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Bung the gap: narrowing Global North – Global South bias in measuring academic excellence by weighting with academic capital

Marton Demeter

Department of Social Communication, National University of Public Service, HUNGARY

Abstract: This paper presents an analysis of three modes of assessing academic scholars' productivity, based on their education history and their publication output. The sample consists of the career paths of 231 authors from the Global South that includes the places of their BA, MA and Ph.D. education and their production in terms of the number of their Scopus-indexed articles. The analysis found that there is no general rule determines that Global North education would result in higher productivity, and the paper will argue that favoring productive authors without Global North education would be not just ethical but also deliberately reasonable in the restricted sense of instrumental reason.

Keywords: Selection criteria, academic inequality, global power relations, Global South – Global North bias, productivity assessment, academic capital

Introduction

Despite considerable modifications that occurred during the history of modern science in the last decades, the publish or perish paradigm remained inviolate (Erren, Shaw and Morfeld, 2016). One of the most important conditions for international success represented in tenure and hiring decisions is based on high-quality publications in leading peer-reviewed journals (Zdenek, 2018). One could presume that the more talented and hardworking a scholar is, the more publications of high quality she will have, but empirical data contradict to this assumption by presenting evidence on serious inequalities. The assumption would be, in the case of a sufficiently merit-based field, that talent and diligence will lead to research excellence which could be measured in publication output. Contrariwise, one could conclude from research excellence to the diligence and talent of the candidate. Some researchers add the role of good fortune (Frankl, 2017), but this current paper prefers to call it structural inequality.

Sociologists of science found that the world of the academy is full of invisible colleges (Price, 1965), and non-academic factors like geographical position, political and economic issues (Shenhav, 1986) or cultural and epistemic differences (Toth, 2012) play a crucial role in publication possibilities. Academic inequalities of these shorts divide the world of science into two domains: there are successful countries that have leading periodicals and many papers in them, and there are the so-called Matthew countries (Bonitz, Bruckner and Scharnhorst, 1997)

Address for Correspondence: Marton Demeter, email: demeter[at]komejournal.com
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that do not have highly visible journals, neither have they significant number of authors that publish in leading periodicals (Zanotto, Haeffner, and Guimaraes, 2016). The typical Matthew countries are those from the Global South (GS) including Africa, the developing Asia (China, India, Malaysia, just to mention the most important ones), South America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe (with Russia), while the winner countries are those from the Global North (GN) including developed Asia (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore), North America, Israel and Western Europe (Demeter, 2017; Lauf, 2005). Scholars from Matthew countries get, typically, fewer citations for their articles, their odds for publishing in top-tier international journals is far below than those of their GN colleagues, not to mention their prospects of being a best-seller, academic authors. As Heilbron and his colleagues put it, "virtually all of the most cited scholars in the social and human sciences were born and have worked in western countries" (Heilbron et al, 2018, p. 7). Even the name *Matthew-country* refers to the so-called rich get richer or Matthew-effect that, as a paraphrase for the Biblical verse in the gospel of Matthew ("for to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away") says that GN authors will be more cited than their GS colleagues irrespectively of the fact that they were published in the same journal and in the very same issue. The phenomenon of this serious inequality between central and peripheral regions of academe are well known, and often treated as trivial and unproblematic:

> The current status of the academic communities at the center is, at least for the immediate future, an immutable reality of the world knowledge system. Universities in developing countries and their academic communities must function in the unequal world of centers and peripheries. Peripherality does not mean that academics in the developing world cannot do creative scientific or intellectual work, or that they are forever relegated to a subordinate status in academe. It does mean that they will seldom be at the frontiers of world science and will not share in the control over the main levers of academic power worldwide. (Altbach, 2003, p. 4.)

