The History of Postmodernism and Its Impact on Muslim Lifestyle in Malaysia

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Abstract

This article aims to explore the history of postmodernism and its impact on Muslim lifestyles in Malaysia. The emergence of postmodernism is inevitable in the Muslim world due to daily interaction among cultures, religions, and ideologies through various mediums of communication. The notions of scepticism, subjectivism or relativism, and suspicion of reason nurture postmodernist way of thinking and reasoning. Then, it jeopardises the absolute sources of the Islamic way of life specifically the Quran and Hadith. One pertinent question is how does postmodernism affect the lifestyle of Muslims? Primary and secondary data are needed to be collected to answer the question and achieve the aims of this article. Thus, methods of data collection were documentation on the history of postmodernism, and observation on social media regarding the lifestyle of Muslims in Malaysia. The collected data were analysed using comparative, deductive, and inductive analyses. Findings exhibit that the system of secular education and social media exposed Muslim society in Malaysia to the postmodernism lifestyle that jeopardised Islamic teaching. Modern lifestyle demands Muslim society to discard traditional ways of thinking based on religion, and nurture stressful minds and soul. In conclusion, empowering the Islamic education in promoting an Islamic lifestyle is pivotal to nurturing healthy mind and soul in the postmodernism era.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Islamic society, Islamic civilization, Malaysia, Islamic studies

Introduction

Malaysian Muslims have engaged in local and international activities since the advent of Islam to the Malay Archipelago while trading and dealing with merchants and travellers from the Middle East, East Asia, South Asia, and the West, such as the British East-India Company. Apart from that, Malaysia was ruled by the British during the colonial period and was under their influence until postmodernism epoch. The changes in local culture evolved due to cultural globalisation through the process of education and interaction. For example, Malaysian Muslim students travelled to the United States of America in the mid-1960's and brought back western culture, which was constructed by postmodernism. The mutual interaction affected the Muslim lifestyle. Thus, this article discusses the historical bedrock of postmodernism and aspects of Muslims' lifestyles affected by it.

Review of Literature

Malaysia in Brief

Malaysia is a composition of Peninsular and East Malaysia, separated by the South China Sea and situated in Southeast Asia on the equator latitude. Both parts combine thirteen states and three federal territories. According to the worldometers.info, Malaysia is inhabited by 34,387,122 populations. Figure 1 below serves to illustrate that Malaysia is a multi-religious country and clearly demonstrates that Muslims are dominant in Malaysia. However, other religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, can be practiced in peace and harmony. Based on population projections for Malaysia in 2020 by the Statista Research Department, it has been published on the website that 63.5 percent of the Malaysian population professes to be of the Islamic faith. The second-largest religion in Malaysia in that year was Buddhism, adhered to by 18.7 percent of the population.

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Figure 1: Statistics of the Malaysian population by religion in 2020, by Statista

The Malaysian government rules the country by the Law of Malaysia, which was introduced as the Constitution of the Federation of Malaya on Independence Day, August 31, 1957. Subsequently, it was pronounced as the Constitution of Malaysia on Malaysia Day, September 16, 1963. Article 3(1) of the Federal Constitution states that Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.[1]

Malaysian Muslims follow the Ghazali schools of thought for sufism, the Shafie school of thought for Sharia law, and Ahlu Sunnah wa al-Jamaah for theology. There are three systems of education in Malaysia: the first is totally secular, the second is totally religious, and the third is a combination of two in one compound. Those types of orientations are decided by who is offering the system. If the system is offered by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, then the syllabus of the dual system is the choice that Muslims can make. In addition, the private sector also provides educational services as a complement to the government's education plan for the citizens of Malaysia. The Private sector can be individuals, foundations, or state governments, and they are requested by the government to apply for permission to run the educational institution and register their organization. The Malaysian government monitors the development of the educational system in the country as a responsibility to protect the country from any unintended output of national citizen, i.e., human resources.[2] For an example, Adni Islamic private school provide two orientations: secular stream follows the Cambridge syllabus, and the religious stream follows *al-Azhar*'s syllabus. Parents can choose which orientation they prefer for the future of their children.[3]

Terminology of Postmodernism
Postmodernism, also known as postmodernity,[4] now broadly refers to or relates to a series of movements that emerged in western countries of European descent in the fields of art, architecture, literature, music, the social sciences, and the humanities. It is derived from the etymologically puzzling combination of "post" (after) and "modo" (just now) and has characteristics that can be traced through the history of modern thought but took present shape after the Second World War. As a result, postmodernity involves a fundamental re-examination of the assumptions that underlie knowledge claims and is consequently associated with a feeling of release from constricting prior practices.

