya PRN dan PRK. Maka, bertitik tolak daripada itu, kajian ini memfokuskan perkara tersebut. Hal ini penting kerana kajian sedia ada banyak memberi tumpuan kepada keruntuhan PH dan pembentukan kerajaan perpaduan, tetapi kurang meneliti mekanisme pelaksanaan kerjasama PH-BN di peringkat negeri dan akar umbi. Selain itu, walaupun kerangka teori seperti konsosiasionalisme dan realisme politik telah digunakan untuk menjelaskan perubahan politik besar, penggunaannya dalam konteks PRN dan PRK masih terbatas. Kajian ini akan cuba menjawab persoalan tersebut dengan memberi fokus kepada pelaksanaan kerjasama PH-BN dalam PRN 2023 (Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Pulau Pinang, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu) serta PRK selepas PRU15. Fokus akan diberikan kepada bentuk agihan kerusi, kempen bersama, reaksi akar umbi, dan keputusan pilihan raya sebagai ukuran keberkesanan kerjasama.

PILIHAN RAYA NEGERI 2023 (PRN 2023)

Pilihan Raya Negeri telah diadakan di enam negeri iaitu Selangor, Pulau Pinang, Negeri Sembilan, Kelantan, Terengganu dan Kedah. Enam negeri ini merupakan negeri yang ditadbir oleh Pakatan Harapan dan Perikatan Nasional sebelum PRN 2023. Apabila Perdana Menteri kesembilan, Ismail Sabri memohon pembubaran Parlimen kepada Yang diPertuan Agong pada

Oktober 2022, kerajaan di enam negeri ini memutuskan untuk tidak untuk tidak membubarkan Dewan Undangan Negeri (DUN) masing-masing bagi membolehkan pilihan raya diadakan serentak bersama Parlimen (Berita Harian, 14 Oktober 2022). Pasca PRU15, keenam-enam ketua kerajaan di enam negeri mulai merundingkan untuk menetapkan tarikh bersama untuk membubarkan DUN masing-masing (Sinar Harian, 14 Mei 2023). Hal ini akhirnya membolehkan pilihan raya negeri bagi keenam-enam DUN ini diadakan pada 12 Ogos 2023.

Bagi menghadapi pilihan raya ini, PH dan BN telah memuktamadkan bahawa tidak mahu mewujudkan pertembungan antara kedua-dua gabungan tersebut (Astro Awani, 5 Mei 2023). Keadaan ini telah menyebabkan rundingan kerusi telah diadakan. Kajian ke atas pembahagian kerusi di enam negeri tersebut untuk memahami siapa yang memiliki lebih keuntungan dalam permuafakatan politik PH-BN selepas PRU 2022.

Jadual 1 Perbandingan kerusi dimenangi oleh parti-parti PH-BN pada PRU 2018 dan kerusi ditandingi pada PRN 2023 di Selangor

Parti	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU 2018	Jumlah kerusi yang ditandingi dalam PRN 2023	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRN 2023
PKR	21	20	12
DAP	16	15	15
AMANAH	8	9	5
UMNO	4	12	2
MCA	0	0	0
MIC	0	0	0
JUMLAH	49	56	34

Sumber: Malaysikini (undi.info)

Jadual 1 menunjukkan jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi oleh parti-parti dalam PH-BN dalam PRU14, diikuti agihan kerusi dalam PRN 2023 serta keputusannya di Selangor. Berdasarkan jumlah di atas, PKR yang memiliki jumlah kerusi tertinggi dalam PRU14 dan mengurangkan satu kerusi yang dimenanginya untuk ditandingi dalam PRN tersebut untuk ditandingi UMNO.[1] DAP juga mengurangkan jumlah kerusi kepada 15 kerusi berbanding 16 kerusi ditandingi dalam PRU14 bagi memberi laluan satu kerusi ditandingi oleh UMNO di Dusun Tua. Sebagai imbalan balik kepada pengorbanan DAP ini, parti itu memohon jawatan Speaker DUN apabila kerajaan dibentuk diberikan kepada calon DAP bukan dalam kalangan ahli DUN (Malaysiakini, 24 Julai 2023). AMANAH pula memperoleh pertambahan satu kerusi diberikan oleh UMNO di Hulu Bernam. UMNO pula bertanding di tiga kawasan yang

[1] PKR melepaskan kerusi Gombak Setia untuk ditandingi oleh UMNO. PKR juga membuat pertukaran kerusi dengan AMANAH. Kerusi AMANAH di Hulu Klang diberikan kepada PKR bagi parti itu mencabar bekas Menteri Besar Selangor, Azmin Ali. Manakala, AMANAH diberikan kerusi PKR di Batu Tiga.

dimenangi dalam PRU 2018[2] dan tujuh kerusi yang dimenangi oleh PPBM sebelumnya[3] di samping dua kerusi yang diambil dari PH, Gombak Setia dan Dusun Tua dan satu kerusi yang dimenangi PAS dalam PRU 2018, Sijangkang. Formula kerjasama PH-BN di Selangor tidak memberikan sebarang ruang kepada parti komponen BN iaitu MCA dan MIC yang tidak memiliki kerusi untuk ditandingi. Perkiraan '*incumbent will stay'* memberikan manafaat yang banyak kepada parti komponen PH yang sudah memiliki banyak kerusi. Namun begitu, sokongan kepada gabungan PH-BN di Selangor masih gagal mewujudkan sokongan dua pertiga di DUN Selangor. Pencapaian PKR, AMANAH dan UMNO kian merosot terutamanya di kawasan pengundi Melayu manakala DAP berjaya menyapu bersih semua kerusi yang ditandingi. Sebahagian kemenangan dalam PRN ini oleh parti komponen PH & UMNO dimenangi dengan majoriti yang tipis (bawah 1000) undi seperti di Sungai Air Tawar (846 undi) dan Taman Templer (467 undi).

Jadual 2 Perbandingan kerusi dimenangi oleh parti-parti PH-BN pada PRU 2018 dan kerusi ditandingi pada PRN 2023 di Pulau Pinang

Parti	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU 2018	Jumlah kerusi yang ditandingi dalam PRN 2023	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRN 2023
PKR	14	13	7
DAP	19	19	19
AMANAH	2	2	1
UMNO	2	6	2
MCA	0	0	0
MIC	0	0	0
JUMLAH	37	40	29

Sumber: Malaysikini (undi.info)

Jadual 2 menerangkan jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi oleh parti-parti dalam PH-BN dalam PRU14, diikuti agihan kerusi dalam PRN 2023 serta keputusannya di Pulau Pinang. PKR bertanding di 13 kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU14 dengan pengurangan satu kerusi di Sungai Acheh yang diserahkan kepada UMNO. DAP pula mengekalkan hegomoni di Pulau Pinang dengan bertanding di semua kerusi di Pulau Pinang. Perkara yang sama dilakukan oleh AMANAH bertanding di dua kerusi yang dimenangi sebelumnya. UMNO yang hanya memperoleh dua kerusi dalam PRU14[4], menambah dua kerusi yang pernah dimenangi PPBM[5] di samping satu kerusi diberikan oleh PKR (Sungai Acheh) dan satu kerusi yang dimenangi PAS dalam PRU 2018 (Penaga). Seperti di Selangor, DAP mengekalkan sokongannya dengan

[2] Kerusi tersebut ialah Sungai Air Tawar, Sungai Burong dan Sungai Panjang
[3] Kerusi itu merujuk kepada Batang Kali, Jeram, Kuang, Semenyih, Selat Kelang dan Dengkil
[4] Dua kerusi tersebut merujuk peada Sungai Dua dan Permatang Berangan.
[5] Dua kerusi tersebut merujuk kepada Bertam dan Teluk Bahang.

tidak hilang satu kerusi pun setelah keputusan diumumkan. PKR menyusut di kebanyakan kerusi ditandingi calon Melayu apabila hanya dua calon Melayu PKR sahaja yang menang dalam PRN 2023 di negeri ini.[6] AMANAH juga turut menerima tempias perubahan politik Melayu apabila hanya menang satu kerusi di Bayan Lepas.[7] UMNO hanya memperoleh dua kerusi di Bertam dan Sungai Acheh. Seperti di Selangor, Pulau Pinang turut menyaksikan penyusutan sokongan pengundi Melayu terhadap PH di samping DAP terus mengekalkan sokongan yang padu. Namun, di Pulau Pinang, kerjasama PH dan BN masih mengungguli sokongan dua pertiga majoriti di DUN tersebut.

Jadual 3 Perbandingan kerusi dimenangi oleh parti-parti PH-BN pada PRU 2018 dan kerusi ditandingi pada PRN 2023 di Negeri Sembilan

Parti	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU 2018	Jumlah kerusi yang ditandingi dalam PRN 2023	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRN 2023
PKR	6	6	5
DAP	11	11	11
AMANAH	3	2	1
UMNO	15	17	14
MCA	0	0	0
MIC	1	0	0
JUMLAH	36	36	31

Sumber: Malaysikini (undi.info)

Jadual 3 menggambarkan jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi oleh parti-parti dalam PH-BN dalam PRU14, diikuti agihan kerusi dalam PRN 2023 serta keputusannya di Negeri Sembilan. PKR dan DAP menyertai PRN 2023 di Negeri Sembilan dengan mengekalkan jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU14. AMANAH pula dilihat menyerahkan satu kerusi kepada UMNO di Lenggeng. UMNO pula memperoleh pertambahan dua kerusi dari Lenggeng dan Jeram Padang, yang sebelumya dimenangi oleh MIC. Keadaan ini menjadikan UMNO mmepunyai kerusi terbanyak dalam permuafakatan ini. Secara tidak langsung kerjasama PH-BN telah menafikan kerusi terakhir MIC di negeri tersebut di samping MCA yang dilihat tidak mempunyai apa-apa keuntungan. Keputusan PRN 2023 menunjukkan politik di negeri tersebut masih memberikan keuntungan kepada PH-BN apabila PN hanya berjaya memenangi lima kerusi sahaja. Sokongan politik Melayu kepada PN yang bertiup dari koridor utara tidak membadai negeri beradat pepatih ini. Hal ini berbeza dengan perubahan sokongan pengundi

[6] Dua kawasan itu ialah Batu Maung dan Pulau Jerjak yang memiliki lebih 40% pengundi bukan Melayu.
[7] Bayan Lepas mempunyai 35.9% pengundi bukan Melayu. AMANAH tewas di Permatang Pasir yang dimenangi dalam PRU 2018.

Melayu kepada PN yang kuat di Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Pahang dan Selangor di samping tidak koridor kuasa yang dimiliki oleh PN (terutamanya di Kelantan dan Terengganu.

Jadual 4 Perbandingan kerusi dimenangi oleh parti-parti PH-BN pada PRU 2018 dan kerusi ditandingi pada PRN 2023 di Kedah

Parti	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU 2018	Jumlah kerusi yang ditandingi dalam PRN 2023	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRN 2023
PKR	8	10	2
DAP	2	2	1
AMANAH	3	9	0
UMNO	3	15	0
MCA	0	0	0
MIC	0	0	0
JUMLAH	16	36	3

Sumber: Malaysikini (undi.info)

Jadual 4 menggambarkan jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi oleh parti-parti dalam PH-BN dalam PRU14, diikuti agihan kerusi dalam PRN 2023 serta keputusannya di Kedah. Berdasarkan jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU14, PKR merupakan parti yang mempunyai kerusi yang banyak di Kedah diikuti DAP dan UMNO yang masing-masih mempunyai tiga kerusi di samping AMANAH dengan dua kerusi. Percaturan politik PH-BN meletakkan semua parti bertanding di semua kerusi yang pernah dimenangi dalam PRU 2018[8] diikuti dengan agihan yang memberi kelebihan kepada UMNO. Keputusan PRN 2023 benar-benar mencerminkan penolakan terhadap calon Melayu dari PH-BN apabila hanya tiga calon bukan Melayu PH yang menang di Kota Darul Aman (DAP), Bakar Arang (PKR) dan Sidam (PKR).

[8] PKR bertanding di tujuh kerusi dimenangi dalam PRU 2018; Suka Menanti, Gurun, Bukit Selambau, Bakar Arang, Sidam, Lunas dan Kulim. Parti ini menyerahkan satu kerusi, Kubang Rotan kepada AMANAH. Di samping itu, PKR menambah tiga kerusi baharu. DAP yang menang dalam PRU 2018 mengekalkan dua kerusi dimenangi iaitu di Derga dan Kota Darul Aman. AMANAH mengekalkan tiga kerusi dimenangi pada PRU 2018 iaitu Alor Mengkudu, Kota Siputih dan Pengkalan Kundor di samping menambah enam kerusi baharu. UMNO pula mengekalkan tiga kerusi dimenangi pada 2018 untuk ditandingi iaitu Sungai Tiang, Guar Chempedak dan Bandar Baharu di samping penambahan 12 kerusi baharu.

Jadual 5 Perbandingan kerusi dimenangi oleh parti-parti PH-BN pada PRU 2018 dan kerusi ditandingi pada PRN 2023 di Kelantan

Parti	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU 2018	Jumlah kerusi yang ditandingi dalam PRN 2023	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRN 2023
PKR	0	7	0
DAP	0	0	0
AMANAH	0	7	1
UMNO	8	31	1
MCA	0	0	0
MIC	0	0	0
JUMLAH	8	45	2

Sumber: Malaysikini (undi.info)

Jadual 5 menggambarkan jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi oleh parti-parti dalam PH-BN dalam PRU14, diikuti agihan kerusi dalam PRN 2023 serta keputusannya di Kelantan. Hanya UMNO yang memiliki lapan kerusi di Kelantan sebelum PRN 2023 diadakan.[9] UMNO mengekalkan calon di lapan kerusi ini di samping penambahan 23 kerusi untuk ditandingi. PKR dan AMANAH masing-masing diberikan jumlah kerusi yang sama iaitu tujuh kerusi. Keputusan PRN 2023 masih mencerminkan perubahan politik Melayu di Kelantan yang berpihak kepada PAS terutamanya dan PN amnya[10] dengan hanya dua kerusi dimenangi oleh PH-BN iaitu di Kota Lama (AMANAH) dan Galas (UMNO). Penguasaan dua kerusi boleh dianggap beruntung berbanding monopoli sepenuhnya ke atas kerusi Parlimen di Kelantan oleh PN dalam PRU 2022. Namun begitu, penguasaan AMANAH di Kota Lama dengan majoriti yang tipis memberikan satu titik bermakna dalam politik Malaysia apabila parti ini berjaya memenangi kerusi pertamanya di Kelantan sejak penubuhannya pada 2015. Jumlah kerusi PH-BN bertambah kepada tiga kerusi apabila UMNO melalui calonnya berjaya memenangi PRK Nenggiri pada tahun 2024.

Jadual 6 Perbandingan kerusi dimenangi oleh parti-parti PH-BN pada PRU 2018 dan kerusi ditandingi pada PRN 2023 di Terengganu

Parti	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU 2018	Jumlah kerusi yang ditandingi dalam PRN 2023	Jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRN 2023
PKR	0	3	0

[9] UMNO menang dalam PRU 2018 di Kok Lanas, Gual Ipoh, Bukit Bunga, Air Lanas, Kuala Balah, Nenggiri, Paloh dan Galas.
[10] Semua calon PN bertanding menggunakan logo PAS di Kelantan dan Terengganu.

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DAP	0	0	0
AMANAH	0	2	0
UMNO	10	27	0
MCA	0	0	0
MIC	0	0	0
JUMLAH	10	0	0

Sumber: Malaysikini (undi.info)

Jadual 6 menjelaskan jumlah kerusi yang dimenangi oleh parti-parti dalam PH-BN dalam PRU 2022, diikuti agihan kerusi dalam PRN 2023 serta keputusannya di Terengganu. UMNO memasuki gelanggang PRN 2023 dengan bekalan 10 kerusi yang dimenangi dalam PRU 2018.[11] UMNO bertanding di semua kerusi yang dimenanginya dalam PRU 2018 di samping pertambahan 17 kerusi lagi. PKR dan AMANAH masing-masing memperoleh tiga dan dua kerusi yang tiada sejarah kemenangan parti tersebut di kawasan itu. Keputusan PRN 2023 menggambarkan penguasaan penuh PN di Terengganu apabila gabungan itu menang semua kerusi sekaligus menamatkan peranan pembangkang di Terengganu. Hal ini juga satu trajektori baharu dalam politik Malaysia pasca kejatuhan BN apabila wujud satu parti mampu membolot semua kerusi DUN dalam sesebuah negeri tanpa memberi peluang kepada kewujudan pembangkang.

Melihat dengan lebih mendalam kerjasama PH-BN, beberapa perkara boleh diamati dan diperhalusi. Kerjasama PH dan BN tidak menyeragamkan penggunaan logo untuk bertanding dalam PRN ini. PH dan BN masing-masing menggunakan logo masing-masing dalam PRN ini (Malaysia Gazette, 14 Mei 2023. Kedua-dua gabungan ini telah menggerakkan jentera pilihan raya secara bersama dengan jelas mempamerkan kedua-dua logo gabungan tersebut dalam bahan edaran kempen mereka (Berita Harian, 6 Ogos 2023). Kedua-dua parti ini juga bersepakat untuk menghasilkan manifesto bersama ke arah usaha mereka untuk membina kerajaan setelah gabungan itu memenangi PRN (Astro Awani, 2 Ogos 2023). Perkara-perkara ini boleh dikategorikan sebagai usaha mereka yang dilihat sebagai satu bentuk pakatan pilihanraya sahaja bukan satu bentuk permuafakatan politik dengan satu identiti. Hal ini selaras dengan dengan kenyataan Detter (2012) yang menyatakan bahawa pakatan pilihan raya ialah bentuk kerjasama taktikal yang bersifat mengejut dan tidak melibatkan pembentukan gabungan formal. Ia sering terhad kepada persetujuan mengelakkan pertembungan kerusi, menyokong calon tertentu, atau menjalankan kempen minimum bersama, tanpa satu platform dasar yang dikongsi atau struktur institusi yang kekal.

Selain itu, kajian ini juga melihat bahawa kerjasama PH-BN itu bukanlah secara jelasnya kerjasama melibatkan parti komponen PH dan parti komponen BN. Hakikat yang perlu diakui berdasarkan jadual-jadual di atas kerjasama tersebut hanyalah melibatkan tiga parti dari PH; PKR, DAP dan AMANAH bersama UMNO sahaja. MCA dan MIC jelas kelihatan tidak diberikan ruang dalam kerjasama pilihan raya ini apabila tiada satu kerusipun diberikan

[11] Kerusi tersebut ialah Kuala Besut, Jertih, Hulu Besut, Pemaisuri, Langkap, Bukit Rakit, Seberang Takir,Telemung, Bukit Besi dan Kijal

kepada dua parti ini. Pada awalnya, Pengerusi BN, Ahmad Zahid memberikan jaminan bahawa MCA dan MIC akan diberikan kerusi untuk ditandingi dalam PRN ini (Berita Harian, 27 Jun 2023). Namun, lebih seminggu dari tarikh kenyataan Zahid ini dikeluarkan, dua parti tersebut telah menyatakan hasrat untuk tidak bertanding dalam PRN di enam negeri ini (Astro Awani, 5 Julai 2023). Jika difahami dengan konsep keputusan dahuluan (*incumbent stay*), kedua-dua parti ini memang tidak mempunyai kelebihan melainkan satu kerusi di Jeram Padang, Negeri Sembilan yang dimenangi MIC dalam PRU14.

Seterusnya, keputusan PRN 2023 juga jelas menunjukkan kemerosotan kerusi meskipun seharusnya gabungan sewajarnya memperkukuhkan kedudukan parti yang bergabung. Hal ini berlainan dengan kerjasama PH-BN yang jelas memperlihatkan UMNO semakin menonjolkan penolakan pengundi terhadap parti ini terutama di kerusi yang mempunyai pengundi Melayu. Ketiadaan kerusi dimenangi oleh UMNO di Kedah dan Terengganu di samping satu kerusi sahaja di Kelantan jelas menunjukkan parti ini kehilangan asas sokongan pengundi Melayu di negeri yang menyaksikan kepadatan pengundi Melayu yang tinggi. Kemenangan UMNO di Selangor melalui kemenangan dua kerusi sahaja. Di Sungai Air Tawar, kemenangan diperoleh melalui majoriti yang tipis (846 undi). Manakala, di Dusun Tua pula UMNO menang di kerusi pengundi Melayu marginal (57.2% pengundi Melayu) dengan kemenangan majoriti 3014 undi setelah DAP yang menang di kerusi tersebut dalam PRU14 membuat keputusan menyerahkan kerusi tersebut kepada UMNO untuk ditandingi. Dua kemenangan UMNO di Pulau Pinang juga melihatkan nasib yang serupa seperti di Selangor. Di Sungai Acheh, UMNO menang dengan majoriti 124 kerusi manakala di Bertam, UMNO menang dengan majoriti 2321 melalui calon berpengaruh, Reezal Merican yang merupakan bekas menteri dan ahli Parlimen Kepala Batas yang tewas dalam PRU15. Hanya di Negeri Sembilan, UMNO selesa dengan kemenangan 14 kerusi di samping PH yang menang 17 kerusi. Namun, UMNO tidak diberikan kerusi Menteri Besar apabila PKR yang menang enam kerusi memperolehi kelebihan jawatan Menteri Besar sebelumnya meneruskan legasi tersebut.

Secara keseluruhannya, kerjasama ini selain boleh dilihat sebagai satu permuafakatan politik, ia boleh juga dilihat sebagai satu usaha survival oleh dua gabungan politik di Malaysia. BN, melalui UMNO terutamanya, memerlukan PH untuk terus memastikan parti itu menjadi tunjang kepada kerajaan yang berkuasa di Selangor dan Pulau Pinang meskipun parti itu daripada segi kerusi yang dimiliki amat lemah. Begitu juga dengan PH, kewujudan UMNO mampu memperkukuh kekuatan pemerintahan kerajaan negeri yang ditadbir. Di Selangor, misalnya secara hipotetikal, PH hanya mampu memenangi 32 kerusi sahaja daripada 56 kerusi tanpa UMNO dan ini menjadikan majoriti yang dimiliki tipis jika tidak bekerjasama. Dalam hal yang lain, dengan ketiadaan kerjasama dengan UMNO, sebahagian kerusi PH juga mungkin akan hilang tanpa sokongan pengundi UMNO. Begitu juga dengan Pulau Pinang, dengan keberadaan dua wakil UMNO, ahli DUN Pulau Pinang Melayu menjadi kepada enam orang.[12]

[12] PH mempunyai empat ahli DUN Melayu iaitu di Pantai Jerjak (PKR), Tanjong Bungah (DAP), Bayan Lepas (AMANAH) dan Batu Maung (PKR). Dengan keberadaan dua ahli DUN UMNO dari UMNO di Bertam dan Sungai Acheh, PH-BN mempunyai enam ahli DUN Melayu.

Dengan keberadaan enam ahli DUN Melayu ini akan memperlihatkan kerajaan PH-BN mempunyai perwakilan suara Melayu.

PILIHAN RAYA KECIL (PRK) SELEPAS PRU15

Selepas PRU15, Malaysia menyaksikan 12 siri PRK yang berlaku dan 11 PRK tersebut berlaku di Semanjung. Dalam 11 pilihan raya yang berlaku di Semenanjung, parti komponen PH-BN berjaya memenangi 11 kerusi PRK.

Jadual 7 Senarai Pilihan Raya Kecil Selepas PRU 2022 di Semenanjung

Kawasan	Tarikh	Keputusan PRU 2022/ PRN 2023	Parti Bertanding (PH-BN)	Keputusan
DUN Tioman, Pahang	7 Disember 2022	UMNO	UMNO	Menang
Parlimen Kuala Terengganu, Terengganu	12 Ogos 2023	PAS	PKR	Kalah
DUN Simpang Jeram, Johor	9 September 2023	AMANAH	AMANAH	Menang
Parlimen Pulai, Johor	9 September 2023	AMANAH	AMANAH	Menang
DUN Pelangai, Johor	7 Oktober 2023	UMNO	UMNO	Menang
Parlimen Kemaman, Terengganu	2 Disember 2023	PAS	UMNO	Kalah
DUN Kuala Kubu Baharu, Selangor	11 Mei 2024	DAP	DAP	Menang
DUN Sungai Bakap, Pulau Pinang	6 Julai 2024	PAS	PKR	Kalah
DUN Nenggiri, Kelantan	17 Ogos 2024	PPBM	UMNO	Menang
DUN Mahkota, Johor	28 September 2024	UMNO	UMNO	Menang
DUN Ayer Kuning, Perak	26 April 2025	UMNO	UMNO	Menang

Sumber: Portal SPR

Jadual 7 memperlihatkan berkenaan 11 pilihan raya kecil yang berlangsung di Semenanjung selepas PRU14. Daripada 11 pilihan raya tersebut, lapan PRK disebabkan oleh kematian penyandangnya kecuali kerusi Parlimen Kuala Terengganu, Parlimen Kemaman dan DUN Nenggiri. PRK Kuala Terengganu diadakan berikutan keputusan Mahkamah Pilihan Raya Terengganu membatalkan kemenangan Ahmad Amzad (PAS) setelah mendapati wujud unsur rasuah ketika tempoh kempen PRU15 (Malaysia Gazette, 12 Ogos 2023). PRK Kemaman pula diadakan apabila Mahkamah Tinggi Kuala Terengganu mendapati terdapat semasa tempoh berkempen PRU15 untuk meraih undi kepada calon PAS (Harian Metro, 26 September 2023). PRK DUN Nenggiri pula diadakan apabila kekosongan kerusi yang diumumkan Speaker DUN Kelantan selepas bekas penyandangnya Mohd Azizi Abu Naim (BERSATU) digugurkan keahlian oleh BERSATU.

Kajian ini melihat kerjasama PH-BN mengekalkan status quo bagi menentukan parti yang bertanding dalam PRK tersebut. Tujuh kerusi ditandingi oleh parti dalam kerjasama PH-BN yang memenangi pilihan raya tersebut sebelumnya. Kerusi tersebut ialah DUN Tioman, DUN Simpang Renggam, Parlimen Pulai, DUN Pelangai, DUN Kuala Kubu Baharu, DUN Mahkota dan DUN Ayer Kuning. Bagi kerusi Parlimen Terengganu, PH telah menukar parti yang bertanding di kawasan itu.[13] Bagi PRK Kemaman pula, UMNO meletakkan calonnya memandangkan parti ini mempunyai jumlah undi kedua tertinggi dalam PRU 2022.[14] Bagi DUN Sungai Bakap pula, permuafakatan ini memilih untuk meletakkan parti yang mereka calonkan dalam PRN 2023, PKR.[15] PRK DUN Nenggiri pula meletakkan calon dari UMNO berdasarkan rekod PRN 2023 yang menyaksikan calon UMNO bertanding di situ.

Untuk kesemua 11 PRK ini, kerjasama PH-BN jelas menunjukkan sejarah lepas dengan melihat parti yang menang akan bertanding di kawasan tersebut. Jika itu bukan keadaanya, parti yang memiliki kerusi kedua terbanyak dalam PRN atau PRU lepas akan diletakkan bertanding di kawasan tersebut. Namun begitu, keputusan menunjukkan status quo dikekalkan apabila tiada perubahan di 10 kerusi PRK ditandingi melainkan di DUN Neggiri yang menyaksikan peralihan kerusi dari BERSATU kepada UMNO.

PERBINCANGAN

Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa bentuk kerjasama antara PH-BN selepas PRU15 tidak sepenuhnya menggambarkan permuafakatan politik dalam bentuk konsosiasionalisme acuan Lijphart (1969, 1977). Walaupun terdapat elemen pakatan besar melalui pembentukan kerajaan perpaduan, pelaksanaan kerjasama dalam konteks pilihan raya negeri dan kecil lebih bersifat taktikal dan *ad hoc.* Empat ciri utama konsosiasionalisme — iaitu gabungan besar, perwakilan berkadar, veto minoriti, dan autonomi segmen — tidak diaplikasikan secara menyeluruh dalam kerjasama ini. Contohnya, keputusan untuk tidak menggunakan satu logo bersama dan kegagalan untuk melibatkan semua parti komponen BN seperti MCA dan MIC menunjukkan kekurangan dari segi struktur institusi dan mekanisme kuasa bersama yang mapan.

Di sebalik itu, teori realisme politik memberikan kerangka yang lebih sesuai untuk memahami keperluan utama kerjasama ini. Morgenthau (1948) menegaskan bahawa tindakan politik sering terjadi disebabkan oleh keperluan untuk mengekalkan kuasa dan mengelakkan kehilangan pengaruh. Dalam konteks ini, PH dan BN berhadapan dengan satu realiti politik yang menyaksikan tiada gabungan mempunyai majoriti mudah selepas PRU15. Oleh yang demikian, pembentukan pakatan adalah satu bentuk keperluan survival politik. Kerjasama ini

[13] Dalam PRU15, AMANAH meletakkan calon di Kuala Terengganu. Namun, dalam PRK Kuala Terengganu, calon daripada PKR diletakkan bagi kerusi tersebut.
[14] Dalam PRU 2022, calon PAS menang dengan undi 65,774 undi diikuti oleh calon BN (38, 535 undi) dan calon PH (8,340 undi)
[15] PKR mempunyai rekod kejayaan dalam PRU 2018 menjadikan parti itu dipilih dalam PRN 2023. Namun begitu, PKR masih tewas dalam PRK ini.

menjadi satu bentuk kompromi yang mengutamakan kelangsungan kuasa di peringkat persekutuan dan negeri, meskipun terpaksa mengorbankan prinsip ideologi serta identiti politik yang berbeza.

Namun, pendekatan realisme politik juga dapat menjelaskan mengapa kerjasama ini gagal diterjemahkan secara konsisten di peringkat akar umbi. Beberapa keputusan dalam PRN 2023, terutamanya di Kedah, Kelantan dan Terengganu, menunjukkan bahawa pengundi Melayu tidak menerima gabungan ini sebagai satu entiti politik yang mewakili mereka. Penolakan ini juga membayangkan wujudnya jurang antara kompromi elit dan penerimaan akar umbi, yang merupakan satu cabaran besar dalam membina permuafakatan politik yang berakar. Liow dan Yong (2020) menyatakan bahawa tanpa legitimasi akar umbi, kerjasama elit sukar untuk bertahan dalam jangka panjang dan berisiko mencetuskan fragmentasi dalaman.

Selanjutnya, dapatan menunjukkan bahawa agihan kerusi dalam PRN tidak berlaku secara seimbang. DAP, misalnya, mengekalkan semua kerusinya dan menunjukkan prestasi konsisten, manakala UMNO mengalami kemerosotan besar, walaupun diberikan lebih banyak kerusi untuk ditandingi. Ini menimbulkan persoalan sama ada PH menggunakan kerjasama ini sebagai strategi untuk memperkukuh dominasi parti dominan seperti DAP dan PKR, dengan meletakkan UMNO sebagai rakan kerjasama yang melemah dan digunakan untuk menampung kelemahan pengaruh PH dalam kalangan pengundi Melayu. Dari sudut ini, kerjasama PH-BN boleh dilihat sebagai pakatan taktikal bersifat asimetrik — sepertimana diperincikan oleh Bogaards (2019) dalam kajiannya terhadap pakatan rentas parti yang bersifat tidak seimbang.

Dalam konteks ini, analisis terhadap PRK juga memberikan gambaran bahawa PH-BN cenderung mengekalkan status quo berdasarkan sejarah kemenangan kerusi. Strategi ini mungkin dilihat stabil dalam jangka pendek, tetapi tidak membantu dalam membina satu identiti politik bersama. Detter (2012) menyatakan bahawa bentuk pakatan sebegini hanya memberi kesan minimum terhadap pembentukan budaya gabungan politik yang berkekalan kerana ia tidak mengambil kira visi jangka panjang, struktur institusi, atau identiti bersama.

Walau bagaimanapun, tidak boleh dinafikan bahawa kerjasama PH-BN telah menghasilkan kestabilan politik di peringkat persekutuan dan di negeri-negeri utama seperti Negeri Sembilan, Pulau Pinang dan Selangor. Dalam konteks politik pasca-etnik yang semakin rencam, kemampuan untuk mengekalkan kerajaan yang stabil dengan kerjasama rentas ideologi merupakan satu pencapaian yang penting. Hal ini menunjukkan wujudnya satu bentuk adaptasi strategik terhadap landskap politik baharu Malaysia yang lebih terbuka, tidak menentu dan kurang terikat kepada paksi etnik seperti era BN dahulu.

Akhirnya, kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa kerjasama PH-BN pasca-PRU15 lebih wajar dilihat sebagai satu bentuk kerjasama dilaksanakan oleh elit politik dalam jangka pendek dan merupakan satu eksperimen politik Malaysia yang unik. Ia mencerminkan usaha parti-parti utama untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan realiti politik pasca dominasi seperti diamalkan oleh UMNO dalam BN, namun masih belum mencapai satu bentuk konsosiasionalisme penuh yang yang dicadangkan oleh Lijphart (1977). Masa depan kerjasama ini bergantung kepada keupayaannya untuk membina sokongan akar umbi, membentuk identiti bersama, dan

menangani cabaran ketidakseimbangan kuasa serta ketidakpuasan dalaman dalam kalangan parti komponen.

RUJUKAN

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Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA): A Study On The Transformation Of Its Mandates

(Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA): Penelitian Terhadap Transformasi Amanah-Amanah)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the mandates entrusted to the Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) within Malaysia's development plans. As an agency established to accelerate economic development, particularly among the Bumiputera community, MARA has been given key responsibilities to help achieve the nation's development goals. This study examines the transformation of these entrusted mandates in alignment with the current national development objectives. The research adopts a qualitative approach by analyzing official Malaysian development plan documents. The findings of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive overview of the responsibilities assigned to MARA in achieving national development goals. The results are also hoped to offer recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of MARA's programs in empowering the Bumiputera community's economic and social well-being in the future.

Keywords: Inequality, policy, Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis amanah-amanah yang telah dipertanggungjawabkan kepada Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) dalam rancangan-rancangan pembangunan Malaysia. Sebagai sebuah agensi yang ditubuhkan untuk mempercepatkan proses pembangunan ekonomi khususnya dalam kalangan masyarakat Bumiputera, MARA telah diberikan amanah-amanah penting untuk membantu mencapai matlamat pembangunan negara. Kajian ini meneliti mengenai transformasi amanah-amanah yang telah diberikan yang bersesuaian dengan matlamat semasa pembangunan negara. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan menganalisis dokumen rasmi rancangan-rancangan Malaysia. Dapatan kajian ini dijangka memberikan gambaran menyeluruh tentang amanah-amanah yang telah diberikan kepada MARA dalam mencapai matlamat pembangunan negara. Hasil daripada kajian ini juga diharap dapat memberi saranan untuk meningkatkan keberkesanan program-program MARA dalam memperkasa ekonomi dan sosial masyarakat Bumiputera di masa hadapan.

Kata Kunci : ketidaksamarataan, polisi, Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA)

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PENGENALAN

MARA ini dihasilkan daripada Revolusi Kongres Ekonomi, sebuah agensi khusus yang ditubuhkan khusus untuk membantu untuk meningkatan kedudukan sosio ekonomi orang Melayu Bumiputera. Kolonialisasi telah membawa impak yang besar kepada orang Melayu Melayu Bumiputera, di mana dipinggirkan dari arus pembangunan ekonomi moden oleh penjajah Inggeris dan ini menjadikan orang Melayu dalam kemiskinan dan berlakunya ketidaksamarataan dalam masyarakat Malaysia. Sehingga kini, isu kemiskinan, kepinggiran, ketinggalan masih menjadi antara isu-isu utama yang sering dibahaskan yang melibatkan orang Melayu Bumiputera.

KONSEP KETAKSAMARATAAN

Ketidaksamarataan telah menjadi satu isu struktur dalam kebanyakan masyarakat moden, terutamanya dalam konteks pembangunan ekonomi yang didorong oleh sistem kapitalisme global. Dalam sosiologi pembangunan, ketidaksamarataan merujuk kepada keadaan di mana individu atau kelompok mempunyai akses yang berbeza terhadap sumber daya ekonomi, pendidikan, kesihatan, dan peluang sosial. Ia bukan sahaja berkisar kepada aspek pendapatan semata-mata, tetapi merangkumi pelbagai dimensi seperti status sosial, kuasa politik, dan akses kepada kemajuan teknologi.

Pandangan sarjana melihat ketidaksamarataan dalam teori pembangunan boleh dilihat kepada pandangan Amartya Sen (1999). Sen menegaskan bahawa ketidaksamarataan tidak wajar diukur hanya dari segi pengagihan pendapatan, tetapi harus dilihat sebagai kekangan terhadap kebebasan individu untuk membuat pilihan dalam hidup mereka. Dalam pandangan ini, pembangunan ialah pengembangan kebebasan asas manusia, dan ketidaksamarataan dilihat sebagai penghalang utama terhadap proses ini.

Goesling dan Baker (2008) memperkenalkan pendekatan multidimensional dalam memahami ketidaksamarataan, dengan mengambil kira faktor-faktor seperti kesihatan, pendidikan, dan mobiliti sosial. Mereka berhujah bahawa ketidaksamarataan dalam satu dimensi akan memberi kesan langsung kepada dimensi lain, mencetuskan kitaran ketidaksamarataan yang berterusan.

Stiglitz (2012) pula menyoroti kegagalan kuasa pasaran sebagai faktor utama ketidaksamarataan. Dalam sistem kapitalisme moden, pasaran sering gagal menyediakan peluang pekerjaan yang adil dan efisien, menyebabkan pembaziran sumber, pengangguran, dan jurang sosial yang melebar.

Pandangan sarjana melihat ketidaksamarataan dalam dimensi politik pula boleh dilihat kepada pandangan Piketty (2014) dalam *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* yang mengemukakan hujah bahawa ketidaksamarataan didorong oleh dua kuasa bertentangan: *forces of convergence* dan *forces of divergence*. Yang pertama merujuk kepada usaha untuk mengurangkan jurang melalui pendidikan dan dasar pengagihan semula, manakala yang kedua berkaitan dengan pengumpulan kekayaan oleh golongan elit yang menggunakan pengaruh politik untuk mengekalkan status quo. Ketidaksamarataan, menurut beliau, adalah hasil gabungan antara mekanisme ekonomi dan pengaruh politik.

Giddens & Sutton (2013) pula menjelaskan bahawa ketidaksamarataan boleh dibahagikan kepada ketidaksamarataan sosial dan ekonomi. Ketidaksamarataan sosial berkait rapat dengan struktur kelas dan status dalam masyarakat, manakala ketidaksamarataan ekonomi menumpukan kepada agihan kekayaan dan pendapatan yang tidak seimbang.

Ketidaksamarataan juga boleh dilihat dari dimensi-dimensi berikut pertamanya ketidaksamarataan peluang, ketidaksamarataan pendapatan dan ketidaksamarataan pendapatan. Pertamanya ketidaksamarataan peluang merujuk kepada perbezaan dalam akses terhadap perkhidmatan asas seperti kesihatan dan pendidikan. Golongan miskin seringkali tidak dapat mengakses perkhidmatan ini dengan mudah, sekaligus menyukarkan mereka untuk meningkatkan taraf hidup.

Keduanya dari dimensi ketidaksamarataan pendapatan pula mengikut pandangan Todaro & Smith (2015) yang menyatakan bahawa ketidaksamarataan pendapatan yang melampau menyebabkan ketidakstabilan ekonomi dan sosial. Ia memberi kelebihan kepada golongan kaya untuk menguasai kuasa politik dan ekonomi, dan melemahkan solidariti sosial. Dimensi ketiga pula melihat dari sudut ketidaksamarataan institusi dan organisasi. Institusi sosial dan ekonomi memainkan peranan penting dalam menentukan struktur ganjaran dan peluang. Organisasi menentukan siapa yang memperoleh gaji tinggi, kenaikan pangkat, dan akses terhadap peluang pekerjaan yang berkualiti. Ketidaksamarataan institusi ini akhirnya menyumbang kepada pembentukan kelas sosial yang berbeza secara struktural.