Current research also shows that inequalities between the publication achievement of the GN and the GS are much bigger in social sciences and in humanities than in the case of natural sciences, life sciences or mathematics (Gumpenberger et al, 2016; Moody, 2004). It is not surprising, however, if we consider that epistemic, cultural and regional differences – not to mention language issues – matter mostly in social sciences and in humanities, while they are not quite as important in mathematics, physics or life sciences. A recent study shows that amongst social sciences, the GN – GS inequality (in terms of publication biases) is the most significant in the case of communication studies There is less GN/GS bias in philosophy and in hard sciences, and the most balanced picture could be found in the case of engineering, where the aforementioned cultural, epistemic and regional differences do not play determining roles. Engineering is the only discipline in Scopus, where not a GN region, but China leads the global academic field by delivering more than one-third of the total publication output. China is followed by the US (13%), India (6%), Korea (5%), Japan (5%) and the UK (5%). As contrasted with engineering, the GN is the absolute leader of science output in both natural and hard sciences with the difference that there is a greater Western European contribution in hard sciences than in the soft sciences where the United States is the absolute 'winner takes all' country (Demeter, 2018; 2019).

In order to raise the visibility of their scientific achievements, GS scholars often try to win GN affiliation (Lee and Kuzhabekova, 2017). Mobility, that is, being educated or work abroad raises the symbolic or academic capital of researchers (Bourdieu, 1988; 1998; 2004) in a great extent, while immobility often results in narrowed career paths. The motivations behind

mobility include simply economic features like higher salary or better material-technical conditions, but research shows that the promotion of scientific visibility – growth in publication output, co-authored international publications or the increase of citation indices – also play a very important role (Asheulova and Dushina, 2014; Aksnes et al, 2013). Since mobility is the most important factor when GS academics wish to raise their academic capital, it is expected that more mobile authors will collect more capital. Amongst the most obvious examples of "entry-level" (Bourdieu, 2004) academic capital like BA, MA or PhD degrees accomplished in the GN, scientists could collect advanced types of capital in the form of GN postdoctoral research experience, international grants, GN affiliations (Shen et al, 2018) and, mostly, publications in leading periodicals (Cole, 1967; Hanssen et al, 2017). But, as this paper will show later, GS authors face serious disadvantages when they apply for positions at GN institutions, since GN education experience often goes for academic capital in itself, and GN education is presumably added to the publication output, too. With this "double counting", GS candidates must be extraordinary productive in order to be taken into account in terms of hiring, because they have to compensate for their GS education. This present paper will show that academic capital (GN education) and academic production (publication output) could be calculated in at least three different ways, and these different ways of calculations significantly modify the ranks of applicants. This article will also make the case for using the GS-weighted calculation which favors the most productive GS educated candidates against their equally (or worse) productive GN educated competitors. But first of all, the analysis has to differentiate academic capital from academic production to make later calculations conceptually clear.
Bourdieu's notion of capital could be roughly conceived as the extension of the economic sense of the concept, since

> Bourdieu's purpose is to extend the sense of the term "capital" by employing it in a wider system of exchanges whereby assets of different kinds are transformed and exchanged within complex networks or circuits within and across different fields. He is attempting to relocate the narrow instance of mercantile exchange away from economics into wider anthropology of cultural exchanges and valuations of which the economic is only one (though the most fundamental) type. It is important to note, however, that other forms of capital such as cultural and social can be seen as "transubstantiated" forms of economic capital. (Grenfell, 2008, p. 102).

Thus, academic capital is a symbolic capital that could be accumulated in the form of certifications, degrees, fellowships, research grants and work experience. Academic capital that has been collected in the top of the hierarchy (typically, in the US and other English-speaking countries) is much more valuable than those collected in rather peripheral countries (Bauder, 2015; Bauder et al, 2017). Thus, academic capital is generally measured in terms of BA, MA and Ph.D. certifications from GN countries. As opposed to academic capital, academic production is measured by the number of high-quality publications. Since, especially in social sciences and humanities, leading journals are published at the GN almost without exception (Altbach, 2003; Demeter, 2019), academic production refers to the number of GN publications generally indexed in prestigious international science databases like Scopus or Web of Science SSCI list (Astaneh and Masoumi, 2017). But, as the paper will argue later, academic capital should be allegedly incorporated in academic production, because the main role of every capital (including academic capital) is to boost production (Johnston and Schluter (2017). Thus, a candidate A with GS education (less capital) who has the same production as her competitor B with GN education (more capital) is much more productive than candidate B, since the former made the same production with less capital. Otherwise, one should say that GN education could