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[1] Malaysia's Federal Constitution.
[2] Ministry of Education (n.d.), retrieved September 29, 2023, https://www.moe.gov.my/index.php/en/.
[3] Sekolah Islam Adni (n.d.), About: Adni Islamic School, retrieved September 30, 2023, https://adni.edu.my/sejarah-adni/#about.
[4] Ilhab Hassan (1985), "The Culture of Postmodernism," *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 119-131.

Umair[5] argues that though it has now become the dominant paradigm and is being questioned for its limiting practices, its rise has given rise to entirely new approaches like post-colonial theory (see Edward Said), queer theory, and feminist studies such as those of Heckman, women's studies, gay and lesbian studies, gender studies, and cultural studies. According to Andreas Huyssen, postmodernity is the result of a split between two modernist movements, the historically avant-garde and the consciously exclusive "high" modernism, both of which questioned the aesthetic assumptions underpinning the notion that high culture is self-sufficient.

The German philosopher Rudolf Pannwitz appears to have coined the word "postmodern," regarded as differentiating from the modern, in 1917 to characterise the "nihilism" of twentieth-century Western civilization, a topic he borrowed from Friedrich Nietzsche. It reappeared in 1934 to allude to the opposition to literary modernism in the writings of the Spanish literary critic Federico de Onis. Theologian Bell B.I.[6] used it to denote the rejection of secular modernism and the return to religion when it first appeared in English in 1939, and historian Arnold Toynbee used it to describe the rise of mass society following World War I, in which the working class surpassed the capitalist class in importance.

According to the Oxford Dictionary, postmodernism is a late 20th-century style and concept in the arts, architecture, and criticism which represents a departure from modernism and is characterised by the self-conscious use of earlier styles and conventions, a mixing of different artistic styles and media, and a general distrust of theories.[7] On the other hand, Britannica said that postmodernism is a late 20th-century movement characterised by broad scepticism, relativism, a general suspicion of reason, and an acute sensitivity to the role of ideology in asserting and maintaining political and economic power. Hick S. describes postmodernism as a new intellectual era, philosophical, and cultural movement and believes that there is no absolute truth.[8]

The History of Post-Modernism

According to History.com Editors (2017) modernism, which spanned from the late 19th to the middle of the 20th centuries, peaked in the 1960s; postmodernism is the term used to characterise the decade that followed, which is known as the 1960s and 1970s.[9] Post-modernism has its origins in the United States of America. Bell, B.I., a well-known American educator, social commentator, and Episcopal clergyman, wrote a collection of writings titled Postmodernism and Other Writings in 1926. One of the earliest recorded usages of the phrase in the English language is in the collection's main piece, "Postmodernism," which is also its title. However, while critics have acknowledged other early applications of the theory, such as those made by the British historian Arnold J. Toynbee in 1939 and the Spanish literary critic Federico de Onis in 1934, they continue to dismiss Bell's 1926 thesis, labelling it "antimodernist" or unrelated to current discussions of postmodernism.[10]

Postmodern philosophy is characterised by broad scepticism, or relativism and a general distrust of reason. It is also commonly claimed that Western intellectual and cultural norms and values are a product of, or are in some way influenced by, the ideology of dominant or elite groups and at least indirectly serve their interests. Glenn W. argues that the result of postmodernism in the field of cultural studies is a form of relativism.[11] The debate on Christianity's belief among Catholic and Protestants continues as Bell B.I argues that the Bible can no longer be considered an infallible standard or as the Eternal's perfect gift to suffering men. Because of this, Protestantism—in any meaning that Luther, Calvin, Wesley, or Moody would have found acceptable—has either already collapsed or is in the process of collapsing. There are undoubtedly people who fight tenaciously for the historic sanction in every so-called Protestant communion, but they are fighting a losing battle. The fact that many Protestant organisations still use outdated terminology on a formal level is meaningless, aside from the

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[5] Umair Mirza (2001), *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*, Victor E. Taylor and Charles E. Winquist (eds.), London: Routledge, p. 304.
[6] Bernard Iddings Bell (1926), *Postmodernism: And Other Essays*, Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing Company.
[7] Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d.), "postmodernism," retrieved September 30, 2023, https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/postmodernism.
[8] Britannica (n.d.), "What do postmodernists believe?," retrieved September 28, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/question/What-do-postmodernists-believe.
[9] History (2017), "Modernism and Post-Modernism History," retrieved September 27, 2023, https://www.history.com/topics/art-history/history-of-modernism-and-post-modernism.
[10] Kristen D. Brauer (2007), "The Religious Roots of Postmodernism in American Culture: An Analysis of the Postmodern Theory of Bernard Iddings Bell and Its Continued Relevance to Contemporary Postmodern Theory and Literary Criticism," PhD thesis, University of Glasgow.
[11] Glenn Ward (1987), *Postmodernism*, London: Oxford, p. 182.