Ketidaksamarataan yang tidak ditangani dengan berkesan boleh menjejaskan keupayaan masyarakat untuk berkembang secara lestari. Ia melemahkan kohesi sosial, meningkatkan risiko konflik, dan mengurangkan kecekapan ekonomi (Dahl 1975). McMichael (2004) turut mengaitkan ketidaksamarataan sebagai salah satu cabaran utama dalam pembangunan moden, bersama isu pembangunan tidak sekata dan ketidaktentuan ekologi. Ketidaksamarataan merupakan cabaran multidimensi yang memerlukan perhatian serius dalam setiap aspek dasar pembangunan. Ia tidak boleh dilihat hanya sebagai masalah ekonomi, tetapi perlu ditangani melalui pendekatan holistik yang merangkumi pendidikan, kesihatan, keadilan sosial dan reformasi institusi. Pemahaman terhadap teori-teori sosiologi dan ekonomi memberi panduan yang penting untuk merangka strategi yang lebih saksama dan mampan dalam menstruktur semula masyarakat yang lebih adil.

MALAYSIA DAN KETIDAKSAMARATAAN : DASAR AWAM SEBAGAI SOLUSI

Dasar ekonomi yang diperkenalkan oleh penjajah Inggeris di Tanah Melayu telah memberi impak yang besar terhadap kemunduran ekonomi orang Melayu. Sistem ekonomi pasaran bebas yang diamalkan oleh penjajah Inggeris, bersama dengan penggunaan sistem upah murah dan import buruh asing dari China dan India, telah memberi keuntungan yang besar kepada pihak penjajah. Namun, dasar ini juga membawa kepada kepinggiran, kemiskinan, dan ketidaksamarataan yang jelas antara orang Melayu dan etnik-etnik lain.

Penjajahan ini menempatkan orang Melayu dalam kedudukan yang lemah dalam ekonomi, kerana mereka kebanyakannya terlibat dalam sektor pertanian tradisional dan terpinggir daripada sektor perladangan serta perlombongan yang didominasi oleh migran Cina dan India. Pemisahan ekonomi ini menyumbang kepada kesenjangan sosial yang ketara, di mana orang Melayu menjadi miskin dan terpinggir dalam sistem ekonomi yang didominasi oleh kaum asing.

Polisi ekonomi pasaran bebas yang dipraktiskan oleh penjajah British telah memberikan impak yang besar kepada orang Melayu. Menurut Shamsul (1997), era kolonial telah memperlihatkan bahawa penjajah telah menjadikan di mana "*...was arrested and indigenous economy development marginalized by colonial subjugation and immigrant encroachment*", telah menyumbang kepada kemunduran ekonomi di kalangan orang Melayu. Menurut Roff (2003) impak penjajahan Inggeris dalam bidang ekonomi telah meminggirkan orang Melayu dan menjadikan taraf sosio ekonomi dan kehidupan yang jauh ke belakang berbanding dengan orang Cina dan India. Orang Melayu yang ditinggalkan dalam arus ekonomi moden yang berpusatkan kepada kuasa pasaran bebas telah meminggirkan orang Melayu yang telah terperangkap dan diperangkap dalam kedaifan.

Penjajah British telah memperoleh tenaga buruh murah yang tidak terbatas jumlahnya daripada China dan India bagi menjalankan projek pembangunan kolonial, terutamanya dalam perlombongan bijih timah dan pembukaan ladang pertanian. Buruh asing ini memainkan peranan penting dalam menggerakkan ekonomi penjajah British, yang bertujuan untuk mengaut kekayaan melalui sumber-sumber alam yang ada di Tanah Melayu.

Namun, penjajah British tidak memberikan peluang kepada orang Melayu untuk terlibat dalam sektor perlombongan dan pertanian komersial yang berkembang pesat pada masa itu. Hal ini menyebabkan orang Melayu terus kekal dalam sektor pertanian tradisional, yang lebih berfokus kepada pertanian sara diri. Kesan ketidakseimbangan sosial ini jelas terlihat, di mana orang Melayu semakin terpinggir daripada sektor-sektor utama ekonomi yang menguntungkan.

Pembangunan ekonomi di bawah pemerintahan British telah menghasilkan sistem dualisme ekonomi, di mana terdapat pemisahan jelas antara sektor ekonomi moden yang dikuasai oleh kaum Cina dan India (terutama dalam perlombongan bijih timah dan ladang-ladang besar), dan sektor ekonomi tradisional yang didominasi oleh orang Melayu. Dualisme ekonomi ini telah memberikan impak negatif kepada orang Melayu, yang terus ketinggalan dalam pembangunan ekonomi, menjadikan mereka semakin terpinggir dalam masyarakat kolonial.

KEPINGGIRAN

Polisi penjajah British kepada bangsa tamu iaitu orang Melayu sebagai anak watan adalah berdasarkan kepada andaian ciri-ciri ras yang dicipta oleh penjajah bahawa orang Melayu tidak berkemampuan dalam bidang perdagangan dan perindustrian. Menurut Shamsul Amri Baharuddin (2005):

"British policies towards the Malays therefore were designed, at best, to guide them in

the direction of those activities considered beneficial to them and commensurate with their limited capacities, and at worst, to prevent them from any attempts at involvement in commercial and entrepreneurship opportunities involving British capital".

Oleh itu, dasar-dasar British terhadap orang Melayu direka, paling baik, untuk membimbing mereka ke arah aktiviti-aktiviti yang dianggap bermanfaat kepada mereka dan sepadan dengan keupayaan mereka yang terhad, dan paling teruk, untuk menghalang mereka daripada sebarang percubaan untuk terlibat dalam peluang komersial dan keusahawanan yang melibatkan modal British.

Surat khabar British "*The Guardian*" telah mengambarkan situasi orang Melayu dari segi ketinggalan ekonominya dengan mengatakan(Sowell, 2004):

Malays were on the sidelines in their own society, with hardly any place in economic life, little role in the media, and not much more in intellectual and academic life. So action which would normally be inadmissible, interventions in the economic, cultural and education sphere to give Malays a chance to catch up, ought to be permitted. Foreign firms and governments which blocked Malay progress could be similarly treated.

Jika diselusuri sejarah, pemerintah British telah memulakan inisiatif dengan menubuhkan perusahaan awam di Malaya sejak zaman penjajahan lagi. Selepas tertubuhnya Persekutuan Tanah Melayu (PTM) tahun 1948, British menyedari tentang keperluan untuk mewujudkan beberapa perusahaan awam untuk melicinkan proses perjalanan PTM 1948. Dalam sistem pemerintahan tradisional sebelumnya, strukturnya sudah amat berbeza dengan sistem baharu dalam PTM 1948. Dalam satu laporan yang dikemukakan, British menyatakan tentang keperluan untuk menubuhkan beberapa perusahaan awam yang khusus untuk "*undertaking of a commercial character*". Menurut Salleh & Rani (1991):

The public enterprises then were largely confined to the departmental form of enterprises which controlled the so-called natural monopoly sector or decreasing-cost public utilities and transportation, such as postal, telecommunications, electricity and railway services.

Semasa era kolonial British, kebanyakkan barang-barang pengguna di Tanah Melayu diimport dari British. Penjajah British tidak membangunkan sebarang tarif perlindungan (*protective tariff*) dan juga sebarang insentif khas untuk membangunkan perusahaan tempatan.

Jika disoroti sejarah awal, kegagalan penguasaan ekonomi orang Melayu adalah bermula melalui penjajahan terutamanya dengan Dasar Pecah Perintah penjajah Inggeris dalam pentadbirannya. Dari segi politik pula, wujudnya masyarakat majmuk melalui pengasingan tempat tinggal dan kewujudan parti politik berasaskan kaum, manakala dari segi ekonomi pula, etnik bukan Melayu menguasai ekonomi, terutamanya etnik Cina. Sistem ekonomi pasaran bebas yang dipraktiskan oleh penjajah British dan kemudiaanya diteruskan oleh pemerintah Malaysia pasca kemerdekaan telah memberikan kesan negatif kepada orang Melayu khasnya.

Penguasaan ekonomi di Malaysia berada di dalam tangan orang Cina, yang dilihat mempunyai kelebihan menguasai industri dan kemahiran khusus. Industri kecil, industri

peladangan dan syarikat-syarikat perniagaan, perdagangan dan bank dikuasai secara besar oleh orang Cina. RIDA adalah antara beberapa agensi yang ditubuhkan oleh pemerintah untuk meningkatkan situasi sosio ekonomi orang Melayu, akan tetapi RIDA dengan keterbatasan yang ada, tidak mampu untuk berfungsi dengan baik.

Dalam tempoh awal kemerdekaan sehingga tahun 1969, sistem ekonomi yang diamalkan ialah berbentuk pasaran bebas di mana pemerintah tidak campur tangan secara langsung dalam ekonomi tetapi pemerintah memihaki modal asing (melalui pelbagai akta untuk melaksanakan dasar pengantian import) di samping mengawal tata undang-undang dan menyediakan kemudahan awam (Rahimah Abdul Aziz 2000). Pendekatan pasaran bebas yang diamalkan pemerintah walaupun agak berjaya mewujudkan pertumbuhan ekonomi, tetapi ianya gagal dalam menangani persoalan dilema Melayu. Tambahan lagi, ianya telah meningkatkan ketidakseimbangan antara kaum dan rasa tidak selamat di kalangan orang Melayu khususnya terhadap kuasa politik mereka (Rahimah Abdul Aziz, 2000)

Mulai pertengahan dekat 1960-an, terdapat sedikit perubahan dalam dasar tidak campurtangan pemerintah hasil desakan sejumlah kecil ahli perniagaan, ahli politik dan pentadbir Melayu yang mahu pemerintah mengambil langkah yang lebih tegas dengan mewujudkan beberapa institusi bagi membolehkan pengembangan kelas kapitalis dan kelas menengah Melayu. Tuntutan yang dikemukakan dalam dua kali Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputera yang diadakan pada tahun 1965 dan 1968 yang kemudiannya menghasilkan penubuhan Bank Bumiputera Malaysia Berhad, Perbadanan Nasional Berhad (PNB), Lembaga Pembangunan Bandar (UDA), dan Insitut Teknologi MARA (ITM) yang mengantikan pusat latihan *Rural Industrial Development Authority* (RIDA) (Abdul Rahman Embong, 2000).

Sebelum tahun 1969, pemerintah tidak memajukan kepentingan orang Melayu dalam sektor ekonomi secara terbuka dan natijahnya penglibatan yang sangat kecil sahaja dalam sektor ekonomi, walaupun ianya bukan bermakna tiada kemajuan langsung. Jelasnya, belum ada dasar ekonomi yang kukuh bagi membantu orang Melayu dalam sektor ekonomi. Pada tahun 1970, 49.3% daripada penduduk Malaysia hidup di bawah garis kemiskinan yang meliputi 64.8% masyarakat Bumiputera, 39.2% masyarakat India dan 26.0% masyarakat Cina. Selain itu, wujud jurang sosioekonomi yang ketara, terutamanya dalam kalangan masyarakat Bumiputera,yang hanya memiliki 2.4% ekuiti sektor korporat, mempunyai purata pendapatan isi rumah sebanyak 65.0% daripada purata pendapatan negara dan kebanyakannya bekerja dalam sektor tradisi di luar bandar (masyarakat Bumiputera mewakili 74.0% dalam sektor pekerjaan tersebut). (Malaysia 2010:147)

Sehingga tahun 1969, pemerintah telah mempunyai anggapan bahawa “tolak ansur” antara orang Melayu dan bukan Melayu dalam sektor ekonomi dan politik negara sudahpun diterima baik. Akan tetapi rusuhan 13 Mei 1969 telah menunjukkan situasi yang sebaliknya, bahawa keadaan politik dan ekonomi adalah tidak seperti yang digambarkan. Kebanyakkan pemerhati membuat kesimpulan bahawa orang Melayu tidak berpuas hati dengan kadar pemodenan yang terlah berlaku dan anggapan bahawa aktiviti mereka seharusnya tertumpu kepada soal politik semata-mata. Sebaliknya, etnik bukan Melayu pula tidak berpuas hati

bahawa mereka seharusnya berkecimpung dalam aktiviti ekonomi sahaja dan juga tidak bersetuju dengan konsep hak istimewa orang Melayu seperti tercatat di perlembagaan Malaysia (Zakaria Ahmad, 1983). Peristiwa 13 Mei telah membawa satu dimensi baru dalam proses pembangunan Malaysia, akhirnya pemerintah menyedari dasar pasaran bebas yang dijalankan telah mengakibatkan berlakunya ketegangan dan konflik antara kaum yang teruk. Lantaran itu, dasar laissez faire telah digantikan dengan dasar campurtangan pemerintah.

Tun Razak kemudiannya telah memperkenalkan Dasar Ekonomi Baru (DEB) dan Rancangan Jangka Panjang Pertama (RRJP1) berteraskan sektor perindustrian. Dalam rancangan Malaysia Kedua (1971-1975), pemerintah telah menumpukan kepada usaha untuk menyelesaikan masalah perbezaan ekonomi di antara sektor dan etnik supaya matlamat perpaduan negara dapat dicapai dan dikekalkan. Melalui dasar afirmatif dalam DEB, pemerintah bertindak aktif memajukan bidang ekonomi khususnya untuk membantu etnik Bumiputera. Pemerintah menyedari bahawa ketidakseimbangan antara etnik dalam ekonomi tidak boleh diperbaiki jika hanya melalui kuasa pasaran semata-mata. Oleh itu, DEB digubal untuk mencapai matlamat utama perpaduan nasional melalui objektif serampang dua mata iaitu pembasmian kemiskinan tanpa mengira kaum dan penyusunan semula masyarakat bagi menghapuskan pengenalan kaum mengikut fungsi ekonomi. (Malaysia 2010:147).

Perincian dasar dalam rancangan-rancangan Malaysia yang telah dirangka oleh kerajaan dalam usaha untuk meningkatkan kedudukan sosioekonomi orang Melayu dapat dilihat dalam Jadual 3 dibawah.

Jadual 3 : Rancangan-Rancangan Malaysia dan Fokus Utama Pembangunan Bumiputera

RANCANGAN	**DASAR PEMBANGUNAN**	**FOKUS UTAMA PEMBANGUNAN BUMIPUTERA**	
		Isu Struktur	Inisiatif
Draf Development Plan (1950 – 1954)	Kolonial Inggeris		
Rancangan Malaya 1 (1955 – 1960)	Pasca Kemerdekaan (1956-1970		
Rancangan Malaya 2 (1961 – 1965)			
RMKe-1 (1966 -1970)			
RMKe-2 (1971-1974)	Dasar Ekonomi Baru (1971-1990)	Kadar kemiskinan tinggi dan pengenalan kaum mengikut fungsi ekonomi	• Meningkatkan pemilikan ekuiti Bumiputera • Mewujudkan Masyarakat Perdagangan dan Perindustrian Bumiputera (MPPB) • Menubuhkan FIC • Menumpukan kepada pertanian dan pembuatan
RMKe-3 (1975-1980)			
RMKe-4 (1981-1985)			
RMKe-5 (1986-1990)			
RMke-6 (1991-1995) RMKe-7 (1996-2000)	Dasar Pembangunan Nasional (1991-2000)	Penyertaan Bumiputera dalam ekonomi yang rendah	• Melaksanakan program pengswastaan • Meningkatkan Tabungan melalui pengukuhan peranan PNB • Menumpukan kepada industri

			berat dan pertanian berskala besar
RMke-8 (2001-2005) RMKe-9 (2006-2010)	Dasar Wawasan Negara (2001 – 2010)	Ketidakseimbangan sosial, ekonomi dan wilayah	• Memperkasa peranan institusi Bumiputera termasuk PKEN • Meningkatkan penyertaan Bumiputera dalam pekerjaan profesional • Meliberalisasi garis panduan FIC • Menumpukan kepada sektor perkhidmatan
RMKe-10 (2011-2015) RMKe-11 (2016-2020)	Dasar Transformasi Nasional (2011-2020)	Perangkap pendapatan sederhana	• Meningkatkan pendapatan rakyat • Memperluas peluang pekerjaan berpendapatan tinggi • Menumpukan kepada pertanian moden dan pembuatan bernilai tinggi
RMKe-12 (2021-2025)	Wawasan Kemakmuran Bersama (2021-2030)	Jurang pendapatan dan kekayaan melebar	• Memperkukuh pembangunan inklusif dan mampan • Merapatkan jurang antara Kumpulan pendapatan, etnik, wilayah dan rantaian bekalan

Sumber : Kementerian Ekonomi (2024)

Kerajaan telah melaksanakan pelbagai dasar dalam usaha untuk membantu orang Melayu Bumiputera untuk meningkatkan kedudukan sosio ekonomi mereka. Antaranya pelbagai dasar telah diperkenalkan, menubuhkan pelbagai agensi-agensi khusus untuk orang Melayu dan Bumiputera.

Menurut Milne (1976), kerajaan telah membuat beberapa perubahan dalam usaha untuk mencapai matlamat DEB dengan penglibatan aktif pelbagai agensi dan institusi kerajaan dalam menjayakan matlamat dasar. Pentadbiran Tun Razak juga mendapatkan pandangan dari James Putuchheary mengenai idea baharu bagi menyelesaikan masalah impak dari peristiwa 13 Mei 1969. Putucheary memberikan pandangan bahawa campurtangan negara melalui perbadanan awam adalah perlu demi membetulkan keadaan tidak seimbang yang berpunca dari struktur ekonomi tinggalan penjajah dan kesannya yang berkekalan ke atas hubungan antara kaum di Malaysia (Beng 2007:212).

Keduanya, kerajaan telah membuat perubahan dasar dari dasar tidak campur tangan dalam ekonomi pasaran kepada dasar campur tangan secara aktif (intervensi) dalam pasaran. Kerajaan akan memainkan peranan dalam tadbir urus dan governan yang baik bagi memastikan wujudnya pertumbuhan ekonomi yang mampan dalam negara. Pada masa yang sama, dasar ini turut memberikan impak yang positif kepada Bumiputera dari sudut ekonomi mereka.

Dalam perbincangan sebelumnya mengenai pembangunan dan dasar afirmatif, kerajaan telah menubuhkan pelbagai agensi khusus dalam kerangka dasar afirmatif bagi mencapai matlamat yang telah dibuat. Salah satu agensi khusus yang ditubuhkan dibawah dasar afirmatif,

bahkan lebih awal lagi dari perlaksanaan dasar untuk membantu orang Melayu yang terpinggir, ialah MARA.

Dalam sektor pendidikan, kerajaan telah menyediakan kuota-kuota khusus untuk kemasukan ke universiti, menyediakan tajaan biasiswa dan penubuhan institusi-institusi pendidikan Bumiputera yang khusus (H. Lee 2017:10). Kerajaan juga telah membanyakkan penubuhan universiti awam dengan menubuhkan beberapa universiti lain seperti Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) (1969), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) (1970), Universiti Pertanian (Putra) Malaysia (1973) dan lain-lain universiti awam yang menyediakan kuota-kuota khas untuk kemasukan Bumiputera. Menurut Rudner (1994:306) lagi penubuhan Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM) yang khusus kepada Bumiputera sahaja telah meningkatkan jumlah Bumiputera di institusi pengajian tinggi dalam bidang profesional dan semi profesional.

Kerajaan juga telah menyediakan pelbagai bantuan kepada para usahawan Bumiputera dalam usaha untuk melahirkan lebih ramai Bumiputera yang terlibat dalam bidang keusahawanan. Pelbagai bantuan telah disediakan termasuklah khidmat nasihat, pinjaman perniagaan, penubuhan syarikat dan sebagainya. Syarikat-syarikat Bumiputera juga telah diberikan keutamaan dalam penganugerahan kontrak-kontrak dari pihak kerajaan, dari kontrak yang kecil sehinggalah kontrak yang bernilai tinggi. Penyediaan pinjaman perniagaan oleh MARA dan agensi-agensi lain telah banyak membantu para usahawan dalam memulakan perniagaan dan menjalankan projek-projek yang telah dianugerahkan (Lee, 2017).

Inisiatif untuk menyusun semula corak pekerjaan ini telah dimulakan dalam sektor perkhidmatan awam dan syarikat-syarikat berkepentingan kerajaan (GLC). Penyediaan kuota untuk memasuki perkhidmatan awam telah merubah sektor pekerjaan di kalangan Bumiputera di mana Bumiputera mulai menguasai jawatan-jawatan utama dalam perkhidmatan awam. Agensi-agensi kerajaan juga telah menubuhkan pelbagai anak-anak syarikat yang kemudiannya telah menyediakan banyak peluang pekerjaan kepada Bumiputera sama ada diperingkat bawah atau pengurusan tertinggi (Lee, 2017).

Penemuan menunjukkan ketidaksamarataan yang tinggi dan berterusan akan memberi kesan negatif kepada prospek pertumbuhan ekonomi pada masa hadapan. Pada dasarnya, ketidaksamarataan yang berterusan akan memudaratkan pembangunan manakala ekuiti dan kemakmuran adalah pelengkap pembangunan. Ekuiti yang lebih besar juga boleh mengurangkan kemiskinan, meningkatkan pertumbuhan ekonomi, mengembangkan pembangunan dan menyediakan peluang yang lebih besar kepada kumpulan paling miskin dalam masyarakat. Melalui agensi-agensi kerajaan, berlakunya peningkatan dalam pemilikan ekuiti Bumiputera secara drastik di mana agensi-agensi tersebut telah membeli, membina dan menyewakan atau menjualnya kepada Bumiputera.

MARA telah wujud seiring dengan perlaksanaan Rancangan Malaysia Pertama (1966-1970) dan antara agensi yang diberi tanggungjawab secara terus untuk mencapai matlamat serampang dua mata DEB iaitu membasmi kemiskinan dan menstruktur semula masyarakat. MARA telah diamanahkan khusus dibawah matlamat untuk menstruktur semula masyarakat melalui pendidikan dan keusahawanan (MARA 2005:11).

KAJIAN LEPAS

Beberapa kajian telah dijalankan untuk melihat mengenai pelbagai dimensi MARA seperti dimensi sejara, dimensi keusahawanan, dimensi pendidikan, dimensi pelaburan, dimensi pengurusan dan perspektif, dan dimensi politik. Bagaimanapun kajian ini menumpukan kepada dimensi peranan MARA . Zarina Begam bt Hj Abdul Kadir (2013) telah mengkaji tentang sejarah penubuhan RIDA dan kegagalan RIDA dalam membantu Bumiputera. Kerajaan kemudiannya telah mengantikan RIDA dengan MARA dalam kerangka dasar afirmatif dan diberi peranan yang lebih besar dalam membangunkan sosio ekonomi orang Melayu dalam memberikan latihan, pinjaman perniagaan, pengangkutan, Pembangunan usahawan dan perniagaan dan juga khidmat nasihat.

Abdul Karim Haron; et al. (2016) merupakan penulisan mengenai sejarah awal Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA), yang diamanahkan untuk pembangunan modal insan dan usahawan dalam kalangan Bumiputera. Selain merakamkan sumbangan sebuah agensi yang telah begitu banyak berjasa bagi bangsa dan negara, tulisan tersebut mengisahkan bagaimana peranan, sumbangan dan pengorbanan puluhan wira dan wirawati tahun-tahun awal kemerdekaan. Penghargaan terhadap kewujudan MARA adalah suatu yang semestinya diberi kepada Tun Razak di mana Tun Razaklah sebagai pemimpin yang telah berjaya memberikan kejayaan MARA sehingga hari ini.

Walaupun penulisan buku telah ditumpukan dan tertumpu hanya hingga pada akhir alaf lalu, meliputi hampir tiga dekad kehadirannya, ia sudah cukup untuk menyatakan bahawa masih banyak yang perlu diusahakan. maka jelas perjuangan yang bermula pada zaman RIDA dan digembur, dipupuk dan dituntut pada Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputera Pertama, masih belum selesai. Justeru, buku ini membuat kesimpulan bahawa bukan sahaja perjuangan ini belum tuntas dan sempurna, malahan ia perlu diterus, ditingkat dan diperhebatkan. MARA masih relevan bahkan wajib melanjutkan peranan dan tanggungjawabnya. Namun, usaha dan perjuangan ini mestilah bukan sahaja diperbaharui asas dan arahnya, tetapi beberapa anjakan paradigma perlu dilakukan. Di sinilah MARA perlu belajar daripada sejarah, melihat kisah dan teladan daripada usaha lampau, di samping mengambil kira senario di bumi nyata dewasa ini dan yang diunjur atau diandai akan berlaku, perlu dilaksanakan, untuk merangka strategi demi kelangsungan perjuangan dan pencapaian matlamat tersurat dan tersirat. Penulisan ini juga akan memfokuskan bagaimana MARA perlu melonjakkan usaha dalam bidang baharu dan menggunakan strategi terkini serta mantap demi menjamin ia terus menjadi agensi utama dalam membangunkan sosio ekonomi Bumiputera. Penulisan juga telah mencadangkan beberapa tindakan tersurat dan tersirat dilaksanakan oleh MARA dalam mendepani masa depan.

Seterusnya Sudharmin & Arshad Ayub (2019) yang mengkaji mengenai peranan MARA dalam melahirkan Bumiputera professional. Menurut Sudharmin & Arshad Ayub (2019), ianya perlu dilihat dalam dua situasi, pertama persoalan kenapa MARA ditubuhkan

oleh kerajaan dan keduanya ialah dari sudut sejarah kenapa MARA ditubuhkan untuk meningkatkan kedudukan ekonomi orang Melayu. Penulisan ini menumpukan kepada tiga perkara penting iaitu pertamanya mengenai peranan MARA dalam konteks dasar afirmatif dibawah perlaksanaan Dasar Ekonomi Baru, keduanya mengkaji mengenai sejarah penubuhan MARA dan ketiganya melihat kepada sumbangan MARA dalam pembangunan modal insan Bumiputera. Sudharmin & Arshad Ayub (2019) menyimpulkan bahawa MARA telah memainkan peranan yang sangat penting dalam pembangunan Bumiputera professional dan juga usahawan-usahawan Bumiputera. Juga merumuskan peranan besar yang telah dimainkan oleh Tun Razak sebagai arkitek utama pembangunan Bumiputera di Malaysia. Sudharmin & Arshad Ayub juga menegaskan bahawa MARA perlu senantiasa bersedia dengan globalisasi dan perubahan teknologi, untuk memastikan MARA kekal relevan dan mampu untuk menyumbang kepada pembangunan negara. Ujarnya "*Planning is essential to take account of this rapidly unfolding developments".*

Kajian Ab Bassit Husain (2023) mengenai rekayasa sosial yang telah dirancang oleh Malaysia selepas peristiwa 13 Mei 1969 melalui perlaksanaan dasar afirmatif, penubuhan institusi-instusi yang mempunyai peranan khusus telah memberikan impak yang sangat positif kepada pembangunan sosio-ekonomi Bumiputera di Malaysia. Walaupun sehingga kini, rekayasa sosial dengan dasar afirmatif telah dikritik sebagai dasar yang berbentuk diskriminasi, akan tetapi secara khususnya kejayaan yang dicapai oleh orang Melayu Bumiputera melalui bidang pendidikan untuk melahirkan golongan profesional dan tenaga kerja mahir amat membanggakan. Orang Melayu Bumiputera sebagai anak watan Malaysia kini boleh berdiri sama tinggi, duduk sama rendah dalam soal ekonomi dan pembangunan negara.

Berdasarkan kepada kajian-kajian yang dilakukan sebelum ini, kajian ini memberikan satu dimensi baharu mengenai amanah-amanah MARA yang telah diberikan oleh Kerajaan kepada MARA. Berdasarkan kepada kajian-kajian lepas, kajian terperinci mengenai amanah-amanah MARA mengikut rancangan-rancangan Malaysia belum lagi dilakukan oleh mana-mana pengkaji. Objektif utama kajian ini dijalankan ialah untuk mengkaji dan menganalisis amanah-amanah yang telah diberikan oleh kerajaan kepada MARA dalam mengurus ketidakseimbangan sosial, kemiskinan dan kepinggiran dalam masyarakat Melayu dan Bumiputera.

METODOLOGI

Kajian ini menggunakan dokumen rekod awam, iaitu dokumen Rancangan-Rancangan Malaysia (RMK). Dokumen RMK ini membolehkan pengkaji mencari, mengenalpasti serta menganalisis amanah-amanah yang telah diberikan oleh kerajaan kepada pihak MARA

Teknik analisis data merupakan satu teknik yang digunakan untuk mengolah maklumat umum kepada satu bentuk maklumat khusus mengikut ciri tertentu yang telah ditetapkan oleh objektif penyelidikan. Maklumat atau data umum dalam kajian ini ialah diperolehi melalui laporan berkaitan dengan tema MARA dari dua dokumen utama iaitu dokumen Rancangan-

Rancangan Malaysia dan Dokumen Laporan Tahunan MARA. Teknik analisis yang digunakan dalam menganalisa data atau maklumat dalam kajian ini ialah teknik analisis isi kandungan.

DAPATAN KAJIAN

Analisis kandungan telah dijalankan melalui pengkodan carian "MARA" dan kata kunci yang berkaitan dengan MARA yang menumpukan kepada frekuensi atau kekerapan MARA dalam dokumen rancangan Malaysia. Analisis kandungan mengenai kekerapan ini sangat penting bagi menunjukkan kedudukan dan kepentingan agensi MARA di mata pihak pemerintah. Rajah 6.1 menunjukkan frekuensi atau kekerapan MARA dalam dokumen rancangan Malaysia.

TUJUAN MARA DITUBUHKAN

Berikut merupakan beberapa petikan kenyataan yang merujuk kepada tujuan MARA ditubuhkan oleh pemerintah dalam rancangan-rancangan Malaysia yang dianalisis.

RMKe-1 :

> Pelbagai perkhidmatan dan kemudahan yang akan disediakan oleh MARA adalah luas dan perlu pergi jauh ke arah membantu Bumiputera untuk mengambil bahagian secara berkesan dalam pembangunan industri dan komersial negara.

RMKe-10:

> Peranan institusi khusus Bumiputera seperti Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) akan terus dipertingkatkan bagi menyokong agenda pembangunan Bumiputera.

RMKe-12 :

> Peranan MARA akan diperkukuh berdasarkan kuasa yang diperuntukkan di bawah Akta MARA 1966. MARA akan meneroka model pembangunan baharu untuk terus memacu kemajuan dalam meningkatkan kedudukan sosioekonomi Bumiputera. MARA juga akan terus terlibat dalam beberapa aktiviti komersial dan perindustrian untuk mewujudkan lebih banyak peluang kepada usahawan Bumiputera. Tambahan pula, MARA akan memainkan peranan penting untuk meneroka potensi ekonomi Tanah Rizab Melayu.

Tujuan penubuhan MARA telah dinyatakan dalam RMK 1, 2, 3, 10, dan 11. Ini membayangkan penekanan semula atau penilaian semula objektif teras MARA semasa rancangan-rancangan ini. Berdasarkan kepada petikan-petikan dalam Rancangan-Rancangan Malaysia yang menyentuh mengenai amanah dan aspirasi yang diberikan oleh kerajaan kepada MARA, dapat disimpulkan bahawa MARA adalah sebagai agensi utama yang diberikan harapan oleh pemerintah dalam usaha untuk membantu dan mempertingkatkan kedudukan sosio- ekonomi orang Melayu melalui daya usaha untuk menubuhkan Masyarakat Perdagangan dan Perindustrian Bumiputera (MPPB) melalui keusahawanan, pendidikan dan meningkatkan ekuiti di kalangan Bumipuitera.

Analisis kandungan telah dijalankan melalui pengkodan carian "MARA" dan yang berkaitan dengan MARA yang menumpukan kepada frekuensi atau kekerapan MARA dalam dokumen rancangan Malaysia. Analisis kandungan mengenai kekerapan ini sangat penting bagi menunjukkan kedudukan dan kepentingan agensi MARA di mata pihak pemerintah. **Rajah 6.1** menunjukkan frekuensi atau kekerapan MARA dalam dokumen rancangan Malaysia.

Jadual 4 : Kod-Kod yang Dihasilkan Berdasarkan Analisa Tematik

Kod -Kod	RANCANGAN-RANCANGAN PEMBANGUNAN MALAYSIA (RMK)											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Latihan Keusahawanan	2	1	4	4	3		1	1	3	3	2	
Bas MARA	1	2			1							
Biasiswa Dan Pinjaman Pendidikan	1		2			1					1	
Dewan Latihan MARA	1											
Kemudahan Sokongan Untuk Penyertaan Bumiputera	1			2								
Khidmat Nasihat Perniagaan	1	1	3	4	2			1				
Mewujudkan Industri Baharu	1											
Pelaburan MARA	2	1			1							1
Pembudayaan Usahawan	1											
Pinjaman Perniagaan	1	2	12	6	2	1	1	1		2	1	
Tujuan MARA	1	3	1							3		2
Amanah Saham MARA		5	3		1				1			
British Malaysia Institute (BMI)								2				
Elaun Pelajar				1								
German Malaysia Institute (GMI)							1	1		1		
Hak Milik Saham Bumiputera		1	3	1					1			
Institut Kemahiran MARA (IKM)				6	4	2	1			1		

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Institut Perdagangan MARA				1								
InstitutTeknologi MARA (ITM)		2	14	6	2	2	4					
Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi MARA (KKTM)										1		
Kompleks Kewangan Malaysia Bhd			2	1								
Latihan Kemahiran		4	15	1		1	3		1	1	2	1
Latihan Kemahiran Antarabangsa									1			
Latihan Kemahiran Bukan Melayu									1			
Latihan Keusahawanan Bukan Melayu									1			
Latihan Praktikal								1				
Literasi Pelaburan												1
MARA Holdings Sdn. Bhd.								1				
MARA Shipyard & Engineering (Terengganu)								1				
Masmara Sendirian Berhad				1								
Malaysia France Institute (MFI)							1	2				
MPPB - Keusahawanan				1								
Maktan Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM)			3	3	1				2	2		5
Pelajar Luar Negara			1									
Pembangunan Modal Insan Bumiputera												3
Pembangunan Usahawan							1				1	
Pembinaan Rumah Murah			1									
Pengswastaan	1	2						1				
Penubuhan Syarikat		4	1									
Perdagangan Borong						2						

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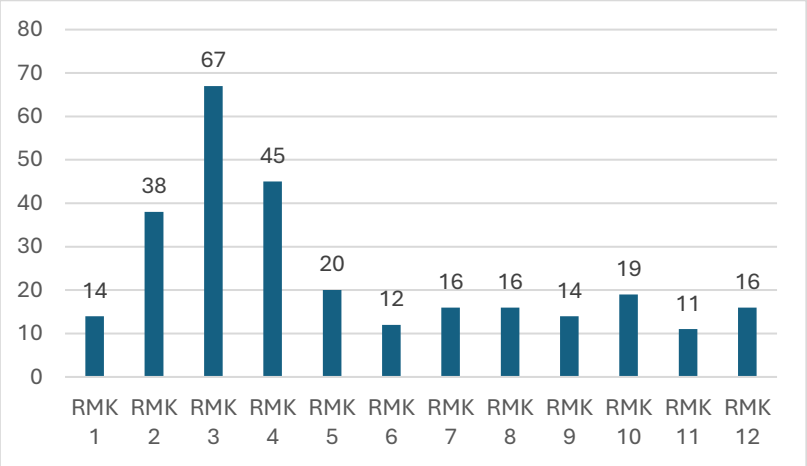
dan Runcit												
Program Inkubator										1	1	
Projek industri		5										
PusatGIAT MARA						1	2		3	1	1	
Ruang Niaga / Premis Perniagaan		2		6	3	2	1	4			1	1
Syarikat Berkaitan Kerajaan		3	2	1						1		
Tenaga Manusia Mahir dan Separuh Mahir											1	
Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)										1		2
Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL)										1		

Berdasarkan Rajah 4 di atas, menunjukkan kekerapan nama MARA dalam dokumen Rancangan-rancangan Malaysia bermula dari Rancangan Malaysia Pertama sehingga Rancangan Malaysia ke Dua belas. Data menunjukkan bahawa peranan MARA sebagai sebuah agensi pelaksana sangat diberikan keutamaan oleh kerajaan bermula dari Rancangan Malaysia Pertama, dan menjadi institusi utama dalam Rancangan Malaysia ke Tiga. Kekerapan MARA dalam RMKe-1 ialah sebanyak 14 kali, meningkat kepada 38 kali dalam RMKe-2 dan menjadi agensi yang sangat penting dalam RMKe-3 dengan 67 kali kekerapan. Mulai RMKe-4, kekerapan MARA mulai berkurangan dari 45 kali, kepada kekerapan di antara 20 dan 11 dalam dalam RMK-RMK berikutnya.

Rajah 1: Kekerapan Carian MARA Dalam Rancangan-Rancangan Malaysia



Peningkatan kekerapan MARA dalam RMKe-2 dan RMKe-3 memandangkan ianya adalah permulaan kepada Dasar Ekonomi Baru (DEB), manakala dalam RMK 3 pula, MARA telah menjadi antara agensi utama dalam mencapai hasrat DEB dengan amanah dalam pengstrukturan semula masyarakat. Kerajaan telah membuat pelbagai langkah intervensi yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kedudukan dan keupayaan bumiputera dalam soal ekonomi. Peranan MARA kekal dalam kekerapan yang sama dalam rancangan-rancangan Malaysia yang lainnya memandangkan pelbagai agensi lain telah ditubuhkan oleh pemerintah dalam usaha membangunkan sosio ekonomi negara.

Analisis kekerapan atau frekuensi MARA memperlihatkan satu trend perubahan yang melibatkan amanah-amanah yang diberi kepada MARA, bergantung kepada perubahan masyarakat, krisis-krisis politik yang berlaku dan perubahan dalam pendekatan pembangunan dan ekonomi negara. Perubahan pembangunan dan ekonomi negara yang bergerak mengikut pasaran yang bermula dengan pasaran bebas tanpa sebarang intervensi kerajaan dalam pasaran, kemudiaan pasca krisis 13 Mei 1969 memperlihatkan perubahan dasar pertumbuhan ekonomi dengan pengagihan serta bermula bermulanya intervensi kerajaan dalam ekonomi secara aktif. Di zaman Tun Mahathir sebagai Perdana Menteri, Malaysia dilihat kembali kepada sistem ekonomi pasaran bebas dengan pelancaran dasar Wawasan 2020, untuk Malaysia menjadi sebuah negara maju. Di era Datuk Seri Najib Razak kemudiaanya, menetapkan dasar untuk Malaysia menjadi sebuah negara berpendapatan tinggi, dan kini di era politik Malaysia yang berubah pucuk kepimpinan, maka dasar-dasar pembangunan juga menerima tempias, dimana dasar-dasar pembangunan ekonomi sebagai pertumbuhan dengan pengagihan dalam suasana politik orang Melayu yang tidak kukuh dan stabil, maka timbulnya kembali isu ketidakseimbangan sosio-ekonomi orang Melayu dan bumiputera. Jelasnya amanah-amanah yang diberikan oleh pemerintah kepada pihak MARA adalah mengikut kepada perubahan arus pembangunan negara dan MARA dilihat sebagai satu agensi yang sangat penting dalam proses pembangunan negara.

Jika dilihat secara lebih mendalam amanah-amanah yang diberikan kepada MARA mengikut RMK-RMK pula, kod-kod yang mempunyai kekerapan yang tertinggi adalah ITM, pinjaman perniagaan, latihan Kemahiran, latihan keusahawanan, menyediakan ruang niaga / premis perniagaan, MRSM dan IKM. Kekerapan-kekerapan tertinggi ini menunjukkan kepada MARA apakah amanah-amanah utama yang perlu dilaksanakan.

