

Malaysian Social Issues and their Categories: A Meta- Analysis

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Abstract--- *The concept of a 'social issue' can be thought of in a many ways, with the definition differing depending on the thinker's perspective. This often leads to a degree of confusion and misalignment on what exactly constitutes a 'social issue'. Most broadly, a 'social issue' can be thought of as a problem that influences or affects a considerable number of people within a society. These must be distinguished from the standard 'personal life' issues faced by all members of society, and from the economic issues every nation faces. The identification of prevalent social issues within Malaysia requires a clear vision as to which segments of society require the most and immediate attention. Thus, this study aims to identify categories to understand what constitutes a social issue, to clarify what the term means in a Malaysian context based on previous studies via meta-analysis techniques. There were 30 journals articles collected from SAGE journal and Science Direct starting from 2010 to date .After a review analysis, there are seven categories of Social Issues: (1)Falling prey to abuse ; (2) Committing Crime; (3) Obstacles to employment (4) Quality of living condition (5) Obstacles to healthcare (6) Obstacles to Education and (7) Engaging in vice.*

Keywords--- *Malaysian, Social Issues, Social, Issues.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Malaysians, like citizens of all countries, face a variety of problems that may be labelled 'social issues'. Fortunately, the widespread social safety nets provided by the government address many of these problems to a certain degree. Given this, we should specifically define 'social issues' in Malaysia as those that affect the destitute and forgotten members of society, as well as those facing deep poverty. Essentially, these segments of society represent those who have fallen through the cracks of standard social safety nets, or whom existing social service deliveries are unable to uplift from their situation, thus creating the need for social innovation.

1.1 Literature Review

Based on Oxford English Dictionary through the Oxford English Dictionary Online (2009/2012), social issues are issues that are somehow related to society. According to Teri Aronowitz., & Jacqueline Fawcett (2016) they found definitions of social issues is the most relevant meaning of an issue is "A matter or point which remains to be decided; a matter the decision of which involves important consequences" (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 1900/2012), and society refers to "Association or interaction with or between people" (Oxford English Dictionary Online, 2009/2015).

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On the other hand, Neuman, B., & Fawcett, J. (Eds.). (2011) claimed that Neuman systems model trustees defined a social issue as an issue that has opposing sides and affects society. Specifically, one trustee indicated that a social issue is a situation that has the potential to influence members of a society. Furthermore, another trustee indicated that a social issue is a social problem or conflict that extends beyond an individual's control or geographic region. Still another trustee indicated that a social issue could be a nursing team working together on a social matter.

1.2 Needs to understand the social issues categories

Per a study by Teri Aronowitz., & Jacqueline Fawcett (2016), the analysis of the literature, the survey results, and the symposium participants' from several journals responses revealed that social issues as a client system has not been fully developed thus systems model as a guide for research, practice, education, or administration of nursing services focusing on social issues provide an explicit definition of the social issue of interest and explicitly identify that social issue as a client system, thus the researcher found that it is vital to have identification of prevalent social issues within Malaysia which requires a clear vision as to which segments of society require the most and immediate attention.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to identify the categories of Malaysian social issues. The keywords used in the search process of previous related studies includes social issues, social, Malaysian, and also issues in Malaysia. Previous studies have been obtained through an online database such as *SAGE Journals and Science Direct*. The following criteria were used to search for previous studies that are relevant: (1) research on Malaysia social issues; (2) The study focuses on Malaysian; (3) Studies published between 2010 to date; and (4) The study should indicate the method or element of Malaysian social issues. For the selection of research publications starting from 2010 to date is to ensure that these studies are current and updated. After a meta-analysis of research-based on categories of Malaysian social issues has been carried out, a summary of the findings is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: The Meta-Analysis of Elements based on categories of Malaysian social issues