not be conceived as academic capital since it does not boost the productivity of an equally productive candidate. Based on the above-mentioned assumptions this paper argues that productivity is the quotient of production (measured in the number of high-quality articles) and capital (measured in GN degrees and experience).

i. $$Productivity = \frac{Production\ (number\ of\ articles)}{Academic\ capital\ (GN\ degrees\ and\ experience)+1}$$

However sensible is that selection committees should use the above-mentioned formula when assessing candidates' merits in most cases, the rather opposite calculation is being used when GN education is added as a surplus to measured production (Cook, 2009; Evers et al, 2005). It is a fairly detrimental way of calculating productivity since it is well known that not education in itself but rather pre-selection productivity is the main factor in predicting future publication success (Kaiser and Pratt, 2016). Thus, the best predictor of future success is a prior success in publishing academic research – and not education *per se*. As the same authors put it, "like it or not, peer-reviewed publications are the 'currency of the business,' and they tend to dominate articles about faculty rankings more than anything else." (Kaiser and Pratt, 2016, p. 439). Other authors like Génova, Astudillo, and Fraga (2015) or Kekale (2018) also argue that published academic papers are, in principle, the currency of science.

Since hiring new fellows is a serious investment, "it is not surprising that the topic of employee recruitment has attracted considerable attention. In fact, as employers are becoming more strategic with regard to talent management, the importance attached to recruitment has increased" (Schmitt, 2012, p. 68). Herschberg, Benschop, and Bring (2018) argue that excellence became the main criterion in staff selection decisions, and they also state that this research excellence could and should be gauged in an objective, neutral and merit-based manner. But the same authors also put that only a few selection committee members question traditional selection criteria, and with this mentality, they limit the pool of candidates – and it could lead to the exclusion of many talented scholars. For example, international experience is usually narrowed to those attained in a limited number of countries, so mostly the English-speaking research universities of the GN are valued. Since this process premiates GN educated candidates (without reference to their production) it often excludes more productive but GS educated applicants (Altbach, 2004). Selection committee members could make inferences even about the candidates' level of English, which can put applicants of certain nationalities at more of a disadvantage than others (Herschberg, Benschop and Bring, 2018). Behtoui and Leivistad (2019) also observed that GS applicants are more likely to remain unemployed, and even if they are employed, they would get lower positions than their GN peers. This all above-mentioned phenomena causes serious disadvantages to not just GS academics but to science itself, because they make tough barriers to the flow of international talent.

Based on current research on this topic, this paper assumes that GN educated candidates are unjustly favored over their GS educated competitors if selection committees will overrate their productivity based on their GN academic capital. Thus the hypothesis of the article is that

H1 if selection committees would replace the GN-weighted calculation with its GS-weighted variant, the rank of candidates would significantly transform and it would give a chance to very productive GS educated applicants.

Methods

Since former research shows that the most extreme bias towards academics from the GS could be found in communication studies (Demeter, 2019), this present research chose this particular