Rajah 2 : Kekerapan-Kekerapan Tertinggi Mengikut Kod

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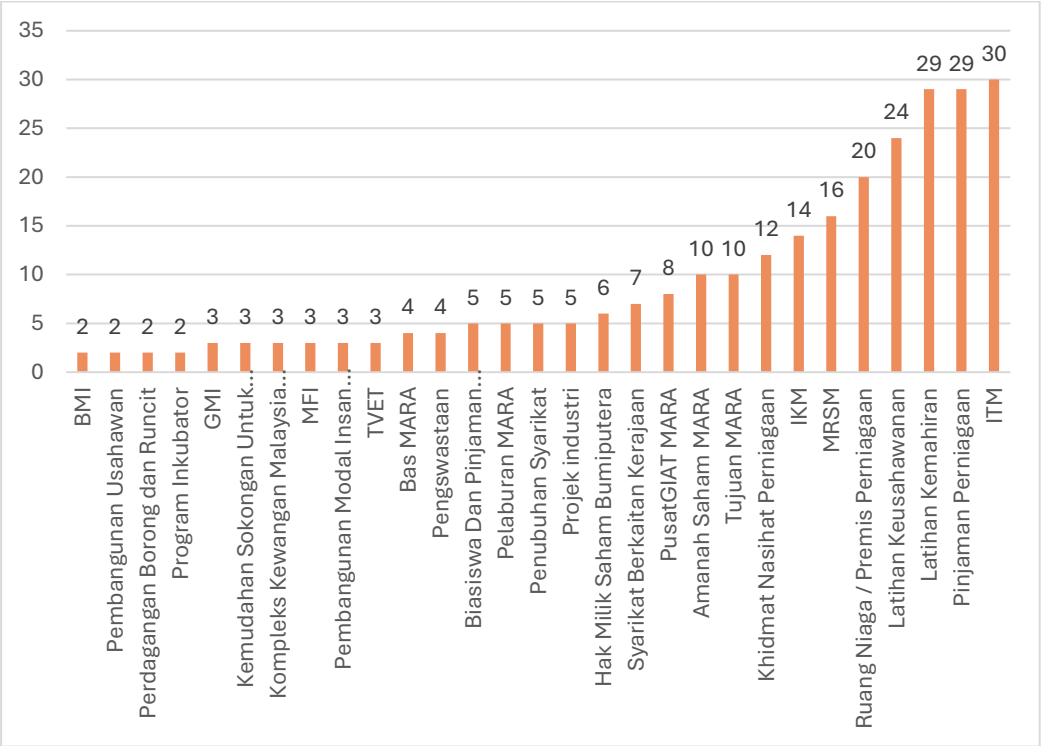

AMANAH-AMANAH MARA : ANALISIS TEMATIK

Menerusi proses pengkodan amanah-amanah pemerintah kepada MARA yang dapat dilihat melalui Jadual 5 , tiga tema utama telah dibentuk melalui proses deduktif melalui proses pengkodan tersebut. Tiga tema utama tersebut adalah amanah-amanah yang diberikan oleh pemerintah kepada MARA iaitu dalam mengstruktur semula masyarakat iaitu tema keusahawanan, tema pendidikan dan dan tema pelaburan. Ianya dapat dilihat secara jelas dalam Jadual dibawah, mengikut tema dan sub tema

Jadual 5 : Kod-Kod dan Tema yang Dihasilkan Berdasarkan Analisis Tematik

Tema	Sub Tema	Kod	Frekuensi
Keusahawanan	1. . Latihan	▪ Latihan Keusahawanan	24
		▪ Khidmat Nasihat Perniagaan	12
		▪ Pembangunan Usahawan	2
		▪ Pembudayaan Usahawan	1
		▪ Kemudahan sokongan untuk penyertaan bumiputera	3
		▪ Latihan Keusahawanan Bukan Melayu	1
		▪ Program Inkubator	2
	2. Bantuan Pinjaman	▪ Pinjaman Perniagaan	29
	3. Ruang Niaga /	▪ Premis Perniagaan	20

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	Premis Perniagaan		
Pendidikan	1. .Pendidikan Tinggi	▪ ITM	30
		▪ Latihan Kemahiran	29
		▪ Latihan Kemahiran Antarabangsa	1
		▪ Latihan Kemahiran Bukan Melayu	1
		▪ Institut Kemahiran MARA (IKM)	14
		▪ PusatGIAT MARA (GIAT)	8
		▪ German Malaysia Institute (GMI)	3
		▪ Malaysia France Institute (MFI)	3
		▪ TVET	3
		▪ British Malaysia Institute (BMI)	2
		▪ Dewan Latihan MARA	1
		▪ Institut Perdagangan MARA	1
		▪ Kolej Kemahiran Tinggi MARA (KKTM)	1
		▪ UniKL	1
		▪ Latihan Praktikal	1
	2. Pendidikan Menengah	▪ Maktab Rendah Sains MARA (MRSM)	16
	3. Biasiswa dan Pinjaman Pendidikan	▪ Biasiswa Dan Pinjaman Pendidikan	5
		▪ Elaun pelajar	1
		▪ Pelajar Luar Negara	1
	4. Tenaga Manusia Mahir dan Separuh Mahir	▪ Tenaga Manusia Mahir dan Separuh Mahir	1
Pelaburan	1. Pemilikan Saham Bumiputera	▪ Amanah Saham MARA	10
		▪ Kompleks Kewangan Malaysia Berhad	3
		▪ Literasi Pelaburan	1
	2. Penubuhan Anak-Anak Syarikat	▪ Pelaburan MARA	5
		▪ MARA Holdings Sdn. Bhd	1
		▪ Masmara Sendirian Berhad	1
		▪ MARA Shipyard & Engineering (Terengganu)	1
		▪ Pengswastaan	4
		▪ Syarikat Berkaitan Kerajaan	7
		▪ Projek Industri	5
		▪ Mewujudkan industri baharu	1
		▪ Perdagangan Borong dan Runcit	2
	3. Pengangkutan Luar Bandar	▪ Bas MARA	4
	4. Pembinaan Rumah Murah	▪ Pembinaan Rumah Murah	1

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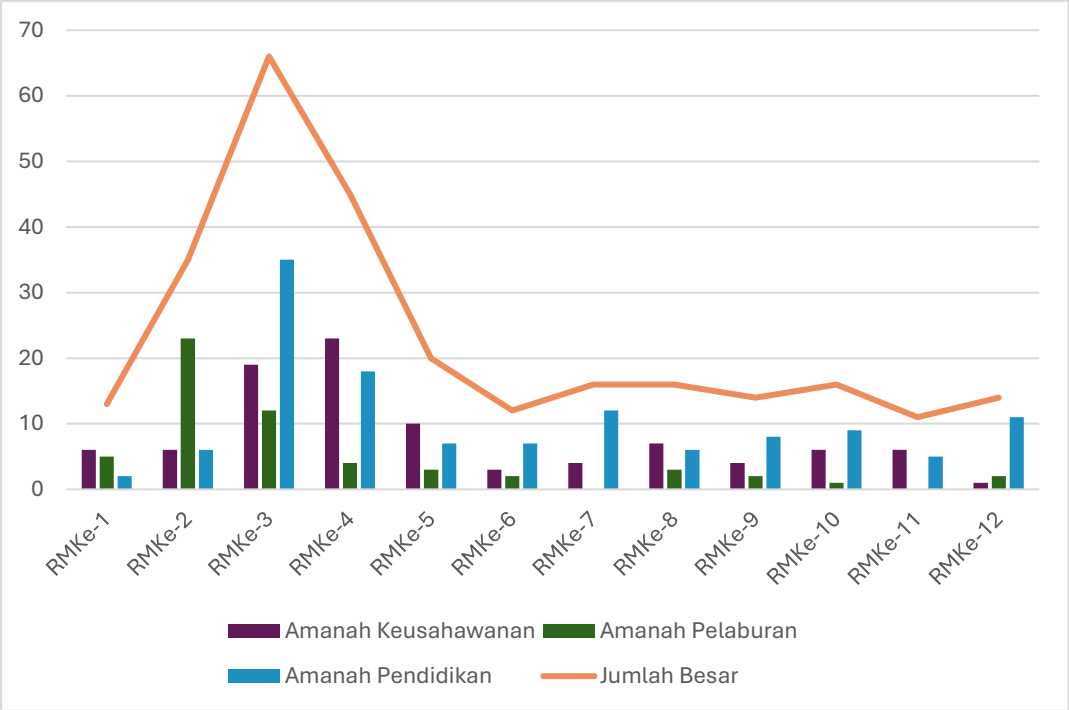
Tema-tema amanah-amanah MARA memberikan pandangan berharga tentang keutamaan sejarah dan evolusi strategi MARA dalam kerangka rancangan pembangunan negara Malaysia. Ia jelas menunjukkan fokus yang konsisten pada pendidikan, pembangunan kemahiran, dan keusahawanan untuk Bumiputera, dengan anjakan dalam program khusus dan penekanan institusi dari semasa ke semasa untuk menyesuaikan diri dengan landskap ekonomi dan matlamat nasional yang berubah.

Rajah 3: Perbandingan Amanah Mengikut Tema Sektor



Berdasarkan kepada Rajah 3 menunjukkan bilangan amanah MARA mengikut sektor iaitu keusahawanan, pelaburan, dan pendidikan dalam setiap Rancangan Malaysia (RMK-1 hingga RMK-12). Ddapat diperhatikan bahawa amanah pendidikan menjadi amanah utama yang diberikan perhatian oleh kerajaan berbanding dengan amanah-amanah lain. Data juga menunjukkan bahawa jumlah amanah meningkat secara mendadak dari RMK-1 ke RMK-4, dengan kemuncak pada RMK-3 manakala amanah pendidikan mencatat jumlah tertinggi dalam RMK-3 dan RMK-4.

Selepas RMK-4, terdapat penurunan drastik dalam jumlah amanah keseluruhan, dan trend ini stabil dalam RMK-6 hingga RMK-12. Rajah 3 juga menunjukkan amanah keusahawanan dan pendidikan kekal konsisten dalam RMK-6 ke atas, manakala amanah pelaburan sangat rendah selepas RMK-4. Ini menunjukkan MARA memberi fokus kuat kepada pendidikan dan keusahawanan sejak awal, dengan pelaburan sebagai amanah yang kurang dominan sejak pertengahan pelaksanaan RMK

Keusahawanan

MARA telah diberikan amanah yang sangat besar dalam bidang keusahawanan, iaitu kerajaan telah berhasrat untuk melahirkan masyarakat perdagangan dan perindustrian dalam kalangan Bumiputera bermula dari Rancangan Malaysia pertama lagi. Jika dilihat secara gambaran umum dari RMKe-1 sehingga RM Ke-12, amanah-amanah MARA dalam usaha untuk membangunkan keusahawan di kalangan orang Melayu dapat dilihat dari pelbagai aspek. Dalam RMKe-1 (Malaysia 1965:137) kerajaan telah memberikan satu penumpuan khusus untuk menggalakkan penyertaan orang Melayu dan Bumiputera dalam bidang pembangunan industri. Kerajaan menyedari bahawa antara masalah utama yang dihadapi oleh orang Melayu ialah kekurangan modal untuk memulakan perniagaan dan keduanya kekurangan ilmu pengurusan perniagaan dan industri. Justeru itu, MARA telah diamanahkan untuk menyediakan fasiliti dan peluang kepada orang Melayu dan Bumiputera agar mereka dapat terjun kedalam bidang perniagaan dan industri.

Dalam RMK Ke-2 (1971-1975:15) dinyatakan secara jelas amanah MARA, iaitu "*..to assist and promote the participation of Malays and other indigenous people in commerce and industry"*. Amanah untuk melahirkan orang Melayu dan Bumiputera yang bergiat aktif dalam bidang perdagangan dan industri adalah satu amanah yang sangat besar dan berat jika dilihat kepada situasi ekonomi orang Melayu pada awal-awal kemerdekaan yang menyaksikan penguasan ekonomi berada di tangan orang pemilik asing dan bukan Melayu.

Matlamat utama kerajaan melalui amanah yang diberikan kepada MARA ini akhirnya ialah kepada penciptaan Masyarakat Perdagangan dan Perindustrian Bumiputera (MPPB). Matlamat ini akan memberikan impak yang sangat besar kepada orang Melayu dan Bumiputera untuk bersaing dengan etnik-etnik lain dalam bidang perdagangan dan perindustrian di Malaysia, agar pembahagian kek ekonomi akan menjadi seimbang akhirnya.

Pendidikan

MARA telah diberikan peranan yang amat besar dalam membantu kerajaan mencapai matlamat pembangunan negara dan khususnya untuk mencapai hasrat DEB dalam menyusun semula masyarakat melalui sektor pendidikan. Dalam RMKe-2 (Malaysia 1970:137) dinyatakan bahawa amanah yang diberikan kepada MARA dalam membantu matlamat kerajaan untuk meningkatkan penyertaan Bumiputera dalam bidang pembangunan industri ialah melalui bidang pendidikan dan latihan.

MARA telah diberikan amanah khusus dalam sektor pendidikan teknikal untuk memenuhi kehendak keperluan tenaga kerja semasa. Menerusi RMKe-4(Malaysia 1981:236).

> Penekanan program pendidikan dan latihan semasa Rancangan Malaysia Keempat adalah untuk memperluaskan dan meningkatkan lagi kecekapan mereka sebagai instrumen penting dalam memenuhi keperluan tenaga kerja dan mencapai objektif

Dasar Ekonomi Baru (DEB).

Amanah kerajaan kepada MARA dalam bidang pendidikan ialah untuk membantu orang Melayu dan bumiputera secara khusus, dengan memberikan peluang dan ruang yang diperlukan dalam bidang pendidikan. Dalam RMKe-3, kerajaan menyedari kaum bumiputera berada dalam situasi kemiskinan dan keadaan tersebut akan menyukarkan proses integrasi nasional dan perpaduan jika soal ketaksamaan ekonomi gagal diurus dengan baik oleh kerajaan. Polisi dan program yang khusus untuk membantu bumiputera terpinggir, dalam usaha untuk mengurangkan jurang ekonomi antara etnik-etnik utama negara.

> "..Fokus dasar dalam hal ini akan terus menjadi keperluan untuk mengurangkan perbezaan dalam pemilikan dan kawalan kekayaan dalam sektor moden dan untuk mengurangkan fokus pekerjaan di kalangan orang Melayu dan Bumiputera hanya dalam pertanian tradisional dengan meningkatkan kedudukan mereka dalam sektor bandar yang lebih luas peluang ekonominya. (Malaysia 1976: 44).

Tindakan pengstrukturan semula boleh dan akan diambil untuk melibatkan lebih ramai bumiputera dalam sektor-sektor utama dan seterusnya akan memperbaiki komposisi etnik dalam struktur guna tenaga di Malaysia. Penekanan yang sama juga dinyatakan oleh kerajaan dalam RMKe- 9 di mana dinyatakan bahawa "pendidikan dan latihan akan kekal sebagai strategi penting bagi mencapai objektif meningkatkan guna tenaga Bumiputera dalam pekerjaan profesional, pengurusan dan pekerjaan berpendapatan tinggi lain terutamanya dalam sektor perkhidmatan serta sektor lain yang moden dan berproduktiviti tinggi (Malaysia 1970:25).

Pelaburan dan Meningkatkan Ekuiti

Pada peringkat awal, amanah pelaburan disekalikan dengan dengan peranan MARA dalam usaha untuk melahirkan masyarakat Melayu Bumiputera yang terlibat dalam bidang keusahawanan dan perdagangan. Dalam RMKe-1 (Malaysia 1965:137), dinyatakan bahawa :

> MARA akan menambah fungsi syarikat pelaburan Nasional dengan membeli saham yang dikhaskan untuk Bumiputera dan syarikat lain dan menguruskannya sehingga ianya boleh dijual kepada Bumiputera.

Isu penglibatan orang Melayu yang sangat kecil dalam sektor perdagangan dan perusahaan memang disedari oleh pihak kerajaan, Penglibatan yang kecil itu telah memberi impak kepada pemilikan ekuiti dan aset di kalangan orang Melayu bumiputera. Dalam usaha untuk melahirkan komuniti masyarakat Melayu dalam bidang perdagangan dan perindustrian, kerajaan telah merancang untuk meningkatkan ekuiti orang Melayu melalui pembelian aset-aset dan saham dalam usaha untuk meningkatkan pemegangan ekuiti orang Melayu dan Bumiputera. Dalam RMKe-2 (Malaysia 1971:160) dinyatakan bahawa matlamat pelaburan

yang diberikan kepada MARA ialah untuk meningkatkan pemilikan aset dikalangan orang Melayu dan Bumiputera.

> Kemudahan akan dibangunkan untuk meningkatkan pemilikan aset modal Melayu dan Bumiputera, terutamanya dalam modal ekuiti syarikat dalam sektor ekonomi moden. Pada peringkat awal di mana institusi seperti MARA, PERNAS dan SEDC membeli saham ekuiti secara kerjasasama dengan sektor swasta, saham-saham tersebut kemudiannya akan dipindahkan kepada pemilikan individu Melayu dan Bumiputera. Dengan itu, simpanan isi rumah mereka akan digerakkan dan dilaburkan melalui unit Amanah dan saluran pelaburan lain.

Selain MARA, beberapa agensi lain juga turut diberikan amanah dalam usaha untuk menjayakan hasrat kerajaan untuk melahirkan "Masyarakat Perindustrian dan Perdagangan Melayu" dengan meningkatkan pemilikan ekuiti orang Melayu. Antara agensi yang diberikan amanah tersebut adalah Perbadanan Nasional (PERNAS), Lembaga Pembangunan Bandar (UDA), Bank Bumiputra, Bank Pembangunan dan Perbadanan Pembangunan Ekonomi Negeri (SEDC). Agensi-agensi tersebut telah berjaya memperoleh saham korporat berjumlah RM541 juta untuk dipegang sebagai amanah untuk orang Melayu dan Bumiputera sehinggalah mereka berada dalam kedudukan untuk memiliki saham tersebut dengan modal yang mereka ada.

Amanah yang diberikan kepada MARA dalam sektor pelaburan ialah untuk membuka syarikat, membeli ekuiti syarikat dan kemudiaanya menyerahkannya melalui pengswastaan kepada orang Melayu dan Bumiputera yang layak. Tujuan utamanya ialah untuk meningkatkan jumlah pemilikan ekuiti dikalangan orang Melayu dan Bumiputera dengan kadar yang seberapa segera. Dalam RMKe-4 (Malaysia 1980:108) disebut secara jelas matlamat pelaburan MARA melalui agensi-agensi tersebut iaitu :

> *The investment strategy for the trust agencies will focus on the high growth industries and those where current Bumiputera share capital ownership is relatively low.*

Kerajaan berhasrat untuk memindahkan kepentingan kerajaan dalam pemilikan-pemilikan saham dan ekuti dalam syarikat-syarikat kepada individu dan pihak yang berminat mulai tahun 1981.

ANALISA TREND DAN TRANSFORMASI AMANAH MARA

Analisis trend dasar MARA dalam Rancangan Malaysia Pertama hingga Kedua Belas (RMK1–RMK12) pula menunjukkan transformasi Amanah-amanah yang diberikan kepada MARA bergantung kepada keperluan semasa kerajaan. Secara jelasnya berdasarkan analisa trend amanah MARA, ianya boleh dibahagikan kepada empat fasa utama, pertamanya fasa permulaan, fasa pengembangan dan pemelbagaian, fasa pengukuhan institusi dan kini fasa dasa saing global dan inklusiviti.

Jadual 6 : Analisa Trend Fasa Transformasi MARA

	Fasa Permulaan RMKe-1 – RMKe-3	Fasa Pengembangan & Pemelbagaian	Pengukuhan Institusi (RMK7–RMK9:	Daya Saing Global & Inklusiviti

		(RMK4–RMK6: 1980-an–1990-an)	1996–2010)	(RMK10–RMK12: 2011–2025)
Fokus Utama	- Infrastruktur Asas,	- Penyertaan Ekonomi	- Pemodenan Institusi MARA	- Teknologi Tinggi
	- Penyertaan Bumiputera	- Pembangunan Kemahiran	- Pengembangan Akses Pendidikan	- Inklusiviti,
	- Akses Pendidikan	- Perindustrian		- TVET
				- Modal Insan
Initiatif	- Bas MARA - Dewan Latihan MARA - Pinjaman perniagaan - Penubuhan ITM - Latihan Kemahiran Asas	- Pertumbuhan Ketara : Pemberian pinjaman keusahawanan meningkat (contohnya, 12 entri dalam RMK3), ITM dan IKM diperluas.	- Institusi Baharu: Penubuhan GMI, MFI, BMI, peluasan MRSM, dan penubuhan MARA Holdings	- Bidang Tumpuan Baharu: TVET dan kemahiran teknikal selaras dengan Revolusi Industri 4.0.
		- Program Baharu: Penekanan kepada khidmat nasihat keusahawanan, industri baharu, sokongan kewangan dan penubuhan syarikat.	- Keusahawanan: Sokongan berterusan dalam bentuk pinjaman, latihan, dan penyediaan premis perniagaan.	- Latihan inklusif: program untuk komuniti bukan Melayu, pendedahan antarabangsa, dan celik pelaburan
		- Pembangunan Kemahiran: - Dorongan kuat terhadap pendidikan teknikal melalui IKM, ITM dan latihan vokasional.	- Akses Pendidikan: Penekanan kepada biasiswa, elaun, dan penghantaran pelajar ke luar negara.	- Institusi Baharu: Penubuhan KKTM, UniKL, serta pelaksanaan program di bawah kerjasama global.
				Modal Insan: Pengenalan program seperti "Pembangunan Modal Insan Bumiputera."
Hasrat	Dasar ini bertujuan untuk menyediakan akses asas kepada pendidikan, latihan kemahiran, dan mobiliti luar bandar bagi masyarakat Bumiputera, dengan matlamat yang lebih			

	luas untuk mengurangkan ketidakseimbangan sosioekonomi dan memacu pembangunan negara yang inklusif.			
Ciri-Ciri	- Memberikan tumpuan terhadap pemerkasaan Bumiputera melalui pendidikan dan pemilikan ekuiti. - Institusi awal seperti ITM dan GIAT MARA telah ditubuhkan. - Sokongan kepada keusahawanan agak terhad tetapi tetap wujud.			
Arah Tujuan	Membina asas bagi pembangunan sosioekonomi Bumiputera	Membina golongan usahawan Bumiputera yang berkemahiran dan berdikari bagi menyokong matlamat Dasar Ekonomi Baru (DEB).	Menginstitusikan MARA sebagai peneraju dalam bidang pendidikan, latihan industri, dan pembangunan keusahawanan selari dengan Wawasan 2020.	Mengubah MARA daripada institusi berfokus domestik kepada agensi yang kompetitif di peringkat global, inklusif dan berorientasikan masa depan.

Amanah-amanah yang diberikan kepada MARA adalah disesuaikan dengan dasar-dasar keutamaan kerajaan semasa dan juga peranan MARA sebagai sebuah agensi khusus untuk membangunkan kedudukan ekonomi orang Melayu Bumiputera yang inklusif, progresif, dan berpaksikan keupayaan teknologi serta inovasi. Pertamanya daripada hanya memberi akses kepada Pendidikan, MARA telah berkembang menjadi peneraju nasional dalam latihan dan pendidikan, dengan melahirkan tenaga-tenaga manusia mahir dan separuh mahir yang diperlukan negara dalam Pembangunan.

Keduanya dalam soal keusahawanan, bermula dengan matlamat untuk melahirkan usahawan Bumiputera sahaja kepada pertumbuhan inklusif. Walaupun masih berteraskan Bumiputera, dasar terkini turut merangkumi komuniti bukan Melayu dan inisiatif bertaraf global. Begitu juga dalam pelaburan, daripada sokongan mikro kepada pelaburan berimpak tinggi, penglibatan MARA dalam TVET, UniKL, MARA Holdings, dan pelaburan industri menunjukkan kesan ekonomi yang lebih luas dan strategik.

KESIMPULAN

Secara keseluruhannya, amanah-amanah yang telah diberikan oleh kerajaan kepada MARA telah berkembang secara dinamik sejajar dengan perubahan struktur ekonomi negara. Daripada menyediakan kemudahan asas dan peluang pendidikan untuk masyarakat luar bandar, MARA kini menjadi peneraju dalam bidang pendidikan tinggi teknikal, keusahawanan berteknologi, dan pelaburan strategik. Fasa-fasa perkembangan MARA memperlihatkan bagaimana dasar yang fleksibel dan berasaskan data mampu mengekalkan relevansi sesebuah agensi pembangunan dalam mencapai hasrat kerajaan untuk meningkatkan kedudukan ekonomi orang Melayu dan Bumiputera.

PENGHARGAAN

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Living Funerals as an Emerging Ritual: Exploring Its Presence and Perceived Meaning Among Malaysian Chinese

Upacara Pengkebumian Semasa Hidup sebagai Ritual yang Muncul: Menjelajahi Kehadirannya dan Makna yang Dirasai dalam Kalangan Masyarakat Cina Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how the Malaysian Chinese community perceives and responds to the concept of living funerals, an emerging ritual that has sparked public interest amid shifting attitudes toward death. Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) as a framework, it investigates how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control shape individuals' intentions toward this practice. Through semi-structured interviews with 12 Generation Z participants and thematic analysis, the findings reveal that while cultural taboos and limited social support remain challenges, many view living funerals as a meaningful, reflective practice. Personal beliefs and psychological readiness often outweigh external pressures in shaping willingness to consider such rituals. This research offers new insights into death-related behaviours and beliefs in a multicultural context.

Key Words: Living Funeral, death rituals, Malaysian Chinese Community

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneroka bagaimana komuniti Cina Malaysia menilai dan memberi respons terhadap konsep "upacara pengkebumian semasa hidup" (living funerals), satu ritual yang semakin mendapat perhatian sejajar perubahan sikap terhadap kematian. Dengan menggunakan Teori Tingkah Laku yang Dirancang (Theory of Planned Behaviour, TPB) sebagai kerangka teori, kajian ini meneliti bagaimana sikap, norma subjektif, dan kawalan tingkah laku yang dirasakan membentuk niat individu terhadap amalan ini. Melalui temu bual separa berstruktur dengan 12 peserta Generasi Z dan analisis tematik, dapatan menunjukkan bahawa walaupun tabu budaya dan sokongan sosial yang terhad kekal sebagai cabaran, ramai yang melihat upacara ini sebagai satu amalan yang bermakna dan mendorong refleksi. Keyakinan peribadi dan kesiapsiagaan psikologi seringkali mengatasi tekanan luaran dalam membentuk kesanggupan untuk mempertimbangkan ritual sedemikian. Penyelidikan ini memberi pemahaman baharu tentang tingkah laku dan kepercayaan berkaitan kematian dalam konteks berbilang budaya.

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Kata Kunci: Upacara pengkebumian semasa hidup, Upacara kematian, Kommuniti Cina Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

The ways societies manage death and the established norms surrounding it have become reflective of their collective beliefs about mortality (Gadberry, 2000). Douglas asserts that funeral rites serve both social and personal functions, and help the bereaved navigate the psychological distress brought about by death (Davies, 2017). Over time, the traditional concept of funerals, which primarily focuses on serving the deceased, has begun to shift. As proposed by Wolfelt in 1997, the "life-centred funeral" movement challenges conventional funeral industry norms and values. The transformation of funeral rites, moving away from religious and culturally ingrained notions of death, has led to a renewed focus on the essence and meaning of life (Huntington & Metcalf, 1979). Consequently, the secularization of funeral rites has emerged as a major trend in the modern funeral industry (Davies, 2017).

With the development and promotion of the funeral industry and life education in Malaysia, the perspectives of Malaysian Chinese on death and funerals have undergone significant changes. Among these, pre-planning and end-of-life care have gained increasing attention (Moh, 2021). On April Fool's Day 2024, the "living funeral" organized by Malaysian Chinese singer Namewee caused a big stir, and his "incomplete" living funeral was criticized by all walks of life as "dragging the feet of life education" (Adamou, 2024). The content and value of the living funeral has also attracted extensive discussion, with some arguing that it is a waste of money and resources, and that it has been guided by the media and the market to gain attention and promotion (Peng, 2024).

Amidst the trend of secularization and personalization of funeral rituals, living funeral occupies a special place. Despite its gradual development in different cultural contexts, it is still a relatively unfamiliar concept in the Chinese community in Malaysia. Therefore, this study aims to provide a clearer understanding of how Malaysian Chinese individuals become aware of, understand, and accept the practice of living funerals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

LIVING FUNERALS

The history of living funeral can be tracked back in Japan, be attributed to the country's aging society since the 1950s and the excessive commercialization of the funeral industry in the late 1980s, has led consumers to seek greater autonomy in funeral planning (Kawano, 2004). Beyond this, psychological and emotional dimension is one of the reasons that living funerals have gained attention in modern society. For instance, South Korean funeral service provider

has conducted over 25,000 living funerals, to reflect on life and its meaning, ultimately helping to relieve stress and alleviate depression (Woung & Seo, 2019).

With the promotion of life education, these ceremonies are no longer strictly framed as "funerals" but can take diverse forms. In the specific cases in Singapore, living funeral referred as "Love Party" (Hoh, 2024), expressing that "making death less frightening" (Soh, 2024), emphasize personalization and customization.

According to a survey, 26% of Singaporeans expressed openness to hosting their own living funerals (Samuel, 2024). However, in Malaysia, living funeral sparked strong backlash from netizens, by the cause of "trivializing life and death" and crossing ethical boundaries (Tan, 2021).

DEATH RITUALS

In Chinese culture, discussing one's own death and afterlife arrangements is considered disrespectful to elders, while participating in funerary affairs is often seen as bringing misfortune (Kew, 2012). However, with the promotion of life education, public perceptions of funeral traditions have gradually shifted. For example, a phenomenological study on South Korean funeral experiences found that "preparing for death, whether alone or as a family, reduces the emotional burden associated with the funeral process" (Sungwon, 2022). The global COVID-19 pandemic in 2021 accelerated the normalization of pre-arranged death planning, bringing the increasingly will-writing among younger individuals in Malaysia, reflecting a growing awareness of end-of-life planning (Li, 2021).

Previous studies suggest that funerary rites symbolize the transition of the deceased, marking the final passage of life, while also serving as a means for the living to cope with grief and maintain a sense of continuity (Huntington & Metcalf, 1979). This concept has also been extended to living funerals, where individuals perceive them as "rebirth ceremonies", to embrace and heal from their fears, ultimately achieving personal transformation (Chu, 2024). Confronting to death can lead individuals to re-evaluate their life priorities, shifting their focus from external achievements to inner fulfilment (Seifu et al., 2022). This aligns with the concept of "Back to Zero" event, where participants lie in coffins for a minute to simulate death, inspiring them to reflect on the significance of life (Zhong, 2024). Overall, existing research suggests a strong connection between perceptions of death and funerary rituals. Changes in attitudes toward death and funerals can reflect broader societal shifts in understanding and acceptance of mortality.

Personalized and customized funerals, which share conceptual similarities with living funerals, as a part of pre-planned funeral arrangements, reflecting the transition from traditional religious funerals to modern, personalized funerary practices. In a study on alternative funerals, 70% of participants believed that personalized funerals, which cater to the needs of the deceased, provide greater emotional support and empowerment compared to traditional funerals (Bergen & Williams, 1982).

In Malaysia, despite a few funeral companies beginning to offer related personalized services, whether evolving societal values, the promotion of life education, and the

development of the funeral industry will impact the way people view funerary rites—including living funerals—remains an important question.

In summary, research on death rituals is highly diverse. By exploring the experiences and expectations of the living regarding funerary practices, this study aims to uncover how the general public engages with discussions on death-related topics and further extends this inquiry to the emergence of personalized and innovative funerary practices, including living funerals.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative study to explore the perceptions, attitudes, and acceptance of living funerals among Malaysian Chinese by using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. TPB suggests that human behavioural intentions can be reflected through attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control, and that attention to attitudes and perceived behaviours toward specific behaviours can lead to a better understanding of the formation of behavioural intentions and the occurrence of behaviours (Ajzen, 2005). Attitude refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of the given behaviour, subjective norms represent the perceived social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour, and perceived behavioural control is defined as the perceived capability and control over executing the behaviour. (Renzi & Klobas, 2008). In research related to death and funeral rituals, TPB has also been applied to examine consumer behaviour in end-of-life planning (Kemp & Kopp, 2010； Katan et al., 2019).

By applying TPB, this study aims to explore how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence decision-making processes related to living funerals among the Malaysian Chinese community.

PARTICIPANTS

This study adopted purposive sampling to focus on Malaysian Chinese aged 18–30 years, with experience that have participated in a funeral or are aware of living funerals, but not restrictions on religion or profession to ensure diverse perspectives. Additionally, snowball sampling will be used to expand the participant pool by asking interviewees to recommend others who meet the criteria. The demographics of participants can see Table 1.

TABLE 1. Demographics of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Experience
P1	25	Male	Currently engaged in funeral industry
P2	22	Female	Previously participated in related activities
P3	26	Male	Previously worked in the funeral industry
P4	26	Female	Currently engaged in funeral industry
P5	26	Female	Previously participated in related activities
P6	26	Male	Previously participated in related activities or courses
P7	25	Male	Previously participated in related activities or courses

P8	25	Female	Conducted relevant academic research
P9	26	Male	Previously participated in related activities or courses
P10	25	Female	Previously participated in related activities or courses
P11	26	Female	Previously participated in related activities
P12	26	Female	Previously participated in related activities

DATA COLLECTION

This study developed 15 interview questions based on the three main domains of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, and an in-depth interview with 12 participants who had been exposed to or were involved in the relevant field. Eligible participants received text messages or email invitations containing concise information regarding the purpose of the study and the interview. They were informed that the interview was voluntary, that their identity and employment would not be disclosed, and that interviews would be conducted individually either online or offline. This content was gathered through semi-structured interviews incorporating open-ended questions. The inquiries in Table 2 were formulated on the basis of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and pertinent literature on death rituals.

TABLE 2. Interview protocol

No	Questions
1	What do you know about the concept of “living funeral”? What do you think is the point of it?
2	If you had the opportunity to host a living funeral for yourself, would you be willing?
3	What do you think is the impact of hosting a living funeral on an individual and family?
4	What do you think is the difference between a living funeral and a traditional funeral?
5	Do you think your elders and peers will accept you holding a living funeral?
6	Do you think talking about death will change your outlook on life?
7	What influences you to have a living funeral?
8	Do you think this ritual will be accepted in Malaysia’s future society? Why?

DATA ANALYSIS

This study employs Thematic Analysis (TA) as the data analysis method. Its key feature lies in its theory-neutral flexibility, allowing researchers to explore core themes from multiple perspectives while maintaining a structured and systematic analytic process (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, thematic analysis is particularly well-suited for examining individual experiences, social meanings, and cultural phenomena, especially in critical frameworks where psychological, emotional, and social values related to a specific topic are explored (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

Given that this study aims to explore the perceptions, acceptance, and socio-cultural influences surrounding living funerals among the Malaysian Chinese community, thematic analysis is an appropriate method. This study adopts the three core components of TPB as the main thematic categories, integrating them with the systematic steps of thematic analysis.

RESULTS

Based on the TPB framework and using Nvivo to explore the coding phase, eight sub-themes were generated from the interview data. The table 3 outlines the themes and their analytical descriptions.

TABLE 3. Main themes and sub-themes derived from the analysis.

Main Theme	Sub-Theme
Attitude	Diverse but Positive Perceptions
	Emotional Resonance and Functional Benefits
Subjective Norm	Cultural Reluctance and Positivity to Discuss Death
	Understanding and Comparison to Death Rituals
	Limited Societal Openness and Acceptance
Perceived Behavioural Control	Perceived Constraints and Psychological Readiness
Behavioural Intention	Idealized Living Funeral Format
	Situational and Psychological Conditions Shaping Willingness

MAIN THEME 1 : ATTITUDE

This topic explores participants' fundamental understanding and general perception of living funerals. From various perspectives, participants discussed the existence and influence of this ritual in contemporary society, including its ceremonial function, practicality, emotional value, relational bonds, and experiences of death.

Sub-theme1 : Diverse but Positive Perceptions towards Living Funeral Participants' initial reaction to living funerals is usually shock and curiosity: "I was shocked at the time. I used to think that farewell ceremonies were something that people did after they died. I never thought that a farewell ceremony could be held even before a person died." (P2). It was felt by most participants that a space to open up and resolve past issues was provided by the ceremony, allowing difficult-to-process emotions to be dealt with:"It may provide another solution to the problem of life for human beings in the 21st century." (P1)

In terms of function and practicality, participants felt that the ritual allowed people to "experience death", encouraging reflection on mortality and evoking the most authentic feelings about life. Participants also mentioned that increasing awareness of death can encourage people to cherish the present, enjoy life, and become more engaged in their own lives: "We should realize that regardless of gender or age, death does not necessarily occur in old age. Accidents can happen at any time, reminding us to cherish our loved ones and care for them while we can". (P11)

As a ceremony similar to advance planning, participants believe that living funerals also have the important meaning of "advance preparation" and can effectively avoid family disputes

and confusion after the death of the deceased. However, although most participants had a relatively positive understanding of the meaning, function, and connotation of living funerals, they believed that such ceremonies should be reserved for "those who truly need them" rather than being viewed as a tool for healing and resolving disputes in life. One of the participants said that: "I think it's understandable that terminally ill patients, elderly people, or those who know they don't have much time left and are prepared to face death would hold a living funeral."(P10)

Sub-theme2: Emotional Resonance and Functional Benefits Participants who had positive thoughts about living funerals generally believed that such ceremonies could provide emotional and spiritual support. In addition to the most significant factor—"they have a chance to say things that they did not have time to say" (P4)—participants believed that this ritual's impact on individuals, families, and communities lies in strengthening relationships. Participant 7 shared about his feeling: "I think it may cause a lot of waves in the relationship, and then make the cherishment of each other, cherishing life and cherishing the present more concrete… about strengthening or deepening the bond."(P7)

In addition to strengthening or repairing relationships between the living and the deceased, participants believe that living funerals create a space for understanding personal duality. This allows people to understand and care for different aspects of the deceased's life experiences, bringing the group closer together. As the participant said: "Many people's perspectives are one-sided, but at the living funeral you can really get to know this person again in a comprehensive way. I think this is a very new experience, and you will better understand what this person is thinking."(P5)

Some participants suggested that living funerals could enhance the promotion of life education by combining concepts with rituals: "When you watch all the works about the subject of life and death, you will have deep feelings, but after the feelings, you usually digest it internally, so you may not be able to fully act. But if there is really such an activity, then whether it is a participant or an initiator, I think it can be carried out in a very specific way"(P7)

Furthermore, participants believe that living funerals can impact behaviour. Aside from eliminating the need to speak on behalf of the deceased through wills and messages, participants can understand how those around them feel about death during the ceremony, thereby knowing how to approach the dying person. "From the funeral to the time of his death, his friends know whether I should go to find him or not, whether I should be by his side. And not only friends, but also relatives. I know what this person is thinking and what his situation is, and I also know how can I views his death, to react."(P6)

While participants tend to have a positive attitude and open mind when it comes to life issues and living funerals, their relatives, friends, and the surrounding community hold different opinions.

MAIN THEME 2: SUBJECTIVE NORM

The second construct factor of TPB theory states that this theme centres on the attitudes of participants' friends, family, and social groups regarding living funerals. It also explores participants' comprehension of funerals, their propensity to discuss death, their social openness, and other related factors. The theme includes three sub-themes.

Sub-theme1 : Cultural Reluctance and Positivity to Discuss Death Due to differences in Chinese culture and religious backgrounds, the older generations still have certain taboos regarding this topic. Even if they don't firmly refuse to discuss it, they express their unwillingness by changing the subject or remaining silent. However, it is noteworthy that, while they are reluctant to discuss their own death or that of their relatives, they do not object to discussing the death of others: "They may not directly tell you 'Don't tell me this, I don't want to hear it', but when you try to talk to them, or you specifically chat with them, they may just say a few words to avoid the question."(P1)

Participants believed that older Chinese people believed in the saying, "Trouble comes from the mouth", and held the superstition that "every time you celebrate your birthday, the underworld marks you once." Therefore, they refused to talk about death themselves and did not want their children to talk about it either: "As for me, my family used to be very 'bantang'. When I was a kid, I would be slapped if I said the word death. People couldn't say anything unlucky."(P4) According to participants' observations, most people avoid discussing death because they fear the loss, uncertainty, and future that death brings: "I think the so-called superstition is often because we don't understand death. And it is not that you have done more, but that you have done less. "(P4);"I think it's a fear. It's not in death; it's in the instability of losing."(P1)

When people avoid thinking about death, they are forced to confront its unexpected arrival. Participants mentioned that most people suddenly become concerned with the topic of death when someone close to them passes away. They stated that "no one can truly prepare for death", but one can choose not to panic or feel helpless when faced with it. From another perspective, some participants believe that Chinese people cannot shake off their superstitions about this topic because they have a deep reverence for tradition and are afraid to break long-standing customs. At the same time, it is also due to the practical and uncommunicative habits of local Chinese people, who therefore adopt a more pointless attitude toward death. As the participants claimed: "We don't dare to flatter traditions, but do we have new ideas? Actually, no."(P8); "I think Chinese society doesn't like to express emotions, I'm dead then dead lah, why should I set up such an occasion?"(P6)

However, participants believed that the extent of discussion about death and attitudes toward it depend largely on personal growth and cultural background. There is no fundamental right or wrong, "I think talking about life and death is a way to reflect on your entire life process. It is not necessarily right or wrong."(P7). Participants generally demonstrated a higher degree of openness and willingness to discuss the topic with peers than with elders, who generally had a lower level of acceptance regarding discussions about death. However, participants believed that this situation is changing.

