Ethnicity at workplace: Value and culture of Malaysian Malay tradition in organization

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A B S T R A C T

Organizations are built from the essence of many cultures, divisions, professions, functions and roles, employees, management and hierarchy. Collective activities within the organization function continuously with the division of work and the hierarchy of authority to achieve the goals set by the organization. Culture is a mode of thinking, values, and attitudes including the beliefs, traditions and behaviors of human beings that learned and inherited from one generation to another. Cultural sociologists examine the meaning-making process, the reasons behind the meanings, the effects on human action, and the importance of meaning in generating unity and conflict. Today, Malays in Malaysia have shown tremendous changes in economic, political and social aspects. This situation can be seen in the rural and farming communities as well as modern societies in the cities that are actively involved in modern economic sectors including services and businesses, and the communities have even formed a Malaysian middle class society. Historically, the founding of the Malay community in Malaysia began from the village, hence the combination of both custom and culture being built in the village. The value and culture of the Malays are said to be attributed to the view of the Islamic world which is 'Islam as a way of life'. Religion, culture and social bonds are embedded in the lives of the Malays. A study conducted among 265 Malay workers in the national automotive industrial organization indicated that there was a positive finding between the traditional culture and the official culture of the workplace. Malay values and norms are brought to the workplace and have affected the routines at the workplace as well. Hence, in the context of organization and occupation, employers cannot separate the workers from their labor capacity because employees are the people who are living with the society, and they are shaped and seen through the society. Various socially constructed elements including the perceptions, and may affect the interaction among the employees, employers, leaders, and success of an organization.

1. Introduction

Development and modernization in Malaysia have gone through various processes including modernization in physical aspects that are closely related to industrial processes, townships and efforts to increase the country's economic wealth since independence. The development is based on philosophical thinking on the importance of racial equality and national unity by implementing the principle of growth and distribution in order to create harmony and stability of the society (Embong, 2003). The history of the development and transformation of Malaysian community demonstrates the important role played by the governments in planning and implementing various development projects that resulted in rapid economic growth, particularly through the introduction of various national policies since the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1970. The poverty issue began to be seriously addressed by the government in the NEP and The First Long Term Plan (1971-1990), after the tragedy

of the May 13, 1969. Various development programs and projects were continuously implemented and aimed at eradicating poverty and reducing inter-regional income gaps and income groups, thus the ultimate goal of achieving national unity and integration among diverse ethnics, cultural and linguistic communities. Explicitly, the national economic development project since the implementation of the NEP is to eradicate poverty and bridge the wealth gap between the ethnics and rural areas. The government plays a very important role in the country's economic development, especially eradicating poverty and closing the gap of wealth through various national planning and implementation efforts (Sa'at et al., 2018). Without continued efforts of the government, the capability of the majority of the rural communities, mainly the Bumiputeras, to seize the opportunity and enjoy the benefits of the country's rapid economic growth is difficult and it is unlikely to reach the real goal of the country. A comprehensive development effort covering the economic, political and social aspects through various five-year plans has attracted a large number of ethnic communities, men and women, to be actively engaged in the national economy. The economic growth will also take place from the rapid urbanization process and encourage the changing lifestyle of the community (Bloh, 2008) which then causing new opportunities for the locals such as education, employment, healthcare and so forth. Even, the impact of the development of small urban centers also flowed into the sub-urban and inland areas.

Industrialization is one of the important factors contributing to the rapid development of the country's industrial sector. The Malaysian economic structure has changed from a country of agriculture to an industrialized nation. During the labor-intensive export-oriented industries, the employment opportunities are created and widely distributed to the majority of the country's labor force including women, and thus promoting rural migration to the city. Efforts to advance the industrial sector are implemented through several policies, legislation, and industrial incentives. The introduction of a number of industrial strategy policies began in the 1960s that accelerating industrial development (Said and Mohd, 1999). The national industrial policy which is enacted to enhance the manufacturing sector has led to massive economic transformation of the country. Starting with the substitution policy of imports of consumer goods for domestic market through the Pioneer Status Ordinance 1958, then the introduction to the export-based industry began in 1968 to attract foreign investors who had capital, management expertise and industrial technology, thus obtaining overseas markets, and the Promotion Act Investment 1968 provides a variety of incentives to promote exports, the use of labor, and spread the industry to the underdeveloped rural areas in Malaysia. Similarly, the introduction of the Industrial Coordination Act 1975 and the NEP which attracted

the participation among the Bumiputeras in the manufacturing sector. The industrial strategy of the country was intensified from 1981 to 1990 through the First Industrial Master Plan (PIP) 1989 and the Industrial Technology Development Action Plan (PTPTP) which were implemented in 1990 and included a combination of export-driven industrial policies, advancing the second round of selected import substitution industries and certain heavy industries, developing the resource-based industries, elevating the technology capabilities, and facilitating the technology transfer (Said and Mohd, 1999).