No.	Elements based on categories of Malaysian social issues	Explication	Study
1	Falling prey to abuse	Increased risk of substance abuse Depression has been linked to risk behaviors to abuse	(Jasvindar Kaur et al.(2014; Sara Niner et al .(2013), Crinis and Parasuraman, (2016, (James Gomez (2014), James Gomez (2014), Crinis and Parasuraman, (2016
2	Committing Crime	Child abuse is most often framed in the newspaper articles as a crime crime 'story' in simple episodic articles , moral issues	(Jasvindar Kaur et al.(2014; Sara Niner et al .(2013), Danielson et al (2010), Crinis and Parasuraman, (2016, (James Gomez (2014), Danielson et al (2010)
3	Obstacles to employment	Employment and also education Malaysia's unemployment	Crinis and Parasuraman, (2016, (James Gomez (2014),
4	Quality of living condition	Living in urban areas rising costs of living	(James Gomez (2014), Crinis and Parasuraman, (2016)
5	Obstacles to healthcare	Result in a health threatening situation.	(Fazli Khalaf et al, (2014), (James Gomez (2014), Crinis and Parasuraman (2016)
6	Obstacles to education	Insufficient education	Niner et al.(2013) Fazli Khalaf et al. (2014))
7	Engaging in vice	May lead to other vices	Danielson et al (2010)

III. RESULTS

Based on the meta-analysis study, there are seven categories of Malaysian social issues:

3.1 *Falling prey to abuse*

Abuse cases tend to be a sensitive issue, as they involve the breakdown of relationships. Letting others be aware of one's situation encroaches on the privacy of the relationship and may often entail shame. Thus, many abuse cases go unreported, making it difficult for lawmakers or even social-purpose organizations to help these individuals. Jasvinder Kaur et al. (2014) reported in their research that in adolescents especially, depression has been linked to risk behaviors, namely, an increased risk of substance abuse and it was reported also that smoking was associated with a higher prevalence of depression, and the number of cigarettes smoked increased with the severity of depression. Jasvinder Kaur et al. 2014 also claimed that adolescents who drank alcohol had significantly higher severity of depression.

Sara Niner et al. (2013) through her study found that from the early 1980s, when cases began to be formally registered, child abuse has grown as a public health and social policy issue. During this time, the social and political environment in Malaysia underwent huge transition. Jasvinder et al (2014).

3.2 *Committing Crime*

Crime is another pervasive social issue that affects many in society. Besides the immediate impact on human welfare from loss of property or the physical harm to individuals, crime can also have negative consequences to the society as a whole in the longer term. This manifests itself through a greater sense of insecurity in the community, and even social tension between higher-income and lower-income groups. Sara Niner et al. (2013) in their finding emphasized that child abuse is most often framed in the newspaper articles as a crime 'story' in simple episodic articles and when deeper analysis is given it is framed in particular ways.

Sara Niner et al. (2013) also reported in their articles were coded either episodic (specific event-focused, much like a short crime report) or thematic (an in-depth article giving context and issue focused).

3.3 *Obstacles to employment*

Despite the best efforts to stimulate employment on a national level, some segments of the population will always face unique circumstances and obstacles. People with disabilities, for example, deal with a wide range of complex conditions that may present obstacles to employment. Single parents face difficulties in juggling the time needed for both full time employment and child care. Crinis and Parasuraman, (2016) in their finding has emphasized that the first objective was to restructure society to increase the economic standing of Malays by bringing them into the modern economy. Malays were given preferential treatment in business, employment and education to allow them to 'catch up' to the non-Malay population, but especially to the Chinese. Furthermore, they claimed that although these jobs solved Malaysia's unemployment problem, they did not meet the promises of the government to provide Malays with quality employment and a fair share of capital accumulation claimed Crinis and Parasuraman, (2016).

3.4 Quality of living condition

Basic infrastructure and facilities such as electricity and potable water are essential for a good standard of living among the citizens. These infrastructures are necessary for the citizens to go about daily social and economic activities such as working, cooking, and washing. However, some rural communities still face obstacles in obtaining supplies of water and electricity. James Gomez, (2014) in his studies found that online news sites, such as “*Malaysiakini*” and the “*Malaysian Insider*”, which are not covered by the country’s restrictive Printing Presses and Publications Act, were deemed to be the medium of choice for the middle-class Malaysians and those in living in urban areas and of course will affect their living condition.

James Gomez (2014) also found that, up to the 2013 general election, they could not arrest the erosion of support for the government from Malaysian voters, who were keen to hear of significant fundamental reforms and governmental actions in rising costs of living, public corruption and equal opportunities for all Malaysians.