Sub-theme2 : Understanding and Comparison to Death Rituals Participants' understanding and interpretation of funerals greatly affect their willingness to hold living funerals and their awareness of the importance of death rituals. Participants distinguish clearly between traditional and living funerals, believing the former are for the living and the latter are for the dead: "It's special for the people dying that do a farewell to the world and convinces himself to accept the arrival of death."(P3)

In other words, despite their differences in content, form, and rhythm, rituals all aim to provide comfort regarding the changes brought about by death and separation. However, participants also noted that traditional funerals are solemn and involve many taboos and complicated steps that create a separation between life and death. Participants felt that traditional funerals were too hurried, complicated, and tradition-laden. Relatives and friends were too busy completing a series of activities, which left them exhausted with no outlet for their grief afterward. Furthermore, people's confusion over the intricate rituals of traditional funerals, coupled with low religious devotion, diminishes the meaning of funerals. This reduces the efficacy of rituals in processing grief, alleviating the fear of death, and accepting the deceased's departure: "People nowadays may have a lower level of piety towards religion; they may not understand these traditional rituals well enough." (P8); "If you don't believe in salvation and heaven, then the funeral is not for the person, right?(P6)"

Participants expressed the sentiment that traditional funerals often fail to resolve feelings of regret, instead leaving people immersed in guilt, regret, and sadness. Despite most participants find the elaborate rituals of traditional funerals troublesome, they still believe that these rituals are significant and will remain the mainstream choice for funerals in Chinese society, with the reason that "have their own meaning."(P1)

Participants' deep reflection and understanding of traditional funerals largely shaped their positive attitude toward living funerals.

Sub-theme 3: Limited Societal Openness and Acceptance However, when assessing social openness, participants believed that, although the general public's understanding of living funerals varied, their level of acceptance did not differ greatly. It also includes Asian societies' lack of obsession with expressing and dealing with emotions. Participants indicated that older generations at most not be overly surprised or strongly opposed to such a funeral, but it is uncertain whether they would organize or participate in one. This attitude also applies to younger generations: "Young people may be more open-minded, but it cannot be ruled out that they view it as something fun."(P11)

Moreover, from a counselling and psychological perspective, if living funerals serve as a means of resolving regrets, then it cannot be ruled out that individuals with suicidal tendencies may engage in suicidal behaviour after participating in such activities. One of the participant claimed that: "As I said, many times the purpose of a living funeral is to reduce regrets. Some people may feel that they really have no regrets after doing it, and they can leave this world."(P4)

Finally, regarding the possibility of change in the Malaysian Chinese community's future views on the ritual, most participants believed that people would prefer to adopt an indifferent attitude. Even if change is possible, it will not be easy, the participants trusted about: "Chinese are still very pragmatic. They won't be too eager to spend the money. They may want to die on their own."(P6); "Malaysia is a very superstitious country, regardless of race"(P5)

There is a certain gap between participants' personal awareness and the general public's views, and the final behavioural assessment factor will examine participants' capabilities and resources to more accurately determine the causes behind their transition from cognition to action.

MAIN THEME3: PERCEIVED BEHAVIOURAL CONTROL

This theme further examines participants' beliefs, resources, and concerns about holding living funerals.

Sub-theme 1: Perceived Constraints and Psychological Readiness Participants commonly mentioned "mental preparation", "clear purpose" and "financial circumstances". The opinions of friends and family, as well as social reactions, were unanimously found not to influence participants' willingness to hold a living funeral. Due to practical considerations, participants believed that financial circumstances inevitably became the most significant factor in how individuals planned and conducted the ceremony. However, even the economy is the biggest obstacle, participants believe there are many ways to approach planning. It is not necessary to allocate many resources; rather, the focus should be on expressing the purpose of the ceremony. They identified the psychological preparation for their own impending death as the most challenging aspect: "The lack of psychological construction and the fear of falling into a sad scenario."(P9)

Participants claimed that death rituals are the most important rituals in life and that organizing a funeral that is uniquely one's own does not require excessive concern for social reactions or the opinions of relatives and friends. From personal cognition, social and external acceptance to practical abilities and resources, participants generally maintain a positive attitude toward the ritual and are willing to promote it. The specific imagination of a living funeral can help participants form clearer behavioural intentions, which is also the final conclusion-oriented conclusion in TPB theory.

MAIN THEME4: BEHAVIOUR INTENTOIN

Participants had a strong preference for living funerals that were completely different from traditional ones.

Sub-theme 1: Idealized living funeral format Participants' ideas for planning a living funeral reflect their approach to saying goodbye to the world. They reject the solemnity of traditional funerals, hoping instead to bid farewell in a relaxed and joyful atmosphere. In the

living funeral envisioned by the participants, the ceremony's primary purposes are to "explain one's influence on others" and "summarize one's life", rather than to express sadness or regret. Participants also pointed out that in a living funeral, the most important thing is the connection between people, not the form or procedures. What matters is the gains achieved through the activity: "I think the focus is not on how the ceremony is run, but on the people, that is, how the people who come to the funeral process their emotions, and which links can help them deal with the possible psychological burden brought by the whole activity."(P6)

In the participants' specific ideas, they hope to view the funeral as a party, a gathering, or even a general farewell party, and hope that the participation of the counsellor will ensure that the attendees do not feel burdened by the deceased and that the emotions brought about by the ceremony can be digested: "I would first look for someone who does counselling, rather than someone who works in the funeral industry."(P6)

Sub-theme 2: Situational and Psychological Conditions Shaping Willingness Participants generally expressed a desire to hold a living funeral or practice "pre-death farewells", but they were more inclined to do so when they were nearing death. On the other hand, some participants held completely opposite views, believing that the importance of a living funeral lies in the concept it conveys rather than its form, and that even without a ceremony, it is possible to "say what needs to be said". While participants had varying views on the timing and purpose of holding a living funeral, they were unanimous in their strong desire to participate in someone else's living funeral. Even if they were not yet prepared for the death of a loved one, this did not affect their desire to participate.

DISCUSSION

The research findings show that participants generally hold positive views towards living funerals, especially in recognising the emotional support, promotion of death reflection, and the intrinsic value of breaking cultural and religious superstitions embedded in the ritual. As in previous studies, the social atmosphere and family environment perceived by participants provide limited support for this ritual (Ngah et al., 2023), and the prevailing Chinese pragmatic worldview and death taboos restrict open discussion (Jiao & Hussin, 2020). However, their recognition of the value of the ritual ensures that internal beliefs are not overridden by external norms. This indicates that the motivation behind participants' willingness to carry out a living funeral stems more from personal needs, understanding of the ritual, and its purpose, while external pressures such as resources, financial burden, and social perception can be mitigated through various planning approaches, shows that in situations where attitudes are strong, PBC has less predictive power for intentions (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

Although the older generation accepts death as a natural part of life, Lei's research shows that they still tend to avoid discussing it and preparing. As participants pointed out, generational cultural differences, fear of death, and avoidance are the main reasons that hinder public discussion of death (Lei et al., 2022). Beside this, in the Malaysian and Asian contexts,

emotional resistance and cultural differences regarding "speaking one's mind" are significant factors that influence people's consideration of living funerals (Hei et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2025).Therefore, regarding whether knowledge in this field can be accepted or popularised, participants believe it is a gradually improving but extremely slow process.

The results of this study show that within the TPB model, although all three core variables exert influence, "attitude" and "perceived behavioural control" play more prominent roles. As TPB suggests, when individuals believe they are capable and affirm the intrinsic value of an action, positive behavioural intentions may arise even in the face of social normative pressures (Ajzen, 2005).

During the reflection on death rituals and the imagination of living funerals, participants proposed integrating elements such as parties and gatherings, emphasising the creation of an emotionally connected, warm and relaxed space. Their imagination of personalised and non-traditional forms of living funerals echoes Walter's observation that death rituals centred on the individual and focused on the meaning of life have become a growing trend (Walter, 1996). In addition, participants generally agreed that thinking about and planning for death in advance can bring spiritual comfort and even practical benefits to life, preventing unexpected situations such as emotional breakdowns or family disputes due to unpreparedness among loved ones, aligns to "preparing for death in advance, whether alone or with family, can reduce the difficulty of the funeral process" (Park et al., 2020).

In summary, this study reveals the presence and significance of living funerals as an emerging death ritual within the Malaysian Chinese community. It is seen as a ceremony that promotes life education, encourages a more open mindset towards death, resolves regrets and conflicts. Although society generally maintains a conservative attitude, individual needs, psychological readiness, and positive interpretations of the ritual have become the core driving forces for promoting and accepting such ceremonies.

CONCLUSION

This study is guided by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), which provides a neutral framework and intrinsic variables of human psychological behaviour, to develop new interview design and systematically address the rising and culturally sensitive issues of death and living funerals (Francis, 2004). By applying TPB to the culturally and emotionally complex topic of death, it reveals the interaction between cultural cognition and psychological readiness in end-of-life decision-making, and shows that changing one's attitude toward a specific topic will have a greater impact on the outcome of one's intentions (Sussman & Gifford, 2018).

The objective of how Malaysian Chinese perceive, experience, and conceptualise living funerals has been thoroughly addressed in this study. Findings showed that living funerals are meaningful, especially in term of emotional support, reflection on life and death, and breaking cultural taboos. Although society and family support may be limited, many individuals remain open to the idea due to their personal beliefs and emotional needs. In conclusion, the current

study revealed that, although uncommon in the Malaysian Chinese community, living funerals are an area drawing positive attention.

Through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, this study found that attitudes and perceived behavioural control are more effective predictors of behavioural intention than social pressure (Ajzen, 1991). Participants are more willing to hold a living funeral if they understood its purpose and felt emotionally prepared, regardless of others' expectations. Many also suggested that living funerals should be warm and personal, incorporating elements such as gatherings or celebrations to make the experience more meaningful, emphasized the social dimension of death ritual and the value of emotional expression(O'Rourke et al., 2011).

Moreover, living funeral was interpreted as both a therapeutic and ritualistic practice, reflecting individuals' positive subjective responses in death dialogues, emotional preparation, and the construction of personal values (Kellehear, 2007). However, due to limited familiarity, participants often relied on prior experience with death and funerals, resulting in responses that were sometimes fragmented, but on the other hand, it allowed the thematic boundaries of the discussion to be more open and expansive (Patton, 2015). While the sample——aged 22 to 28——who offered reflective insights, though their exposure to life education and openness toward death may have likely contributed to the generally positive attitude towards living funerals. Therefore, suggesting a need for broader age and cultural diversity in future studies, and the themes developed may serve as the basic for future quantitative tools, informing the development of measurement.

In summary, while traditional views and fear of discussing death still exist, more individuals are starting to see the value of planning for death thoughtfully and peacefully. This shows a slow but important shift in how people think about death, encouraging more open and prepared conversations in the future.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings suggest that living funerals hold potential as instruments of life education and psychosocial support within Malaysian Chinese communities, particularly among younger generations. Counselling, gerontology, and funeral service practitioners may consider incorporating advance emotional preparation and personalized formats that prioritize relational closure over ritual formalities. Policymakers and nonprofit providers of death education could pilot community programs that incorporate living funerals into broader end-of-life planning initiatives while addressing cultural sensitivities and safeguarding against potential adverse effects, particularly for vulnerable individuals. Further translational work should evaluate scalable, culturally adapted models that combine counselling, family mediation, and affordable service options.

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Global Migration and Japan's Framework for Ethical Recruitment

Migrasi Global dan Rangka Kerja Pengambilan Beretika Jepun

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ABSTRACT

The research aims to analyse Japan's experience towards fair migration and ethical recruitment in the context of global migration challenges. The United Nations has implemented a variety of global initiatives that acknowledge the significance of fair migration in the prevention of debt bondage, exploitation, and forced labour. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial for the effective management of global migration. SDG 10 emphasises the reduction of disparities between and within nations, and Target 10.7 is specifically designed to facilitate responsible, safe, and orderly migration. One of the indicators of safe migration is the payment of recruitment costs by employers rather than foreign labourers (Indicator 10.7.1). This paper examines the programmes of the Japanese government, remediation of recruitment fees by companies in Japan, and bilateral efforts by JICA (and its related association: JP-MIRAI) in safeguarding migrant rights and achieving zero-cost migration. A new program called Ikusei Shūrō (Training and Employment) will be introduced to address issues of ethical recruitment in transnational labour migration, along with initiatives by socially responsible companies. The findings suggest that Ikusei Shūrō program includes measures to improve conditions for ethical recruitment, but its actual implementation is still awaited. In addition, business communities, such as Responsible Business Alliance member companies, have begun taking concrete steps toward the ethical recruitment of migrant workers including the prohibition of worker-paid recruitment fees yet full implementation throughout the lower tiers of the industrial supply chain remains to be achieved.

Keywords: ethical recruitment; fair migration; foreign worker; Japan; SDG 10

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ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengalaman Jepun ke arah migrasi yang adil dan pengambilan beretika dalam konteks cabaran migrasi global. Pertubuhan Bangsa-Bangsa Bersatu telah melaksanakan pelbagai inisiatif global yang mengiktiraf kepentingan migrasi yang adil dalam mencegah perhambaan hutang, eksploitasi, dan buruh paksa. Agenda 2030 untuk Pembangunan Mampan adalah penting untuk pengurusan migrasi global yang berkesan. SDG 10 menekankan pengurangan jurang antara dan dalam negara, dan Sasaran 10.7 direka khusus untuk memudahkan migrasi yang bertanggungjawab, selamat dan teratur. Salah satu petunjuk migrasi yang selamat ialah pembayaran kos pengrekruitan oleh majikan bukannya buruh asing (Petunjuk 10.7.1). Kertas ini mengkaji inisiatif kerajaan Jepun, pembayaran balik yuran pengrekruitan oleh syarikat-syarikat di Jepun, dan usaha dua hala oleh JICA dalam melindungi hak migran dan mencapai migrasi sifar kos. Program baharu yang dipanggil Ikusei Shūrō (Latihan dan Pekerjaan) akan diperkenalkan untuk menangani isu pengambilan pekerja yang beretika dalam migrasi buruh merentas negara, bersama dengan inisiatif oleh syarikat yang mengamalkan tanggungjawab sosial. Hasil kajian ini mencadangkan bahawa program Ikusei Shūrō mengambil kira langkah-langkah ke arah pengambilan beretika, tetapi pelaksanaan sebenarnya masih ditunggu. Selain itu, komuniti perniagaan, seperti syarikat-syarikat anggota Responsible Business Alliance, telah mula mengambil langkah konkrit ke arah pengambilan pekerja migran secara beretika termasuk larangan kos pengrekruitan yang dibayar oleh pekerja namun pelaksanaan sepenuhnya di peringkat sistem rantaian bekalan industri masih belum dicapai.

Kata kunci: pengambilan beretika; migrasi yang adil; pekerja asing; Jepun; SDG 10

INTRODUCTION

Globally, many attempts have been undertaken to institutionalise the rights of migrant workers into global governance, including the UN Global Compact on Migration, migration-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the International Labour Organization's 'Fair Recruitment Initiatives' (Jones 2022; Likić-Brborić 2018).The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018 with the objective of enhancing migrant rights, international cooperation, and migration governance. The Global Compact for Migration (GCM) is the inaugural global migration agreement, comprising twenty-three objectives (McAdam 2019). The GCM, or the architecture of global migration governance has two objectives: the first is to facilitate the movement of migrants and empower them, while the second is to monitor their mobility

(Pécoud 2021). Significant commitments include the promotion of ethical recruitment, the reduction of vulnerabilities, the encouragement of respectable employment for migrants, and the preservation of lives (Solomon and Sheldon 2018). Objective 6 of the GCM aims to facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work (United Nations 2019). Action measures designed to safeguard migrant workers from various forms of exploitation include the regulation of public and private recruiting agencies, as well as the prohibition of recruiters and employers from imposing migration charges on migrant workers (McAdam 2019).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial for the effective management of global migration. The SDGs bolster the rights of migrant workers by promoting universal human rights instruments, social protection, and dignified work in certain migration-related objectives (Likić-Brborić 2018). Lowering migration costs and eliminating workers-pay fees adhere to SDG Target 10.7 concerning facilitating orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration. One of the indicators of safe migration is the assumption of recruitment costs by employers rather than labourers (Indicator 10.7.1). The facilitation of orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration is in accordance with SDG target 10.7, which is achieved by reducing migration costs and eradicating workers' pay fees. The recruitment cost endured by the employee as a proportion of the yearly income earned in the country of destination is the definition of SDG indicator 10.7.1. The SDG Target 8.8 recognises the importance of protecting labor rights and promoting safe working environments for all workers. In particular, Target 8.7 calls for the abolition of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking, and child labour, while Target 8.8 demands the preservation of labour rights and the promotion of secure working environments (Rotaeche 2019; United Nations 2015).

This research seeks to answer two questions: How does the Japanese government ensure ethical recruitment? What are the bilateral efforts conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) (or its related association: JP-MIRAI) to ensure fair recruitment? Ethical recruitment is defined as a 'process for hiring workers lawfully and fairly and transparently that respects their dignity and human rights' (Verité 2021: 2–3). The International Labour Organisation (ILO) report, titled "Fair Migration: Setting an ILO Agenda", asserts that fair migration must uphold the basic rights of migrants and provide them chances for dignified employment (2014: 4). A rights-based approach to migration governance is crucial in combating labour exploitation and abuses of basic rights resulting from inadequate protection measures and flawed migration systems (2014: 23). Fair migration is indicative of a fundamental switch in the conceptualisation of the labour migration industry, from a business model to a rights protection model. The state endeavoured to eliminate the business aspect of the industry by instituting zero-cost memoranda of understanding (MoUs), implementing direct employment through digitalisation, and introducing joint liability schemes for employers and private employment agencies. Under the MoUs, the long-standing practice of labourers covering migration costs has been replaced by the zero-cost migration regime (Low 2025). National governance dictates the operation of a nation's migration management systems. Effective international labour migration governance requires cohesive institutional systems

endorsed by national governments. These frameworks should prioritise the establishment of fair and competitive labour mobility that advantages host nations, destination countries, and migrants (Hamada 2012).

This paper focuses on policy interventions for fair migration and zero-cost recruitment based on the case study of Japan. This paper firstly discusses the global frameworks on ethical recruitment, followed by Japan's new programme on *Ikusei Shūrō* (Training and Employment), remediation of recruitment fees by Japanese companies, and efforts by government related agencies.

ETHICAL RECRUITMENT: THE GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS

This paper is built within the fair recruitment framework established by the International Labour Organization's (ILO) "Fair Recruitment Initiative" and the International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) "International Recruitment Integrity System" (IRIS). The ILO established the Fair Recruitment Initiative to define and promote fair recruitment as a coordinated governance mechanism. Fair recruitment is acknowledged as a component of global migration regulation (Jones 2022). In response to the difficulties encountered by low-skilled migrant workers in labour markets, the ILO initiated the "Fair Recruitment Initiative" in 2014 with three objectives: to prevent human trafficking and forced labour, to safeguard workers' rights from exploitative practices during the placement process until their return, and to diminish the costs associated with labour migration while improving developmental outcomes for migrant workers and their families (ILO 2015). The expenses for migrant workers might be much more than those for domestic workers, attributed to a lack of transparency in the global supply chain and varying definitions of recruiting costs (ILO 2019). In 2016, the ILO established the "General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment," applicable to both domestically and internationally recruited workers. The seventh of the thirteen basic principles states, "No recruitment fees or related costs should be charged to, or otherwise borne by, workers or jobseekers" (ILO 2019: 13).

Simultaneously, IOM's IRIS is a worldwide multi-stakeholder program designed to ensure equitable international recruiting for all parties involved, including migrant workers, employers, recruiters, and both countries of origin and destination. IRIS enforces equitable recruitment by the promotion of the Employer-Pays Principle, upholding the rights of migrant workers, increasing openness and accountability in recruitment processes, and fortifying governmental policies, laws, and enforcement mechanisms (IOM 2014). The IRIS Standard aligns with Objective 6 of the UN Global Compact concerning Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. It comprises seven principles (two general and five particular), each of which is elaborated with indicators to assess labour recruiters' adherence to ethical recruiting standards (IOM 2019).

Unethical recruiting techniques, particularly those imposing exorbitant fees on migrants, exacerbate the dangers of debt bondage, forced labour, migrant smuggling, and human

trafficking. This culminates in substantial indebtedness, prompting irregular movement as migrant workers circumvent legal avenues or abandon their low-paying legal employment in pursuit of illicit opportunities inside shadow economies. Excessive borrowing adversely affects both families and the economy of labour-exporting nations that depend on remittances. Consequently, elevated recruiting expenses diminish the influence of migration on development and result in the unequal allocation of its advantages (Institute for Human Rights and Business [IHRB] 2017: 16–17; Wickramasekara & Baruah 2017: 23). A rights-based and socially fair framework for regulating global labour movement requires the removal of the structural function of agents (Jones 2022). At the bilateral level, the principles of zero migration cost and the employer-pays-recruitment model were implemented by the MoU between both the sending and receiving states. The MoU between Malaysia and Nepal, signed in 2018) was an example of zero-cost migration to address forced labour and human trafficking (Low 2020).

An ILO research entitled "The Cost of Coercion" indicates a strong correlation between recruiting expenditures and the likelihood of victimisation by forced labour (ILO 2009: 32). Forced labour include workplace exploitation and abusive recruiting methods that increase workers' susceptibility to exploitation. Debt bondage, or the exploitation of indebtedness, is the primary factor that confines people to circumstances of forced labour (ILO 2009). The activities of recruiting agencies amount to human trafficking if the recruitment of workers involves coercion, abduction, fraud, deceit, abuse of authority, or exploitation of vulnerability for the purpose of exploitation, including forced labour (UNODC 2015). The acceptance of underground labour markets and the establishment of temporary migrant worker programs with single-employer sponsorship have led to unethical labour conditions and the exploitation of migrant workers. The lack of legal status and the government's unwillingness to enforce labour laws against unscrupulous employers have resulted in precarious conditions for undocumented workers (Crépeau 2018). High transaction costs are often linked to the first stages of recruitment in Asia and the Pacific. This is exacerbated by the involvement of several agents, subagents, middlemen, travel providers, and bureaucrats in the recruitment process, resulting in additional layers of expenses across various nations. The substantial expenses constitute a significant barrier to the allocation of migration funds for socio-economic development initiatives (Hugo 2009).

Unlike conventional state-centric regulatory measures for recruiting firms, the corporate responsibility of the private sector is becoming more significant. Several worldwide efforts underscore business responsibility, including the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (2011), the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (1976), and the Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity (2011). The U.N. Guiding Principles, referred to as UNGPs or the Ruggie Principles, are the foremost international benchmarks for corporate behaviour (Farbenblum & Nolan 2017; Ruggie & Nelson 2015). Individual enterprises are a primary target of changes aimed at equitable recruitment, since those at the upper echelons of the supply chain may enforce compliance among labour recruiters and subcontractors (Farbenblum & Nolan 2017). By monitoring labour law

infringements and reducing irregular migration, technology interventions promote fair migration. By facilitating the monitoring of employers with undocumented and absconding foreign workers, as well as wage fraud, they address employers' failure to comply with immigration and labour laws. Employers are encouraged to adhere to legal obligations and employ regular employees by being closely monitored for any violations of migrant rights (Low 2023).

The UN Guiding Principles were ratified by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011. The paper signifies a significant advancement in the international regulation of human rights norms for multinational corporations. The Ruggie Principles advocate for companies to rectify human rights breaches and facilitate the assessment of corporate human rights performance (Aaronson & Higham 2013). These Guiding Principles are based on Protect, Respect, and Remedy. The principles are complementary: 1) The state is obligated to safeguard against third-party human rights infringements, 2) companies are duty-bound to uphold human rights, and 3) there is a need for enhanced access to remedies (Ruggie 2008). This paper delineates a corporate obligation to uphold human rights, mandating enterprises to avert, mitigate, and rectify human rights infringements associated with their activities (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR] 2011a). Moreover, Principle 15 of the UNGP asserts that to meet their corporate responsibilities, corporations must implement policies and processes, including policy commitments, human rights due diligence procedures, and mediation mechanisms. Principle 22 articulates the practical concept of corporate responsibility to provide repair (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR] 2011b).

The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, established in 1976, signify a notable worldwide endeavour. These guidelines provide governmental advice for firms about responsible business practices. They are the only multilaterally sanctioned corporate codes of conduct, embodying the worldwide consensus established by the participating states (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] 2001). In light of the evolving international investment environment, the rules were amended in 2011 to include a new chapter on human rights and an innovative due diligence framework. The human rights chapter references the U.N.'s Protect, Respect, and Remedy Framework and recognises that adherence to human rights is the anticipated worldwide responsibility for businesses. The inability of a state to enforce international human rights does not reduce the human rights responsibilities anticipated from corporations (OECD 2011). The updated OECD Guidelines include corporate responsibility for human rights protection in the new human rights chapter and provide a fresh due diligence obligation in the General Policies chapter, so aligning with the U.N. Guiding Principles (Ruggie & Nelson 2015).

The Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity were established in 2011 as a framework for enterprises across all sectors to fulfil their corporate duty in safeguarding the rights of migrant workers (Institute for Human Rights and Business [IHRB] 2017: 4, 10). The Dhaka concepts include two fundamental concepts and 10 additional principles grounded in human rights, applicable to employers and labour recruiters throughout each phase of the

migration process. The fundamental principles underscore equitable treatment devoid of discrimination in the workplace and the safeguarding of employment rights in the host nation (Institute for Human Rights and Business [IHRB] 2017: 5). Principle 1 asserts that migrant workers should not incur recruiting expenses, while Principle 9 emphasises the need for access to remedies. Exorbitant recruiting expenses have led to debt bondage, coerced work, and human trafficking. Migrant workers may face opaque wage cuts if they are responsible for recruiting expenses (Institute for Human Rights and Business [IHRB] 17, 28).

METHODOLOGY

The study, focused on the Japanese case study, aims to comprehend national, bilateral, and global initiatives in fostering safe movement and fair recruitment. The case study was selected because to nations' initiation of bilateral initiatives by JICA aimed at zero-cost migration in the labour-sending countries. It analyses reports from international organisations, official documents, websites of the companies, online news media and secondary literature. The data are analysed and interpreted using a method known as qualitative content analysis. The analytical process includes the identification, location, selection, analysis, and synthesis of primary data from documents. Qualitative content analysis is executed through these steps: formulating research questions, selecting materials, developing a coding framework, segmenting the materials into coding units, testing the coding framework, evaluating and refining the coding framework, analysing the data, and presenting the research findings. Inductive analysis entails the methodical formation of categories and subcategories derived from empirical evidence (Schreier 2012).

PRACTICES TOWARDS ETHICAL RECRUITMENT AND FEE REDUCTION IN JAPAN

Lessons learned from Technical Intern Training Program

The Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) of Japan began under an "international cooperation" framework in the late 1980s, transitioning from the 1990 Industrial Training Program to the official establishment of TITP in 1993, which imposed a two-year training restriction. In 2010, participants were classified as 'workers' rather than 'trainees,' thereby bringing them to the protections of Japanese labour law from the outset (OTIT 2024). A reform in 2017 established a new residency status—Technical Intern Training—and prolonged the programme to five years (OTIT 2024: 5). By 2025, TITP has 91 job categories and 168 distinct tasks, demonstrating its extensive occupational range. The program functions under 18 bilateral Memoranda of Cooperation (MOC) between Japan and the sending nations, establishing a

transnational administrative framework for the deployment and oversight of workers (JITCO 2025).

TITP workers are mostly engaged in manufacturing and agriculture, sectors where small and medium-sized firms significantly depend on their labour (OECD 2024: 82). Nevertheless, the system has encountered ongoing criticism. Inspections performed by the Organisation for Technical Intern Training (OTIT) and other agencies have uncovered a significant prevalence of labour law infringements among certified businesses (OECD 2024: 175). Issues include excessive overtime, hazardous work environments, and inappropriate pay deductions. Moreover, recruiting expenses and debt bondage are significant issues. Numerous trainees pay substantial fees and accrue debt to travel to Japan, sometimes to licensed or semi-official middlemen in their home countries (OECD 2024: 172; U.S. Department of State 2024). These debts produce a systemic vulnerability, preventing workers from reporting abuses or leaving from exploitative workplace.

International assessments, such as the Trafficking in Persons Report (U.S. Department of State 2024), have cautioned that such indebtedness and employer-based residency statuses render some individuals vulnerable to situations tantamount to labour exploitation. Academics and migrant rights organisations contend that the TITP operates primarily as a conduit for temporary low-skilled labour migration rather as a vehicle for skills transfer, perpetuating unequal power dynamics between employers and migrant workers (Onuki 2025). Notwithstanding the 2017 reforms—such as enhanced oversight by OTIT and more stringent regulation of supervising organisations —execution remains inconsistent (Burgess 2020). Current policy discussions focus on ethical recruiting, fee reimbursement, and possible transitions from the TITP to Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) status to promote equitable labour mobility and enhance protections for foreign workers in Japan (OECD 2024; OTIT 2024; U.S. Department of State 2024).

Government's Initiative in Japan: Ikusei Shūrō Program

The Ikusei Shūrō (Training and Employment) Program is Japan's new framework to replace the Technical Intern Training Program (TITP). It will be introduced within 3 years from 2024[1] to strengthen worker protection, expand job mobility, and align with international labor standards. The initiative aims to mitigate labour shortages while promoting fairness and minimising the potential for exploitation, especially for international workers (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2025). The following table delineates the distinctions between the former TITP and the newly established Ikusei Shūrō program. Under the Ikusei Shūrō program, the fees are limited to a maximum of two months' salary of the trainee paid to the sending organisations. The cost breakdown of fees to sending organisations should be transparent and

[1] The law was enacted in 2024, and detailed manuals and ordinance draft were released for public comment in April 2025, pending the issuance of Ministerial Ordinances for implementation. The final outcome may be subject to new cabinet members to be selected Oct 2025.

uploaded through websites. In addition, the employers must pay when issuing a job posting to receiving recruitment organisation in Japan. Companies are prohibited from deducting the paid fees from workers. Moreover, the employment contract must be transparent in providing the cost breakdown. Together, these reforms aim to create a system that supports both Japan's labour needs and the protection of migrant workers, moving closer to ethical recruitment practices.

TABLE 1: Key Features of Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) and *Ikusei Shūrō*

Category	Technical Intern Training Program (TTTP)	Ikusei Shūrō (Training and Employment Program)
1.Recruitment fees	Unclear regulation, often high costs imposed by sending agencies, debt bondage is common	Fee cap set at max 2 months' salary to sending organisations; mandatory disclosure of costs breakdown online; kickbacks prohibited; Employer's pay when issuing a job posting to receiving recruitment/supervising organisation in Japan
2.Reimbursement/ prohibition	Salary deductions, deposits and penalties used to recover costs; weak regulations	Explicit prohibition of deductions, deposits, and kickbacks; reimbursement and remedial measures required
3.Transparency	Cost breakdowns were unclear	Contract and cost breakdowns must be clearly disclosed in advance, in multiples languages, so workers understand their rights and obligations
4. Housing Conditions	Housing details reported but no obligation to submit proof of adequacy	Employers must submit documents proving housing is appropriate
5. Working condition	No specified regulations	Equal pay, equal learning opportunity, equal social benefits
6. Job Mobility (transfer)	Transfer are strictly limited, led to high risk of absconding	Transparent rules allow transfer under certain conditions, greater job mobility
7.Language training	Basic orientation provided but inconsistent in quality and duration	Clear learning targets (CEFR A1-A2 level); required hours of Japanese language training
8. Monitoring and Supervision	OTIT oversight often criticised as insufficient	Stricter registration and sanctions for supervising organisations; stronger monitoring
9. Career Path	Transition to Specified Skilled Worker unclear; many dropped out	Official pathway from Ikusei Shūrō to Specified Skilled Worker explicitly established

Sources: Compiled by the author with reference to *Ikusei Shūrō* parts from Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan, 2025. https://public-comment.e-gov.go.jp/pcm/download?seqNo=0000292196

Companies' Initiatives: Responsible Business Alliance

Besides the aforementioned government initiatives, the actual fair recruitment practices were carried out by major Japanese corporations that are members of the Responsible Business Alliance (RBA) or the Responsible Labour Initiative (RLI) under RBA. The RBA is the world's leading industry coalition committed to enhancing social, environmental, and ethical standards within global supply chains. Founded in 2004, it now encompasses members from the electronics, automotive, and various other industries. The RBA establishes a comprehensive Code of Conduct that encompasses labour rights, health and safety, environmental considerations, ethics, and management systems.[2] The RLI was established in 2017 to focus on the rights of migrant and marginalised workers. The principle at its core is the Employer Pays Principle, mandating that businesses, rather than workers, assume responsibility for recruitment-related fees and expenses.[3] The RLI develops practical tools such as worker voice surveys, multilingual grievance mechanisms, and guidance for fee reimbursement when violations are found.[4]

TABLE 2: Remediation of Recruitment Fees Programme by Companies in Japan

Remediation of Recruitment Fees Programme	Companies
Companies whole policies explicitly stipulate "reimbursement of recruitment fees paid by workers"	Konica Minolta (Korea), Kyocera, Ricoh, Sharp Panasonic, Epson, Omron, Renesas
Companies with publicly disclosed cases of reimbursement	Epson; the Human Rights Due Diligence page reports concrete remedial actions, stating that recruitment fee borne by workers were "reimbursed" and intermediary fees were "halted and reimbursed" Panasonic Manufacturing Malaysia Berhad, " reimbursement of recruitment fees was implemented and provisions were made" for both existing and newly hired migrant workers (2024-2025)
Companies showing remedial measures and audits, but without explicit mention of reimbursement (based on public information)	Toyota Motor Corporation: Through JP-MIRAI utilisation, policies, and remedial processes are documented. Tokyo Electron. Supplier surveys cover "recruitment and employment fees borne by workers" with published remedial actions, discrepancy findings, and requests for remediation (as of Oct 2025).

[2] RBA Code of Conduct version 8.0 (2024), p.2, https://www.responsiblebusiness.org/code-of-conduct/ (accessed Oct 16, 2025) clearly states that "Workers shall not be required to pay employers' agents or sub-agents' recruitment fees or other related fees for their employment. If any such fees are found to have been paid by workers, such fees shall be repaid to the worker."

[3] RBA Practical Guide to Due Diligence on Recruitment Fees in International Supply Chains can be downloaded. https://www.responsiblebusiness.org/publications/rba-practical-guide-no-fees (accessed on Oct 16, 2025)

[4] The RBA Worker Voice Platform includes worker surveys, on-site assessment support, mobile learning, and feedback and grievance reporting. https://www.responsiblebusiness.org/tools/voices (accessed on Oct 16, 2025)

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Source: Authors' Compilation from Websites of the Respective Company[5]

JICA's Technical Cooperation Project "Supporting Access to Job Information for Vietnamese Overseas Workers" in Vietnam

The "Supporting Access to Job Information for Vietnamese Overseas Workers" is a JICA technical cooperation initiative that began in 2023. The program seeks to provide a comprehensive digital platform that offers Vietnamese job seekers in Japan direct access to verified employment information and encourages adherence to applicable rules and regulations among sending organisations. Thus, the project aims to ensure that overseas job applicants make informed choices about sending organisations and that overseas employment is conducted in compliance with the amended Work Agency Act and associated regulations (JICA 2023a).

The project implements a comprehensive system that allows job seekers to acquire verified employment data directly, in response to concerns regarding the swift rise of Vietnamese workers in Japan—projected at 476,000 in 2022—and ongoing issues such as exorbitant brokering fees, lack of transparency, and limited access to verified job information, (Immigration Services Agency 2022, 2024). The system seeks to prevent fraudulent activities and assure adherence to the amended Work Agency Act and other laws by removing reliance on unregulated intermediaries. The program underscores the significance of informed decision-making by applicants, allowing them to choose sending organisations that comply with legal and ethical criteria (Immigration Services Agency 2022).

The project aims to create a sustainable framework for international employment by collaborating with the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and the Department of Overseas Labour (DOLAB). Key initiatives include strengthening enforcement mechanisms, formulating policy measures informed by worker feedback, and devising action

[5] The following sites were accessed on Sep 12, 2025 to compile the chart.
Konica Minolta CSR / RBA: https://www.konicaminolta.com/global-en/newsroom/2024/1212-01-01.html
Kyocera Sustainability: https://global.kyocera.com/newsroom/news/2022/000587.html
Ricoh Supplier Code: https://www.ricoh.com/sustainability/supplychain
Sharp CSR Report: https://global.sharp/corporate/csr/report/backnumber/pdf/2019/19all.pdf
Panasonic Human Rights: https://holdings.panasonic/global/corporate/sustainability/human_rights/
Epson Human Rights DD: https://corporate.epson/en/sustainability/human-rights/index.html
Omron Supply Chain: https://www.omron.com/global/en/sustainability/supply-chain/
Renesas Sustainability: https://www.renesas.com/us/en/about/company/sustainability/supply-chain-management
Toyota Human Rights: https://global.toyota/en/sustainability/human-rights/
Tokyo Electron CSR: https://www.tel.com/sustainability/management-foundation/supply-chain-management/rba/

plans to improve career assistance for returnees. These initiatives seek to enhance fair recruiting practices, protect workers' rights, and foster the sustained stability of labour mobility between Vietnam and Japan (JICA 2023b). In 2025, the project launched the system, allowing job seekers to set conditions such as salary, occupation, and work location, and to search for suitable positions. Applicants can directly disclose their profiles and contact sending organisations. In Vietnam, Migrant Resource Centers—similar to Japan's Hello Work offices—are expected to play a key role in providing information and facilitating access to the system (Vietnam.Vn; Voice of Vietnam 2025).

The effectiveness of this initiative will largely depend on the degree to which sending organisations disclose job information and on the proactive engagement of job seekers. Ultimately, the project aims to create an environment where Vietnamese workers can utilise the system strategically and autonomously to pursue overseas employment opportunities.

Private Sector initiative for Promoting Transparent and Cost-Free Labour Migration: Vietnam-Japan Fair and Ethical Recruitment Initiative (VJ-FERI)

The VJ-FERI (Vietnam-Japan Fair and Ethical Recruitment Initiative) is a private-sector initiative aimed at promoting the recruitment of migrant workers in accordance with international standards by prohibiting the imposition of recruitment, placement, or associated fees on technical intern trainees and specified skilled workers coming to Japan from Vietnam. VJ-FERI prohibits workers from paying fees prior to their arrival in Japan by ensuring that all entities involved in the sending process—namely, employers (receiving companies), intermediaries (supervisory organisations, registered support organisations), and local sending organisations—perform their migration intermediation functions in compliance with the "FERI Guidelines" (JP-MIRAI 2025).

It was established by the "Japan Platform for Migrant Workers towards a Responsible and Inclusive Society" (JP-MIRAI), a general incorporated association first developed with the cooperation of JICA. The programme implements a certification system for FERI job advertising based on the FERI principles created by JP-MIRAI in conjunction with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and legal specialists. It seeks to promote collaboration among all relevant parties to guarantee fair and ethical recruiting processes. Besides FERI accreditation, the project offers monitoring, third-party consultation, and complaint services for migrant workers facing difficulties. To get certification, firms are required to pay membership and inspection fees. The program operates in Vietnam, Indonesia, and Nepal (JP-MIRAI 2025).