The industrial development in Malaysia has been intensified since 1990 to 2000 in line with the desire to make Malaysia as a developed industrial country by the year 2020. With the completion of the NEP 1971-1990, the Second Round 1991-2000 starts with the 6th Malaysia Plan, 7th Malaysia Plan and The National Development Policy, as well as the introduction of the long-term government policy of Vision 2020. The unity of forming a united Malaysian nation is expressed in Vision 2020. National unity and integration among the people are to be achieved through the economic social justice that includes the reduction of income gaps between the ethnic groups, the full partnership of economic progress, and the development of national human resources. Additionally, there is also intention to form a competitive economy by having a dynamic, agile, resilient, and able to self-support in the long term. Meanwhile, the industrial sector is mature, efficient and productive in nature, has a broad base and a robust and integrated industrial chain (NPD, 1991). In facing the challenges of the 21st century and developing Malaysia more forward than last year's success, the New Economic Model under the National Transformation Policy was introduced by the government to make Malaysia as a high-income and developed nation with a fair growth. The New Economic Model introduces an inclusive development approach based on the principle of growth with equality to ensure that all societies in Malaysia, including in Sabah and Sarawak, benefit from the economic development and wealth of the nation. For the past four decades after independence, the Malaysian economy has been commendable with a significant reduction in poverty. Through the Ninth Malaysia Plan (9thMP), the poverty rate has been reduced to 2.8% in 2010. The incidence of poverty in Malaysia was declined from 6.8% (1997) to 5.1% (2002) and 3.6% (2007). The ethnic poverty in 1999 showed the rates among Bumiputera was 12.4%, Chinese was 1.2% and Indian was 3.5%. Whereas in 2004, the poverty rates among Bumiputera was 8.3%, Chinese was 0.6% and Indian was 2.9%. In 2012, the incidence of poverty was decreased to 1.7%. In 2012, the strata and ethnic groups showed the poverty among the Bumiputera was 2.2%, Chinese was 0.3% and Indian was 1.8%, compared to 5.3% among Bumiputera, Chinese 0.6% and Indian 2.5% in 2009 (DSM, 2013). The basis for the country to function and grow is the existence of material that exists from the market. Even though the country

does not specify the production relations, but it is the country that is capable in maintaining and expanding the production relations through the laws and policies adopted by the country. Then, the influence of production relations on the society is to create classes in society that are also influenced by the country. Furthermore, the cultural capital such as education, knowledge and lifestyle of individuals has a positive relationship with the economic capital as well as the social capital that individuals possess. The cultural capital will enable individuals to gain a position in production relationships in order to accumulate cultural capital either in jobs or in their life that ultimately enable the individuals to enjoy the social status in a society. According to Embong (2000), the process of formation of the working class, middle class and capitalist classes in Malaysia is driven by the rapid growth of the economy which is triggered by various national policies, especially the NEP. The formation of the middle class in Malaysia is closely related to the three major powers in society, namely the market capital, country and cultural capital that are interconnected with each other. The emergence of the middle class in Malaysia, that resulting from the impact of the NEP, is not merely among a particular ethnic group, but the numbers are beyond the ethnicity. In the 1950s and 1960s, most Chinese ethnic occupied the capitalist and secondary classes, while only a small group of Malay middle classes occupied an administrator class. However, the 1970s have shown the development of new middle class and multi-racial corporate classes that belonged to both the government and private sectors, and some of them participated in transnational capitalists (Embong, 2002; 2005). The emergence of the new middle class has directly affected the contemporary lifestyle, which is to earn a high salary and enjoy the prestige of being a manager, professional and administrator. The NEP era has led the rural migration among the working class people to the city as a result of the country's industrial sector that turned out to provide an enormous job opportunity. The traditional village communities migrated to the city and worked as laborers in the factory. They become the first generation of the new working classes, and most of them lived in the same residential area as the middle class. The aspiration to make Malaysia as a developed country by the year 2020 with the ultimate goal of building unity and national integration, that is translated through a range of short-term and long-term efforts since achieving independence, has brought a significant impact on social change among the various Malaysian societies in terms of the social structure of the community and interconnected relationships between them.