field for the analysis of publication success. First, all the communication journals from the first quartile (Q1) of Thomson Reuters' Web of Science SSCI list were selected. With this, the sample consists of 19 periodicals (Table 1). Second, national diversity measures for each journal from 2013 to 2017 were made. National diversity measure shows the diversity of a given periodical in terms of the percentage of authors with affiliations of different countries or, in this present example, of different world regions. Only research papers were analyzed (n = 3910) since they are usually considered as the most valuable publications in terms of science output. Third, those articles that had been published, or at least co-authored by GS author(s) were systematically selected. As a result, the sample consisted of 263 GS papers. A GS paper means an article that has been submitted from a GS institution and this information was indicated on the author info part of the paper. Therefore, the labels 'GS author' and 'GS paper' refer to the nationality of the submission's affiliation only, not to the country of origin of the corresponding author(s). As a result, 426 (co)authors from GS affiliations were selected. As a next step, the cv-s of each author were selected from their official academic sites (official site of their departments or institutions, academic social media sites like Academia.edu, Researchgate, LinkedIn, Mendeley and Escavador). Then the so-called academic milestones of the authors considered as *science capital* (BA, MA, and Ph.D. degrees) and the number of their Scopus-indexed articles considered as *science production* were recorded. The science production of an author refers to the total number of their Scopus indexed articles so it is not restricted to the analyzed time period. It means that authors with science production = 1 published only one Scopus indexed article in their course of academic life. Since only clear and assured data were registered, those authors with missing information were deleted. As a result, our sample consists of 315 GS authors with complete and appropriate data. In some cases (n = 14) the list has the same author twice, but in these cases, their productivity indices were listed only once. So, for example, authors with 2 occurrences were registered only once with their corresponding productivity indices. In the course of this empirical research, the analysts aimed to work with as accurate data as it was possible, so only certified data regarding the career paths of the different authors were recorded. If it was possible, the official web page of the author's affiliation was used. If it was not possible, the author's cv was found on professional academic social media sites like ResearchGate, Academia.edu, LinkedIn or Mendeley. If the data was defecting, unclear or the CV of the author was completely missing, the corresponding author was clustered to the N/A category. As a result, 110 authors (26% of the original sample) was registered without appropriate data. It means that the current analysis is representative to only those authors with clear and certified data. It can be assumed, however, that authors with missing resumes are not on the top of the discipline, in other words, they have, presumably, low publication output irrespectively from their education history. Consequently, their missing or presence on the lists of this paper would not likely to affect the top of the rankings.

This research aimed to show power relations in the top of the field, that is why the most selective Web of Science was used instead of Scopus. But the analysis aimed to be also detailed, that is why Scopus was used when calculating the number of articles of a given individual. In other words, journal selection was conducted in regard to prestige (Web of Science), and publication measurement was conducted in regard to a more detailed picture since the average number of Scopus indexed articles is much greater than that of the Web of Science indexed articles.

Considering the place of the BA, MA and Ph.D. education of the authors as science capital and their numbers of Scopus-indexed articles as science production, different measurements regarding their weighted productivity were taken. Their normal productivity (NORM) is equal with their production: in this case, education was considered as irrelevant as regards the measured productivity, or, more precisely, as incorporated in the production. Their GN-weighted productivity has been calculated as follows. Each type of science capital (BA, MA,

and Ph.D.) which has been earned at a GN university gives 10% (in case of GN10) or 20% (in case of GN20) surplus to normal productivity. Thus, for example, if an author A has 10 Scopus-indexed articles and she has a GS BA and a GS MA, then her GN10 and GN20 will be 12 and 14 accordingly (10 x (1 + 0.1 + 0.1)) and (10 x (1 + 0.2 + 0.2)). On the contrary, the GS-weighted productivity index premiates GS science capital, so GS BA, MA, and Ph.D. will increase the normal productivity of a given author. Accordingly, if an author B has 10 Scopus-indexed articles and she has GS BA, MA and PhD degrees, then her GS10 and GS20 indices will be 13 (10 x (1 + 0.1 + 0.1 + 0.1)) and 16 (10 x (1 + 0.2 + 0.2 + 0.2), see Table 1). With this, she could overtake many of her competitors with a similar number of published papers but GN degrees. This paper will cover the significance of these different calculations in details in the discussion part.

Table 1 Calculations for different measurements. Percentages should be added together and then it should be multiplied by the number of articles.