fact that it confuses people. The majority of Christians find it difficult to unquestioningly embrace the spiritual authority of our direct predecessors.[12]

Apart from the concept of modernism from the Western perspective, the Muslims world also copes with the concept of Islamic modernism introduced by so-called Muslim modernists or reformists in the name of *ijtihad*. Who is the father of Islamic modernism? Luce, M.D said that Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani (1838–1897) is considered the "father of Islamic modernism." As a philosopher, writer, orator, and journalist, Al-Afghani affected Islamic thought from the Indian subcontinent to Iran and the Middle East. He promoted national liberation and was the founder of the revival movement that later gave rise to the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Afghani was of Iranian descent and travelled widely, spending time and working in Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Egypt, and Istanbul. His sermons and writings called for a revival of Islam, the rejection of fatalism, and the use of the intellect to advocate for freedom. He urged students to use journalism as a tool in the fight- to influence minds. He condemned Muslim rulers who rejected reforms. Al-Afghani envisioned Muslims being ruled in a single state, free from Western imperialism, and reviving the past glory days of Islam. Through his writings, teachings, speeches, and political organisations, he pioneered an Islamic awakening among Muslims and sparked anti-imperialist, reformist, and pan-Islamic political activities.[13] It seems that he conflicted his own notion of pan-Islamism by being anti-imperialism.

Cultural Milieu in Malaysia

It is of paramount importance to understand the historical foundations of the cultural milieu surrounding Muslims in Malaysia. Malaysia is becoming a centre of cultural convergence that comes not only from Asia, i.e. Southeast Asia, South Asia, East Asia, and West Asia, but also from Europe. This cultural globalisation arises and remains in Muslim society, as trade is a nomenclature of the Malay Archipelago. Furthermore, the colonial period contributed to the effect of a homogenising culture, where the dominant nation spread its culture through interaction in daily life.

According to Sardar. Z (1988), the modernization theories of the 1950s and 1960s were based on these and similar theories from the Western social sciences. Blueprints for Modernization: Step-by-step instructions for eradicating personal traditional non-Western cultures and replacing them with a pale representation of impersonal Western culture and way of life. Since the cities of non-Western people have no perspective, they must be structured hierarchically. Most of the population in developing countries lives in rural areas, urbanisation needs to be introduced so that they can lead a modern lifestyle. In the postcolonial world, non-Western cultures were described as traditional, in contrast to the modern and inherently superior Western culture. It was their traditionalism that made them underdeveloped. To become like the West, they had to evolve.
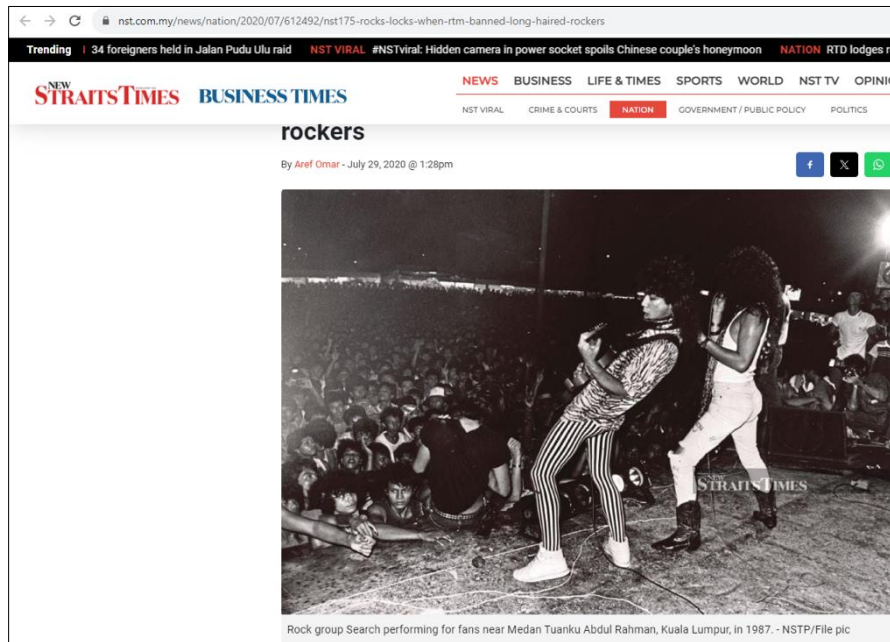
Empirically, the British colonial rule profoundly influences the communities of Malay Muslim leaders and the Muslim upper class in terms of education, institutional forms, and mosque architecture, as tourists can particularly see the design of the Johor Bharu State Mosque during their period of intervention in the Malaysian countryside from the 19th century to 1957, before the Malay country gained its independence, which was proclaimed on August 31, 1957, by Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj. However, on the one hand, interconnectedness continues even after independence, as people easily move and travel to Western countries for education, business travel, politics, and tourism. On the other hand, the West exported its culture through television and films, which diluted local identity.