2. Malay ethnicity in the diversity of Malaysian society

Ethnic and ethnic identities refer to the same cultural characteristics of a group of people, including sharing a common language, customs and traditions, beliefs, and are often tied to a particular region. The definition of the concept of ethnic exists in subjective and objective dimensions which involves the awareness of the existence of an ethnic identity, sense of belonging and awareness of the common interests, as well as sharing the equality of languages, clothing and customs. Meanwhile, the ethnicity refers to the sense of belonging among a certain ethnic group and the existence of a culture or sub-culture that is clear and can unify its members based on the common history, values, attitudes and behaviors. Ethnicity is contrary to the concept of race which is often referred to by biological characteristics. The members of an ethnic group may be identified in terms of racial characteristics, but they may also share other cultural features such as religion, occupation, language, or politics. In Malaysia, the debate on ethnic and racial concept applications explains that humans have an infinite diversity and the characteristics of a group often overlap with other groups. The conceptual philosophy in the Malay world are not as described by the English colonists and some local scholars and politicians who refer to the colonial understanding. Each ethnic group is bounded among the other ethnicities based on language, culture and religion in the region (Noor et al., 2006). In addition, they bind themselves and their groups with major groups in the Malay world. The ethnic groups in the Malay world are found to have no closed ethnic boundaries otherwise changing due to the presence of group cross-connections. This led to the characteristics of the group to borrow from one another till the establishment of a cultural and social integration of one ethnic to another. Later, the social change and transformation in the post-1990 Malaysia has opened up new physical and social spaces with the diverse distribution of ethnic and religious societies evolving with the emergence of cross-state transitions into the new growth areas. Changes in the stratification, physical and social mobility of the various ethnic communities have a social impact on the frequency, form and intensity of ethnic relations (Noor, 2014). Ethnic relations are manifested in residential areas, in public spaces, in media and in the workplace. The relations on a recurring pattern of social relations was built through a face-to-face relationship. Then, the frequent interaction builds a common sense in society as a social unit. The various experiences, achievements and changes that individuals have through their actions and interactions are something interesting to explore (Nomnian, 2018).

The ethnic and identity issues in Malaysia have a special and important historical event in explaining the origin, development and changes of the Malaysian society. The Malaysian society is a relatively diverse cultural, linguistic and religious community who are living together but maintaining their own ethnic identity. The uniqueness of the community existed since the Malay world became the meeting point of various world's major civilizations and cultures due to trade, religious

expansion and pride. The plural society at that time emerged naturally and transformed through their economic activity. They lived separately, alienated and only met in the market. Later, the plurality in the Malay world was formed as a result of the colonial power policy which brought in Chinese and Indian labor in the 19th century to fulfill the needs of the mining, road and rubber economy in Malaya. The colonial policy has affected the racial segregation not only in economic and residential activities, but also in political segregation. Divide and rule policy have led to racial identification according to economic activity. However, after the Federation of Malaya gained independence on 31 August 1957 and the establishment of the sovereign nation of Malaysia in 1963, there was a formation of a mutually respectful and understanding Malaysian ethnic among the various races, languages, religious, and off springs. Various economic, political and social factors that influence each other in the formation of a stable and harmonious Malaysian society. Statistics of the population of 2018 issued by the Department of Statistics, Malaysia shows an estimated population of 32.4 million people in the population with annual average growth rate of 1.1%. This includes more than 70 ethnic groups with more than 200 sub-ethnic groups, languages and dialects. Generally, the Malays, Chinese, Indians, Aborigines, Sikhs, Chetti, Siamese, Baba-Nyonya Peranakan and many other minorities inhabit the Peninsular, while the Iban, Bidayuh, Kadazan, Dusun, Samah-Bajau and other Bumiputeras live in Sabah and Sarawak. The plurality and composition of this Malaysian society is further enhanced by the coexistence of the immigrants, especially foreign workers from various countries in the world with some of them being the permanent residents of the country. In fact, even though Malaysia is a new country with social diversity, it is able to establish and maintain a relatively peaceful relationship between ethnics and religious beliefs and continue to be strong and developed (Embong, 2006).The stability and security have also been recognized by the Global Peace Index listing Malaysia at 19th place in 2011 as one of the most stable and secure countries in the world.

From the statistics of Malaysia's population by ethnic group in 2010, more than 50% of the population is the Malay ethnic. In Malaysia, the concept used to define the Malays is ethnically characterized by culture, language and religion. The concept of Malay has different meanings from one generation to another, and differs according to the interpretation of various parties. The definition and understanding of the Malay concept is divided into three approaches by referring, 1) the Malay as based on the similarity of the languages and cultures as stated in the Historical Encyclopedia and Malay Culture; 2) the Malay that is based on the Malay name is considered as social construction with the support of the *''Sejarah Melayuand Hikayat Hang Tuah''*; and 3) the Malay that is based on the definition of the Malaysian Federal Constitution arising out of British colonial power for its administrative purposes. Malays, as defined by the Federal Constitution, is a person who believes in Islam, usually speaks Malay language, and practices the Malay customs and traditions (NPD, 2010). On the other hand, if referring to the definition of the Malay definition, the meaning of Malay is broadly based on the historical and socio-cultural definition which indicates that Malays cover those inhabiting the Malay Archipelago. Although there are various ethnicities, languages and dialects, the language and cultural linguists consider them as a group of Malay descendants and inhabit the Malay world (Embong, 2006; Baharuddin, 2012). Notwithstanding the definition given by scholars, the Malays as indigenous natives of the region, were amounted around 15 239 300 of the 30 million Malaysian multi-ethnic population (DSM, 2014), living in every areas of the Peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak, and continuing to maintain their cultural traditions and languages that distinguishes them from other ethnic groups in Malaysia. However, the Malays in Malaysia are not identical to their identities as in Indonesia, because the Malays include tribes from various descendants such as Javanese, Banjar, Bugis, Boyan, Mandailing, Pattani, Rawa, Minangkabau and so forth. In Malaysia, as well as being known through ethnic heritage, the sub-ethnicity of the Malays is also commonly known by their native or district.