A 2022 study by the Immigration Services Agency indicates that technical intern trainees in Japan incur average pre-arrival expenses of 540,000 yen, with some surpassing 1 million yen. High brokering fees, inappropriate contracts, and unclear fee structures have placed financial and psychological strains on workers. Transnational migration comprises the involvement of several organisations across both nations, leading individual companies to have

difficulties in resolving these issues. In response, stakeholders in Japan and Vietnam initiated VJ-FERI to implement fair and ethical recruiting practices (JP-MIRAI 2025).

This initiative facilitates the transparent employment of migrant workers within the global human resources framework through the assessment and evaluation of migrant workers in both sending and receiving nations, adhering to legal and regulatory standards. Additionally, by disclosing details on certified member organisations and employment opportunities, the initiative seeks to establish a network of stakeholders dedicated to fair practices and to advance migrant labour standards based on global standards.

CONCLUSION

The above-mentioned initiatives cannot serve as a panacea for eliminating broker fees and debt-bonded labour unless the recruitment supply chain in sending countries is effectively monitored and regulated. This paper concludes with two complementary policy recommendations to promote fair recruitment practices. First, greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening a collaborative and co-creative "Migration Infrastructure" (Xiang & Lindquist 2014) that gradually replaces the broker's traditional functions of *recruitment, selection, education,* and *placement*. A sustainable migration system requires institutional mechanisms linking sending and receiving countries to generate transparent and trustworthy infrastructures that reduce dependence on private intermediaries. For example, standardised curricula and certified training materials could be developed and disseminated through donor-supported initiatives to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions—including those in rural areas—at minimal or no cost by leveraging education-technology (ed-tech) platforms. Such support would professionalise pre-departure training and lower the financial burden on potential migrants.

Second, a digital job-matching ecosystem should be established to provide direct, accurate, and transparent information on vacancies, fees, and employment conditions. The application of digital-transformation (DX) tools can improve verification, minimise misinformation, and enhance accountability along the recruitment chain. Moreover, financial inclusion must form part of this agenda, ensuring that migrants can access secure payment channels, low-cost remittance systems, and ethical savings products that collectively reinforce a fair and sustainable migration route. Finally, extending these services to rural and remote communities is essential. Innovative delivery models are required to achieve such outreach. The example of India's Common Service Centres (CSCs)—a nationwide digital network of over 550,000–560,000 kiosks operated by young IT entrepreneurs—offers valuable inspiration. By adapting this model, sending countries could expand digital access points where potential migrants can receive verified information, register for training, and complete administrative procedures locally. Integrating such decentralised digital platforms with migration-management databases would embody a pragmatic shift *from exclusion to inclusion* of brokers

(Ishimaru 2025) as their functions, transforming them from profit-driven intermediaries into partners within a transparent, state-regulated migration infrastructure.

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CORRECTION

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This change does not affect the significance of the findings or the overall conclusions of the research.

Living Heritage: Architectural Expressions of Jawi Peranakan Values in Public Buildings

(Warisan Hidup: Ekspresi Seni Bina Nilai Jawi Peranakan dalam Bangunan Awam)

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ABSTRACT

The Jawi Peranakan community, descended from intermarriages between Malays and South Asian Muslims—primarily from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Gujarat, and in some cases from Yemen or other parts of the Arab world—represents a unique cultural hybrid whose heritage is vividly expressed through its architecture and communal spaces. Despite their significant role in shaping Malaysia's urban and architectural history, scholarly inquiry into the integration of Jawi Peranakan intangible values within the built environment remains scarce. Existing heritage conservation frameworks tend to prioritise the preservation of physical structures, often overlooking the socio-cultural systems and values that sustain these spaces as living heritage. This oversight risks eroding the cultural meanings embedded in architectural forms, particularly under the pressures of rapid urban development and socio-economic change. This study addresses this gap by examining how Jawi Peranakan values are materialised in the built environment, framing their architecture as a dynamic form of living heritage. Adopting a qualitative descriptive approach within the interpretive anthropology paradigm and employing semiotic and hermeneutic methods, the research explores the symbolic meanings embedded within key communal structures, such as mosques and houses, which are historically associated with the community. The findings reveal that their architectural expressions integrate Malay vernacular typologies with Indo-Islamic decorative motifs, while spatial configurations embody core communal values: kinship, religious devotion, reciprocity, and economic solidarity. Multi-functional halls, open courtyards, and transitional spaces in mosques and houses that facilitate both ritual and social interaction, reinforcing extended family networks and collective identity. By interpreting these architectural features as physical embodiments of intangible cultural values, the paper underscores the resilience of Jawi Peranakan heritage amidst modernisation. The study contributes to a wider discourse on multicultural heritage preservation, identity construction, and sustainable urbanism in Southeast Asia, advocating for design frameworks on cultural values that embrace both tangible and intangible dimensions of Jawi Peranakan architecture heritage.

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Keywords: Jawi Peranakan heritage; Living heritage architecture; mosque buildings; Intangible cultural values; religious community spaces

ABSTRAK

Komuniti Jawi Peranakan, berketurunan daripada perkahwinan campur antara orang Melayu dan Muslim Asia Selatan—terutamanya dari Tamil Nadu, Kerala, dan Gujarat, dan dalam beberapa kes dari Yaman atau bahagian lain di dunia Arab—mewakili kacukan budaya unik yang warisannya dinyatakan dengan jelas melalui seni bina dan ruang komunalnya. Walaupun peranan penting mereka dalam membentuk sejarah bandar dan seni bina Malaysia, siasatan ilmiah ke dalam penyepaduan nilai-nilai tidak ketara Jawi Peranakan dalam persekitaran binaan masih terhad. Rangka kerja pemuliharaan warisan sedia ada cenderung untuk mengutamakan pemeliharaan struktur fizikal, selalunya mengabaikan sistem dan nilai sosio-budaya yang mengekalkan ruang ini sebagai warisan hidup. Pengawasan ini berisiko menghakis makna budaya yang tertanam dalam bentuk seni bina, terutamanya di bawah tekanan pembangunan bandar yang pesat dan perubahan sosio-ekonomi. Kajian ini menangani jurang ini dengan mengkaji bagaimana nilai-nilai Jawi Peranakan diwujudkan dalam persekitaran binaan, merangka seni bina mereka sebagai bentuk warisan hidup yang dinamik. Mengguna pakai pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dalam paradigma antropologi tafsiran dan menggunakan kaedah semiotik dan hermeneutik, penyelidikan ini meneroka makna simbolik yang tertanam dalam struktur komunal utama, seperti masjid dan rumah, yang secara sejarah dikaitkan dengan masyarakat. Penemuan mendedahkan bahawa ungkapan seni bina mereka mengintegrasikan tipologi vernakular Melayu dengan motif hiasan Indo-Islam, manakala konfigurasi spatial merangkumi nilai komunal teras: persaudaraan, pengabdian agama, timbal balik, dan perpaduan ekonomi. Dewan pelbagai fungsi, halaman terbuka dan ruang peralihan di masjid dan rumah yang memudahkan kedua-dua interaksi ritual dan sosial, mengukuhkan rangkaian keluarga besar dan identiti kolektif. Dengan mentafsirkan ciri-ciri seni bina ini sebagai penjelmaan fizikal nilai budaya tidak ketara, kertas kerja ini menggariskan daya tahan warisan Jawi Peranakan di tengah-tengah pemodenan. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada wacana yang lebih luas mengenai pemeliharaan warisan pelbagai budaya, pembinaan identiti dan urbanisme mampan di Asia Tenggara, menyokong rangka kerja reka bentuk mengenai nilai budaya yang merangkumi dimensi ketara dan tidak ketara warisan seni bina Jawi Peranakan.

Kata kunci: warisan Jawi Peranakan; Seni bina warisan hidup; bangunan masjid; Nilai budaya tidak ketara; Ruang Komuniti Keagamaan

INTRODUCTION

The Jawi Peranakan community, descended from intermarriages between Malays and South Asian Muslims—primarily from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Gujarat, and in certain cases from Yemen and other parts of the Arab world—represents a distinctive cultural hybrid within the Malay Peninsula (Ismail & Daud, 2013). Emerging as a socio-cultural group in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during the height of maritime trade and colonial expansion, the Jawi Peranakan adopted the Malay language, Islamic faith, and local customs while preserving selective elements of South Asian material culture, cuisine, and aesthetics (Jalani et al., 2021). This fusion of influences left a distinctive architectural and urban imprint, particularly in port cities such as Penang, Malacca, and Singapore, where the community flourished as merchants, religious scholars, educators, and civil servants. Historically, the term 'Jawi' was used in the Islamic world by Arabs, Persians, and other Muslim traders to denote Muslims from the Malay Archipelago (covering present-day Malaysia, Indonesia, Southern Thailand, Brunei, and parts of the Philippines) (Yusoff & Aziz, 2010). The trajectory of the Jawi Peranakan community illustrates a legacy of cultural hybridity, maritime connectivity, and adaptive resilience. Despite their historical contributions, the Jawi Peranakan face several pressing issues today, including identity loss and heritage erosion. One of the central issues concerns identity and assimilation. After Malaysian independence, the constitutional definition of "Malay" subsumed communities such as the Jawi Peranakan under a broader Malay-Muslim category (Yusoff & Aziz, 2010). While this offered political and social advantages, it diluted their distinct hybrid identity. Today, many younger generations no longer identify as Jawi Peranakan but simply as Malay. This has led to the gradual disappearance of their unique cultural markers.

Closely linked is the problem of cultural dilution and heritage loss. Once celebrated for their hybrid customs that combined Malay traditions with South Asian influences in cuisine, attire, and religious practice, much of this heritage has faded (Pue, 2016). Community-owned architecture—mosques, madrasahs, waqf houses, and guild halls—remains as testimony to their presence, yet many of these buildings face neglect or redevelopment pressures, particularly in rapidly urbanising areas such as George Town and Malacca (Pue, 2016). Without systematic conservation, the architectural and cultural footprint of the Jawi Peranakan risks being erased. Another challenge lies in historical marginalisation within scholarship. Compared to the Baba-Nyonya or Chitty communities, the Jawi Peranakan have attracted limited academic and public attention (Mohamed, 2016). Their role in maritime trade, Islamic scholarship, and colonial administration remains under-documented, leaving gaps in Malaysia's multicultural narrative. This lack of visibility reinforces the perception that they have been absorbed entirely into the Malay mainstream, rather than recognised as a community with its own layered history. Finally, the community struggles with socio-political repositioning (Yusoff, 2005). Traditionally influential in Islamic education and waqf endowments, their authority has declined with the centralisation of Islamic institutions under the state. Politically, their hybrid identity holds little resonance in a system that emphasises

rigid ethnic categories. In conclusion, the issues confronting the Jawi Peranakan society revolve around identity loss, cultural erosion, and historical invisibility. Preserving their heritage requires deliberate efforts in documentation, heritage conservation, and cultural recognition. Only through such measures can Malaysia ensure that the legacy of the Jawi Peranakan continues to enrich its plural society.

In this regard, this paper addresses two objectives: first, to identify the cultural values of the Jawi Peranakan as expressed in the architecture of their community-owned buildings; and second, to examine how design features and spatial arrangements embody these values, sustaining them as living heritage. While most previous studies on the Jawi Peranakan have focused on economic, political, and socio-cultural aspects, systematic research on their built environment remains limited. This study aims to fill that gap by highlighting the architectural expressions of a community shaped by a hybrid culture, blending Islamic traditions with Malay customs. Furthermore, the Jawi Peranakan experience contributes to Malaysia's multicultural development, promoting shared values, cross-cultural understanding, and cooperation. Their emphasis on waqf, communal solidarity, and respect for elders underscores cultural principles that can inspire modern support systems, fostering unity and harmony within Malaysia's plural society. The following section examines the origins and influence of the Jawi Peranakan in shaping community-owned architecture as a form of living heritage in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE JAWI PERANAKAN COMMUNITY

The Jawi Peranakan community's hybrid culture blends Islamic traditions with local Malay customs, evident in ceremonies, language, and built forms. Their evolution can be divided into three major phases spanning the 13th to the 21st century (Yusoff, 2005). The first phase (13th to late 17th century) reflected early Muslim contact driven by maritime trade and cultural exchange. By the 13th century, the Indian Ocean had become a vibrant commercial and cultural corridor linking East Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Muslim traders from Tamil Nadu (Chulia), Kerala (Malabaris/Moplahs), Gujarat, and Hadhrami Arabs from Yemen sailed regularly to the Malay Peninsula's thriving ports, such as Kedah, Pattani, and later Malacca (Pue, 2015). They exchanged textiles, spices, and beads for tin, gold, camphor, and forest products, while also introducing Islam, the Jawi script (Arabic adapted to Malay), and elements of South Asian material culture. These traders acted as cultural intermediaries, transmitting religion, architecture, education, and courtly etiquette. While many returned home, some settled permanently, forming marital alliances with local Malay women. Their descendants, early precursors of the Jawi Peranakan, were fully acculturated into Malay society—speaking the Malay language, practising local customs, and dressing in Malay style—while retaining South Asian influences in cuisine, architecture, and religious practice (Kashiwa, 2025).

The second phase (late 17th to late 18th century) unfolded within shifting political contexts marked by the decline of Dutch dominance and the gradual expansion of British influence. With the establishment of Penang as a free port in 1786 by Francis Light, the Jawi Peranakan community's commercial role expanded. Their multilingualism, Islamic identity, and cross-cultural heritage positioned them as intermediaries between colonial authorities, Malay rulers, and regional traders (Kashiwa, 2025). They rose as merchants, religious leaders, and administrators, consolidating their hybrid identity that combined Malay customs, Islamic scholarship, and South Asian cultural elements. This period reinforced their socio-economic niche as a prosperous, educated, and cosmopolitan community that bridged traditional Malay society with the colonial economy.

The third phase (19th century onwards) marked the Jawi Peranakan's deepening role in Islamic education, charitable endowments (waqf), and community institutions, such as mosques and madrasahs (Chew, 2013). Their participation in Western-style education and colonial administration further integrated them into the broader Malay-Muslim identity, accelerating cultural assimilation. Yet, after Malaysian independence, the distinct Jawi Peranakan identity gradually declined, absorbed into state definitions of Malay identity. Nonetheless, their hybrid heritage remains visible in community-owned buildings—mosques, madrasahs, waqf houses, and guild halls—that serve as cultural anchors, reflecting values of religiosity and respect for heritage (Chew, 2013). Today, however, many of these buildings face challenges from urban redevelopment, neglect, and a loss of identity. Recognising them as living heritage underscores the need not only for preservation but also for sustained communal use, ensuring that the Jawi Peranakan legacy remains woven into Malaysia's multicultural fabric. To understand the Jawi Peranakan values and the role of these values in how they influence their community-owned architectures, the next section will elaborate on this in detail.

VALUES OF THE JAWI PERANAKAN COMMUNITY

The Jawi Peranakan society, formed through the intermarriage between South Asian Muslims and the local Malay community, embodies a unique cultural hybridity that is reflected not only in their identity and customs but also in their architectural expressions. Their values—rooted in Islam, kinship, mutual aid, education, and cultural pride—offer profound inspiration for shaping the built environment. Translating these values into architecture and urban spaces allows their heritage to be celebrated while providing functionality for contemporary community life. In understanding this community, four enduring values shaped and influenced their societal life, including its built environment, namely communal solidarity (gotong-royong), religious devotion and moral guidance, as well as hospitality (keramahan) and generosity (kedermawanan) (Mohamed, 2016). These four values will be explained in turn to show that they are not optional virtues but an integral part of their faith and cultural identity, offering profound inspiration for shaping the built environment.

In the aspect of communal solidarity, this value is often expressed through gotong-royong, which can be defined as the value of collective responsibility, cooperation, and mutual

assistance within a community (Pue, 2016). For the Jawi Peranakan, who lived as a distinct yet blended cultural group within Malay society, this value meant more than simply working together—it was a way to maintain harmony, strengthen identity, and ensure survival in a shared environment. Gotong-royong covers a wide range of activities like helping neighbours build or repair houses, organising weddings and funerals, preparing feasts during religious festivals, and supporting one another in times of crisis. The Jawi Peranakan practiced communal solidarity in both daily life and special occasions including in their domestic and social life in which they had religious gatherings, communal events like kenduri (religious feasts), marriages, or circumcision ceremonies as well as through economic activities where they often relied on kinship and neighborhood networks to support their businesses through trust and cooperative exchanges since many Jawi Peranakan were traders and small-scale entrepreneurs. Communal solidarity plays a vital role and values in the Jawi Peranakan community, as it is the key factor which ensures cultural survival and integration (Yusoff, 2005). This is crucial as being a hybrid community of South Asian Muslim and Malay descent, communal solidarity helped the Jawi Peranakan maintain their distinct identity while integrating into the wider Malay-Muslim society, hence allowing them to gain acceptance and respect through participation in collective life. In the long run, this can enhance social cohesion and establish one's own identity as living in tightly knit neighbourhoods, where solidarity was essential for building trust and unity. It created a sense of belonging and reinforced the shared values that bound the community together across generations. In the Jawi Peranakan community, communal solidarity (gotong-royong) was not merely a social custom but a foundational value that shaped their way of life. It defined what it meant to live as a community, how they engaged in collective activities, and why their cohesion remained strong across cultural and historical transitions (Abdullah, 2025).

The value of religious devotion and moral guidance, on the other hand, refers to the commitment of the Jawi Peranakan community to Islamic faith and values as the foundation of their way of life. Rooted in Islam, this devotion emphasised prayer, adherence to Sharia principles, ethical conduct, and community responsibility (Yusoff & Mohamed, 2010). For the Jawi Peranakan, who emerged from the blending of South Asian Muslim and Malay heritage, religion was not only a personal practice but also a unifying identity marker. Moral guidance, drawn from the Qur'an, Hadith, and community elders, shaped everyday behaviour, family structure, and cultural customs. These values are widely practised collectively in mosques and suraus, which serve as hubs for prayer, Quranic recitation, and community meetings (Yusoff & Aziz, 2010). Domestic spaces, such as homes, are also utilised, where prayer corners or small areas are designated for religious rituals, reflecting the integration of spirituality into daily domestic life. These spaces not only served for religious devotion but also indirectly symbolised both spiritual and social unity. Apart from this, moral guidance was reinforced through madrasahs and home-based teachings, where children learned Quranic studies, Arabic, and Islamic ethics. This ensured the transmission of faith across generations. For the Jawi Peranakan, the values of religious devotion and moral guidance were more than rituals—they were the cornerstone of identity, cohesion, and resilience (Pue, 2015). What they represented

was faith as a way of life; how they were practised included worship, education, and ethical conduct; and why they played such a vital role was to ensure unity, moral order, and continuity in a hybrid community navigating multiple cultural influences. These values anchored the Jawi Peranakan firmly within the wider Islamic world while preserving their own distinct heritage.

The Jawi Peranakan community also places significant emphasis on the values of hospitality (keramahan) and generosity (kedermawanan) (Matondang, 2012). These values are deeply embedded in their social fabric, reflecting both Islamic teachings and local cultural traditions that prioritise communal harmony, respect, and social responsibility. Their values in hospitality and generosity is not limited to material giving, but also extend to kindness, openness, and the readiness to share resources, time, and care. In their worldview, welcoming guests, providing food, offering assistance, and sharing wealth or knowledge are seen as moral duties that strengthen social cohesion (Ayob & Queen, 2015). For the Jawi Peranakan, generosity is tied to the Islamic concept of sadaqah (charity) and zakat (almsgiving), which are central to maintaining spiritual purity and communal balance. Hospitality, on the other hand, symbolises respect and dignity, demonstrating their commitment to treating others with warmth regardless of social standing. These values that are practised can be observed in multiple aspects of Jawi Peranakan daily and communal life. Within households, families often extend hospitality by serving elaborate meals to guests and ensuring their comfort, reflecting pride and sincerity. In community gatherings such as weddings, religious festivals, and funerals, hospitality and generosity are expressed collectively through the sharing of food, open invitations, and collaborative contributions. Generosity is also evident in charitable acts—supporting orphans, funding religious schools, and assisting the poor. The values of hospitality and generosity are so important to the Jawi Peranakan as they can be traced to religious, cultural, and social foundations. Islam encourages believers to treat guests kindly and to give freely as a means of earning divine blessing (Abdullah, 2018). Culturally, these values ensured the community's acceptance within the broader Malay-Muslim society, strengthening bonds of trust and respect. Socially, practising generosity helped maintain networks of mutual aid, which were crucial for a diasporic community navigating colonial-era challenges. By giving freely and welcoming others, the Jawi Peranakan not only upheld their moral obligations but also reinforced harmony and cultural identity. In essence, hospitality and generosity functioned as ethical pillars of the Jawi Peranakan community, serving both spiritual devotion and practical survival. These values ensured harmony, elevated their social reputation, and safeguarded the continuity of their hybrid identity across generations. In sum, the values of the Jawi Peranakan—which are communal solidarity (gotong-royong), religious devotion and moral guidance, as well as hospitality (keramahan) and generosity (kedermawanan) shaped their institutions, built environment, and cultural practices. To understand how these values are transformed in their built environment, the next section will elucidate this in detail.

The Jawi Peranakan community, formed through the intermarriage of South Indian Muslim migrants with local Malay women in the Malay Peninsula during the colonial period, developed a distinctive cultural identity that was expressed not only through language, attire, and customs but also in their architectural practices (Ng, 2023). Their buildings stand as living testimonies of hybrid identities, integrating Islamic, Malay, Indian, and colonial influences. These built forms represent more than functional spaces; they embody values of religion, kinship, social solidarity, and cultural continuity.

The influence of Jawi Peranakan values is well reflected in the various typologies of buildings owned by them, serving both domestic and communal needs. At the domestic scale, the Jawi Peranakan houses and mosques were the most prominent. In urban settings such as George Town and Penang, houses were constructed along shophouse rows, with narrow frontages and elongated floor plans or in a standalone building form. These houses were often used as both family residences and sites for commercial activity, reflecting the entrepreneurial spirit of the community. At the communal level, mosques, madrasahs, and wakaf buildings (religiously endowed structures) were central typologies (Abd Rashid & Amat, 2011). The Jawi Peranakan community, being devout Muslims, emphasised religious and educational structures. Mosques associated with Jawi Peranakan often adopted South Indian and Middle Eastern stylistic elements, such as onion domes, pointed arches, and intricate plasterwork, while still employing local building materials. Madrasahs served as both centres of religious learning and markers of cultural transmission, reinforcing the community's emphasis on education. In addition, wakaf (charitable endowment) structures—such as small prayer halls, community kitchens, or resting pavilions—were built to serve collective welfare. The elements of built form and space in the building typology of Jawi Peranakan society, including their roles, structures, and characteristics, embody the ethical values of principles grounded in Islamic teachings, Malay adat (customs), and hybrid Peranakan traditions. These elements act as codes that may explicitly or implicitly convey specific messages (Pampus, 2025). The built form serves as a rich and versatile symbol, capable of carrying multiple layers of meaning—whether representing physical safety, personal identity, or broader societal values. In this context, the Jawi Peranakan architecture becomes a medium for expressing these ethical values on two levels: to individuals and society. Scholars have noted that the typology of buildings within the Jawi Peranakan community reflects a diverse range of architectural forms, each designed for a specific purpose and embodying the people's cultural, spiritual, and social values (Pampus, 2025). This includes mosques, madrasahs, and wakaf buildings that are distinguished by their symbolic designs, harmony with nature, and alignment with Islamic teachings, Malay adat (customs), and hybrid Peranakan principles.

The value of communal solidarity in the Jawi Peranakan community in Malaysia embodies the Islamic value of ukhuwah (brotherhood) and jamaah (collective unity), which are central to their social and religious life. As a hybrid community of Indian Muslim and Malay heritage, the Jawi Peranakan viewed architecture not merely as shelter, but as a reflection of

communal bonds, social ethics, and spiritual belonging. Their built forms—mosques, homes, and waqf buildings—were consciously designed to encourage collective interaction and shared responsibility within the community (Mohamed, 2016). At the urban scale, Jawi Peranakan settlements were typically organised around a central mosque complex. These mosques served as the heart of religious, educational, and social life—reinforcing the role of architecture as a space for communal prayer, learning, and decision-making. Surrounding them were madrasahs, endowment shops, and residences built on waqf land, reflecting a shared investment in faith and welfare. This clustered arrangement translated the moral idea of jamaah into physical proximity and daily social interaction. At the domestic level, Jawi Peranakan houses revealed solidarity through spatial openness and multi-generational living. The serambi (verandah) acted as a semi-public space for neighbours and guests, fostering community exchange. The inner courtyard (laman or airwell) created a central communal area for family gatherings, religious recitations, and social events—symbolising the unity of household and faith (Mohamed, 2016). Rooms were arranged in interconnected sequences rather than rigid separations, allowing fluid movement and interaction among family members. The aesthetic expression of unity was also visible in architectural ornamentation. Geometric and floral arabesques, symmetrical layouts, and calligraphic inscriptions of Quranic verses reinforced notions of harmony, equality, and divine order—visual metaphors for social cohesion. Even the act of building, often carried out through gotong-royong (communal labor), embodied solidarity as a lived practice (Ismail & Daud, 2013). Ultimately, Jawi Peranakan architecture stands as a physical manifestation of communal values—where faith, kinship, and cooperation shape not only form and space but also the social fabric of everyday life. Through the integration of mosque-centered urban planning, inclusive domestic design, and collective endowment structures, their architecture transforms the principle of ukhuwah into a spatial and cultural identity rooted in togetherness.

In terms of the value of religious devotion and moral guidance, the architecture of the Jawi Peranakan community reflects a deep synthesis of Islamic faith, moral order, and cultural hybridity. As descendants of Indian Muslim traders and local Malays, the Jawi Peranakan embedded religious devotion (taqwa) and moral discipline (akhlak) into their built environment, transforming architecture into a tangible expression of spiritual values and ethical living (Yusoff & Aziz, 2010). Their buildings—ranging from mosques and madrasahs to homes and community spaces—served not merely functional purposes, but as instruments of moral guidance and spiritual reflection. At the urban and communal level, the Jawi Peranakan settlements were often structured around the mosque complex, which symbolized the heart of spiritual and social life. The mosques, were not only places of worship but also centres for religious education, dispute resolution, and moral instruction. The presence of adjoining madrasah buildings and waqf shops illustrated the integration of piety with social welfare—an architectural expression of the Quranic principle of ‘amar ma’ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil). Through such spaces, religious devotion was continuously reinforced within daily communal rhythms. At the domestic scale, the Jawi Peranakan house reflected Islamic moral values through spatial hierarchy and orientation. The main prayer area (surau

kecil) within homes often faced the qibla, emphasizing the household's alignment with divine order. Spaces were arranged to respect privacy and modesty (aurat)—with distinct zones separating male and female domains during gatherings. The serambi or front verandah functioned as a semi-public interface, where hospitality and moral conduct were displayed to the community, reflecting the Islamic ethic of adab (propriety). Architectural ornamentation further echoed devotion and moral symbolism (Yusoff, 2005). Calligraphic panels, Quranic inscriptions, and floral arabesques adorned walls, doors, and windows—acting as both spiritual reminders and aesthetic guidance toward piety. The symmetrical organization and balanced proportions of Jawi Peranakan buildings conveyed harmony and discipline, resonating with Islamic ideals of order and balance (mizan). Ultimately, Jawi Peranakan architecture embodied an ethical worldview where faith directed both design and daily life (Yusoff, 2005). Through the integration of prayer spaces, modest spatial organization, and religious symbolism, the built environment became a medium of spiritual cultivation—reminding its inhabitants that architecture, when guided by devotion, serves as both a shelter for the body and a sanctuary for the soul.

The values of generosity and hospitality are also deeply embedded in Jawi Peranakan culture and are distinctly expressed through their architectural form and spatial organization. The Jawi Peranakan community, descended from intermarriage between local Malays and Indian Muslim traders, embodies a hybrid cultural identity influenced by Malay adat, Islamic teachings, and colonial urban traditions. Their architecture, therefore, reflects both spiritual values and social ethics, where generosity (dermawan) and hospitality (keramahan) are translated into the design and use of space (Said & Majid, 2004). This is widely seen in the Jawi Peranakan domestic living in which the serambi or front veranda is the most visible expression of hospitality in their houses. Serving as a welcoming threshold between the public street and the private home, it provides a shaded, comfortable area for greeting visitors and neighbors. This openness reflects the owner's generosity and willingness to connect with the community. The serambi often features decorative columns, arches, and patterned tiles — aesthetic gestures that not only signify wealth and taste but also extend visual warmth and comfort to guests. Inside, the main hall (ruang tamu) is designed for communal gatherings, religious ceremonies, and festive meals. Its spaciousness symbolizes the ability and willingness to host others, a key measure of social prestige and moral duty in Jawi Peranakan society (Pue, 2015). The organization of the house ensures that guests are received respectfully, with designated spaces that balance hospitality and privacy, following Islamic principles of modesty. Generosity is also reflected through ornamental detailing and craftsmanship. Intricate wooden carvings, stained glass, and colorful ceramic tiles beautify the interiors, transforming the domestic space into an environment of visual delight for visitors. This aesthetic generosity demonstrates sincerity (ikhlas) in welcoming guests and reflects pride in cultural refinement. Beyond private residences, public architecture funded through wakaf (charitable endowment) — such as mosques, madrasahs, and community halls — extends these values to the wider society. Buildings like the mosque and madrasa also exemplify the community's commitment to collective welfare and inclusive hospitality. In essence, Jawi Peranakan architecture

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translates generosity and hospitality from moral virtues into spatial experience (Merican, 2021). Through open verandas, grand halls, and ornamental richness, their built environment expresses an enduring ethos of welcoming others with grace, comfort, and sincerity, reflecting a harmonious blend of Malay, Islamic, and cosmopolitan influences. For the benefit of this writing, the study focuses on the architectural styles of Jawi Peranakan represented only in mosque as case study followed by an analysis of how the Jawi Peranakan ethical values comprise the concept of communal solidarity (gotong-royong), religious devotion and moral guidance, as well as hospitality (keramahan) and generosity (kedermawanan) are embedded and symbolized in these building typology as case study of its architectural design form and its spatial organization(Yusoff, 2005). This will be described in the findings and discussion section. Before understanding how these values are translated into architecture, it is best to understand the Jawi Peranakan architectural elements and their evolution in the Malaysian context.

EVOLUTION OF JAWI PERANAKAN ARCHITECTURE IN MALAYSIA AND DESIGN FEATURES

The evolution of Jawi Peranakan architecture in Malaysia encapsulates a journey from early diasporic adaptation to modern reinterpretation. Emerging from cross-cultural encounters in the 18th century, it matured into a sophisticated architectural expression that blended Indian, Malay, Islamic, and Western aesthetics. Its influence reached its zenith during the colonial and early modern Malaysian period, where it contributed significantly to defining the visual identity of Muslim urban elites.

The earliest Jawi Peranakan settlements appeared in the 18th and 19th centuries, following waves of migration from South India—especially Tamil Nadu and Kerala—where Muslim traders (often referred to as Chulias or Keling Muslims) arrived in Melaka, Penang, and later Singapore. These traders integrated into the Malay social structure, adopting Malay language and customs while maintaining Islamic faith and select South Asian traditions (Yusoff & Mohamed, 2010). During this 18th and 19th century period, British colonial urban planning introduced grid street layouts, shophouse typologies, and civic infrastructures that would frame much of the built environment in Penang and Melaka. Jawi Peranakan homes of this era adopted the Straits Eclectic architectural style—a synthesis of British colonial design, Chinese shophouse structure, and Malay-Islamic ornamentation. Their townhouses typically featured narrow frontages with deep floor plans, an internal airwell for ventilation, and decorative stucco façades that integrated motifs from multiple cultural sources. Architecturally, the façades often displayed Islamic geometric patterns, European pilasters and cornices, and Chinese porcelain tiles. This combination reflected the cosmopolitanism of the Straits Settlements, where the Jawi Peranakan community participated in both local and transoceanic networks. Interiors featured high timber ceilings, arched verandas, and marble flooring, symbolizing wealth and refinement. Notable early examples include residences in George Town's Acheen Street area, where Jawi Peranakan merchants lived near mosques and religious schools. The Acheen Street Mosque (Masjid Lebuh Acheh), built in 1808, stands as a

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cornerstone of early Jawi Peranakan architectural expression—merging Indian-Islamic domes, Malay timber craftsmanship, and colonial masonry detailing (Mei, 2015; Yusoff & Aziz, 2010). Architecturally, the Jawi Peranakan residences and public buildings in Melaka continued the Straits Eclectic style, but with a stronger Islamic and Indian character compared to Chinese Peranakan counterparts. Their homes were typically double-storey terrace houses or shophouses, constructed with brick and lime plaster, featuring internal courtyards for ventilation and light—an adaptation from both Malay rumah panggung and British shophouse typologies (Mei, 2015). Key features included: Arched verandahs with pointed or horseshoe arches inspired by Mughal and Middle Eastern forms; Stucco and plaster ornamentation combining Quranic calligraphy with floral arabesques; Coloured ceramic tiles arranged in geometric motifs, a legacy of Chinese artisanship adapted to Islamic aesthetics; Wooden doors and shutters intricately carved with vegetal patterns reminiscent of Malay craftsmanship. These hybrid buildings were not mere imitations of colonial or Chinese forms; they were creative reinterpretations shaped by Islamic values and cosmopolitan exposure. The Jawi Peranakan thus forged a distinctive architectural idiom that stood at the intersection of cultural hybridity and religious orthodoxy.

The propagation of the stronghold to Islamic belief among the Jawi Peranakan community which was strengthened during the mid-18th till the late 19th century, led to the open expression by devout Jawi Peranakan community to portray their religious identity prominently through architecture. Domestic spaces included prayer rooms (surau kecil), gender-segregated quarters, and the orientation of rooms in accordance with qibla. The facades and interior ornaments avoided figural imagery, instead using floral arabesques, calligraphic inscriptions, and lattice screens (jali) to achieve aesthetic refinement within Islamic bounds (Mei, 2015). The community also invested heavily in the construction of mosques, madrasahs, and waqf (endowment) buildings—public structures that embodied religious virtue and community solidarity. Many of these were funded by prominent Jawi Peranakan philanthropists such as Syed Mohamed Al-Attas and Syed Alwi Al-Sagoff, whose architectural legacies can still be traced in Johor, Penang, and Singapore. Architectural features such as multi-tiered domes, Moorish arches, and Indian-Malay minarets became recurring motifs, symbolizing both piety and cultural synthesis. The use of waqf properties—lands endowed for charitable or religious purposes—also contributed to the formation of urban Muslim enclaves that shaped the architectural landscape of Johor Bahru and Penang. This scenario can also be seen in Malacca. The Jawi Peranakan community in Melaka also invested heavily in religious and educational architecture. Mosques, madrasahs, and waqf (endowment) properties became central instruments for community cohesion and moral expression. Notable among these is the Masjid Kampung Hulu and Masjid Kampung Kling, both of which underwent expansions and refurbishments under the influence of Jawi Peranakan benefactors during the 19th century (Izahara et al., 2022). While these mosques predated their arrival, the renovations introduced new stylistic layers—such as plaster ornamentation, decorative arches, and tiled floors—that reflect Jawi Peranakan aesthetics. The use of waqf properties—endowed for religious and social purposes—enabled the community to sustain educational institutions and housing for

religious teachers. These endowments were both pious and architectural acts, creating enduring Islamic urban fabrics that continue to shape Melaka's heritage zones today (Nasution, 2002).

The 20th century brought significant transformations to the architectural landscape of Malaysia. With urbanization, the decline of traditional merchant classes, and the introduction of modern construction materials, Jawi Peranakan architecture adapted to changing times while retaining its symbolic essence. During the early to mid-20th century, buildings began incorporating Art Deco and Modernist elements, especially in urban areas such as Penang and Johor Bahru and Malacca (Pue, 2016). Yet even as architectural styles modernised, Jawi Peranakan homes retained certain hallmarks: the internal courtyard, the frontal verandah, and decorative motifs evoking Islamic and Indian heritage. Educational and religious institutions founded by the Jawi Peranakan continued to thrive, such as Madrasah Al-Attas and Wakaf Al-Attas buildings in Johor (Latiff, 2022). These structures combined modern concrete frames with ornamental detailing referencing traditional motifs, reflecting the continuity of cultural identity within modernisation. The transition of the Jawi Peranakan was not a mere geographical movement but an architectural and cultural transformation. In this southern context, they synthesised Malay, Indian, Islamic, and colonial elements into a built environment that reflected their dual heritage and religious commitment. This provided the intermediary stage through which the Jawi Peranakan refined their architectural language—bridging the Straits Eclectic style of the north and the Indo-Saracenic grandeur (Mei, 2015). Their legacy endures not only in walls and domes but also in the enduring dialogue between faith, identity, and modernity in Malaysia's architectural history. The methodological approach for analyzing the mosque and house as case study in detail will be presented in the following section, followed by a discussion of how the Jawi Peranakan values manifest in the architectural design of mosque and house building typology in the findings and discussion section.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an interpretive paradigm to explore the integration of Jawi Peranakan values within the architectural forms of the Jawi Peranakan community. Rooted in qualitative research, this paradigm emphasises the contextual and subjective dimensions of meaning, focusing on how individuals and communities assign cultural significance to the built environment. It operates on the philosophical premise that reality is socially constructed and best understood through the lived experiences and interpretations of people rather than through hypothesis testing or behavioural prediction. The research investigates explicitly how the Jawi Peranakan values have shaped the architectural forms of their public buildings, like mosques and houses. Given the focus on uncovering symbolic and philosophical meaning, semiotics is employed as a methodological tool to decode embedded symbols within the architecture. The Jawi Peranakan community's cultural expressions—including their practices, behaviours, and spatial arrangements—are treated as a "text" that can be read, interpreted, and analysed to extract deeper ideological meanings. A single study approach underpins the research design,

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enabling in-depth, qualitative exploration. Data collection methods include observational analysis using the layering technique and semi-structured interviews with experts and residents. This multi-method strategy supports the interpretation of personal and collective meanings attached to the architectural forms. The selection of the Jawi Peranakan community building, represented by the mosque, as four key criteria justifies the case study. First is the Historical and Cultural Authenticity aspect, in which the building should have a direct historical connection to the Jawi Peranakan community, ideally constructed, funded, or managed by Jawi Peranakan individuals or organisations. It should date from the period when the community was socially active (19th–early 20th century), reflecting genuine Jawi Peranakan socio-religious identity. Second is the representation of core cultural values, where the selected building must express Jawi Peranakan values such as generosity (dermawan), hospitality (keramahan), religious devotion, education, and community welfare. This can be seen in the function of the building or in spatial organization that encourages communal gathering, learning, and inclusivity. Third is the extensiveness level of architectural characteristics and hybrid identity. The selection of case study displays distinct hybrid architectural features that reflect the fusion of Malay, Islamic, Indian, and colonial influences. Criteria include façade ornamentation, form typology (courtyard, portico, veranda), symmetry, ventilation details, and use of materials. These hybrid forms are key evidence of how cultural values were translated into architectural language. Fourth is the, community and functional relevance. The building should have been or still be used as a community hub, such as a mosque and others. Continued community engagement strengthens its role as a living representation of Jawi Peranakan generosity and civic responsibility. The architectural analysis is framed by theories of form and space-making, where form includes elements such as setting, scale, façade, structure, and ornament, and space includes aspects like access, circulation, hierarchy, and function. Form-making is studied through layered semiotic analysis, while space syntax mapping is used to understand spatial organization. The semiotic framework follows Malhis, S. (2004) six-layer model:

Layer 1: Establishes the foundational structure of the building form.

Layer 2: Examines volumetric modifications through addition or subtraction.

Layer 3: Introduces piercings (windows, doors) and other attributes, such as screens and garages.

Layer 4: Examines the spatial relationships between piercings and their surrounding surfaces.

Layer 5: Focuses on decorative and constructive details, including columns, cornices, and finishes.

Layer 6: Isolates optional stylistic features (e.g., door/window shapes) and categorises them separately for detailed analysis.