World change is rapidly occurring, and the impact of adoptive and adaptive attitudes contributes to the changes in local people's lifestyles. For example, rock music from Britain and America spread to Malaysia in the 1970s. At this time, rock music fans proudly imitated the fashion and symbols of rock singers from the West; some of them formed their own local bands and composers contributed songs to rock bands such as Search, Wing, and Lefthanded. It seems they are named after the band with English names. The Rock identity became obvious and well known to Muslim society: a man with long, dishevelled hair, tight trousers, a necklace, and long boots, as he appears in the following newspaper.

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[12] Bernard Iddings Bell (1926), *Postmodernism*, Milwaukee: Morehouse Publishing.

[13] Mark D. Luce (2016), "Al-Afghani, Jamal al-Din جمال الدين الافغاني (1838–97)," *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Modernism*, retrieved September 28, 2023, https://www.rem.routledge.com/articles/al-afghani-jamal-al-din-1838-97.

Photo 1: Muslim Malaysian Rockers

Rock group Search performing for fans near Medan Tuanku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur, in 1987. - NSTP/File pic

In Photo 1, the lead singer's identity card and birth certificate identified him as Muslim with a Malay name. However, Suhaimi Abdul Rahman registered, changed his identity and traditional dress, and introduced himself with the English name Amy. The imitation was acceptable to fans, but not in the eyes of authorities and religious parents. The Search band was banned a few times due to the negative influence it had on young people.[14]

Islamic Culture and Muslim Lifestyle

Muslims around the globe are struggling to stay Muslim in their own country or non-Muslim country, despite the foreign culture conquering all aspects of life. Al-Banna mentioned that Europeans exported their half-naked women into our region together with their liquor, their theatre, their dance halls, their amusement, their stories, and beliefs. Traditional Muslims will be secluded or live in isolation when they do not fit the dominant culture or suit modern ideas. Pressure to adapt and adopt among peers is obvious in social media and communication.[15]

Al-Faruqi is of the opinion that culture is fourfold:[16]
    a. the mindfulness of ethics in the totality of their jurisdiction, implying at its lowest level
    b. an intuitive consciousness of their respective identities, and
    c. the ranking order belonging to each of the above.
    d. Personal commitment to the pursuit and actualization.

Al-Faruqi argues that cultural relativism accepts every culture as an independent entity with a hierarchical system of values that, while subject to description, are, by definition, immune to criticism. This happens because the criteria are constantly influenced by culture and so lie within the culture being examined, which rules out the possibility of critique.[17]

Research Methodology[18]

This subheading describes the methods used in the study to explore the history of post-modernism and its impact on Muslim lifestyles in Malaysia. It specifies the sources of data used. These include primary documentary and secondary written data. The process of data collection is driven by the main list of research questions, followed by a long list of subquestions.

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[14] Aref Omar (2020), "NST175: Rock's Locks: When RTM Banned Long-Haired Rockers," *New Straits Times*, retrieved September 27, 2023, https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/07/612492/nst175-rocks-locks-when-rtm-banned-long-haired-rockers.
[15] Gudrun Krämer (2013), *Hasan al-Banna*, London: Simon and Schuster.
[16] Ismail Raji al-Faruqi, (1980), *Islam and Culture*, Kuala Lumpur: ABIM.
[17] al-Faruqi, (1980), *Islam and Culture*.
[18] Aizan Ali Mat Zin (2022), *Metodologi Penyelidikan Sejarah Islam*, Kuala Lumpur: ITBM.

Research Questions
a. What is post-modernism?
b. Is there a terminology of Islamic post-modernism?
c. What is the historical bedrock of the advent of post-modernism?
d. What are the impacts of post-modernism on Muslim lifestyles in Malaysia?
e. Does social media play a significant role in nurturing post-modernism among Muslim Malaysians?
f. How does post-modernism jeopardise the religious mind of Muslims in Malaysia?
g. What are the solutions for living as a Muslim in the post-modernism era?

Methods of Data Collection
Primary and secondary data need to be collected to answer the questions and achieve the aim of this article. Thus, methods of data collection were documentation on the history of post-modernism, and observation on social media regarding the lifestyle of Muslims in Malaysia. Lifestyles are threefold: individual, group, and cultural which reflect their attitudes and values. Variables include the culture of "mind your own business," vaping among Muslim youth, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer modern lifestyles. All of the variables can be treated as a reflection of post-modernism's impact on Muslim society in their daily lives. They choose the ways freely and practice them repeatedly. Then, gradually, their culture and identity developed over the years. The study prioritises all available primary data over secondary and tertiary. In the case of secondary data from other related research, the validity is cross-checked with the original sources, such as the website of the Ministry of Health Malaysia and the original author.