In addition, there are also scholars who categorize the Malay community based on the introduction of cultural zones with their respective dialects and languages such as the East Coast dialect namely Kelantan-Terengganu-Pahang; northern dialect namely Perlis-Kedah-Penang and Perak; and central dialect namely Selangor-Negeri Sembilan (Deraman, 2000). The Malays in Johor, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan and Selangor can also be grouped into a standard language users. On top of that, these Malay groups also have differences in terms of food diversity including in their manufacturing methods, customs and traditions of weddings such as clothing, and various values and norms that distinguish their identity from one another. The ethnic scholar, Noor (2012, 2014) categorizes the Malays into four groups based on religion, ethnicity, modernization and ethno religion. The Malay religious group is staying in the area called as 'the Quranic Belt', which is Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang. The Malay group who prioritizes the language and culture are residing in Johor. The ethnic groups who are focused on modernization has the characteristics of cultural, religious and family languages but is thinner than modernization interests such as progress, development, consumerism and the middle class lifestyle. This group stays in Penang, Perak, Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Negeri Sembilan and Melaka. The ethno religious group is a Malay extremist who hold the Malay and Islamic politics as their main feature.

Historically, the discovery of the Malay community in Malaysia began from the village, thus the language, customs and culture built in the village (Noor et al., 2006). The Malay community speaks

among themselves in Malay language according to the dialects of the local, state or ethnic languages. The village life that is mutually dependent on one another, visiting neighborhood, co-operation, and helping each other is the tradition of the community in the village. Hence, the village is very close to the souls of the Malays although they have migrated and stayed in the city. The practices and traditions of livings in the village are brought to the life in the urban community. The village is also a place to celebrate the festivals and establish a long-standing relationship with the family and relatives. In addition, the value and culture of the Malays are also attributed from the views of the Islamic world which is 'Islam as a way of life'. Religion, culture and social bonds are embedded in the lives of the Malays and make the Malays in Malaysia known as Islam (Noor et al., 2006). Therefore, the cultures related to Islam and Malays are often seen together such as the celebration of Hari Raya Aidilfitri and Hari Raya Aidiladha, *Aqiqah,* marriages, open houses, and visiting of the death. For example, Hari Raya Aidilfitri festival was celebrated by the Muslim Malays as a sign of victory for fasting a month during Ramadan. In Malaysia, the massive celebration has become an ethnic culture such as the return of the village and long holiday in conjunction with the festivals, new clothing, preparing the specific meals for the day of festivals especially the Malay foods, and holding open houses.

The personality of the Malays is associated with the good values and knowledge that embodies the elements of wisdom and kindness, as well as the value of Islam and culture that are regarded as peaceful Malay entities and cause them to easily accommodate in relationship. There are high tolerance and accommodative attributes due to the Islamic teachings and practices as well as feeling of confidence and belief in good and bad rewards, life in the world and the hereafter after death. Responsibility for the religion which is the pillar for a Muslim by saying two *kalimah* of syahadah that acknowledging there is no God but Allah and the prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, performing the five daily prayers a day, fasting during the month of Ramadhan, paying zakat, and pilgrimage, to be an important part in the process of socialization among the Malay Muslim. Hence, a Muslim usually tries to balance between material and spiritual in their lives (Abdullah, 1996). The studies in various disciplines reveal wisdom, welfare, ethics and morals as well as generosity, respectful, sincerity, thoughtful, kindness, and using polite words in communication and relationship with fellow human beings. In addition, the concept of indulgence is deeply embedded in the daily life of the Malay community which encompasses the components of wisdom and kindness that becomes the norm in society. It is highlighted in the Malay poem such as '*Pisang emas di bawa belayar, masak sebiji di atas peti, hutang emas boleh di bayar, hutang budi di bawa mati'* dan '*Orang berbudi, kita berbahasa'* which suggests that the kindness is the

foundation of the Malay community in the social life. This good character has been inherited from childhood and made the Malay personality to seek a peaceful, non-confrontational, and nice face even in tense condition by using a good words (Zakaria et al., 2017). In addition, politeness in action and behavior, and courteous in speech is also the norms in the Malay society that forms the personality of the Malays.