Additionally, semi structured interviews were conducted with 5 people under the category of mosque management who manage the mosque for more than 10 years to gain insight into the practical and symbolic roles of architectural features. Interview content centred around the core concepts of Jawi Peranakan values—and their manifestation in architectural form and

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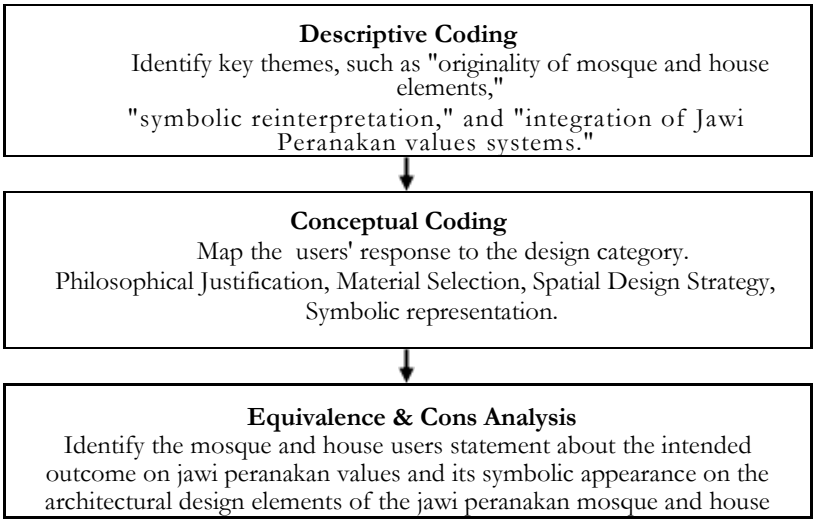
space. This helped link observed architectural characteristics directly to philosophical and cultural values. To analyse the findings from interviews, the coding method is used because it is an important qualitative research technique that provides a structured approach to analyzing complex text data. By systematically categorizing and interpreting text data, theme-based coding allows for the identification of patterns, thematic relationships, and implicit discourse related to Jawi Peranakan values with the architectural formation of this Jawi Peranakan community mosque and houses. The use of this coding method ensures that the data from the interview transcript is successfully synthesized into meaningful insights that support the research objectives. The coding for this interview involves:



For the data validation of findings from the observation and semi structured interviews, focus group discussions with selected five experts— 1 architects, 2 academician, and 2 conservators—with backgrounds in Jawi Peranakan culture and architectural heritage, using the Socratic method, were adopted. The selection of these experts were based on their academic credentials, cultural expertise, and professional experience in the field of Indian tradition and cultural heritage. The Socratic method is seen as beneficial for conducting focus group discussions. First, it elevates a research-centred view, capturing the ideologies of experts according to their views on design, function, and spirituality. Second, the dialogical nature fosters knowledge sharing between experts and researchers, creating a collaborative environment for diverse perspectives to be brought out. Third, by challenging assumptions and encouraging more in-depth research, this Socratic method reveals hidden or unintentional design needs as a result of the researcher's findings. Finally, the expert's in-depth relationship with the research subject will provide critical insight into how design decisions align with the formation of Jawi Peranakan community identity and how it should work.

The study uses an explanatory research approach, aiming to explain the relationships between architectural features and cultural values. Analysis occurs in two phases:

Phase One: Observational and documentation-based analysis of built form and spatial organisation, supplemented by semi-structured interviews on Jawi Peranakan-related interpretations.

Phase Two: All findings from the three processes above are synthesised to assess how and to what extent Jawi Peranakan values have influenced architectural forms and to evaluate their potential role in supporting communal development.

Phase Three: Finally, data validation with experts is made to identify what, how and why the mosque's architectural expressions highlight the shared values of Jawi Peranakan in representing unique features, commonalities and differences in architectural expression.

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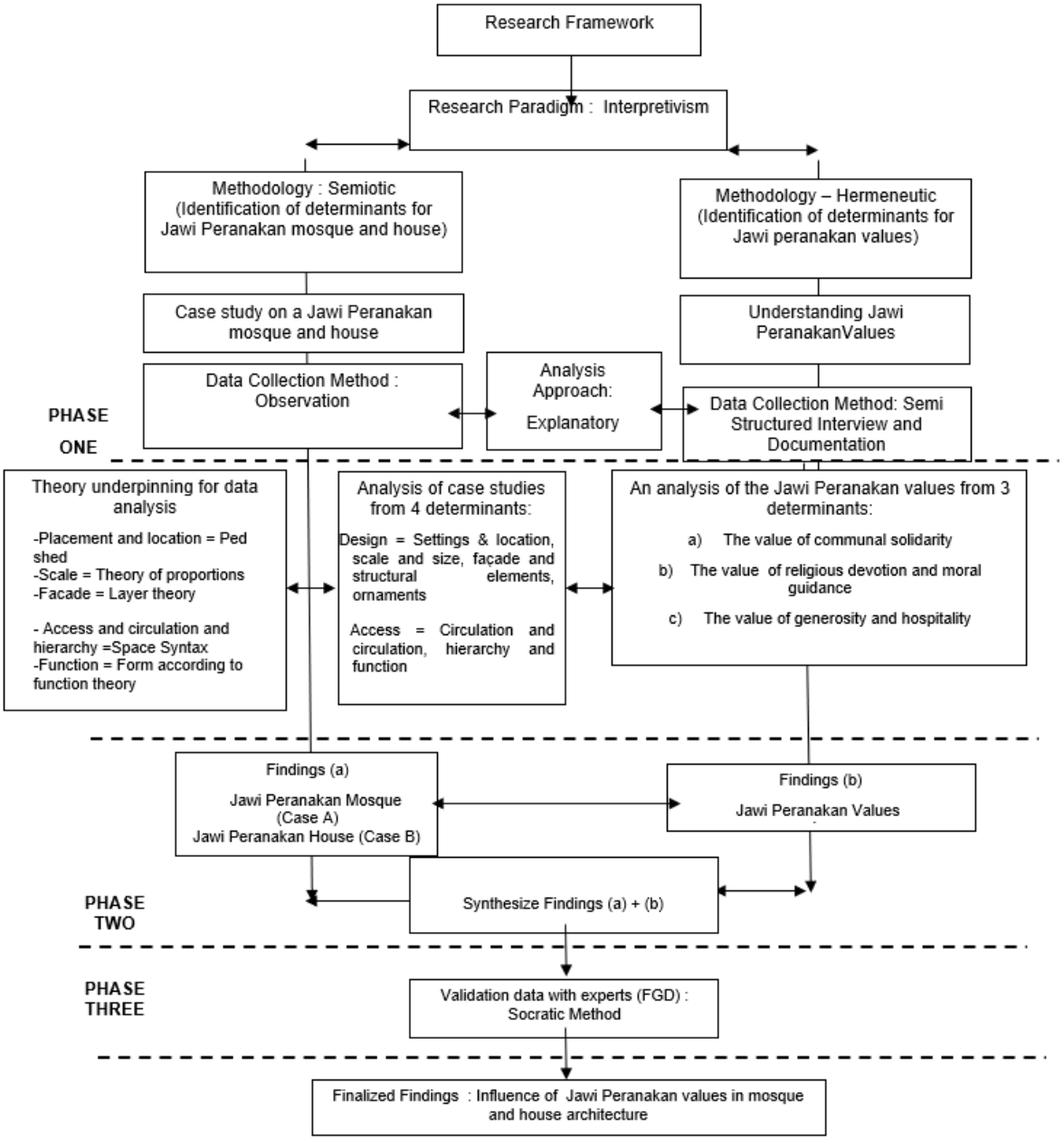

DIAGRAM 1.0 Research framework (source: author)

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RESULT

This paper examines two case studies of buildings owned and patronised by the Jawi Peranakan community, which are the Kapitan Keling Mosque and Syed Al Attas Mansion. These two case study backgrounds will be explained in turn as in the following.

CASE STUDY A - THE KAPITAN KLING MOSQUE

FIGURE 1.0 View of Kapitan Kling Mosque (source: author)

This mosque was established in the late 18th century, is among the earliest Muslim institutions in George Town. The term "Keling" historically referred to people of South Indian origin, particularly Tamil Muslims who were among the first settlers brought to Penang at the invitation of the British East India Company. Their leader, Cauder Mohideen, was appointed as the Kapitan Keling—a system in which the colonial administration recognized a community head responsible for mediation, organization, and tax management(Jones, 1997). Upon his appointment around 1801, Cauder Mohideen donated land for the construction of a mosque that would serve as the religious and social center for the South Indian Muslim community. Initially, the mosque was a modest brick structure surrounded by a large Muslim settlement known as the Keling Kampung. Over time, as Penang became a thriving free port attracting Indian Ocean traders from Aceh, the Coromandel Coast, Gujarat, Yemen, and the Malay world, the mosque expanded to accommodate the growing population. The colonial authorities formalized land grants to the mosque trustees, reflecting both British administrative order and the community's increasing institutional strength. By the mid-19th century, the original structure proved insufficient, leading to significant renovation under the leadership of succeeding Kapitans, notably Kapitan Kechil Abdul Rahman and Kapitan Kechil Lebai Tambusamy. The architectural evolution of the mosque displays the syncretic aesthetics of the period: Indo-

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Islamic arches, Mughal domes, and colonial Neoclassical features incorporated by European architects and local artisans. The transformation reached a major phase in the early 20th century when the mosque underwent extensive reconstruction designed by Henry Alfred Neubronner of the PWD. This reconstruction introduced the striking ochre façade, imposing central dome, four smaller corner domes, and colonnaded verandahs that define the mosque today. The surrounding grounds historically functioned as a Muslim burial site, emphasizing the mosque's role as the religious heart of the Muslim quarter. Its placement in the urban grid of George Town reflects typical features of Islamic settlement patterns—close proximity to markets, residential clusters, waqf lands, and community schools. In this sense, the Kapitan Keling Mosque served not only as a place of worship but also as a locus of cultural continuity, legal authority, social welfare, and communal identity for generations of Indian Muslim settlers. By the late 20th century, as George Town modernized and expanded, the mosque became a symbol of historical preservation. Its conservation under UNESCO's designation of George Town as a World Heritage Site (2008) reaffirmed its importance as a living monument of Penang's multicultural past. Today, the Kapitan Keling Mosque stands as one of the oldest and most architecturally significant mosques in Malaysia, representing the layered histories of colonial administration, South Asian diaspora leadership, and Islamic architectural expression.

CASE STUDY B – SYED AL ATTAS MANSION

FIGURE 1.1 View of The Syed Al Attas Mansion (source: author)

The Syed Al Attas Mansion, constructed around the 1860s, embodies the influence of the Hadhrami Arab community—a group known for their trading networks spanning the Red Sea, Arabian Peninsula, India, and Southeast Asia. Syed Mohammad Al Attas, a prominent merchant from the distinguished Al Attas family of Hadhramaut, built the mansion. The Hadhrami diaspora in the Malay world became influential both economically and intellectually,

contributing to Islamic scholarship, trade, and later reformist movements. The mansion served multiple functions: it was a residence, trading office, and gathering place for the Arab elite in Penang. Its architectural style is emblematic of the Straits Eclectic tradition, blending European Neoclassical symmetry and ornamentation with Chinese craftsmanship and Islamic spatial principles. Features such as internal courtyards, large shuttered windows, and decorative plasterwork reflect this hybrid aesthetic that defined wealthy urban homes in 19th-century Penang. Historically, the Syed Al Attas Mansion is particularly important for its association with anti-colonial activism. It is widely regarded as a meeting place for leaders of the Acehnese resistance against Dutch colonial rule in Sumatra. Arab scholars, merchants, and Hadhrami leaders such as Syed Al Attas maintained close networks with Southeast Asian sultanates, and the mansion became a hub for intellectual debate, strategic planning, and cultural exchange. This political dimension elevates the mansion beyond its architectural value, situating it within a broader narrative of Indian Ocean solidarity and resistance. As Penang flourished as a commercial port, the mansion also reflected the prosperity of the Arab merchant class, who invested in real estate, waqf properties, spice exportation, and regional trade. Its location along Armenian Street placed it within a vibrant multicultural district inhabited by Chinese Peranakans, Tamil Muslims, Malay traders, and European institutions. This setting underscores the cosmopolitan nature of George Town's urban fabric. In the 20th century, shifting economic patterns, the decline of traditional trading houses, and changing urban demographics led to the mansion's gradual deterioration. However, its significance was revived through conservation initiatives tied to Penang's heritage revitalisation efforts. Today, the Syed Al Attas Mansion stands as a restored monument representing the intellectual, political, and economic contributions of the Hadhrami Arab diaspora. Its historical role as a centre of anti-colonial activity and intercultural exchange continues to anchor its legacy within Malaysian heritage studies.

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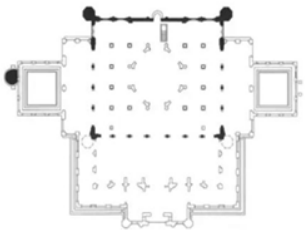
Jawi Peranakan values	Values influence the architectural design	Diagram of Case Study A : The Kapitan Kling Mosque	Diagram of Case Study B : Syed Al Attas Mansion
The value of communal solidarity Communal solidarity in the Jawi Peranakan community refers to the deeply rooted collective value that prioritises unity, mutual support, and the preservation of shared identity among members of this Malay–South Asian Muslim hybrid society. Grounded in Islamic teachings, extended kinship networks, and long-standing cultural practices, this solidarity manifests through cooperation in religious rituals, social gatherings, economic activities, and community decision-making. The value emphasises interdependence, where individuals are expected to contribute to communal welfare, uphold moral obligations, and assist one another in times of need.	Jawi Peranakan architecture expresses **communal solidarity through spatial designs** that encourage collective gatherings, support extended family structures, integrate religious life, and invest in shared community spaces. These features transform buildings into living embodiments of cooperation, shared faith, and cultural continuity—key values that define Jawi Peranakan heritage.	**Spatial layout –**  **Image 1.0 Ground floor plan of mosque (source: author)** **Centralised Congregational Prayer Hall** • The prayer hall is large, symmetrical, and unobstructed by internal partitions. • It brings the entire community together in *saff* (aligned rows), reinforcing equality and unity before God. • The mihrab is highly visible to allow a collective spiritual focus. *Everyone—regardless of status or ethnicity—shares the same worship space, building social cohesion. Showing the equality & unity in worship. **Multi-Entry Access that Welcomes Diverse Groups** • The mosque features several gates oriented toward surrounding Tamil Muslim neighbourhoods. • This spatial permeability reflects inclusivity toward	**Spatial layout-** **Image 1.6 Ground floor plan of the mansion (source:author)** **Image 1.7 First floor plan of the mansion(source:author)** **Hierarchical but Connected Spatial Layout** The mansion uses a traditional *introverted* design centered around internal circulation spaces: • Front reception halls (*serambi* or grand foyers) serve as public areas for receiving guests, traders, scholars, and community members. • Semi-private and private rooms are positioned deeper inside. *Creates a welcoming place for communal interaction while still respecting Islamic norms of privacy and hospitality—fostering trust and social bonding.

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		multi-ethnic Muslim communities (Indian, Malay, Arab). • Linear pathways guide the flow of people from outside to the prayer hall in groups. • Ritual movement during Friday prayers and festivals fosters synchronized collective behavior. *Breaking hierarchical access patterns promotes a shared sense of belonging. Representing inclusivity across Muslim ethnic groups **Ancillary Communal Facilities Integrated into the Complex** • Ablution areas (wudu), madrasah classrooms, and meeting rooms are connected to the main hall. • Historically, charitable food distribution and religious administration took place onsite. *The mosque becomes a community centre—not only a prayer space. Support for lifelong communal activities and reinforced identity through shared ritual.	**Large Multi-Functional Reception Areas** The expansive audience hall on the ground floor historically functioned for: • Business negotiations • Community meetings • Hosting travelling merchants and religious leaders *Strengthens social and economic networks—solidifying communal ties through trade and religious fraternity. **Spatial Separation for Community Inclusivity** Separate pathways and access zones were provided for: • Male guests (public front) • Women and family members (private interior) • Servants and domestic helpers (discreet routes) *This respectful zoning facilitates broader participation in communal activities—without violating Islamic social boundaries. **Courtyard and Ventilation Spine as Social Node** A central light court and surrounding verandahs link major rooms for: • Daily communal gatherings • Family–community exchanges • Religious celebrations (e.g., communal meals during Ramadan) * The courtyard acts as the heart of communal life—symbolically and practically reinforcing unity.

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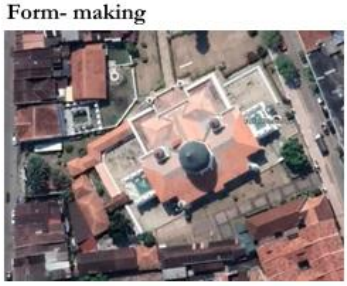
The value of religious devotion and moral guidance In the Jawi Peranakan community this value reflects the central importance of Islamic faith as the foundation of identity, conduct, and social order. Rooted in Malay–Indian Muslim heritage, this value emphasizes commitment to worship, spiritual discipline, and ethical behavior guided by Shariah principles. Religious teachings influence family life, community relationships, education, and leadership roles, ensuring that decisions and everyday actions uphold honesty, modesty, and compassion. Through mosques, religious scholars, and communal rituals, this value preserves cultural integrity, strengthens unity, and provides a moral compass for the wellbeing of the whole community.	The value of religious devotion and moral guidance in the Jawi Peranakan community strongly shapes their architecture by placing Islamic faith at the center of spatial design. Mosques, homes, and public buildings incorporate features such as prayer halls, mihrabs, and courtyards that facilitate worship and religious gatherings. Spatial hierarchy separates public and private zones to protect modesty and uphold Islamic etiquette. Decorative elements including calligraphy and geometric motifs promote spiritual reflection rather than worldly display. Buildings often include areas for Quranic learning and charitable activities, showing that architecture supports both moral education and the nurturing of a righteous, unified Muslim community.	**Form- making**  **Image 1.1 Location of the mosque (source:author)** **Sacred Orientation and Centralized Worship Focus** • The entire building mass is oriented toward the **qibla**, guiding the congregation toward Mecca. • The prominent **mihrab** niche and aligned prayer rows *(saff)* visually reinforce unity and equality before God. *Spiritual direction becomes a physical and moral anchor. **Symbolic Verticality as Connection to the Divine** **Image 1.2 The frontal façade of the msoque form (source: author)** • The **large onion-shaped dome** symbolizes the heavens and divine protection. • The **minaret** stands tall to broadcast the adhan, calling the community to prayer and moral discipline.	**Form-making** **Image 1.8 Location of the mansion (source:author)** **Introverted Spatial Structure for Modesty and Privacy** The mansion adopts an inward-looking layout where private spaces are positioned deeper within the building, separated from street-facing public areas. This zoning reflects Islamic principles of **haya'** (modesty) and controls social interaction between genders, ensuring behavior aligned with moral guidelines. **Symbolic Aesthetic Expression of Islamic Identity** **Image 1.9 Calligraphic pattern at the façade mansion form (source: author)** Geometric motifs, arches, and calligraphic ornamentation celebrate Islamic artistic tradition without figurative imagery, upholding moral teachings against idolatry. The

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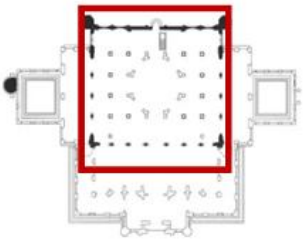
		*Architecture acts as a reminder of religious duty and constant devotion. **Calligraphic and Geometric Ornamentation** **Image 1.3 Calligraphic pattern in interior form (source: author)** • Quranic calligraphy and geometric patterns communicate sacred knowledge. • Repetition of patterns reflects divine order and Islamic moral cosmos. *The mosque becomes a visual medium of religious teaching.	harmonious façade conveys dignity, humility, and moral order expected of community leaders. **Purification and Cleanliness Embedded in Form** **Image 1.10 Opening at the façade mansion (source: author)** The well-ventilated verandahs highlights the importance of **tahara'** (cleanliness) as a spiritual and moral obligation, ensuring the home remains suitable for worship.
The value of generosity and hospitality is essential to the Jawi Peranakan community as it strengthens social relations, supports religious obligations, and sustains cultural identity. Grounded in Islamic teachings on charity and caring for guests, these values guide how the community welcomes travelers, hosts communal gatherings, and assists those in need. Generosity builds trust within trade networks and reinforces the	The value of **generosity and hospitality** is portrayed in the Jawi Peranakan built environment through architectural features that support communal gatherings, guest reception, and charitable practices. Residences such as those of prominent merchant families include large reception halls, verandahs, and courtyards designed to welcome visitors with comfort and respect. Mosques and community buildings provide expansive prayer spaces, social areas, and facilities for travelers, reflecting	**Spatial layout-**  **Image 1.4 Large open prayer hall (source: author)** **Expansive Congregational Prayer Hall** • Large, open interior accommodates significant numbers of worshippers, especially during Friday prayers and festivals. • Reflects generosity in providing communal access	**Spatial layout-** **Image 1.11 Large public reception space (source: author)** **Prominent Front Reception Halls** • Large, accessible reception rooms placed at the building's front demonstrate readiness to receive merchants, scholars, and community visitors. • Reflects the owner's social obligation to host guests and provide communal support.

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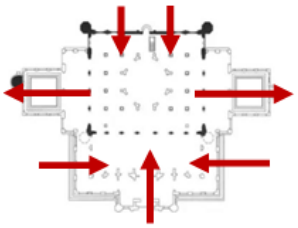
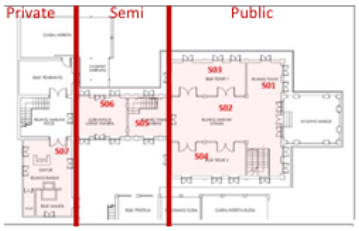
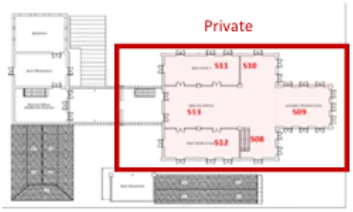
community's reputation for kindness and leadership. Hospitality also promotes unity among Muslims of diverse origins, especially in multiethnic settings like Penang. By practicing open-handedness and respectful hosting, the Jawi Peranakan preserve social harmony, spiritual merit, and cmmunal resilience.	Islamic obligations of charity and care for the needy. Spatial hierarchies maintain dignity by balancing openness with privacy. Collectively, these elements demonstrate that the built environment functions as a physical expression of social generosity and communal responsibility.	to sacred space for all Muslims.  **Image 1.5 Well segregation of zoning of public , semi and private (source: author)** **Multiple Entry Points** • Several access routes allow diverse groups—from different ethnic and social backgrounds—to join the congregation easily. • Communicates openness and inclusivity as Islamic social virtues. **Welcoming Transitional Spaces** • Verandahs, arcades, and shaded walkways function as social areas before and after prayers. • Offer comfortable zones to gather, converse, and support community members. **Open Courtyard for Social Interaction** • The sahn accommodates community events, religious celebrations, and relief distribution. • Enables acts of **sadaqah** (charity) and reinforces collective hospitality. **Mosque as a Social-Welfare Hub** • Layout supports Quranic classes, charitable collection, and community decision-making.	  **Image 1.12 Well segregation of zoning of public , semi and private (source : author)** **Hierarchical Spatial Zoning** • Clear separation between public reception areas and private family quarters allows visitors to be hosted without compromising domestic privacy. • Aligns with Islamic ethics of respectful and dignified hospitality (*adab al-ziyāfah*). **Image 1.13 Frontal mansion façade (source: author)** **Symbolic Representation of Hospitality** • The mansion's grand entrance and ornamental façade signal openness, dignity, and

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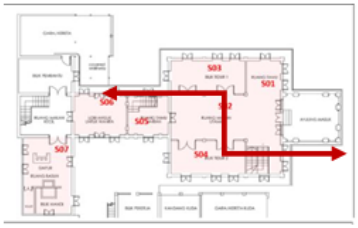
		• Hospitality is embedded in both spiritual and socio-economic functions. *Through accessible circulation, communal gathering areas, and facilities for worship and welfare, the Kapitan Keling Mosque turns generosity and hospitality into **spatial practices**—reinforcing the Islamic ideal of caring for all who enter its domain.	willingness to engage with the community. • Architecture communicates generosity as a cultural and moral value **Interconnected Verandahs and Circulation Routes**  **Image 1.14 Fluid circulation at the ground floor** **(source: author)** • Verandahs create fluid movement between public and semi-private areas, allowing guests to circulate comfortably. • This ease of access expresses hospitality while maintaining respectful boundaries *The mansion's spatial layout transforms the home into a place of social responsibility, reflecting generosity not only as a personal virtue but as a communal obligation embedded in Jawi Peranakan culture.

Based on the preceding case studies, it is evident that Jawi Peranakan architecture like the mosque and individual house in Malaysia continues to embody and safeguard fundamental communal values, particularly those associated with familial respect, hierarchical social structure, Islamic belief systems, and collective responsibility. Despite progressive adaptations to contemporary functional requirements, these cultural principles remain deeply embedded within spatial organisation, decorative expression, and architectural symbolism. The sustained emphasis on religious devotion, family loyalty, and social order reinforces the transmission of Jawi Peranakan identity across generations, thereby ensuring that these values remain integral to both the built environment and the broader socio-cultural fabric of the community in Malaysia.

ETHNIC STUDIES IMPLICATIONS

The study of cultural values embedded in Jawi Peranakan public buildings—such as communal solidarity, religious devotion and moral guidance, and generosity and hospitality—offers significant insights for ethnic studies by linking material culture to social identity, intergroup relations, and heritage preservation. Public architecture functions as a tangible expression of community norms, beliefs, and social ethics, making it a vital medium through which ethnic identity is both manifested and reinforced. For instance, spatial arrangements that prioritize communal gathering areas, inclusive prayer halls, and reception spaces reflect the value of communal solidarity, illustrating how physical space supports social cohesion and collective responsibility within a minority ethnic community.

Similarly, design elements emphasizing religious devotion and moral guidance, including spatial hierarchy, ceremonial circulation, and provision for religious learning, demonstrate the interplay between faith and daily life. These features provide evidence of the Jawi Peranakan community's integration of spiritual principles into social organization and collective behavior, offering scholars a framework to understand how religion shapes ethnic identity and moral governance. Meanwhile, architectural expressions of generosity and hospitality—through open courtyards, reception halls, and facilities for travelers or the needy—highlight the ethical and social responsibilities that underpin community relations, shedding light on the role of cultural norms in sustaining intra- and inter-ethnic networks.

By examining these values in the built environment, ethnic studies can move beyond abstract cultural theorization to observe the materialization of social norms, intergenerational knowledge transmission, and cultural resilience. It also enables a comparative understanding of how minority communities negotiate identity, social cohesion, and heritage preservation within multicultural societies. Thus, analyzing Jawi Peranakan public buildings contributes to ethnic studies by demonstrating the inextricable link between architecture, culture, and social identity, providing a holistic lens for exploring the dynamic processes that shape ethnic experience and community continuity.

CONCLUSION

The development of a design framework grounded in the Jawi Peranakan values of communal solidarity, religious devotion and moral guidance, and generosity and hospitality is vital in shaping a culturally meaningful Malaysian built environment. These values, historically embedded in the spatial and architectural character of settlements such as George Town, illustrate how architecture can function as a socio-cultural instrument rather than merely a physical construct. Designs informed by communal solidarity encourage spatial inclusivity by providing environments that support social interaction, collective engagement, and community resilience. Spaces such as courtyards, verandahs, and prayer halls facilitate communication and

cooperation, strengthening social cohesion in multicultural urban settings. Likewise, integrating religious devotion and moral guidance into architecture shapes environments that respect and reinforce Islamic principles, ethical conduct, and spiritual identity. In both domestic and institutional buildings, zoning for privacy, purification, and worship highlights architecture as a medium of spiritual continuity. Similarly, generosity and hospitality manifest through public accessibility, welcoming spatial gestures, and the incorporation of facilities intended to support communal welfare—demonstrating how the built environment can encourage compassion, care, and openness in daily life.The benefits of embedding these values are multifold. They promote cultural continuity, enhance community wellbeing, and preserve a unique architectural identity that contributes to Malaysia's heritage narrative. Such values-driven frameworks also support social inclusivity by recognizing the historical contributions of diverse Muslim communities in nation-building. They offer design guidelines that prioritize human experience, ethical spatial organization, and social sustainability—principles that remain relevant in contemporary city-making.

However, challenges persist in maintaining and translating Jawi Peranakan values into modern architecture. Globalization, real estate commercialization, and rapid urban development often prioritize economic profit over cultural preservation. The decline of traditional community structures and changing social behaviours risks diminishing collective memory and weakening cultural linkages. Additionally, heritage buildings face deterioration, inadequate conservation funding, and pressure to be redeveloped, creating tensions between modern functionality and historical integrity. Despite these challenges, reinforcing Jawi Peranakan cultural values within Malaysia's design discourse is essential. It ensures that the built environment continues to reflect plural identity, honour inherited wisdom, and support meaningful social relations. Moving forward, an adaptive, context-sensitive design framework rooted in these values can guide future development toward environments that are not only functional but also spiritually grounded, community-oriented, and culturally dignified—safeguarding heritage as a living and evolving legacy for generations to come.

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Bandaraya Islam Sebagai Ruang Sakral: Kota Bharu, Kelantan

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ABSTRACT

Mircea Eliade in his seminal work, "The Sacred and The Profane" distinguished between the space that is sacred and profane. Sacred space denotes a reality and meaning that were embedded with the elements of the divine and the mystical, while the profane denotes a space of chaos and foreign from the sacred features. This paper discusses the history and actions taken by the Kelantan State Government in implementing the Islamic City as a Sacred Space, utilizing Mircea Eliade's framework of the sacred and the profane. The discussion demonstrates that the initiatives of the Kota Bharu Municipal Council align with Eliade's conceptualization of Sacred Space, despite challenges such as cases of Shariah law violations which may undermine its sacred meaning.

Keywords: sacred space; profane space; islamic city; Kota Bharu; Mircea Eliade;

ABSTRAK

Mircea Eliade dalam karyanya "The Sacred and The Profane" membezakan antara ruang yang 'sakral' dan ruang 'duniawi'. Ruang sakral dilihat sebagai ruang yang mempunyai realiti dan makna yang mempunyai unsur-unsur ketuhanan, dan ghaib, manakala ruang duniawi ialah ruang yang 'kacau' dan asing daripada unsur-unsur kesakralan. Makalah ini membincangkan sejarah serta tindakan Kerajaan Negeri Kelantan dalam melaksanakan Bandaraya Islam sebagai Ruang Sakral dengan menggunakan kerangka ruang sakral dan duniawi oleh Mircea Eliade. Perbincangan karangan ini menunjukkan usaha-usaha Majlis Perbandaran Kota Bharu selari dengan pembentukan Ruang Sakral oleh Eliade, walaupun terdapat cabaran-cabaran seperti kes-kes jenayah syariah yang boleh menjejaskan pemaknaan sakral tersebut.

Kata kunci: ruang sakral; ruang duniawi; bandaraya Islam; Kota Bharu; Mircea Eliade;

PENGENALAN

Pembandaran moden pada masa ini telah membawa kepada perubahan besar terhadap struktur sosial dan moral dalam masyarakat. Di sebalik kemajuan teknologi dan gaya hidup, nilai-nilai keagamaan dan kerohanian dalam bandar semakin terhakis. Masyarakat bandar

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terutamanya golongan muda, semakin terdedah dengan pengaruh globalisasi dan kepelbagaian budaya sehingga menyebabkan berlakunya penghakisan nilai dan menjadi lebih individualistik dalam kehidupan seharian mereka (Föllmer 2022). Dalam konteks ini, bandar tidak dilihat sebagai ruang untuk kesejahteraan rohani, tetapi sebagai simbol kemajuan material dan gaya hidup individualistik yang sering kali menjauhkan manusia daripada unsur kesakralan (Ellul 1973; Nasib et al. 2023).

Namun begitu, penulis berpendapat pemahaman bandar tanpa melihat aspek kerohanian sahaja tidak mencukupi. Penulis sependirian dengan Lynch (1992) bahawa bandar juga merupakan satu entiti yang mengandungi simbol, makna, dan realiti sosial hasil yang terbentuk melalui interaksi masyarakat dengan persekitaran mereka. Sekiranya bandar diberikan simbol atau makna keagamaan dan kerohanian, imej sakral bandar dapat dibentuk, iaitu imej yang difahami dan dikhususkan dalam konteks keagamaan(Verschuuren et al. 2010).

Dalam konteks Malaysia, usaha Kerajaan Negeri Kelantan untuk menjadikan Kota Bharu sebagai Bandaraya Islam di bawah slogan “Membangun Bersama Islam” (Mohd Nasir, 2012) perlu diteliti. Kota Bharu memiliki sejarah panjang sebagai pusat pendidikan Islam dan budaya Melayu-Islam. Namun, dalam masa yang sama, negeri ini turut berhadapan dengan cabaran sosial yang ketara peningkatan kes jenayah, pelacuran dalam talian (Nawi, 2021) dalam pembentukannya sebagai sebuah Bandaraya Islam.

Makalah ini membincangkan tentang latar-belakang serta pembentukan Bandaraya Islam di Kota Bharu berfungsi sebagai satu bentuk ruang sakral dalam konteks sosial dan sejarah Kelantan berdasarkan kerangka ruang sakral dan ruang duniawi melalui karyanya, The Sacred and Profane(Eliade 1959). Seterusnya, makalah ini membincangkan cabaran dalam mempertahankan kesakralan Bandaraya Islam Kota Bharu dapat dipertahankan dalam menghadapi cabaran moden seperti sekularisasi, kapitalisme bandar, serta kewujudan ruang baharu seperti ruang siber yang mendominasi kehidupan masyarakat kontemporari.

DEFINISI BANDAR

Sebelum membincangkan konsep kesakralan bandar menurut Eliade, penting untuk kita memahami bandar secara umum dari aspek etimologi atau 'maksud sebenar dalam sesuatu perkataan'. Pendekatan etimologi untuk memahami bandar penting untuk memahami makna-makna, realiti, atau menurut Heidegger, "kewujudan" asal perkataan (Eiland 1982).

Perkataan **bandar** berasal daripada perkataan Parsi بندر atau bandar yang menggabungkan perkataan بند (band) dan در (dar) dan digunakan bagi kebanyakan pelayar Parsi membawa maksud "kawasan terlindung" daripada laut (Steingass 2018). Dalam Bahasa Melayu, ia mempunyai persamaan dengan perkataan Latin *civitatem* yang membawa maksud kepada keahlian komuniti dalam sesuatu (Hoad 1993). Makna etimologi ini memperlihatkan bandar sebagai kawasan yang mempunyai aspek fizikal dan sosial.

Wirth (1938), seorang ahli sosiologi pembandaran, mentakrifkan bandar sebagai penempatan berdasarkan ciri populasi yang besar, saiz bandar, dan sifat kepelbagaian bandar dari aspek sosial seperti kepelbagaian status sosial, dan kaum, serta mempunyai batasan yang jelas. Max Weber (1958) melihat sebuah bandar perlu mempunyai lima ciri, iaitu ia mestilah mempunyai (1) sempadan yang kukuh, (2) aktiviti pasaran, (3) sistem perundangan dan

perlembagaan tersendiri, (4) satu bentuk kesatuan yang menyatukan warga bandar, dan (5) autonomi politik bagi warga bandar untuk memilih pentadbir bandar mereka.

Skop fizikal bandar dalam konteks Malaysia boleh dilihat melalui takrifan bandar oleh Kementerian Perumahan dan Kerajaan Tempatan Malaysia, iaitu "Kawasan yang diwartakan serta kawasan tepu bina yang bersempadan dengannya dan gabungan kedua-dua kawasan ini mempunyai penduduk 10,000 orang atau lebih…" (Malaysia 2006).

Bagi takrifan Bandaraya Islam, Al-Saoud (2002) menekankan empat prinsip untuk mengiktiraf sebuah bandaraya mempunyai ciri-ciri Bandaraya Islam. (1) Faktor persekitaran iaitu pengadaptasian bangunan-bangunan dan pelan bandar dengan persekitaran sekeliling, (2) Kepercayaan agama dan budaya setempat yang mempengaruhi budaya kehidupan setempat dan menekankan pembinaan masjid di tengah-tengah bendar, (3) Prinsip Pembangunan berasaskan hukum syariah Islam iaitu sebagai bentuk perundangan dan perlembagaan dalam hubungan sosial penduduk bandar, dan yang terakhir, (4) Pembangunan bandar dalam aspek sosial dan fizikal perlulah menepati kehendak kepelbagaian penduduknya terutamanya dalam aspek pertalian kekeluargaan, pertahanan bandar, peraturan sosial dan pengamalan agama

Majlis Perbandaran Kota Bharu (2002) menyatakan bahawa prinsip asas bagi bandaraya Islam dalam konteks Kota Bharu berdasarkan **tiga hubungan penting** iaitu, hubungan dengan Tuhan, hubungan sesama manusia dan hubungan dengan alam.

Daripada definisi-definisi bandar di atas, takrifan Bandaraya Islam yang dirumuskan untuk tujuan makalah ini adalah sebuah kawasan penempatan yang berdasarkan bilangan populasi yang tinggi, mempunyai sempadan tersendiri, pentadbiran dan perundangan berdasarkan hukum syariah yang menekankan hubungan antara Tuhan, manusia dan alam, serta menempatkan penduduk dari latar belakang masyarakat yang pelbagai.

BANDAR SAKRAL MENURUT MIRCEA ELIADE

Pemahaman tentang bandar tidak hanya terbatas kepada dimensi fizikal dan sosial, tetapi turut melibatkan aspek simbolik dan kerohanian seperti yang dibincangkan oleh Mircea Eliade dalam karyanya "The Sacred and The Profane". Beliau merupakan seorang ahli falsafah, sejarawan agama dan seorang Profesor di University of Chicago (Rennie 2001). Eliade (1959) membahagikan ruang kepada dua kategori utama: sakral dan duniawi. Ruang duniawi merujuk kepada ruang yang bersifat seragam, relatif, kacau dan wujud hanya untuk memenuhi syarat-syarat dalam kehidupan material dan moden seperti pekerjaan, tempat tinggal dan hiburan. Bandar moden berdasarkan takrifan ini sering menjadi ruang yang bersifat kebendaan yang berfungsi memenuhi keperluan manusia mengikut hierarki Maslow (Baches 2016), bukan ruang yang membawa makna yang mengatasi kewujudan.

Ruang sakral pula ialah ruang yang mempunyai nilai kewujudan dan kerohanian yang mengatasi fungsi kebendaannya. Bagi Eliade (1959), ruang sakral mempunyai axis mundi atau pusat yang menghubungkan dunia manusia dengan realiti ketuhanan. Pusat ini memberikan orientasi kepada ruang di sekelilingnya, membentuk suatu kosmos yang teratur. Melalui pusat inilah sesuatu ruang dianggap sebagai "wujud" dan bukan sekadar ruang yang mempunyai makna luaran dan kebendaan. Rumah, bangunan atau bandar dalam perspektif ini tidak hanya dilihat sebagai struktur material, tetapi sebagai refleksi kepada ciptaan kosmik dalam pengaruh

dan lingkungan ketuhanan. Dengan kata lain, ruang sakral membawa makna yang mengikat manusia kepada pandang alam agama dan kepercayaan mereka.

Eliade (1959) turut menjelaskan bahawa ruang duniawi boleh berubah menjadi ruang sakral melalui tindakan-tindakan tertentu seperti pembinaan pusat sakral (misalnya salib di sebuah pekan Kristian), pelaksanaan ritual yang mengulangi tindakan primordial (kelahiran dunia) atau melalui simbol-simbol alam seperti gunung dan pokok suci. Contoh ruang sakral dapat dilihat pada Gunung Kinabalu yang dianggap sebagai pusat alam ghaib oleh etnik Dusun (Bidder 2023) atau Pokok Bumbakula sebagai pusat sakral bagi suku Arunta di Australia (Eliade 1959). Ruang sedemikian bukan hanya membentuk persekitaran fizikal, tetapi turut mengatur tindak-tanduk, ritus dan adat masyarakat yang berada di bawah bayangan Tuhan.