In addition, the questionnaire method is used to collect data on Malaysian Muslims' knowledge of postmodernism. The selection of respondents is based on random sampling among Malaysian Muslims. An online Google Form has been used to develop the questions. It consists of two questions: the first is age, and the second is their knowledge of postmodernism. The questionnaires are posted to Malaysian Muslim groups and selected individuals through the WhatsApp medium.

Questions and Respondent Demography
The selection of respondents is stratified by random sampling, i.e., age, Malaysian, and Muslims. 118 respondents participated in the random survey via an online Google Form, and the link was distributed through a WhatsApp group on Friday, September 29, 2023. 3 respondents represent the age range 10-20, 52 respondents represent the age range 21-30, 12 respondents represent the age range 31-40, 15 respondents represent the age range 41-50, and 36 respondents represent the age range above 50.

Methods of Data Analysis
The collected data are twofold: qualitative and quantitative. The documented data are analysed using comparative, deductive, and inductive analyses. Data from the website, book, journal, and thesis are compared, validated and cross-checked before the process of classification into themes for the next stage of evaluation. The responses collected from the Google form are presented in a pie chart with descriptive analysis applied to it. (Please refer to Figure 2)

Ethics in Research
Ethics in writing a report of this study's findings abide by the following rules:
a. The names of the institution and person are mentioned if they have been stated in the news, social media, or other public report.
b. Anonymous is written; otherwise, information shared may be deemed to be defamation of the informant or institution.

Results and Discussion

Analyses of the collected data by the methods of documentation and observation are done, and the results are the following:

Scepticism, Subjectivism, or Relativism, and Suspicion of Reason
Muslims' lifestyle in Malaysia is influenced by several systems of thought, which this study considered an output of the formal learning system at religious and secular schools and informal education such as

international interaction and communication on social media, websites, and movies. The later spread rapidly and shows that Muslim society in Malaysia is keen on the modern lifestyle without realising that their actions jeopardises Islamic teaching.

Observation on social media exhibits that postmodernism was spread gradually and was imperceptible among Muslim netizens. Their ignorance of the concept of postmodernism and lack of religious knowledge are among the pulling factors of the issue. The word modern itself is free from religious elements. By scrutiny of its origin, it seems that modernity and religion are separated and unblended in the way of life. Modern lifestyle demands Muslim society discard traditional ways of thinking based on religions and nurture stressful minds and souls.

Figure 2: Survey on Knowledge of Post-Modernism
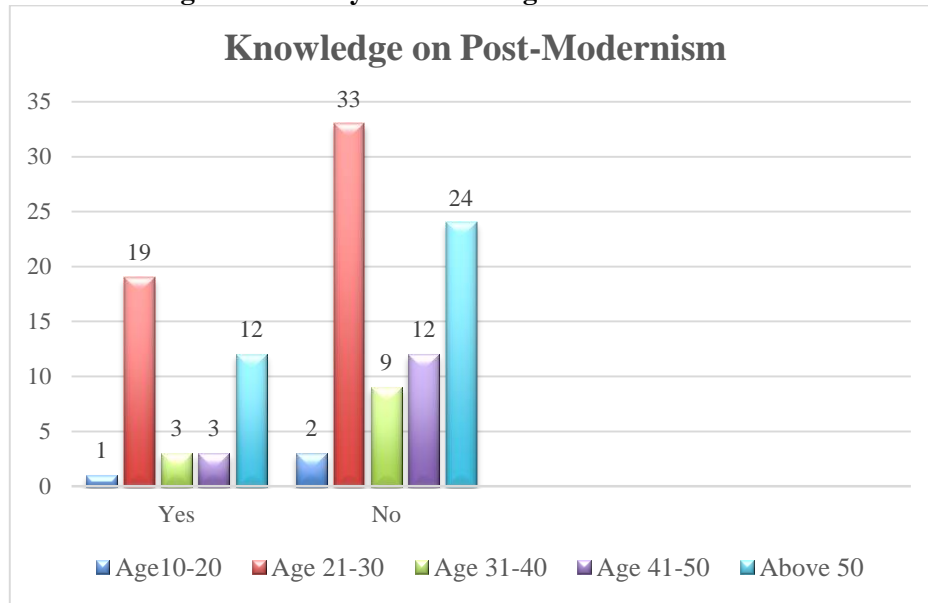
The above chart explicitly exhibits that 63.46% of respondents aged in the range of 21-30 answered that they are ignorant of post-modernism; 75% of respondents aged in the range of 31-40 are ignorant; 80% of respondents aged in the range of 41-50 are ignorant; 66.66% of respondents aged in the range of above 50 claim that they are ignorant. Thus, the majority of respondents are ignorant of the concept of post-modernism. On the other hand, the findings implicitly show that respondents who were born in the year of post-modernism was spreading are ignorant of its existence.