3. National culture and organizational culture

Culture is commonly understood as thoughts, values and attitudes including beliefs, customs, traditions and human behavior. Culture is a system of understanding and behavior learned and inherited from one generation to one generation. The cultural sociologists consider 'culture' as all socially located forms and as the process that human creates or constructs the meaning, which occurs in specific institutions, and limited to a certain group (Ritzer and Ryan, 2010). The cultural sociologists also examine how the meaning-making process is, why there are many meanings, how it affects human action, and how to build the meaning as important in generating unity and conflict. However, the cultural reconsideration in cultural sociology has emerged by combining different approaches in understanding the definition of culture. The first approach in sociology of organization and sociology of knowledge focus on cultural outcome, examine the way in which meaning, value and artifacts are generated within certain organizations, institutions, and networks, as well as to see how the social context affects the existence of meaning. The second approach focuses on how interaction and social practice themselves as the process of building the meaning. It also focuses on ways in which individuals and groups, in certain contexts, recognize the actions with meaning. In this situation, culture is contingent and is considered as the variable element on how the action is explained. The third approach emphasizes on the importance of the formal structure of the discourse in constructing the meaning. The analysis of the cultural structure is built on two different traditions; drawn on the theory and concept of textual structures derived from human works to analyze the meaning-making. They investigate the internal structure of the discourse in terms of categories, codes, genres, and narratives, as well as showing how the meaning arises from their relationship in the sign system. The other cultural sociologists explore the relationship between the building meaning with social psychological cognitive processes, especially categorization. This approach was implemented when outdated fundamental forms of culture are mobilized in orderly culture, and informal importance interaction (Ritzer and Ryan, 2010).

According to anthropologists, culture can be learned consciously and unconsciously. It is easier to see and describe cultures like artifacts, clothes, dishes, games and so forth during conscious level.

Yet there is a level of unconsciousness in our mental program which sets our pattern of thinking, feeling and behavior which is largely as what we call as a culture. As such, Abdullah (1996) insists on understanding the true meaning of culture that we need to look beyond consciousness and deepen our values and assumptions at the unconscious level. In the context of society, the societal culture is considered as a glue that holds or binds its members together by using the same language, cloth, food, religion, beliefs, aspirations and challenges. It is a set of learning behavior patterns that are so deep and rooted, and they produce a set of actions unconsciously and involuntarily. It thus effects on 'what we care' and 'what we ignore'. Through the culture, an individual can distinguish and build boundaries to recognize between 'outsiders' and internal person, we and them, the special person and not special, and men and women (Grint, 1995). In society, however, many things we can describe as part of culture that are either material or non-material. Culture includes patterns of social behavior that becomes routine; the pattern of thought that results in feelings and attitudes in relation to the objects whether material, non-material or social; social organizations from the level of positioning, social relationships, values and regulations, power distribution, institutions that guarantee the stability of society; symbolic elements such as language communication systems; organizational thinking in the form of scientific, philosophical, and religious systems built through the symbols of the Reuters Ltd (1982). Culture is also regarded as the mental program (Hofstede et al., 2005) because everyone brings with him his own mindset pattern, and has the potential to act as it has been learned throughout his life. Most cultures are acquired since in the early childhood, because the children's levels are the most exposed to learning process and assimilation. According to Hofstede et al. (2005), once a certain pattern of thought, feelings and actions have been established in the mind, the individual must learn to abandon them before learning something different. But the unlearning process is harder than the first time learning. By using the analogy of how computers are programmed, Hofstede et al. (2005) held a pattern of thought, feeling and action as a mental program or 'software of the minds'. 'Source' lies in the social environment where a person grows up and is quoted through one's life experience. 'Programming' starts in the families, then in the neighborhoods, schools, among teenagers, in the workplace, and in the community.

Various definitions of culture are summarized by Abdullah (1996) as the forms of beliefs, customs, practices, institutions, techniques and objects that have been created by society, then accepted and inherited by their ancestors, including other reliable sources. Culture is also an integrated and shared patterns of human behavior, which includes thoughts, speeches, actions and artifacts. Cultural retention depends on the ability of its members to learn and spread the knowledge to the next generation so that they will know how they are expected to behave. In addition, culture is also a way of life that gives the members purpose in their life, identity, meaning and well-being, as well as generates the commitment to cultural values and philosophy. Culture is also regarded as accumulated knowledge deposits, experience, meaning, beliefs, values, attitudes and self-concepts, as well as universe involving reality, harmony with nature and status hierarchy, time, role expectations and space relationships gained by a large group of generations through individuals and groups who are trying to adapt with the environment (Abdullah, 1996). Scholars have found no specific definitions that are specifically acceptable to explain the meaning of the organization because the meaning may vary from the sociological approach used. The difficulty in organizational goals arises as individuals and groups within organizations have variety of differences, and competition in achieving their goals. In fact, the level of adherence and cooperation shown by subordinates may also vary. Hence, this situation leads to differences between formal organizations and informal organizations.