Kerangka Eliade ini penting kerana ia menunjukkan bagaimana sebuah bandar boleh difahami sebagai kosmos yang teratur dan mencerminkan kepercayaan masyarakat yang menghuninya sebagai lebih daripada ruang fungsi. Masyarakat tradisional, termasuk masyarakat Islam, membentuk bandar melalui simbol, orientasi dan struktur yang mencerminkan kepercayaan mereka. Walaupun banyak bandar moden bersifat duniawi, masyarakat oriental masih mengekalkan ciri-ciri *homo religiosus* yang melihat ruang sebagai cerminan hubungan antara manusia, alam dan Tuhan (Eliade 1959). Dalam konteks ini, bandar sakral ialah ruang yang dibentuk melalui makna kerohanian, simbolik dan kosmologi, menjadikan bandar bukan sahaja tempat kediaman tetapi juga sebuah kosmos yang teratur dan mencerminkan kepercayaan masyarakat yang menghuninya.

KELANTAN SEBAGAI SEBUAH RUANG SAKRAL: LATAR BELAKANG

Perkembangan Islam di kelantan dibahagikan kepada tiga tahap (Azra 1999) iaitu perkembangan Islam pada abad ke 14 hingga 15 Masihi disebabkan oleh perdagangan dan kemudiannya pengislaman dalam kalangan pemerintah. Tahap kedua dapat dilihat dalam campur tangan penjajahan barat pada awal abad ke-19 Masihi, dan yang ketiga merupakan tindakan-tindakan kerajaan Negeri Kelantan untuk membebaskan diri mereka daripada dasar-dasar penjajah.

Perkembangan agama Islam di Kelantan adalah disebabkan oleh kedudukannya yang strategik sebagai salah sebuah pusat perdagangan (Zainal Abidin & Haji Hamzah 2018). Perkembangan Islam di sesuatu tempat menyebabkan masyarakat mula menitikberatkan tentang pendidikan. Pada awalnya, sistem pendidikan Islam di Kelantan adalah melalui ceramah atau tazkirah lisan, tetapi lama-kelamaan ia mula berkembang dengan kemunculan madrasah, dan masjid sebagai tempat belajar dengan menggunakan kaedah lisan atau *turath* (Yusuff & Abdullah 2007).

Hal ini menyebabkan Kelantan atau Kota Bharu mendapat 'imej' sebagai tempat untuk melanjutkan pembelajaran yang lebih tinggi dalam bidang agama, dan sebagai sebuah tempat yang kukuh dengan nilai-nilai Islam. Bukti ini dapat dilihat dengan jumlah pondok di Kelantan telah mencecah 100 pondok pada awal abad ke-19, dan mempunyai lebih daripada 1000 orang penuntut (Saad & Radzi 2009). Tambahan pula dengan kedudukan Kota Bharu di Kelantan merupakan wilayah yang strategik sebagai pusat penyebaran agama Islam di wilayah Champa (seperti di Kemboja dan selatan Vietnam), Selatan Thailand dan Sumatera (seperti di Aceh dan

Minangkabau) yang menyebabkan ramai dari wilayah tersebut berkumpul untuk belajar agama di situ, sehinggakan Kota Bharu diberi nama julukan, Serambi Mekah (Erasiah et al. 2023).

Peranan Sultan dalam menjalinkan hubungan dengan golongan ulama, terutamanya sebagai penasihat dalam urusan pentadbiran menyebabkan ilmu agama di Kelantan berkembang dengan pesat. Pusat pendidikan Islam di sesuatu kawasan berperanan membentuk ruang sakral Islam di sesuatu tempat, kerana ia menunjukkan penerimaan nilai-nilai agama Islam di situ (Erasiah et al 2023).

Pada tahap kedua pula memperlihatkan campur tangan British dalam menstrukturkan semula sistem pentadbiran kerajaan (Erasiah et al 2023) yang juga membawa kepada perubahan sosial yang ketara dalam masyarakat. Penstrkturan tersebut dilakukan antaranya adalah kerana ingin mengurangkan kadar jenayah, dan tiada ruang kepada rakyat untuk menentang campur tangan asing. British pada ketika itu dilihat ingin mengawal autoriti sultan sebagai ketua agama, yang menyebabkan kepada kurangnya kuasa sistem perundangan Islam di Kelantan, yang sebenarnya sangat berkait dengan niat mereka untuk mengawal ekonomi di Kelantan secara menyeluruh, contohnya mereka boleh bertindak untuk memaksa rakyat membayar cukai kepada kerajaan dan membuat tindakan undang-undang mengikut kehendak mereka.

Hal ini juga membawa kepada sekularisme yang ketara dalam sistem pentadbiran dan perundangan di Kelantan apabila tertubuhnya Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan(MAIK). Walaupun ia dilihat untuk menyekat pengaruh Inggeris dalam pentadbiran Kelantan, tetapi hakikatnya ia hanya menguruskan apa-apa isu dan masalah berkenaan dengan agama sahaja, walaupun yang menganggotai MAIK dalam kalangan agamawan dan ditubuhkan kerana tidak mahu hal ehwal agama dikuasai oleh British (Sawalludin & Ariffin 2017). Isu-isu yang bukan berkaitan dengan agama masih lagi diletakkan di bawah bidang kuasa mahkamah sekular. Dengan kata lain, di sini mempunyai pertentangan dan pemisahan antara ruang sakral oleh MAIK yang memberikan imej Islamik kepada Kelantan yang bertentangan dengan ruang duniawi British yang ingin mengambil manfaat daripada negeri tersebut.

Perubahan sistem pentadbiran di Kelantan pada awal abad ke-20 iaitu pada era Graham telah membawa kepada kemunculan isu sosial di Kelantan ketika itu, iaitu peningkatan jenayah yang sangat ketara. Cukai-cukai yang pelbagai, harga cukai yang tinggi, serta undang-undang yang ketat telah menyebabkan rakyat menjadi tertekan, dan ini menyebabkan rakyat Kelantan ketika itu terpaksa melakukan jenayah sebagai satu bentuk anomie kerana tidak mampu berfungsi dengan struktur yang dibentuk oleh penjajah British (Mohamad Roslaily Rosdi et al 2022). Bukan itu sahaja pembangunan yang dilakukan oleh British lebih tertumpu di kawasan bandar atau kawasan pelabuhan yang berdasarkan modal, tenaga kerja dan perniagaan, manakala kawasan di luar bandar tertinggal, sehingga melahirkan sebuah masyarakat yang materialistik di Kelantan (Erasiah et al 2023).

Pelacuran, iaitu kegiatan maksiat atau perlakuan seksual bukan antara suami dengan isteri (Hasan & Ilham Hussin 2025) telah pun wujud sebelum zaman penjajahan British di Kelantan. Wanita Melayu ketika itu menawarkan diri sebagai gundik atau perempuan simpanan sultan, dan setelah khidmatnya sebagai gundik tidak diperlukan mereka menawarkan perkhidmatan seksual kepada lelaki-lelaki di luar lingkungan istana (Gullick 1978). Pada akhir abad ke-19 dan awal abad ke-20, kegiatan pelacuran menjadi isu ketara kerana ia dilihat sebagai ancaman terhadap nilai moral masyarakat awam serta mencemarkan prestij British (Hasan &

Ilham Hussin 2025). Menurut Hasan (2005) faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan wanita-wanita ini terlibat dalam gejala ini perceraian, pendidikan yang rendah, peluang pekerjaan yang rendah dan seumpamanya, tetapi faktor utama yang membawa kepada semua ini ialah masalah kewangan yang dihadapi oleh mereka, dan sangat berkait dengan perubahan ekonomi disebabkan oleh penjajahan British.

Hal ini membawa kepada MAIK membuat tindakan undang-undang syariah iaitu dengan menghantar waran dan membuat tangkapan kepada penjenayah. Pada awalnya tindakan ini masih lagi sukar kerana negeri masih lagi di bawah kuasa pemerintahan British (Sawalludin & Ariffin 2017). Akan tetapi, kegiatan ini berjaya dicegah dengan bantuan pihak Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM), orang awam, wartawan, kerajaan negeri dan lain-lain (Hasan 2010) dan penting untuk memelihara imej Kelantan sebagai Negeri Serambi Mekah.

Perkembangan ini membawa kepada tahap ketiga dalam sejarah Kelantan yang berkait dengan pentadbiran kerajaan Parti Se-Islam Malaysia x(PAS) dari tahun 1959-1978 dan dari 1990 hingga sekarang. PAS sejak penubuhannya pada tahun 1951 melihat politik sebagai medan dakwah, dan menggunakannya untuk menyedarkan masyarakat Melayu tentang cara hidup Islam. Kerangka pandang gerakan ini yang tidak memisahkan politik dan agama mempengaruhi cara gerakan ini dalam membentuk Kelantan, terutamanya Kota Bharu sebagai Bandaraya Islam (Ghani et al. 2020).

Tidak dinafikan tanggapan terhadap ruang sakral di Kelantan juga bercanggah dengan julukan Kelantan pada zaman dulu yang terkenal sebagai pusat hiburan dan juga pusat pelacuran, malah terdapat laporan akhbar The Straits Time pada tahun 1959 bahawa seorang Ahli Majlis Negeri Kelantan ketika itu, Nik Mohamed bin Ali menggelar Kota Bharu sebagai *Paris of Malaya* disebabkan pelacuran yang berleluasa di situ (The Straits Times 1959). Rakyat Kelantan yang dilihat berbeza dengan kaum lain yang terikat dengan budaya-budaya lama, berpegang teguh dengan Islam dan apa-apa yang tidak berkaitan dengan Islam perlu dibuang atau di-Islamisasikan supaya lebih diterima dan diamalkan oleh mereka. Ini dapat dilihat dengan Kelantan sebagai sebuah negeri yang ditadbir oleh 'ulama' (Erasiah et al. 2023).

ANALISIS DAN PERBINCANGAN

Pada tahun 2005, Kota Bharu telah diisytiharkan sebagai Bandaraya Islam yang merupakan sorotan daripada slogan "Membangun Bersama Islam" oleh Bekas Menteri Besar Kelantan, Dato Hj Nik Aziz Nik Mat yang membawa maksud Islam mestilah diterapkan dalam politik, ekonomi dan sosial kerajaan Kelantan. Bagi Mohd Nasir (2012) yang memetik daripada laporan MPKB-BRI (2006), pembangunan Bandaraya Islam adalah berdasarkan prinsip pembangunan kerohanian antara masyarakat dengan Tuhan iaitu setiap reka bentuk atau ruang-ruang di sekitar bandar tersebut mesti mengingatkan kepada Tuhan, pemeliharaan kebersihan di persekitaran bandar sebagai sesuatu yang ditekankan dalam agama Islam, dan hubungan dalam kalangan masyarakat. Prinsip ini berakar dengan syariah yang berdasarkan al-Quran dan amalan atau Sunnah Nabi Muhammad, serta peninggalan oleh sahabat-sahabat dan golongan ulama.

Penjenamaan ini telah membawa kepada usaha untuk pembentukan imej Islam di Kota Bharu, dari aspek sosial, politik, ekonomi, hingga budaya. Hal ini dapat dilihat dalam aspek perundangan. Contohnya, penggunaan tulisan Jawi dalam semua papan tanda kedai, jalan raya,

dan papan iklan, dan ia juga dipakai di kedai-kedai orang cina, atau India yang bukan Islam (Mohd Nasir 2012). Pelaksanaan perundangan yang berteraskan syariah oleh MPKB-BRI pada tahun 2023 mengenakan kompaun terhadap seorang wanita bukan Islam yang berpakaian tidak sopan, dan dilihat sebagai 'seksi', walaupun terdapat yang menentang kerana ia dilihat sebagai penentangan terhadap demokrasi (Samardi Ahmad 2023), tetapi masyarakat bukan Islam di Kota Bharu dilihat sudah menerima undang-undang yang berteraskan Islam ini (Nor Fazlina Abdul Rahim 2023), dan ini jelas menunjukkan mereka sudah lama beradaptasi dengan ruang Islam di Kelantan.

Dengan penjenamaan ini juga telah dikekalkan dalam pembinaan dan perancangan bandar di Kelantan pada masa ini. Contohnya banyak seni pembinaan yang dikekalkan dari dahulu iaitu yang masih mengekalkan identiti yang melambangkan prinsip-prinsip Islam seperti yang disebutkan di atas (hubungan dengan Tuhan, hubungan sesama alam dan hubungan dengan alam) masih lagi dikekalkan dan digunakan pada bangunan baru-baru ini, seperti TESCO, Masjid Muhammadi, serta Muzium Negeri Kelantan walaupun masih ada percampuran dari pengaruh-pengaruh yang asing seperti pengaruh Arab dan Barat (Nasir & Salleh 2015).

Penekanan terhadap imej *Arabesque* atau pengaruh Timur Tengah juga membawa kepada pembentukan imej keislaman Bandaraya Islam Kota Bharu. Ia dapat dilihat dengan penanaman pokok-pokok kurma di taman-taman sekitar Kota Bharu yang menekankan imej "*Arabesque*" (Nasir & Salleh 2015). Contohnya dapat dilihat dalam pembinaan Taman Tengku Anis di Gelanggang Seni, Kelantan pada tahun 2010 yang menggunakan gerbang-gerbang yang menggunakan corak dan leitmotif geometrik seperti di binaan-binaan di Timur Tengah. Tok Guru Bazar yang selesai dibina pada tahun 2011 pula banyak menerapkan identiti-identiti Islamik yang mencerminkan seni binaan Masjid Nabawi di Kota Madinah (Harun et al 2011).

Usaha dalam penjenamaan ini seperti yang disebutkan di atas, iaitu menerapkan prinsip pembangunan oleh MPKB-BRI, imej *Arabesque*, serta corak dan leitmotif geometrik selari dengan pandangan Eliade (1957) yang berpandangan bahawa masyarakat yang membentuk bandar atau ruang melalui simbol, orientasi dan struktur yang mencerminkan kepercayaan mereka. Prinsip-prinsip inilah mempengaruhi mereka yang berada di ruang tersebut sebagai cerminan *Homo Religiosus* iaitu manusia yang merasai ruang ketuhanan dan sakral yang berbeza dengan ruang duniawi (Vasile 2013).

Ia juga dapat dilihat dalam kajian Cheam et al (2018) yang mendapati penerapan imej Bandaraya Islam di Kota Bharu mempunyai persepsi yang positif terhadap para pengunjung luar. Dapatan kajian mereka menyatakan bahawa unsur kerohanian atau keagamaan merupakan faktor utama kerana responden merasakan ketenangan ruhani serta fikiran ketika berada di bandar tersebut (Cheam et al 2018). Hal ini selari dengan pandangan Eliade (1959) yang melihat unsur-unsur sakral dalam sesuatu ruang seperti ruang di bandar atau binaan-binaan dapat melahirkan perasaan kerohanian bagi mereka yang berada di ruang tersebut.

Kota Bharu, sebagai sebuah bandaraya tidak terlepas daripada kesan-kesan buruk pembandaran. Laporan Harian Metro bertarikh pada 29 Mac 2023 menyatakan kutipan sampah atau sisa pepejal di Kota Bharu telah meningkat sebanyak 430 tan sehari pada bulan Ramadan. Pada tahun sebelumnya, sampah yang dikutip pula hanya mencecah 350 tan, dan peningkatan itu dilihat meningkat pada seminggu sebelum dan selepas sambutan Aidilfitri di Kelantan (Zaidi 2023). Hal ini menunjukkan cabaran dari sikap masyarakat Kota Bharu untuk tidak

membuang sampah secara merata-rataukar diubah, walaupun terdapat juga kempen-kempen kebersihan serta usaha-usaha kerajaan Kelantan memastikan kebersihan Kota Bharu selaras dengan nilai-nilai Islam atau sakral, tetapi ia sukar untuk diterapkan dalam kalangan masyarakat Kota Bharu. Selain itu, Kelantan masih lagi mempunyai kes-kes jenayah seksual dalam kalangan remaja yang dilihat semakin meningkat (Muhafandi Muhamad 2022) iaitu sebanyak 197 orang ditangkap pada tahun 2022 (Zaidi 2022). Bilangan ini meningkat kepada 249 kes pada tahun 2024, dan kebanyakannya terlibat dengan kes rogol, sumbang mahram, liwat cabul dan kesalahan di bawah Akta Kesalahan-Kesalahan Seksual Terhadap Kanak-Kanak (BERNAMA 2024). Perbuatan jenayah seksual ini melanggar hukum syari'ah Islam yang mengharamkan perbuatan tersebut (Muhammad Ammar Harith 2025).

Masalah-masalah ini yang melanggar imej Bandaraya Islam di Kota Bharu selari dengan pemerhatian Eliade (1957) bahawa pembentukan imej ruang yang sakral bergantung dengan amalan, dan orientasi masyarakat di ruang tersebut. Dalam konteks Bandaraya Islam Kota Bharu, hukum syari'ah dan ritual keagamaan yang mengikuti prinsip hubungan antara Tuhan, manusia dan alam. Sekiranya amalan dan perbuatan masyarakat bertentangan dengan ciri-ciri *Homo Religiosus,* ia tidak dapat membentuk atau melahirkan sifat sakral di bandaraya tersebut. Perkara ini akan memberikan cabaran kepada pihak majlis bandaraya dalam memastikan imej Islam dan sakral dapat diserap dalam setiap perbuatan masyarakat.

Daripada satu sisi yang lain, ia juga memperlihatkan keterbatasan 'ruang sakral' yang difahami oleh Eliade (1959) itu sendiri, terutamanya penulisannya hanya tertumpu pada awal abad ke-20 iaitu jauh sebelum zaman perkembangan Internet atau ruang siber. Ia juga menjadi satu cabaran terhadap pembentukan masyarakat di bawah ruang sakral yang diidamkan, kerana pada masa ini terdapat satu lagi ruang yang saling berhubungan dan luas, malah lebih bersifat tidak teratur. Ia membawa kepada kewujudan ruang yang baru iaitu ruang siber(*cyber space*) yang mempunyai ciri-ciri dan masyarakat yang berbeza sifatnya dengan 'ruang' yang nyata yang terdiri daripada ruang sakral dan ruang duniawi.

Sifat ruang siber yang tidak teratur dan terbuka juga menjadi cabaran kepada interaksi antara masyarakat dengan hukum Syariah itu sendiri. Kita tidak menafikan bahawa perkembangan teknologi maklumat terutamanya internet telah membawa kepada peningkatan-peningkatan gejala sosial (Bernama 2024), seperti gejala seksual, dadah, dan penipuan siber. Perubahan sosial ini telah mengubah dan mempengaruhi cara pandang malah bentuk-bentuk ruang sakral di sesuatu tempat, dan Bandaraya Islam Kota Bharu juga tidak terkecuali.

KESIMPULAN

Eliade (1957) dalam pengenalan karya beliau sedar bahawa terdapat banyak perbezaan dalam 'agama-agama' terutamanya dalam ajaran-ajaran terhadap ruang yang sakral yang berbeza mengikut perkembangan agama. Ini menyebabkan penelitian beliau hanya bersifat umum, dan tidak memahami konteks perubahan terhadap ruang sakral, dan kesannya kepada masyarakat sekeliling, terutamanya dalam konteks perkembangan teknologi. Penekanan yang terhad unsur-unsur simbolik sebenarnya seperti *axis mundi*, *hierophany* dan seumpanya sangat terhad untuk diaplikasikan dalam konteks Kota Bharu.

Penekanan terhadap agama tidak lain, dan bukan merupakan sesuatu yang diterapkan oleh usaha-usaha masyarakat sendiri dari zaman ke zaman. Usaha untuk menyeragamkan satu

institusi untuk melaksanakan perubahan ke arah masyarakat hanyalah membawa kepada satu ketidakselesaan dan tidak sesuai dengan tabii' masyarakat. Sejarah-sejarah yang membawa kepada Kota Bharu kepada sebuah bandar berimejkan Islam, dan memperoleh gelaran, "Serambi Mekah", merupakan hasil daripada masyarakat Kota Bharu sendiri, iaitu golongan ulama, pedagang-pedagang luar, golongan pemerintah dan juga rakyat. Pembangunan terhadap masyarakat dalam membentuk imej dan persekitaran yang 'sakral' perlulah bermula dari bawah, iaitu dalam kalangan masyarakat sendiri, dan bukannya daripada autoriti yang boleh menyebabkan ketidakpuasan terhadap masyarakat.

Hal ini membawa kepada imej Bandaraya Islam itu sendiri. Kota Bharu, dari dulu hingga sekarang sudah dan telah pun mempunyai imej sebagai bandar yang berimejkan Islam, dan ia juga dapat dilihat dengan gaya hidup masyarakat Kelantan, imej Serambi Mekah, dan pondok-pondok yang menempatkan pelajar-pelajar dari luar negeri. Cabaran yang perlu ditekankan oleh masyarakat Kota Bharu adalah untuk mendepani arus-arus kemodenan, dan unsur-unsur luar yang boleh merosakkan akhlak dan sarwa pandang masyarakat. Langkah-langkah yang bersifat legalistik atau perundangan semata-mata tidak mencukupi untuk mengekang masalah ini.

Ia memerlukan kesedaran dalam kalangan masyarakat sendiri, terutamanya golongan ulama. Sekiranya dahulu, golongan ulamalah yang mencorakkan masyarakat serta imej bandar Kota Bharu, kini, mereka juga mempunyai dalam menjawab permasalahan-permasalahan kemodenan yang membawa kepada rantaian gejala sosial di bandar Kota Bharu.

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ABSTRAK

Buku yang membawa tajuk '*Berkelana di Belantara Kata*' ini merupakan suatu penghasilan catatan kehidupan peribadi Lim Swee Tin dalam tiga dekad menelusuri alam sastera. Sebuah kumpulan tulisan yang jujur dan telus yang merangkumi pengenalan dan keterangan diri, pemerhatian, kritikan, dan juga pengharapan dalam industri persuratan sastera dalam negara. Dalam tulisan beliau juga kita dapat menjenguk ke dalam ruang perkembangan sastera melayu melalui kaca mata yang dipinjamkan, dapat juga kita sesekali meninjau ke jendela seorang penyair yang arif tentang selok-belok birokrasi penerbitan karya kreatif di Malaysia. Seterusnya, Lim Swee Tin memperlihatkan tentang kepelbagaian dan kedinamikan etnik penyair dalam salah satu makalah, di samping peranannya sebagai pemuisi dari etnik minoriti dalam sastera melayu. Secara keseluruhannya, buku ini menawarkan eksplorasi idea dan kefahaman yang bermutu tinggi dalam perjalanan seorang penyair dalam dunia sastera melayu yang divisualisasikan dalam penulisan santai.

ABSTRACT

The book titled *"Berkelana di Belantara Kata"* is a personal account by Lim Swee Tin, reflecting on his thirty-year journey through the world of literature. It is a collection of honest and straightforward writings that include self-introductions, personal reflections, critiques, and hopes for the literary industry in the country. In his writings, we get a glimpse into the development of Malay literature through his perspective, and sometimes, we also get to see the insights of a poet who understands the complexities of the creative publishing industry in Malaysia. Additionally, Lim Swee Tin highlights the diversity and dynamics of poets from different ethnic backgrounds in one of the chapters, while also discussing his role as a poet from a minority group in Malay literature. Overall, this book offers an exploration of ideas and deep understanding of a poet's journey in the Malay literary world, presented in a relaxed writing style.

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Prof Datuk Dr. Lim Swee Tin adalah satu sosok yang tidak perlu dibahas kemahiran dan sumbangannya. Sebuah nama besar dalam alam persuratan Melayu, juga penerima Anugerah S.E.A Write pada tahun 2000. Sebagai rekod, Anugerah S.E.A Write ini adalah satu pengiktirafan tertinggi kepada penggiat sastera dari Rantau Asia Tenggara, yang pernah menampilkan nama-nama besar yang lain seperti A. Samad Said, Baha Zain, Usman Awang, A. Latiff Mohiddin, Kemala, Siti Zainon Ismail dan Muhammad Haji Salleh sebagai penerima pada tahun-tahun berbeza. Melihat kepada penganugerahan gelaran itu, adil kita meletakkan karya-karya Lim Swee Tin berdiri sama tinggi, duduk sama rendah dengan penulis-penulis agung sastera melayu yang lain.

Bermula dengan bab satu '*Menjengah Diri'* melampirkan kepada pembaca bahawa perjalanan seorang penggiat sastera dari tahap pemula sehingga tahap sarjana adalah bukti bahawa laluan mencapai matlamat penuh dengan tingkah dan ragam. Lim Swee Tin hadir mencurah karya-karya seperti Eva (1981), Akrab (1985), Peniup Seruling (1992), Antologi Seorang Anak Kecil dan Sajak-Sajak Lain (1993), Sebuah Fragmen Cinta (1998), Mimpi di Patagonia (2019) dan yang terbaru, Harum Lavender (2025). Walaupun Bahasa Melayu bukanlah lidah ibundanya, Lim Swee Tin tidak kekok menonjol, malah bergemerlapan pula.

SEORANG ANAK KECIL

Seorang anak kecil
Sedang bermain pasir
Telah tahu menimbang
Antara setempurung pasir
Dengan sehelai daun
Kotor dan bersih
Lalu jelek menyentuhnya
Lewat seorang budak lelaki
Dengan lastik ditangan
Mengintai-ngintai seekor burung
"Mengapa membunuh?" jerit anak kecil itu
"ia juga mahu hidup sepertimu"
Lalu memandang budak itu dengan benci

Anak kecil itu
Dalam usia semuda itu
Jiwanya telah tersemai
Erti kemanusiaan
Kiranya dia sedar dunia hari ini
Pasti dia mengeluh dengan seribu kesalan.

Karya di atas adalah hasil tulisan pertama yang tersiar dalam Mingguan Malaysia (14 Oktober 1973). Puisi yang dipetik daripada antologi *Seorang Anak Kecil dan Sajak-sajak Lain: Sajak-sajak Pilihan* ini adalah titik mula Lim Swee Tin menjadi ghairah menggarap. Beliau menambah, '*Begitu usia muda dan penglibatan yang awal dalam bidang penulisan tidak ubah seperti orang yang jatuh cinta. Semua benar dan elok belaka…*'. Pembaca dapat melihat bagaimana Lim Swee Tin menerangkan faktor-faktor yang menyiram benih semangatnya dalam berkarya. Pertamanya, atas faktor kekurangan penglibatan golongan bukan Melayu. Keduanya, atas kepercayaan bahawa kemahirannya berbahasa mencukupi untuk turut berkarya. Tambahnya lagi, ingin menyaksikan Dasar Kebudayaan Kebangsaan berjaya. Keempat, tanpa berselindung Lim Swee Tin menyatakan dia mahu dikenali dan terkenal.

Berbalik kepada Dasar Kebudayaan Kebangsaan, dasar ini digubal dan dikuatkuasa melalui Kongres Kebudayaan Kebangsaan yang diadakan pada 1971 (anjuran Kementerian Kebudayaan Belia dan Sukan) untuk membina dan memelihara identiti negara Malaysia. Dasar ini mengambil kira sejarah lampau yang panjang serta konteks semasa. Oleh itu, suatu garis panduan telah dibentuk bagi mencapai objektif-objektif seperti memperkukuh perpaduan negara melalui kebudayaan, memupuk keperibadian kebangsaan berasaskan budaya sendiri serta meningkatkan kualiti hidup dari segi kemanusiaan, kerohanian, dan sosioekonomi secara seimbang.

Seterusnya, unsur-unsur teknikaliti dalam sesebuah puisi mula diperkatakan dalam bab bertajuk '*Di Ruang Kreativiti'*. Untuk menguatkan pemaknaan dan falsafah di sebalik kesusasteraan, Lim Swee Tin memetik idea daripada nama-nama besar tanah air seperti Ali Ahmad, Muhammad Haji Salleh, Baha Zain dan juga tokoh-tokoh luar antaranya James Fenton, Henry Guntur Tarigan, Samuel Taylor Coleridge serta Elizabeth Bishop. Pentakrifan yang pelbagai namun tidak melunturkan makna sebenar sastera; semua punyai persamaan dalam kemahuan mengangkat martabatnya. Beberapa unsur penting dalam berkarya turut ditekankan dalam bab ini dan salah satunya adalah penggunaan kata yang selektif supaya penterjemahan idea dapat dilakukan dengan baik. Penggunaan unsur figuratif, perlambangan dan simbolisme juga adalah wajar dalam penghasilan karya yang menarik. Lim Swee Tin juga mengingatkan, sebuah puisi yang baik akan melahirkan kesan-kesan estetika dalam diri pembaca selain berperanan memperkaya intelektual, sepertimana yang diusahakannya dalam berkarya. Perihal seterusnya, Lim Swee Tin berkongsi pengalaman dengan menjelaskan bahawa sesebuah karya puisi tidak wujud dalam keadaan sempurna sekali gus. Ilham datang ketika situasi tidak terduga, tidak juga dijangka. Draf idea kebiasaan ditulis pada apa jua medium yang tercapai; sampul surat dan carikan sisa kertas, berkembang menjadi sebuah karya sedikit demi sedikit. Pengulangan bacaan yang seterusnya menemukan kesalahan, meminda penggunaan kata, menguji rima dan keelokan rentak, serta mengharmonikan makna dengan kata. Pengajarannya, pemuisi semasyhur Lim Swee Tin juga perlu melalui proses pemindaan, pemeriksaan kualiti dan juga pengulangan ritma dalam memastikan puisi benar-benar sebati. Bahagian lain dalam bab ini menyentuh perihal puisi yang disifatkannya mendatangkan kesan yang berbeza kepada orang-orang yang berbeza pandangan terhadap karya sastera. '*Sementara, di kalangan penyajak atau penggemar puisi, selonggokan kata-kata itu menjadi satu kunyahan minda dan jiwa yang penting, besar pula peranannya bahkan mampu memukau fikiran serta kalbu mereka.*'.

'*Seketika Singgah*' adalah bab yang banyak menyentuh hal ehwal penyair dan pengkarya dalam kesusasteraan Melayu pada era '*Berkelana di Belantara Kata*' ditulis. Lim Swee Tin membuka ruang kepada pemuisi-pemuisi asal Kelantan dengan menurunkan nama-nama mereka sebagai pendedahan kepada khalayak dan mereka adalah K. Bali, Zanariah Wan Abd. Rahman, Salmiah Ismail, Wan Jaafar Ahmad, Moechtar Awang, Leo A.W.S, Adi Nasri Hayani, Lee Keok Chih, Mohd Azlee Lee, Sazalee Yaacob, serta ramai lagi. Anugerah-anugerah yang berbilang prestij juga dimuatkan dalam bab ini, selain beberapa hasil karya yang ditulis mereka. Langkah ini dilihat sebagai satu cubaan Lim Swee Tin untuk "memasarkan"

rakan-rakan senegeri yang menghirup nafas yang sama—nafas sastera. Sifat mengambil berat terhadap mereka juga dipaparkan apabila dinyatakan ramai penulis dari negeri itu yang seakan-akan tenggelam, juga melenyap mengikut peredaran masa. Sambil itu, Lim Swee Tin turut melontarkan pemerhatiannya tentang punca kegagalan pengarang-pengarang ini untuk kekal relevan dalam arus kesusasteraan nasional selain menawarkan pendapatnya bagi mendapatkan tempat dalam industri ini. Lantas, dapat kita lihat sisi keprihatinannya terhadap kebajikan pengkarya penulisan kreatif ini. Bab ini juga mengangkat peranan penyair bukan Melayu, dalam usaha untuk menyemarakkan keterlibatan mereka dalam arena ini. Juga, Lim Swee Tin seakan menzahirkan gusaran apabila keberadaan mereka dilihat tidak begitu serius dan dianggap sebagai pepatung yang mencecah permukaan air; merujuk kepada penglibatan yang muncul-hilang. Jika ada seorang yang ditugaskan untuk kedepan dalam isu ini, ia adalah Lim Swee Tin, salah seorang antara 2 penulis bukan Melayu yang memenangi Anugerah S.E.A Write Awards untuk Malaysia, bermula tahun 1979 sehingga tahun ulasan ini ditulis (2025). Sebagai tambahan, ramai nama penyair serta pencapaian yang diseru Lim Swee Tin, misalnya Lee Cheong Beng yang kerap memenangi Hadiah Sastera Utusan Melayu-Public Vank Bhd. Lim Kim Hui, pemenang Peraduan Menulis Puisi Bosnia-Herzegovina, Peraduan Menulis Puisi Patriotisme, dan berbagai-bagai lagi. Bagi Lim Swee Tin, penghasilan karya-karya yang menjurus kepada idea dan semangat persefahaman ini penting terutamanya dalam masyarakat yang berbilang etnik, pelbagai adat budaya dan berlainan kepercayaan agama dalam konteks negara Malaysia. Antara nama yang dinaikkan adalah Siow Siew Sing dengan sajak *'Cap Goh Meh*', juga Munsyi Chai Loon Guan, Penerima Anugerah Tokoh Puisi Kebangsaan peringkat negeri Perak dan tidak dilupa Joseph Selvam, penulis buku kumpulan sajak *Nadi Perpaduan* (1972). Dapat juga dilihat usaha menyeru pemerkasaan keterlibatan dan kesamaan jantina dalam kesusasteraan Melayu apabila Lim Swee Tin mengekhaskan satu cabang bab di bawah tajuk *'Penyair Wanita Malaysia Generasi Baru'*. Pembaca juga dapat menyedari akan sejarah ringkas kemunculan penglibatan mereka, di samping mengikuti perkembangan penyair wanita generasi baru, juga menyelami pemikiran yang dibawa dalam penulisan-penulisan mereka. Beberapa pandangan serta saranan turut ditaburkan bagi menyemai pertumbuhan yang lebih gah dalam kalangan penyair wanita generasi baru.

Penghujung buku ini diselitkan bab *'Sisipan Hujung'* yang menempatkan ucapan penghargaan Lim Swee Tin di Majlis Meraikan Penerima S.E.A Write Award pada tahun 2000. Untuk rekod, anugerah ini adalah satu bentuk pengiktirafan yang diberikan kepada penulis dan penyair setiap negara di rantau Asia Tenggara sejak 1979, yang dimulakan oleh Kerajaan Thailand dengan kerjasama Yayasan Jim Thompson. Di sini dapat kita lihat kemahiran tahap tinggi Lim Swee Tin dalam berbahasa dan menyusun kata-kata. Ucapan yang sesuai, tidak berjela namun sarat dengan untaian penghargaan buat orang-orang sekeliling, luahan 30 tahun pengalaman pelangi dan petir, dan tidak lupa juga pengharapan terhadap hala tuju sastera Melayu. *'...kesusasteraan kita hari ini dan masa depan bukan tiada tantangannya. Kepantasan dan kelicikan teknologi, era digital, serangan faham globalisasi dan keutamaan berlebih-lebihan yang diberi masyarakat kepada material atau kebendaan bukan tidak ada kesannya terhadap survival kesusasteraan kita. Kita perlu menghadapinya, dan saya kira pengarang-*

pengarang dan sasterawan kita yang terpanggil tidak akan membiarkan ia menguncup dan layu sebegitu sahaja.'

Penghasilan buku ini secara keseluruhannya adalah manifestasi sebuah perjalanan seorang sasterawan daripada luah tulisannya sendiri. Pembaca seolah-olah dapat mendiami fikiran figura yang berkecimpung dalam kesusasteraan Melayu selama lebih tiga dekad lamanya dan menariknya melalui penyertaan sebagai orang bukan Melayu. 'Berkelana di Belantara Kata' juga adalah sebuah wadah yang menyalurkan kepada pembaca perihal kepakaran ilmu dan kemahiran Lim Swee Tin dalam selok-belok kesusasteraan di zamannya. Bukan mudah untuk menyediakan penulisan yang sarat dengan informasi semasa, pengetahuan teknikal, untaian pengalaman serta pemerhatian, seruan kepada anak bangsa, dan pengharapan kepada alam sastera semuanya ditulis dalam perkataan-perkataan yang selesa dan mudah dicerna. Percampuran topik-topik berat dan ringan juga tampak stabil dan sama rata dan ini jelas menunjukkan taraf kesarjanaan Lim Swee Tin.

Penerbitan buku ini juga satu langkah penting dalam menyemarakkan semangat kekitaan dan keharmonian etnik dalam kalangan warga Malaysia kerana Lim Swee Tin jelas membawa pembuktian bahawa seseorang di luar etnik Melayu juga boleh mencapai tahap yang tinggi dalam pengkaryaan sastera Melayu. Usaha menonjolkan tokoh-tokoh pemuisi bukan Melayu dalam penulisan ini menepis tanggapan diskriminasi malahan menganjurkan diversiti dalam penghasilan karya yang menembusi lapisan perkauman. Memetik kata-katanya *'Penyair-penyair bukan Melayu di Malaysia... tidak pernah membezakan diri mereka atau mengasingkan diri sebagai satu entiti yang terpisah. Mereka ingin turut bersama-sama dalam arus kesusasteraan tanah air sebagaimana penyair-penyair Melayu yang lain juga. Apa yang dirasai dan difikirkan oleh penyair-penyair Melayu turut sama menyentuh sensitiviti mereka...*' yang jelas memberi dimensi yang unik dalam kesusasteraan kebangsaan, setidak-tidaknya sesuatu yang langka di mana-mana negara lain. Penglibatan Lim Swee Tin dalam arena ini amat penting melalui penghayatan dan sumbangan karya sasteranya di samping menjadi tali penyambung dalam mengikat kesepaduan etnik-etnik di Malaysia.

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Film Review: "The Pig, The Snake and The Pigeon" (2023): An Analysis of Chen Guilin's Identity Based on the Communication Theory of Identity

(Ulasan Filem: "The Pig, The Snake and The Pigeon" (2023): Analisis Identiti Chen Guilin Berdasarkan Teori Komunikasi Identiti)

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ABSTRACT

In the 2024 Taiwanese film "The Pig, The Snake, and The Pigeon" (Chinese title: "Zhou Chu Gets Rid of the Three Evils"), the story follows Chen Guilin, a charismatic gang member, who abandons his life of crime to become a celebrated hero in Chinese culture. The film depicts Chen Guilin's complex identity layers and his transformation from a despised gang member to a revered figure of chivalry. The Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) posits that communication is identity and identity is communication, highlighting four identity layers: personal, relational, enacted, and communal. Inconsistencies, tensions, and conflicts within these layers are identified as identity gaps and sources of dynamic identity change. This paper will apply the CTI framework to analyze the character of Chen Guilin. Research shows that the existence and dynamic changes in identity gaps are closely linked to the cultural environment in which the character resides. This study emphasizes the cultural conditions influencing the dynamic nature of identity gaps within the context of Chinese culture, demonstrating both the general applicability and unique characteristics of CTI in such an environment. Distinct aspects of Chinese culture fundamentally shape the presence and disappearance of Chen Guilin's identity gap.

Keywords: Identity gap; communication theory of identity; chivalrous values

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ABSTRAK

Dalam filem Taiwan 2024 "The Pig, The Snake, and The Pigeon" (tajuk Cina: "Zhou Chu Gets Rid of the Three Evils"), kisah ini mengikuti Chen Guilin, seorang ahli kumpulan yang berkarisma, yang meninggalkan kehidupan jenayahnya untuk menjadi seorang wira yang diraikan dalam budaya Cina. Filem ini menggambarkan lapisan identiti Chen Guilin yang kompleks serta transformasinya daripada ahli kumpulan yang dibenci kepada tokoh kesatria yang dihormati. Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) menegaskan bahawa komunikasi adalah identiti dan identiti adalah komunikasi, dengan menekankan empat lapisan identiti: peribadi, hubungan, pelaksanaan, dan komuniti. Ketidakkonsistenan, ketegangan, dan konflik dalam lapisan ini dikenal pasti sebagai jurang identiti dan sumber perubahan identiti yang dinamik. Kertas ini akan menggunakan kerangka CTI untuk menganalisis watak Chen Guilin. Penyelidikan menunjukkan bahawa kewujudan dan perubahan dinamik dalam jurang identiti berkait rapat dengan persekitaran budaya di mana watak tersebut berada. Kajian ini menekankan syarat-syarat budaya yang mempengaruhi sifat dinamik jurang identiti dalam konteks budaya Cina, sekali gus menunjukkan kedua-dua kebolehgunaan umum dan ciri unik CTI dalam persekitaran sedemikian. Aspek-aspek khusus budaya Cina secara asasnya membentuk kewujudan dan lenyapnya jurang identiti Chen Guilin.