On the contrary, the data collection by using the method of observation on social media proved that the Malaysian Muslims practice the ideology of post-modernism, such as scepticism, subjectivism, or relativism, and suspicion of reason. For instance, male or female singers and music bands in the years of post-modernism resemble the image of "being western and modern," as you can see in the photos below.
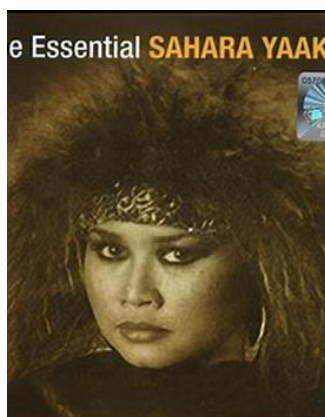
Photo 2: Female Rock Singer

Photo 3: Female Rock Band Singer

Photo 4: Male Rock Singer   **Photo 5: Male Rock Band Singer**

Culture of Individualism

Drew. C is of the opinion that western colonialization, immigration, and globalisation have spread individualism throughout the world.[19] As we know, the phrase "mind your own business" was disseminate mainly through formal education at British schools during their colonisation of Malaysia and Malaysians studying or working abroad, as well as informal education, especially in their film script that was exported to the whole world. Western films cultivate the notion of individualism in the minds of the audience. Gradually, the notion that "it's ok to be individualistic" exists in society regardless of their local culture and values. On the other hand, the World Health Organisation (WHO) stated that mental health is a fundamental human right for everyone, regardless of his/her religion, race, culture, and region. All human beings have a right to the highest achievable standard of mental health, including the right to be protected from the risks of mental health issues. In addition, the right to available, accessible, acceptable, and respectable quality care; the right to liberty; and the right to inclusion in the community.[20] The last phrase, i.e., inclusion in the community, is one factor in happiness. Islam persuades Muslims to mingle around, and know each other, and care for each other. Allah said in the Quran: *People, we created you all from a single man (Adam) and a single woman (Hawa) and made you into nations and tribes so that you should get to know one another*.[21] There are many guides and rules stated in the Quran and the Hadis. In fact, the prophet Muhammad SAW is the best model for Muslims. The system of ideal community was set up by the Prophet in Mecca and then Madinah more than 1445 years ago.

Smoking and Vaping among Muslims

The smoking prevalence among Malaysian adults has remained relatively constant at 23% in recent years. Many in our country have replaced or shared smoking with vaping or e-cigarettes. Vaping is a new version of excessive usage of nicotine and drugs. According to Ahmad Tajuddin N.A., the nicotine denounced from the poisons act on April 1, 2023, but more and more teenagers and children less than 12 years old have never smoked before becoming vapers, as youth are easy prey and deceivable. The issue causes disappointment and increasing worry among healthcare professionals, teachers, and parents. Vaping has become a symbol of being modern and trendy despite the fatwa from mufti of disapproval of smoking, and the usage of vapes, and the act of vaping,[22] and the reminder from the Ministry of Health regarding the bad effects of vape consumption that harm the body and mind.[23]

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[19] Sourabh Yadav and Chris Drew (2023), "Western Culture – 10 Examples, Characteristics & Values," *Helpful Professor*, retrieved September 30, 2023, https://helpfulprofessor.com/western-culture-examples/.

[20] World Health Organization (2023), "World Mental Health Day 2023 – Mental Health is a Universal Human Right," retrieved October 15, 2023, https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2023/10/10/default-calendar/world-mental-health-day-2023---mental-health-is-a-universal-human-right#:~:text=Everyone%2C%20whoever%20and%20wherever%20they,and%20inclusion%20in%20the%20community.

[21] Al-Quran: al-Hujurat: Verse 13. See also, Muhammad Abdel Haleem (2004), *The Quran: A New Translation*, London: Oxford University Press, p. 339.

[22] Pejabat Mufti Wilayah Persekutuan (2015), "Bayan Linnas Siri ke-18: Merokok: Hukum dan Penyelesaiannya," retrieved September 21, 2023, https://muftiwp.gov.my/ms/artikel/bayan-linnas/2634-bayan-linnas-siri-ke-18-merokok-hukum-dan-penyelesaiannya.