The organization can be broadly defined as any purposeful arrangement of social activity that implies active control over human relations ordered for particular ends (Ritzer and Ryan, 2010). In this sense, the organization involves the pattern of relationships outside the major groups, which is spontaneous, unplanned, informal, and symbolized by family relationships, peers, and local community networks. In other words, the organization is a human institution that provides meaning to its members for their actions and behaviors that are not only reflect the personality of the members of the organization but also reflect the image of the organization they represent. Organizations are built up of many cultures, divisions, professions, functions and roles, employees, management and hierarchy. Organizations work with various human roles that have been organized according to their respective duties. Human collections are grouped together in a technological environment that operates to convert inputs from its environment to the products and services that can be marketed to the community (Miles, 1975). In addition, collective activities within the organization function continuously with the division of works and the authority hierarchy to achieve the goals set by the organization (Robbins, 1983), and become a symbolic entity that functions according to implicit models that are determined by the culture found in the thinking of its members (Hofstede et al., 2005).

The term corporate culture used by business organizations is synonymous with organizational culture, and is a modern cultural phenomenon specifically designed by an organization for the purpose of achieving organizational goals in terms of profitability, productivity, vision and mission. It deals with management, governance and regulation. Various cultural definitions in organizations issued by scholars, but they generally agreed that the

corporate culture encompasses organizational assumptions, practices, and habits that reflect the values and beliefs of its collective members (Kramer and Kramer, 2010). It transforms into organizational goals, strategies, structures, and approaches implemented on employees, customers, investors, as well as communities. There are scholars who stress that the corporate culture is what has been done by the organization, not what has been owned by the organization. In this context, culture is considered as the process and the result of communication. This perspective is consistent with structural theories that recognize organizational culture must consistent to be created and reinvented through communication. Individuals may imitate, modify a bit, or significantly alter the culture throughout the process. Due to the cultural manifestation, the organization continues to create and operate its culture through communication. Individuals involved in this process continue to embody the organizational culture throughout the socialization process. Organizational culture manifested in many ways including artifacts, individuals, languages, stories, norms, and rituals, and then contributed to a member's understanding of the value of the organization.

Hence, for organizations, culture is an aspect that can show how an organization works in shaping the overall organizational performance including the feelings of each individuals. Organizational members learn to deal with problems in adapting external factors, as well as addressing internal factors. This includes the right thing to see, think and feel to be successful in broader aspects. The way to dress, when and how to argue, how to liaise with the authoritative leader, the rewards and punishment, and so forth are among the important aspects of organizational culture. Corporate culture is shown in many ways including artifacts, individuals, languages or stories, norms, and rituals. They contribute to the member's understanding towards organizational values. The manifestation of physical corporate culture are usually referred to as artifacts, including objects that describe the values of organizations such as company logos, historical objects, buildings, and documents. Stories about organizations or legends also represent the important values and beliefs. It depends on the part of the story that is being told, and the different values being emphasized. Another manifestation of culture is the expression of the individual as a hero and a criminal, which usually exists in stories and legends. While the founders of the organization are often regarded as heroes in organizational traditions (Kramer and Kramer, 2010). In addition, the norms of the behavior of the members are considered as an important manifestation in the organization. Norms may be explicitly stated, such as rules or policies, or may be implied, and can be understood consciously or subconsciously. Norma is sometimes defined as 'the way we do things around us' (Kramer and Kramer, 2010). Some norms become rituals that stated about organizational values. For example,

most organizations have annual recognition awards for excellence services or retirement groups that show that the organizations appreciate the dedication and services given by the employees. For organizations with no such official ceremonies, there are the co-workers who usually organize the retirement event. Other events such as celebrating the productivity like the highest sales of staff awards, monthly service excellence, and so forth. Coleman (2013) states that there are six outstanding corporate culture components that include vision and mission, values, practices, members, narratives and the environment. Starting with a clear mission statement, it has the meaning of organizational value as well as goals to be achieved. A true and clear mission statement able to give impact of good insight that can help customers, suppliers and other stakeholders. While value is a core of organizational culture which consists of a set of guidelines on the behavior and thinking required to achieve the vision. The values and insights outlined need to be manifested as an organizational practice.