*Kata kunci**:** Jurang identiti; teori komunikasi identiti; nilai kesatria*

INTRODUCTION

The Pig, The Snake, and The Pigeon (Chinese title: "Zhou Chu Gets Rid of the Three Evils") is the first Taiwanese film directed by Hong Kong filmmaker Wong Ching-po. It premiered in Taiwan in October 2023 and in mainland China in March 2024, quickly becoming the box office champion of the month. The film sparked widespread discussion among mainland Chinese netizens about the protagonist, Chen Guilin, who garnered much admiration and inspired numerous fan creations on social media. The film draws on the classical Chinese story "Zhou Chu Eliminates the Three Scourges" from "Shishuo Xinyu" [The story "Zhou Chu Eliminates the Three Scourges" from "Shishuo Xinyu" is about Zhou Chu, a notorious troublemaker, who decides to redeem himself. His village considers him one of three scourges: a tiger and a dragon. Determined to prove his worth, Zhou Chu kills the tiger and dragon.

Expecting gratitude, he is confronted with the villagers' lingering disdain for his past behavior. Realizing the harm he caused, Zhou Chu is deeply ashamed and resolves to reform. He leaves to seek guidance, ultimately transforming into a respected and virtuous individual]; the film uses Zhou Chu as an intertextual figure in its portrayal of Chen Guilin; by metaphorically aligning Zhou Chu's redemption and justice with Chen Guilin's transformation, the film creates a reflective commentary. Zhou Chu serves as Chen Guilin's spiritual goal, while Chen Guilin adds a new dimension of "outlaw spirit" to the traditional image of Zhou Chu.

The film follows Chen Guilin, a gang member driven by the desire for fame. Believing he is facing imminent death due to terminal lung cancer. With the passing of his only close relative, his grandmother—who had previously restrained him from committing more severe crimes—he undergoes a profound internal transformation. He decides to emulate Zhou Chu by eliminating two major criminals above him on the wanted list, aiming to achieve fame through this act. The film portrays Chen Guilin's multi-layered identity transformation from a notorious outlaw to an unconventional chivalric hero. His character embodies both the negative traits of a violent criminal and the positive traits of a dutiful grandson, brave subordinate, heroic savior, and righteous avenger. This portrayal of Chen Guilin as a flawed yet relatable character, rather than a perfect saint, resonates with the audience, evoking empathy and admiration. The turning point in Chen Guilin's identity transformation is triggered by a combination of personal (diagnosis of terminal lung cancer) and external (death of his only relative, his grandmother) factors, leading to a shift in his identity conflicts. This paper will apply the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) to analyze Chen Guilin's character, examining his different identity layers, the gaps between these layers, and the reasons for his identity changes. This analysis aims to provide a detailed understanding of Chen Guilin, a dynamic and charismatic film character, while offering a concrete case study for applying CTI theory. Additionally, it serves as a guide for future theoretical practice.

COMMUNICATION THEORY OF IDENTITY

The scope of applying the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) is broad. For example, it is primarily used in studies on cross-cultural adaptation (Murray & Kennedy-Lightsey, 2013; Orbe, 2004; Wadsworth, Hecht,& Jung, 2007), public health (Hecht & Choi, 2012; Upshaw, 2021; Stanley & Pitts,2019; Colby et al., 2013; Palmer- Wackerly et al., 2018; Paige et al., 2019; Weaver et al.,2021), Romantic and Partner Relationships(Crowley & Miller 2020; Eckstein,2019; Paxman, 2021; Burns & Peters, 2024), and LGBTQ+ identity (Rodriguez, 2019; Wagner et al.,2016; Nuru 2014; Whitestone, S. B.,2022). CTI is also found in analyses of film

and television works (Hecht et al., 2002; Seroka, 2020; Hayes& Watson, 2023). CTI helps to uncover the multilayered nature of identity and the differences, negotiations, and consistencies among the continually evolving identity characteristics.

The personal layer of identity refers to an individual's answer to the question, "Who am I?" This layer encompasses the meanings of self-subjective attributes and those ascribed by others. Personal identity, also known as self-concept, self-image, or self-esteem, provides an understanding of how individuals define themselves (Hecht, 1993). This layer constitutes a self-concept and is a “source of expectations and motivations” (Hecht, 1993). The enacted identity layer is expressed through communication in social interactions, defined as those messages conveyed through behavior and communication (Hecht, 1993). Relational identity is conceptualized by relationship roles (Hecht, 1993; Jung & Hecht, 2004). The relational identity layer involves identities manifesting through 1) internalizing identities through social interaction ascribed by others, 2) defining the self through relationships, 3) the relationship between identities, and 4) the relationship with another (Jung & Hecht, 2004). The communal layer of identity reflects group memberships and broader societal definitions, encompassing collectivities of identities (Hecht et al., 2005; Hecht & Phillips, 2022).

CTI adopts a dialectic or paradoxical view of layers, conceptualizing them as both changing and stable, as well as both subjective and ascribed. CTI emphasizes that we have multilayered identities and that these layers are interpenetrative. When an individual's identity layers are inconsistent or in conflict, tension between layers can result in an "identity gap." Hecht (2004) identified 11 types of identity gaps that can form between each identity layer in the CTI framework. This paper will specifically focus on personal-personal identity gaps, personal-relational identity gaps, and personal-communal identity gaps. Using CTI as a framework, one can analyze how film characters navigate identity gaps, providing insights into the complexities of identity representation and negotiation in cinematic narratives.

FULFILMENT OF CHIVALROUS VALUES

The chivalrous values in this paper refer to a modern interpretation of the traditional Chinese martial spirit. The director uses the figures of "Guan Yu"(关羽) and "Zhou Chu" to concretize the concept of "Xia" (chivalry), which is rich in Chinese cultural and historical significance. While drawing from the Confucian values represented by Guan Yu and Zhou Chu, the film offers a new interpretation of chivalry. In traditional Chinese culture, Guan Yu is the "God of War," symbolizing loyalty and courage. On the other hand, Zhou Chu is a typical example of

repentance, transforming from a local bully into a beneficent official. Both are moral exemplars of traditional Confucian official culture.

In contrast, traditional Chinese chivalric culture represents a form of nomadic culture. Nomads lived outside the ancestral network of ancient Chinese society, detached from the established order. The spirit of chivalry, unlike the elite, official ethical standards represented by Confucianism, embodies secular, grassroots values. The morality adhered to by wandering knights often operates independently of state laws, forming what can be termed "private justice." These knights, guided by their private sense of justice, frequently transgress state laws and regulations. Since the 1980s, Hong Kong and Taiwanese gangster films have cleverly transplanted the spirit of chivalry into the imaginative depiction of gangster life, often portraying it as a counter to the established order. This chivalric spirit and code of conduct are similar to the values and actions depicted in Francis Ford Coppola's film *The Godfather*（*1972*）. For example, Don Corleone helps an Italian funeral parlor owner punish the thugs who sexually assaulted his daughter, taking justice into his own hands due to the court's lenient treatment of the culprits.

The spirit of chivalry represents a complex recognition and rebellion against simple folk morality and official legal ethics. It forms an alternative value system that complements the deficiencies of the official value system. Chivalry plays a role in constructing the value system of the Chinese people alongside official ethics. Therefore, the sense of fulfillment in chivalry refers to an individual's assessment of how well they can embody and achieve the spirit of chivalry, becoming a "great hero."

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Through the following conceptual framework (see Figure 1), the researcher employs the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) to illustrate the identity changes experienced by the film’s protagonist, Chen Guilin. The framework aims to explain how Chen Guilin’s existing identity gaps evolve under the impact of sudden events and how he ultimately manages these identity gaps to fulfill his chivalric values.

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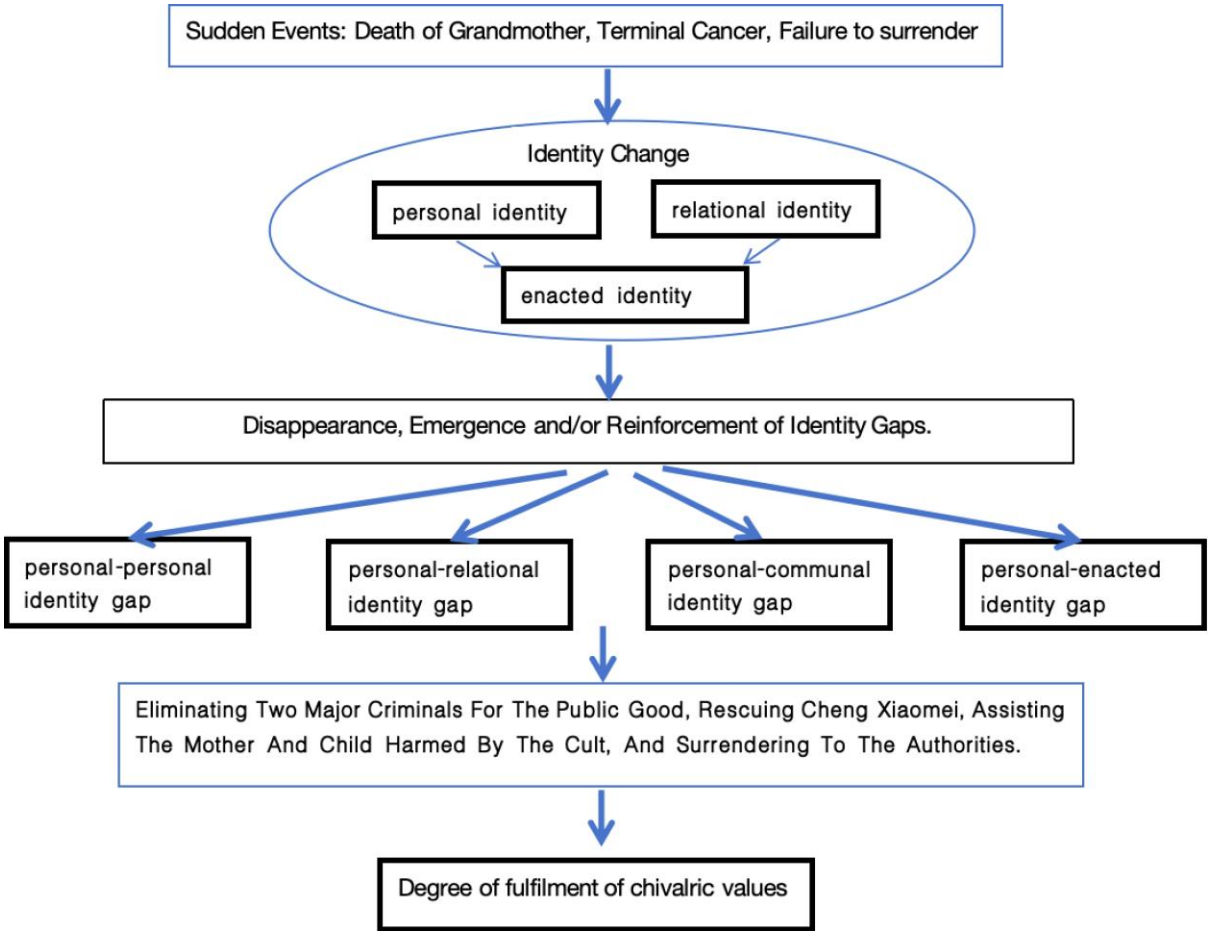

FIGURE 1. Conceptual framework

The researcher conducted all the observations from the main character in the film, collected the data, and analyzed the data using the CTI, which has been explained. This research used the film *The Pig, The Snake, and The Pigeon* and the dialogue script of that film as the source of data, and the data were the dialogues and expressions related to the film's main character. Of course, we do not reject "the paramount importance of non-verbal elements" such as "gestures, gaze, facial expression, head movements, and body posture"; they "can either contribute to expressing meaning along with the speech or can convey meaning per se"(Bonsignori, 2016).

METHODOLOGY

As scholars studying ethnic identity and communication, we analyzed Chen Guilin's identity. The first author is a Chinese female scholar familiar with Chinese culture and genre films, while the second author is a male scholar proficient in identity studies and the Chinese language. Initially, both authors individually watched the mainland China release of *The Pig, The Snake, and The Pigeon*, which has a runtime of 134 minutes. They allowed themselves to immerse in the film's details, aiming to get a sense of the film before breaking it down into separate parts. This approach helped them comprehensively understand the storyline and character development. After the first viewing, both authors re-watched the film. They recorded key moments related to the development of Chen Guilin's identity, its various layers, identity gaps, and identity negotiation on an "Observation Log." In total, eight scenes were transcribed and selected for textual analysis. The transcripts were analyzed using a phonetic iterative coding approach (Tracy, 2020) guided by the CTI layers of identity.

First, researchers began with an initial coding round, identifying and labelling every scene and dialogue related to identity. For example, in the opening scene, where different gang factions attend Hong Ye's memorial service, the subordinate in charge registers the identity of each mourner. It distributes a cash gift (appreciation money) ranging from 300 to 500 NT dollars, depending on the mourner's social status. In Chinese culture, individuals of higher status receive more appreciation for money. Because Chen Guilin receives 300 NT dollars in this scene, he is marked as having "low identity status," and the related dialogue providing identity information is also recorded. Following the initial coding, the researcher conducted categorization and theme development, grouping similar codes to form broader categories or themes. This process involves synthesizing the data into more abstract concepts. During this phase, axial coding explored the relationships between codes and categories, refining the conceptual framework.

According to the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI), axial coding includes personal, enacted, relational, and communal identities. As a result, the aforementioned mourning scene was further categorized under communal identity in the axial coding process. Subsequently, an in-depth analysis was carried out, where the researchers examined the preliminary themes more closely, exploring their relationships and logical connections. During this stage, it was observed that a gap existed between Chen Guilin's lower communal identity and his ambition to "make a big move so that everyone knows me." The researchers then linked the mourning scene to Chen Guilin's personal aspirations, associating communal and personal identity themes. After completing the in-depth analysis, the researchers proceeded with an ongoing iteration,

repeatedly watching the film and returning to the raw data to assess whether the coding system needed modification, themes required reclassification, or new data should be added. For instance, the researchers identified previously overlooked data during multiple viewings, such as the scene where Chen Guilin returns after four years on the run. Despite his return, only one old comrade, Jinmao, is present to assist him, which contrasts with traditional Chinese cultural expectations, where relatives and friends would celebrate or followers would eagerly serve. Chen is left alone. This scene was coded and categorized under relational identity. Since no explicit dialogue conveys Chen's desolation, the audience must infer his emotional state based on their own Chinese cultural understanding, making this data easy to overlook. The researcher added this new observation during the Ongoing Iteration phase. Finally, after multiple iterative processes, the researcher integrated the refined themes into a coherent CTI analytical framework.

Once the first draft was completed, the researchers re-watched the film together, employing the constant comparison method (Baxter & Babbie, 2004) to ensure that no important scenes were overlooked and that the coding was reasonable and consistent. Following this, we examined how to utilize the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) further to reveal the complex layers of Chen Guilin's identity, his identity gaps, and the negotiations surrounding his identity transformation based on our final records. During this process, the authors also engaged in memo writing to self-reflect. This memo writing served as both an individual and collaborative activity. Independently written memos allowed the authors to reflect on how their unique perspectives, biases, or preferences—such as those related to gender—may have influenced the accuracy of their data recording. When working together, the authors could discuss the rational development of the storyline and turning points in the characters' identities while sharing their initial emotional responses to the film. Additionally, the authors could challenge each other's reflections and interpretations of the data, ensuring mutual accountability throughout the process.

RESULTS

INITIAL IDENTITY GAP

Chen Guilin's initial identity gaps are primarily reflected in the relational, enacted, and communal layers. The film opens with a minor gang member, Jin Mao, sharing a recent significant event within the gang: Chen Guilin helped their leader, Ren Yinjiu (Brother Jiu), collect a debt by killing Hong Ye(grandfather), who owed gambling money, with a grenade.

Unbeknownst to Jin Mao, the seemingly gentle man sitting next to him is Chen Guilin himself. This indicates that Chen Guilin has just started to gain notoriety within the gang; he has some fame, but people do not yet recognize him personally. Chen Guilin is dissatisfied with his current level of recognition, as evidenced by his conversation with Jin Mao.

> Jin Mao: Hong Ye (grandfather) made a splash; that lunatic came from Taipei to take him out."
> Chen Guilin: Who are you talking about?
> Jin Mao: Guilin son."
> Chen Guilin: What do you mean 'Guilin' son? Chen Guilin is unhappy with how Jin Mao refers to him.
> Jin Mao: Although I think he's a madman, he's pretty formidable."
> Chen Guilin: Do you know him? Here, Chen Guilin smiles, feeling satisfied as Jin Mao talks about him with admiration.

Chen Guilin is very sensitive about how others refer to him. In the hierarchy of the underworld, titles range from "Grandfather" (the highest rank), "Brother" to "Son" (the lowest rank). In Chinese culture, being called "son" signifies the lowest position, which frustrates Chen Guilin. Regarding gangster rank, Jin Mao and Chen Guilin still belong to the same level of "son." In reality, Jin Mao treats Chen Guilin as an ordinary gang member, even casually inviting him to return to Taipei. Jin Mao perceives their relationship as equal, indicating that Chen Guilin has not yet distinguished himself significantly. However, Chen Guilin is unsatisfied with this status quo of being a nobody and is very concerned about becoming famous. Therefore, after his brief conversation with Jin Mao, Chen Guilin asserts, "My name is Chen Guilin. I have a proper name. Stop calling me 'son'." He then wipes his hands on Jin Mao's shirt, symbolizing his disdain for the term and asserting his desire for respect. This action also establishes a hierarchical relationship between him and Jin Mao, highlighting the personal-relational and personal-communal identity gaps. Chen Guilin desires Jin Mao's respect and wants to establish a notable reputation in the underworld. During this period, Chen Guilin also experiences a personal-enacted identity gap. His grandmother, his only family member, plays a significant role. He kept a relatively low profile because he feared that news of his criminal activities would reach his grandmother in the nursing home and distress her. This is evident from his comments after her death. Upon returning to Taipei four years after committing his crimes, Chen Guilin tells the underworld doctor Chen Guiqing, "I was worried. I feared making the news, and my grandmother would see it and be very upset. Now that she is gone, I want to pull off something big so that everyone in the underworld knows who I am." His grandmother's

death removed this constraint, indicating that Chen Guilin did not fully enact his true self while she was alive.

Chen Guilin's personal-communal identity gap is evident in his desire to become famous within the underworld community. He is very dissatisfied with his obscure status upon returning to Taipei. When the underworld doctor Chen Guiqing informs him that he has terminal lung cancer and advises him to surrender to the police, he is initially shocked but soon accepts his fate. After returning home, Chen Guilin uses traditional Chinese divination to consult Guan Yu, the god of war, on whether he should surrender. This ritual is commonly practiced by Chinese people, in which believers toss two crescent-shaped wooden or bamboo pieces, called 杯筊 (bei jiao), to seek guidance from gods or ancestors. The response is interpreted based on how the “bei jiao” land. This form of divination remains popular in China today, particularly in southern regions. For example, a person from Southeast China may use “bei jiao” to ask Mazu, the goddess of the sea, for her blessing before embarking on a business venture overseas. If Mazu approves, they will proceed; otherwise, they will likely cancel the trip. Despite modern advancements, this divination ritual continues to play a role in the daily lives of many Chinese people. In the film, Chen Guilin similarly seeks the advice of Guan Yu and ultimately receives nine "sacred cups," symbolizing Guan Yu's strong approval of his decision and encouraging him to abandon his wrongdoings and choose a righteous path. Chen Guilin decides to follow this divine guidance and surrender. When Chen Guilin arrives at the police station to surrender, he finds it crowded with people returning money they had picked up from a wrecked banknote truck. Amid the chaos, the police do not recognize him.

> Police officer: Sir, please don't block the entrance. Sir?
> Chen Guilin: I'm Chen Guilin.
> Police officer: Mr. Chen, please prepare your ID and queue there if you want to surrender.
> As he speaks, an older adult bumps into Chen Guilin.
> Elderly man: I'm here to surrender.
> Police officer: Who here isn't here to surrender? Follow the rules and queue up over there.
> Chen Guilin is then directed to join a group of elderly people, where an elderly man pushes and admonishes him.
> Elderly man: Don't be so aggressive. We're all in a hurry, so queue up quickly.

Chen Guilin thought surrendering for his serious crimes would be significant, but he is treated the same as those surrendering lost money. This stark contrast between his expectations and reality shocks him. At the police station, he sees his "Most Wanted" poster buried among other notices, revealing that he is only the third most wanted criminal. Before surrendering, Chen Guilin believed that his crimes—killing the gangster Hong Ye (The highest rank of 'Grandfather') with a grenade, shooting the gang's second-in-command Iron Head(As the second rank of 'Brother'), and attacking police—had made him a notorious and feared figure. However, the absurd reality shows him that he is still a "nobody," far from the infamous criminal he imagined himself to be. This realization drives him to change something.

Overall, this stage of Chen Guilin's life, marked by his grandmother's death, his cancer diagnosis, the results of his divination, and his unnoticed surrender at the police station, leads to significant changes in his identity. These events result in the emergence, disappearance, and/or reinforcement of various identity gaps.

CHANGE OF IDENTITY

Chen Guilin's identity undergoes significant changes in the dimensions of personal, relational, and enacted identity. In terms of individual identity, regarding his "self-concept," Chen Guilin perceives himself as having transformed from a robust man to a terminal lung cancer patient nearing the end of his life. Regarding his "self-esteem," after fleeing back to Taiwan, he realizes that the public has forgotten him. Even among his followers, there's still only one little brother around, starkly different from his expectation of being a notorious figure. He realizes that he lacks even the infamy he once thought he had. On the level of relational identity, the death of his grandmother makes Chen Guilin an orphan, leaving no one in the world for him to care about, and all his constraints disappear. Since the layers of identity in the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) are interrelated and permeable, it can be inferred that the changes in Chen Guilin's personal and relational identity directly lead to changes in his enacted identity. With his life nearing its end and feeling he has achieved nothing, he no longer fears appearing in the news as a criminal. This means he will act even more out of the ordinary to "earn a heroic reputation." These changes in his enacted identity are determined by the disappearing, newly generated, and strengthened identity gaps, which collectively influence his practical behavior. (see Table 1)

TABLE 1. Disappearance, Emergence and/or Reinforcement of Identity Gaps

Disappearance: personal-enacted identity gap	Bound by grandma to keep a relatively low profile	~~gap~~	Can act as he wish without constraints
Emergence：personal-personal identity gap	Redeeming the Feminine	gap	Redeemed by the Feminine
Reinforcement：personal-relational identity gap	The nameless gangster "Son".	gap	"Big Brother", respected by the gangsters.
Reinforcement：personal-communal identity gap	Offenders against the social order	gap	A righteous chivalrous warrior who fights for the people.

Driven by the tension generated by these identity gaps, Chen Guilin embarks on a series of actions to enhance his fulfillment of chivalric values. After being ignored by the police during his initial attempt to surrender, Chen Guilin decides to emulate Zhou Chu. His aim is twofold: to rid society of its evils and earn a reputable name for himself. He tells the female gangster doctor, Chen Guiqing, “After deciding to surrender, I realized I am not valuable enough.” At this point, his desire shifts from merely wanting to “do something big” (regardless of its nature) to explicitly “eliminating evil for the people,” indicating his rejection of his identity as a gangster and his embrace of the idealized figure of Zhou Chu.

He first tracks down the second most wanted criminal, Xu Weiqiang (Hong Kong Zai), and kills him in a barn, also shooting three of Xu’s henchmen who aided in his crimes. He rescues Cheng Xiaomei, Xu’s stepdaughter, who Xu had sexually assaulted for years. When Cheng offers herself to him, Chen Guilin grants her freedom, showing no interest in exploiting her vulnerability. While confronting the top wanted criminal, Lin Luhe, he single-handedly fights Lin Lu and his fanatical followers, rescuing a single mother and her child from their clutches. Realizing that Lin Lu's cult has thoroughly brainwashed its members, leading them to harm innocent people, Chen Guilin massacres the cult members. Finally, Chen Guilin boards a ship back to Taipei, gently taking a girl hostage to facilitate his surrender. After being handcuffed by the police, he walks towards the police car with a smile, proudly raising his handcuffed hands and shouting to the media, “My name is Chen Guilin, Chen—Gui—Lin.” Following these two significant killings, Chen Guilin receives extensive media coverage. The first media report appears after he kills Xu Weiqiang（Hong Kong Zai). He asked Cheng Xiaomei to emphasize to the police that "Chen Guilin killed Hong Kong Zai" and that he had committed the murder. This ensures that his name gets significant media exposure. The second media report follows his surrender, with news outlets highlighting his latest actions. Media

representations can influence how we construct our identities and interact with others (Gündüz, 2017; Riles et al., 2020). Through these media reports, Chen Guilin's actions in eliminating two major criminals and numerous cult members are broadcast to the public, portraying him as a heroic figure who eradicates evil. This narrows his personal-communal identity gaps, and the societal recognition of his new identity also transforms his relational identity. Within the underworld, Chen Guilin's shocking actions elevate his status from "junior" (son) to "brother," earning him respect from gang members. He also gains the admiration of Cheng Xiaomei and the respect of the police, further narrowing his personal-relational identity gaps. By successfully reducing his personal-communal and personal-relational identity gaps, Chen Guilin ultimately achieves his personal-personal identity gap, becoming the idealized version of himself—akin to Zhou Chu. Thus, when faced with a death sentence from the judicial system, he peacefully accepts his fate.

In addition, the film presents a more subtle feminist perspective on Chen Guilin's personal identity gap, which can be easily overlooked due to his acceptance of this gap. In his relationships with women, Chen Guilin appears as a savior. Like many Hong Kong gangster films, women in this movie symbolize goodness and virtue; they are portrayed as weak and in need of male protection, often submissive and without their agency, essentially "voiceless" in the narrative. For example, the female lead, Cheng Xiaomei, has been sexually assaulted for years by the second villain, Xu Weiqiang (Hong Kong Zai), and awaits her "prince" to rescue her. As in many stereotypical Hong Kong and Taiwanese gangster films, Chen Guilin saves Cheng Xiaomei, fulfilling the chivalric trope of the hero, saving the damsel in distress. This act underscores his masculinity and reinforces his perceived superiority over women within his identity. However, the film challenges this dynamic in Chen Guilin's interactions with the female gangster doctor, Chen Guiqing, where a more complex power struggle emerges. In these scenes, Chen Guilin consistently adopts a coercive and domineering approach. When Chen Guiqing refuses to reveal the whereabouts of the two other wanted criminals, Lin Luhe and Xu Weiqiang, Chen Guilin kidnaps Chen Guiqing's son as leverage. Yet, towards the end of the film, a crucial truth is unveiled: it is Chen Guiqing who deceived Chen Guilin about his cancer diagnosis. In reality, the female gangster doctor, Chen Guiqing, who is terminally ill with cancer, orchestrated this ruse to compel Chen Guilin to surrender and reform. Therefore, Chen Guilin's actions of eliminating the two major criminals and voluntarily surrendering were not of his own volition but were triggered by the female gangster doctor, Chen Guiqing. This twist subverts the typical subordinate role of women in gangster films, as Chen Guiqing ultimately determines the course of Chen Guilin's life. When Chen Guilin learns the truth during a visit with Chen Guiqing in prison, he calmly accepts the outcome, recognizing that Chen Guiqing orchestrated his surrender. For the penetration of personal identity, Chen Guilin believes that,

as a criminal, he should reform just like Zhou Chu, and Chen Guiqing helped him achieve this. Chen Guilin undergoes a moral redemption and transformation, evolving from "Chen Guilin" to a figure reminiscent of Zhou Chu. At this point, his identity shifts from a dominant masculine stance to one of gender equality, acknowledging the crucial role of the female doctor in his transformation.

DISCUSSION

This study analyzes key scenes, events, dialogues, and character actions in *The Pig, The Snake, and The Pigeon*, utilizing the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) to interpret the multiple identity layers of the protagonist, Chen Guilin. Through this framework, the study highlights how conflicts arise from the gaps between these identity layers, influencing the character's behavior. By applying this theory, the research offers a nuanced examination of the protagonist's identity and provides a detailed explanation of how these identity gaps are formed. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of the underlying motivations driving the protagonist's actions. While previous research has employed CTI to analyze identity negotiation in film, this study is the first to apply the theory within Chinese culture, addressing a significant gap in the literature. The findings highlight several critical factors in identity negotiation specific to the Chinese cultural context, including traditional Confucian filial piety, folk beliefs, and unique cultural values such as the concept of chivalry. The study reveals that while CTI is an effective tool for analyzing identity negotiation in Chinese films, the importance of different identity layers varies across cultural contexts. For instance, in Chinese culture, Chen Guilin's adherence to his relational identity as a dutiful grandson constrains the expression of his enacted and personal identities.

The study demonstrates that filial piety elevates relational identity above other layers of identity, such as the enacted and personal ones. Given that Chinese society is often described as a "relational society" or a "society of human connections," special attention must be paid to the prominence of relational identity when applying CTI to analyzing identity negotiation in Chinese contexts. This culturally sensitive analysis validates the applicability of CTI in a Chinese context and enhances our understanding of the identity negotiation process. The research underscores the pivotal role that identity gaps play in shaping character behavior and motivations, emphasizing the significance of relational identity in Chinese culture. By introducing this cultural perspective, the study advances a more complex and refined understanding of identity negotiation and contributes to the broader cross-cultural application of identity communication theory.

Furthermore, the findings have practical implications for filmmakers. By revealing how

identity gaps influence character development, directors and screenwriters can draw inspiration from this research to construct more nuanced character arcs. Specifically, the concept of identity negotiation could be used to shape "redemption" narratives, offering audiences positive examples of managing conflict and tension through communication. Thus, this research contributes to academic discourse and provides a fresh perspective that could inspire innovation in film storytelling, particularly in identity expression and negotiation.

Like most studies, this research has limitations. We could only analyze the textual content presented on screen, such as sound, visuals, and plot elements, without directly accessing the intentions of the screenwriter, director, or actors behind specific scenes. Consequently, our analysis is based solely on our text interpretation, which may deviate from the creators' original intent. This limitation may prevent us from fully capturing the intended nuances or, in some cases, may lead to misinterpretation.

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Book Review: The Psychology Of Money By Morgan Housel: Understanding Financial Behaviour And Its Relevance To Malaysian Financial Culture

(Ulasan Buku: The Psychology Of Money Oleh Morgan Housel: Memahami Tingkah Laku Kewangan Dan Perkaitannya Dengan Budaya Kewangan Malaysia)

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ABSTRACT

This review examines Morgan Housel's "The Psychology of Money," emphasizing its core topics of behavioural finance, risk, and emotional decision-making. It underscores the book's significance in the current era and contextualises its ideas within Malaysia, emphasising saving culture, generational perspectives, and financial taboos. The review offers an in-depth evaluation of the book's strengths and weaknesses, highlighting its accessibility, psychological complexity and relevance.

Keywords: Morgan Housel; psychology of money; behavioural finance; risk; emotional decision-making

ABSTRAK

Ulasan buku ini menganalisis "The Psychology of Money" karya Morgan Housel, menumpukan pada tema utamanya iaitu tingkah laku kewangan, risiko dan membuat keputusan emosi. Ulasan ini menggariskan kepentingan buku ini dalam era semasa dan memberi konteks relevan di Malaysia, menekankan budaya menabung, perspektif generasi dan pantang larang kewangan. Ulasan ini memberi pandangan yang mendalam tentang kekuatan dan kelemahan buku ini, yang menunjukkan betapa mudah dan rumitnya psikologi kewangan.

Kata kunci: psikologi kewangan; kewangan tingkah laku; risiko; membuat keputusan beremosi

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INTRODUCTION

The book "The Psychology of Money: Timeless Lessons On Wealth, Greed, And Happiness", written by Morgan Housel narrates the behaviour with money that focuses on financial decisions and having a better relationship with money. Over 8 million copies of the book were sold worldwide, making it one of the well-known books in the finance genre.

The book explores to deepen the reader's knowledge on individuals' attitudes, emotions, and behaviours that creates an impact to their financial decisions and outcome. Morgan Housel emphasizes throughout the book that financial success is not determined based on financial knowledge, but through behavioural management such as the management of greed, fear, and uncertainty

The book is highly relevant in this period as individuals are navigating through rising inflation and greater awareness of financial freedom. The author wrote the book in a way that is relatable to the reader through providing real life stories and lessons that provides the significance of patience, humility, and long-term thinking in wealth accumulation.

A comprehensive review of The Psychology of Money provides readers with insights into the psychological, emotional, and societal underpinnings that shape individual perceptions and management of wealth. This paper examines the key ideas of Morgan Housel's findings on financial behaviour, luck, and human psychology and how the book relates within the Malaysian setting, where cultural norms and societal expectations significantly influence attitudes towards money.

CORE THEMES

Morgan Housel explored on several core themes that deepen the reader's knowledge on financial psychology. One of the central themes of the book is the distinction between wealth creation and the pursuit of wealth. Morgan Housel emphasises that those with wealth is usually hidden, earned through patience, discipline, and the capacity to delay pleasure, but the desire for wealth is commonly associated with external validation and flashy expenditure. He states "Wealth is what you don't see. It's the cars not purchased, the diamonds not bought, the clothes forgone and the first-class upgrade declined" (Housel, 2020, p. 90) Housel argues that individuals frequently mistake the display of wealth with the possession of it, resulting in financial volatility despite substantial income. The theme urges the reader to be able to distinguish the difference between appearing rich and achieving financial freedom.

The other theme that has been emphasised throughout the Psychology of Money is luck, risk and the importance of long-term mindset. The author emphasises that "Luck and risk are both the reality that every outcome in life is guided by forces other than individual effort." (Housel, 2020, p. 18). Effective investment and wealth accumulation need the following mindset and allowing wealth to grow. Along that, long-term contemplation is essential. The compounding of assets, withstanding market volatility, and allowing time for financial growth are crucial. According to Housel (2020, p. 19), "if you give luck and risk their proper respect, you realise that … it's never as good or as bad as it seems." which explains the ability to endure and thrive rather than seeking quick wins. The theme highlights the need of humility in achievement, caution in decision-making, and the discipline to maintain a long-term perspective

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rather than pursuing immediate outcomes.

Morgan Housel also stated how crucial emotions and behaviours are in shaping financial decisions. The author highlights that financial successes are influenced far more by our behaviours and emotions than by our technical expertise or intellect. As Housel states: “A genius who loses control over their emotions can be a financial disaster. The opposite is also true. Ordinary folks with no financial education can be wealthy if they have a handful of behavioural skills that have nothing to do with formal intelligence.” (2020, pg. 2). Housel discusses that choices about saving, investing, or expenditure are profoundly influenced by experiences, fears, ego, and individual psychology. Recognising this requires understanding that the own financial conduct frequently mirrors emotional condition, background, and beliefs rather than being based on neutral, objective analysis. By recognising this theme, the reader will be better prepared to make sustainable, emotionally coherent financial decisions.

The final theme explores on the author’s idea that true financial success is not simply the accumulation of assets, but the attainment of contentment and alignment with personal values. Housel advises that continuously modifying the standards of wealth diminishes contentment and results in endless pursuit. Housel writes, “The hardest financial skill is getting the goalpost to stop moving.” (2020, p. 30) By highlighting the notion of "enough," the author encourages readers to establish their own definitions of success instead of adhering to external criteria. This recontextualization fosters a resilient attitude that prioritises personal independence, self-governance, and sustained well-being over flashy consumerism.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

Morgan Housel's The Psychology of Money excels due to its clarity, narrative skill, and the assertion that money is as much about mentality as it is about technique. The book's greatest strength is in its simplicity. Housel utilises concise, relevant examples to clarify complex ideas about risk, compounding, and behavioural bias for a wide audience. The book can translate behavioural finance topics into accessible language, rendering it beneficial for both general audiences and experts desiring a behavioural viewpoint on money. The format of concise, independent chapters promotes targeted reading and contemplation, which many consider educationally beneficial. A significant strength is the focus on humility, caution, and a long-term perspective.

Housel contends that survival and consistency are more significant than genius, promoting a pragmatic ethic that challenges the cultural adoration of risk-taking and flashy consumerism.

Even so, the book contains several limitations. A prominent limitation is its dependence on anecdotal evidence rather than empirical validation. Housel prioritises storytelling and insightful case studies, which improve readability but sometimes substitute narrative with complex proof. Readers in pursuit of comprehensive data-driven analysis or formal models may find the book inadequate. The book may also have the writing frequently devolves into phrases, providing memorable phrases while delivering minimal practical assistance. The book proficiently identifies behavioural issues but offers limited guidance on specific solutions for institutional transformation or portfolio construction in response to those issues.

An additional area of limitation pertains to the cultural and contextual perspective. Numerous examples are derived from U.S. financial history and the experiences of individual investors in prosperous nations, thereby constraining cross-cultural applicability. Readers in varying economic circumstances may discover that specific assumptions regarding market access, social safety nets, or consumer conventions are not universally relevant. Moreover, the recurrence throughout the chapters, the book's primary themes are constantly restated, which some may interpret it as reinforcement while others mat consider it as redundant.

Ethical and philosophical limitations also occur in this book. Housel's endorsement of moderation and the concept of "enough" subconsciously supports a conservative viewpoint on consumption. Those who advocate structural or policy-oriented solutions to inequality may consider the emphasis on individual temperament inappropriate in addressing systemic financial issues. Ultimately, despite the refined style of the writing, the lightness of tone may cause some readers to undervalue the intricacy of macroeconomic or regulatory influences on outcomes.

The Psychology of Money is a significant and beneficial addition to public financial education. Its qualities include clarity, psychological understanding, and a sympathetic viewpoint on finance. Its shortcomings include an overall lack of empirical depth, occasional redundancy, and restricted application across various socio-economic circumstances.

APPLICATION TO THE MALAYSIAN CONTEXT

Housel's primary observations on the psychology of money are directly applicable to the Malaysian socioeconomic context, where communal responsibilities, status anxieties, and intergenerational customs influence financial conduct. In Malaysia, saving and spending behaviours are often influenced by household responsibilities and cultural expectations. Expenditure on weddings, real estate, and household assistance frequently serves as both a social indicator and an economic choice. This inclination clearly reflects Housel's differentiation between observable consumption and concealed wealth. Housel cautions that visible affluence may conceal vulnerability whereas Malaysian households that emphasise extravagant spending to maintain honour or social status endanger long-term wealth and hinder the advantages of compounded savings (Sabri et al., 2023). Wedding and marriage expenditures in Malaysian communities reinforces the notion that cultural norms compel households to engage in substantial one-time expenditures, financed via savings or loans, which impacts financial stability.

Generational disparities in perceptions of risk and success are prominent. In Malaysia, younger generations, particularly Gen Z, exhibit increased involvement in digital finance and heightened responsiveness to financial education conveyed by parents and online platforms. Family financial interaction continues to significantly shape young adults' opinions, although the methods of transmission vary between generations. Housel's focus on long-term thought and humility in financial choices contrasts with the younger generation's exposure to immediate, high-frequency success narratives on social media platforms. Several studies indicate that parental interaction continues to influence Gen Z's financial objectives and behaviours, despite technological advancements modifying access to financial goods (Abdul Ghafoor & Akhtar, 2024; Sabri et al., 2023).

Cultural taboos surrounding discussions of money, debt, and failure hinder the implementation of Housel's behavioural guidelines. Housel advocates for openness regarding errors, reasonable humility, and a redefinition of success as liberation instead than material gain. In Malaysia, the unwillingness to address debt and the stigma associated with financial failure hinder open financial discourse and the pursuit of support. Research on low-income and vulnerable populations indicates that stigma, inadequate financial literacy, and restricted agency hinder the effectiveness of behavioural interventions unless they are culturally attuned and family centred (Jaffar, 2024). Research on financial well-being among single moms indicates the necessity for context-specific tools and treatments that include caring responsibilities and restricted bargaining power within families (Ramli, Abdol Ghapar, & Abu Seman, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The Psychology of Money is a deep yet comprehensible exploration of how human behaviour, emotions, and cultural values influence financial choices. Housel's views on wealth, risk, and fulfilment beyond economic theory, prompting readers to develop self-awareness and sustained discipline. In the Malaysian context, his conclusions are particularly relevant, demonstrating how social duties, intergenerational norms, and cultural taboos affect financial well-being. Although the book's anecdotal approach may restrict its empirical accuracy, its universal message that genuine financial success is rooted in humility, patience, and the understanding of what constitutes "enough" renders it a timeless resource for financial literacy and mindful existence.

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