3.5 Obstacles to healthcare

Malaysia’s healthcare system comprises of both public and private elements. Public healthcare delivery falls under the Ministry of Health, and its delivery is based upon the model of universal healthcare. Through this comprehensive delivery system, the nation has made great strides in providing affordable public healthcare to the citizen. Nevertheless, despite best efforts and a generous federal budget, the demand for healthcare has been increasing. This has strained the capacity of government-provided healthcare services, raising the issue of obstacles faced by some segments of the societies in obtaining basic healthcare. According to Fazli Khalaf et al, (2014), in their study found that more than 60% of Malaysia’s population is under the age of 35, lack of prevention programs will result in a health threatening situation and, therefore, resulted in a drain on human resource in a large proportion of population.

3.6 Obstacles to education

Malaysia funds education up to secondary level, making it free and available to all. This commitment is rooted in the idea that education is a basic right for every school-aged child. The government has invested heavily in the provision of schools, teachers, materials, and more to achieve this vision of universal education and elevate its level.

Fazli Khalaf et al , (2014) in their findings emphasized insufficient education is reported to be the primary reason for high-risk behaviors and transmission of the HIV infection. Furthermore, despite the existing data and evidence on increasing premarital sexual practices among Malaysian young people. In fact, Malaysia lacks an implementation of national sexuality education program.

Niner et al.(2013) in their study also found that in February, the NST published a feature article graphically describing the condition of the bodies of five dead babies found dumped over the last four months and asserted that 100 babies were abandoned in this way every year in Malaysia that can be resulted to obstacles to education later on.

3.7 Engaging in vice

Vices are activities or behaviors that may be considered sinful, unhealthy or depraved. Society frowns upon them, and they affect both the individual and society. Vice has negative effects on an individual both physically and

mentally, but more often is a detriment to the person's moral character. Social vices are prevalent amongst youth, as peer pressure plays a significant role in influencing this behavior. Danielson et al (2010) stated in their study that depressed adolescents turned to substance use as a coping mechanism. Subsequently, The Ministry of Education Malaysia has recognized the negative impact of drug abuse among adolescents, which resulting in the implementation of the Drug Awareness Educational Program in schools since the mid-2000s.

IV. DISCUSSIONS

A two-step process identified the list of social issues included and discussed in this research. Each process used a separate set of sources, conditions, and selection criteria to ensure the relevance of issues identified. The two-step process comprised of: 1) Identification of a preliminary list of social issues 2) Filtering to ascertain the list of key issues requiring immediate focus to seek additional details (if any) on the programs addressing the identified social issue, to receive inputs regarding any other programs that we may have not identified, to receive suggestions on any other relevant social issues (if any), to priorities the identified list of social issues based on the current cost to government for social service delivery, and potential for whole-of-society innovation to address the issue in Malaysia comprehensively.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, given the unlimited nature of needs across segments of society, it is important to define a preliminary list of social issues to focus on in the immediate term. The list can be further categorized based on the nature of the issue. For the purposes of this study, the social issues identified have been grouped into seven distinct categories through meta-analysis study. The Malaysian social categories that can be identified include falling prey to abuse, committing crime, obstacles to employment, quality of living condition, obstacles to healthcare, obstacles to education and lastly, engaging in vice.

Thus, these elements can be used by educators, government, stakeholders, and also private sectors to test the validity and relevance of the identified social issue, and any details on its true size because the importance of innovation will continue to grow as the needs of our society, economy, and nation as a whole become more complex. While the commercial sector has consistently striven towards increased innovation and productivity, the time is ripe to spearhead growth in social innovation to address the increasingly complex needs of our society, as set out in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan. Having established why this initiative is crucial importance, this research has provided context on the landscape of social issues within Malaysia, and how government and private sectors may be used to benefit the nation.

The research defined the concept of a "social issue" and the target segments it applies to in a Malaysian context. Conventional methods of addressing these need to be discussed and compared against a new 'whole-of-society' approach. The roles of the government, the private sector, could all work together to deliver more effective and efficient social outcomes should also be explored in detail.

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