[23] Azillah Mohd Ali (2014), "Smoking," *MyHEALTH*, retrieved September 20, 2023, http://www.myhealth.gov.my/en/smoking/.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ)

Traditionally, Malay Muslims live in an Islamic way and abide by sharia law, i.e., family law, since Islam came to the Malay Land in the early 13th century, i.e., 1303 M.[24] For example, according to Islamic Family Law (State of Selangor) Enactment 2003. Man and woman, masculine and feminine, married each other to form a family, extended to a society and nation. Therefore, any marriage contract between people of the same gender is unlawful under Islamic law.[25]

Ironically, the lifestyles of free sex, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer have developed in Malaysia generally and are practised by a small group of Malay Muslims who jeopardise the Islamic teachings and the local cultural values. They challenge religious and cultural values in the spirit of United Nations universal human rights.[26] According to Zechenter, E.M. (1997), we can determine that all individuals are entitled to a basic human dignity and certain human rights that are universal, fundamental, and inalienable. Thus, religious and cultural traditions should not overpower the choice of LGBTQ lifestyle.[27]

For example, in the case of Muhammad Sajjad Kamaruzzaman, a controversial entrepreneur who is well known as Sajat for his womanly appearance, announced that she (he) is still Muslim despite her choice to be a transvestite.[28] The second case is Nisha Ayub, 44 years old, of Malacca State, who is a co-founder of the community-run SEED Foundation and the transgender grassroots campaign Justice for Sisters. Nisha Ayub was born as a male but then brought up by his mother (an Indian convert) after the death of his father (a Malay Muslim) when he was six. He told a story about how he participated in a fancy dress competition as a ballerina and used to wear a *selendang* (scarf) while dancing to Bollywood songs.[29]

Photo 6: Malaysian Muslim Transvestite

Malay Muslim activists such as Siti Kasim criticised a government decision to ban three books for promoting the LGBTQ lifestyle. Siti Kasim, a Malaysian human rights lawyer, described the ban as an attempt "to chisel away" at LGBTQ rights, although the Ministry said its objective was obvious: to prevent the spread of elements that are harmful to morality in the community. In fact, homosexuality is forbidden in Malaysia, and civil law criminalising homosexuality can result in imprisonment, corporal punishment, and fines.[30]

Before the epoch of modernity in Malaysia, nobody talked about the lifestyle of LGBTQ people on the street, in coffee shops, in the news, or even in parliament sessions. However, post-modernism seems to accept the way of life of legitimate lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people based on the logic

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[24] Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas (1970), *The Correct Date of the Terengganu Inscription*, Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Negara Malaysia.

[25] Mohamad Razif (2017), "Bayan Linnas Siri Ke-92: Perlakuan Homoseksual dalam Islam," *Pejabat Mufti Wilayah Persekutuan*, retrieved September 21, 2023, https://muftiwp.gov.my/en/perkhidmatan/artikel-soal-jawab/847-bayan-linnas-siri-ke-92-perlakuan-homoseksualiti-dalam-islam.

[26] United Nations (2014), "LGBTQI+," retrieved October 1, 2023, https://www.un.org/en/fight-racism/vulnerable-groups/lgbtqi-plus.

[27] Elizabeth M. Zechenter (1997), "In the Name of Culture: Cultural Relativism and the Abuse of the Individual," Journal of Anthropological Research, Vol. 53, No. 3, pp 319-347.

[28] Zaara Talita (2023), "Sajat: 'I am still a Muslim'," *New Straits Times*, retrieved September 27, 2023, https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2023/03/894077/sajat-i-am-still-muslim.

[29] Boo Su-Lyn (2016), "10 things about: Nisha Ayub, transgender activist," *Malay Mail*, retrieved September 27, 2023, https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2016/04/24/10-things-about-nisha-ayub-transgender-activist/1105805.

[30] The Straits Times (2023), "Activists condemn Malaysia ban on LGBTQ books," retrieved September 27, 2023, https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/activists-condemn-malaysia-ban-on-lgbtq-books.

and reasoning of human rights. Post-modernism promoted cultural globalisation, such as LGBTQ, and recognised their choice of living as a spouse without any concern for religious rules and regulations in supporting human rights.[31]

The Relationship between Post-Modernism and Mental Health Issues

There is growing concern that the second round of layoffs may increase the number of poor urban Malaysians developing mental illnesses. This is evident in the cities of Kota Kinabalu, Selangor, and Kuala Lumpur. Yeo A. [32] believes that people committed suicide as a result of losing their jobs, that other people committed crimes to survive, and that heads of households (HOH) had to pretend to be at work even if they had lost their source of income. According to the Department of Statistics (DOSM), 764,400 people were unemployed in November, which caused the unemployment rate to increase by 0.1 percentage point month over month to 4.8 percent in November 2020. On the other hand, between January and July, the Health Ministry (MOH) documented 465 cases of attempted suicide. The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the mental health of nearly 500,000 people in Malaysia, according to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2019 (NHMS 2019).[33]

It is clear from the evidence that the pandemic's effects on his solitude and lack of employment contributed to his mental health problem. Thus, modern lifestyles nurture stressful minds and souls due to the demands of Muslim society to discard traditional ways of thinking based on religion. This finding was supported by other research done by Ng W. et al. [34] In their study on affluence, feeling stress, and wellbeing, they focus specifically on the self-perceived experience of stress and people's feelings. The challenge is to prove how people's feelings have a relationship with their quality of wellbeing and their state of mental health? Ng W. et al conducted research based on Veenhoven's framework that evaluates four qualities of life as follows:

    a. The living condition is defined by to ecological, social, economic, cultural, and educational characteristics.
    b. The ability to live the fullest life in terms of physical and mental health, knowledge, and skill.
    c. The utility of life is moral perfection.
    d. Life appreciation cognitively and affectively, which denotes subjective wellbeing, happiness, and life satisfaction.