In organizations, corporate culture is a modern cultural phenomenon that is specifically designed by an organization for the purpose of achieving organizational goals in terms of profitability, productivity, vision and mission that reflects the modernization of an organization's culture. However, those working with an organization is the human beings, the employees who come from various ethnic backgrounds, religions, education, family, geography and others. They come with their own culture and they are not nurtured by the corporate culture. The closest facilitation and socialization of the organization is a fairly standardized organizational culture and emphasizes obedience to strict discipline. But, in the society, the discipline based culture is the upbringing or socialization in the school. In the family, the socialization is generally parental compliance rather than adherence to productivity and achieving economic goals as well as profits such as the demands of the working organization. Hence, organizational culture, particularly the corporate culture, is different from the general culture, society and family. Organizational culture is considered as the heart of an organization, so the managers and main players of the organization need to communicate with all staffs. When there are organizational values found unsuitable for employees due to the employees are exposed to the values and culture at home, school or society, then the managers need to take time to understand employees and appreciate the differences (Abdullah, 1996). When the staffs enter the company in their workplace, they must abide with the organizational culture and company demands including working to improve their skills and productivity, thus raising income. However, the realization of ethnic experience in the workplace will certainly vary among individuals whose background in their respective cultures being socialized either from childhood to family, school or in their home

environment and community. The experience of socialization and culture inherited is manifested and may be embedded in their routine workplace. Each workers work together, eat together, wear common formal organizational outfits, perform corporate social activities, and celebrate various annual multi-ethnic festivals.

The findings of a study on a national automotive industry organization show that there is a positive meeting point between ethnic, sub-ethnic and religious culture with the company's official culture (Abdullah, 2015). The traditional culture of the staffs is found in the official culture of the workplace. The study was conducted on 265 respondents consisting of executive and non-executives. Respondents were selected by using a purposive sampling method by selecting the subjects with specific characteristics as respondents of the study based on the scope and objective of the study. The data collection process uses questionnaires, interviews and nonparticipant observations, and involves secondary sources comprising of existing data such as official statistics, company annual reports, media reports, other researcher's work, historical and contemporary records as well as other resources related to the study. The mixed method approach is implemented by combining quantitative and qualitative methods through surveys using questionnaires. While in-depth interviews were conducted with five key informants, non-participant observations, and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) involving four people in a series of FGDs. The mixed study framework is a procedure that involves collecting and analyzing data as well as combining quantitative and qualitative data in a study. The framework of this method is very good because the study uses the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data. Hence, with the advantages of both methods, then the in-depth analysis of the real workplace in the context of the company's historical development can be completed.

In the context of the organization, research on the building of corporate culture and organizational work culture clearly demonstrates the structure and agency where the staff are influencing each other. Organizations are a social system built by actors. Organizational culture and work culture are the official cultures built by structures, but they are the result of consultation and mutual agreement by each members. Every individuals in the organization has a resource that covers all potentials such as knowledge, skills, competencies and experience. While the organization also has material and non-material resources such as technology, devices, buildings, systems, rules, norms and values. Hence, they both influence and contribute to both each other. In this situation, the quality of the organization is determined by the quality of the action of each employees, while the quality of the individual is determined by the quality of the organization. Organizational culture is formed in accordance with the mission and vision that bring national elements together with claims as a

commercial company. Symbols of the organizational culture are clearly stated in each company-related document as well as displayed in the company's operating plant. In fact, it is manifested in the practice of working culture with corporate culture characteristics translated through organizational values, company missions, norms, languages, symbols, beliefs, rituals, leadership models, company practices as well as the company's corporate environment. In addition to professional expertise, engineering, research and development, scientists, and its production personnel which comprises of the majority of Malay Bumiputera, national elements are also highlighted on the symbols and the names of the products. The interaction and social relationships among the employees are found very well. This is because the practice of the working culture is a collective working culture that emphasizes the solid cooperation of every members in the team regardless of ethnicity and cultural background. At workplace, the workers help each other, and replace temporary work such as during performing prayers and going to the toilets, as well as during long holidays. In fact, this culture is not only practiced among the same ranks of workers, but also among the leaders and subordinates. The close relationships among workers are found to contribute to the culture of 'caring' friends, leaders or subordinates that influenced the workplace.