The research appears to support the concept that life quality influences the state of physical and mental health. People who fail to satisfy their basic needs may experience stress and anxiety due to impoverishment of modern life. In addition, people who have more dissatisfaction with their quality of life can easily and frequently experience stress.[35] Hence, Miller and Blackwell (2006) claims that chronic stress causes heart disease and has been linked to diabetes, cancer, and other ailments. On top of that, stress hormones lead to neurological changes that debilitate mental health and cause depression.[36]

In addition, Barhem, B. et al said that today's working conditions are characterised by frequently changing jobs, high workloads, higher work expectations, lower job security, increased scepticism, and constant downsizing efforts by companies, all of which lead to increased stress in the workplace. If workers cannot cope with these stressful conditions, occupational stress becomes a health risk. Employers, trade unions, and occupational health and safety representatives are looking for solutions to provide guidance on both the nature and causes of the problem and the legal requirements for stress prevention and control. [37]

[31] Gianina Ginnie Kon and Anne Chong Yuk Ming (2019), "LGBTQ+ population in Asia Pacific (Malaysia): LGBTQ+ populace," in Anasuya Jegathevi Jegathesan and Siti Salina Abdullah (eds.), *Multicultural Counseling Applications for Improved Mental Healthcare Services*, Pennsylvania: IGI Global, pp. 112-127.

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[37] Bilal Barhem, Hassan Younies and Rusnah Muhammad (2009), "Religiosity and Work Stress Coping Behavior of Muslim Employees," *Education, Business and Society: Contemporary Middle Eastern Issues*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 123-137.

The study of stress may well encompass a multidisciplinary field. This multidimensionality of stress is evidenced by the different forms it takes and by the various studies in different fields of knowledge such as clinical and applied psychology, anthropology, sociology, psychosomatic medicine, industrial relations, and epidemiological aspects (Hogan and Hogan, 1982).[38] The word stress essentially means four fundamentally different things: an environmental condition, an evaluation of an environmental situation, a response to that condition, a relationship between the environmental demands, and a person's ability to meet the demands (Kahn and Cooper, 1993)[39]. Mclean (1979)[40] defines stress as the body's non-specific reaction to any demand placed on it.

There is much research on coping with stress and staying healthy mentally, physically, and spiritually. It seems that the solution to the problem of mental health sustainability lies in the religious approach, as Vander Weele argues that within various health promotion interventions, religious attitudes have been developed between faith-placed and faith-based attitudes.[41]

Conclusion

The study analyses the lifestyle of Muslims in Malaysia, focusing on postmodernism, scepticism, subjectivism, or relativism, and suspicion of reason. It finds that the majority of respondents are ignorant of postmodernism, with 63.46% of respondents aged 21-30 being unaware of it. The culture of individualism is also evident, with Western colonialization, immigration, and globalisation spreading individualism worldwide. The phrase "mind your own business" was disseminated through formal education at British schools and informal education, especially in film scripts exported to the world. Smoking and vaping among Muslims remain relatively constant at 23%, with many replacing smoking with vaping or e-cigarettes. Vaping has become a symbol of being modern and trendy, despite the fatwa from mufti and the Ministry of Health regarding its harmful effects. Apart from that, LGBTQ lifestyles have developed in Malaysia, challenging Islamic teachings and local cultural values. For example, controversial entrepreneurs like Muhammad Sajjad Kamaruzzaman and Nisha Ayub have chosen to be transvestites despite their religious beliefs.

The lifestyle of religious Muslim families, societies, and countries has been influenced by the interaction of diverse cultures and ideologies between Malaysian Muslims and the West, India, China, and Arabs. This is because they uphold the values of tolerance, open-mindedness, peace, and harmony, provided that others respect their rights and property. In addition, the system of secular education and social media exposed Muslim society in Malaysia to the postmodernism lifestyle, endangering Islamic teaching. The modern lifestyle demands Muslim society discard traditional ways of thinking based on religion and nurture stressful minds and souls. It seems that empowering Islamic education to promote Islamic lifestyles can curb the impact of postmodernism on the vibrant colours of Muslim lifestyles in Malaysia.

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