The views of pioneer anthropologists on modern society and business organizations stated that every company has a culture, and each one is unique, difficult to describe accurately, and difficult to change. In addition, organizational culture is a complex system that is interconnected and initially tends to reflect the trust and values of the founders of the organization, then influenced by factors such as local customs and norms, types of industry, and technology used. The ethnic cultures of each society are vary, and organically growing from influences such as local environment, existing technology, and long-term experience through trial and failure (O'Toole, 2014). The findings of the study show that the various characteristics and values of the Malay community and the Islamic religion are closely related to the organization. These values and norms are brought to work and have influenced workplace routines (Abdullah and Mohd Noor, 2015). In fact, these religious and cultural practices are also been given attention by the management persons. Working as a group, working together and tolerating, taking turns, and replacing the workplace are the example of agreed practice. In addition, the culture of respecting the older or senior persons, especially among the long-serving employees despite their rank or position is lesser, courteous when reprimand or when giving opinion, avoid confrontation and admit to being grateful or satisfied with the work and salary accepted. Working is not merely for earning economic satisfaction and other rewards but working because of the religion of Allah, and the quotes of the Quranic verse with its translation, the word Allah, Muhammad and Bismillah hung on the

wall of the factory, azan prayer indicates the time of prayer, Surau in the factory near space work, call for Friday prayers, and religious activities in the factory are the example of religious values employed by employers to remind employees of the importance of integrity in work which is also a claimed by Islam. From the FGD, informants point out that "companies are indeed trying to absorb the Malay sentiment and practice of Islamic religion at work", "work is considered as worship, to do good and to right reward and otherwise. "The traditional culture of the staffs embroidered with the official culture of the workplace can occur as management uses an open approach to embroider both cultures into an asset to the company and employees respond to the approach well. The study found that companies and employees were positive for diversity at workplace and outside the workplace, as well as positive with the company's ability as a global player in the industry. Thus, this situation is in line with multi-modernization theory that argues that tradition and modernity can be shared and embroidered. Traditional culture is not a barrier to companies to be competitive and developed, but can contribute to the integration of relationships between fellow employees, as well as employees with management. For Malaysia, the change of rural communities to the urban areas as a result of the urban and industrial processes encompassing the aspects of employment, education, consumerism and lifestyles are still maintaining the values and norms of rural communities such as collective spirit, continuing to practice faith and religion, by customizing in routine life in the city. Religious and ethnic values are found in everyday life as well as in the workplace that demand them to abide by and adhere to the organizational culture.

From the empirical studies conducted, two important points that can be concluded are namely, the Malay ethnic identity and culture as well as the Islamic religion are more prominent and influential in the workplace. The values of Islamic religion are practiced in the workplace with the truth and support of the company, thus giving a positive impact on morality, attitude and accountability on the job. The Malay cultural values such as co-operation, tolerance, avoiding arguments, and mutual respect for harmonious relationships among employees as well as between workers and employers. Additionally, there is a meeting point between ethnic, sub-ethnic and religious cultures with the official organizational. The culture is the traditional culture of the employees brought from their experience and education to the workplace. The positive encounter between corporate culture and traditional culture should be synthesized and developed so that it may contribute to the enhancement of the company competitiveness.

4. Conclusion

The Malaysian society is constantly changing and becoming more complex in nature. In a country of diverse ethnics, cultures and religions like Malaysia, the question of national unity and integration is an important question as living harmony among different ethnicities will contribute to socio-political stability.

The country with unstable in its socio-political condition has a negative impact on the level of investment, thereby negatively affecting growth and economic development. Ethnic relations in Malaysia are depicted in several alternative views. There is a viewpoint that illustrates ethnic relations in Malaysia as fragile, cracked and contradictory. While other perspectives consider the positive aspects, as introduced by Baharuddin (2012). With the idea that social integration in Malaysia has been around for a long time through a long-term process through the interaction of the multi-ethnic community, but is regarded as a series of components at the societal level. The transformation of ethnic relations in Malaysia is said to be in force through ongoing social negotiations highlighted by accommodation elements, acculturation, amalgamation and assimilation (Baharuddin, 2012).

The diversity of life in terms of culture, language and religion among Malaysians are acceptable, acknowledged and celebrated (Noor, 2012). Even though some people stated that the ethnic differences exist and will create competition among ethnic groups in obtaining limited resources in society, there is already a widespread public opinion sharing that is more developed among the multicultural people than the difference between them. If there is a difference of opinion, this is acceptable without affecting the harmonious social relationships between them. Social relationships among Malaysians are occurring continuously across ethnicity, religion, culture and language through their daily interactions.

They are bound to each other and rely on one another as well as complement with each other in continuing the survival of sovereign and independent nations. The success of various national policies does not mean that the country does not face problems and challenges in the next phase of national development. The question of income inequality and urban poverty shows an increase in addition to national concerns on ethnic and religious issues, social and criminal issues, as well as ethnic and urban-rural gaps. Malaysia is also not only facing domestic problems and challenges but also the problems and challenges of globalization that both demand the wisdom of society and the country in managing, and adapting the problems (Reese, 2008).

From the historical developments of the Malaysian society, it is found that economic, political and social factors are interacting and play a role in ensuring and continuing to enjoy the peace and stability of society. The important thing is that every member of the community needs to build and integrate the integration so that the unity of society and the nation can be achieved.

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Compliance with ethical standards

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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