	GN BA	GN MA	GN PhD	GS BA	GS MA	GS PhD
NORM	0	0	0	0	0	0
GN10	+ 10%	+ 10%	+ 10%	0	0	0
GN20	+ 20%	+ 20%	+ 20%	0	0	0
GS10	0	0	0	+ 10%	+ 10%	+ 10%
GS20	0	0	0	+ 20%	+ 20%	+ 20%

Results

Table 2 shows the analyzed journals and the amount of the GS articles in them. As it can be seen, generally speaking, the GS content is under 10 percent almost everywhere, and it is not unusual that a journal has less than 5 percent of GS articles.

Table 2 The analyzed sample of WoS SSCI journals with the number and percentages of GS articles and the science capital of the GS authors

Title (WoS SSCI Q1)	**total articles (n)**	**GS (n)**	**GS %**	**GN BA %**	**GN MA %**	**GN PhD %**
New Media & Society	475	32	6,7	20	66	71
Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication	173	17	9,8	9	55	86
Journal of Communication	268	15	5,5	11	78	89
Media Psychology	114	5	4,3	33	60	73
Communication Research	223	5	2,2	25	25	50
Journal of Advertising	182	11	6	30	40	60
Communication Theory	110	4	3,6	100	100	100
Information, Communication & Society	431	24	5,5	17	22	28
Public Understanding of Science	336	26	7,7	11	28	50
Political Communication	149	2	1,3	100	100	100
International Journal of Advertising	191	17	8,9	15	50	55
Comunicar	201	53	26	4	12	26
IEEE Transactions of Professional Communication	93	11	11	17	53	53

Technical Communication	77	3	3,8	0	0	0
Journal of Advertising Research	189	6	3,1	30	55	30
Journalism Studies	306	22	7,1	19	41	32
Research on Language and Social Interaction	103	3	2,9	33	66	66
Science Communication	169	7	4,1	14	29	86
Communication Monographs	120	0	0	0	0	0
sum	**3910**	**263**	**6,7**	**27**	**49**	**59**

As demonstrated here, even those from the GS who succeed in publishing in leading periodicals had their education – at least partly – in the GN. Thus 27% of GS authors had their BA from GN universities, and this amount increases to 49% on MA and 59% on the PhD level. There are five periodicals in which more than 85% of the GS authors have their Ph.D. from GN universities, while two journals – *Communication Theory* and *Political Communication* – have exclusively GN educated GS authors who have BA, MA and Ph.D. degrees from the West.

When the analysis is looking for possible correlations between GN education and the success in publication output it founds that there were no significant correlations in any directions. The results were r= –0.012 for GN BA and productivity at $p < 0.05$ (P-value = 0.856), r= 0.057 for GN MA and productivity at $p < 0.05$ (P-value = 0.388), r= 0.077 for GN PhD and productivity at $p < 0.05$ (P-value = 0.243), and r= 0.053 for GN "BA+MA+PhD" and productivity at $p < 0.05$ (P-value = 0.417). In all cases, the positive correlation between the GN education of GS scholars and their future success in terms of publication output was not significant (or even slightly negative): nor BA, MA or Ph.D. degrees, neither their combination results in a greater number of Scopus-indexed articles. These results mean that there is no general rule that determinates that GN education (in any level) would necessarily boost someone's science output in terms of the number of Scopus-indexed articles. For this reason, the analysis should turn the career trajectories of the individual researchers.

Figure 1 shows the science production measures of the normal calculation (NORM). The horizontal axis shows the number of authors with the appropriate production, while the vertical axis shows the production (the number of Scopus-indexed articles). It can be seen that this is a consistently decreasing curve with a small number of authors with extraordinary productivity and an abundance of authors with 1-5 papers. The productivity of a given author is the same as their production numbers in NORM since this is a non-weighted calculation. This paper will use NORM as a reference for the weighted calculations.

Fig 1 The non-weighted productivity indices of GS authors (NORM)

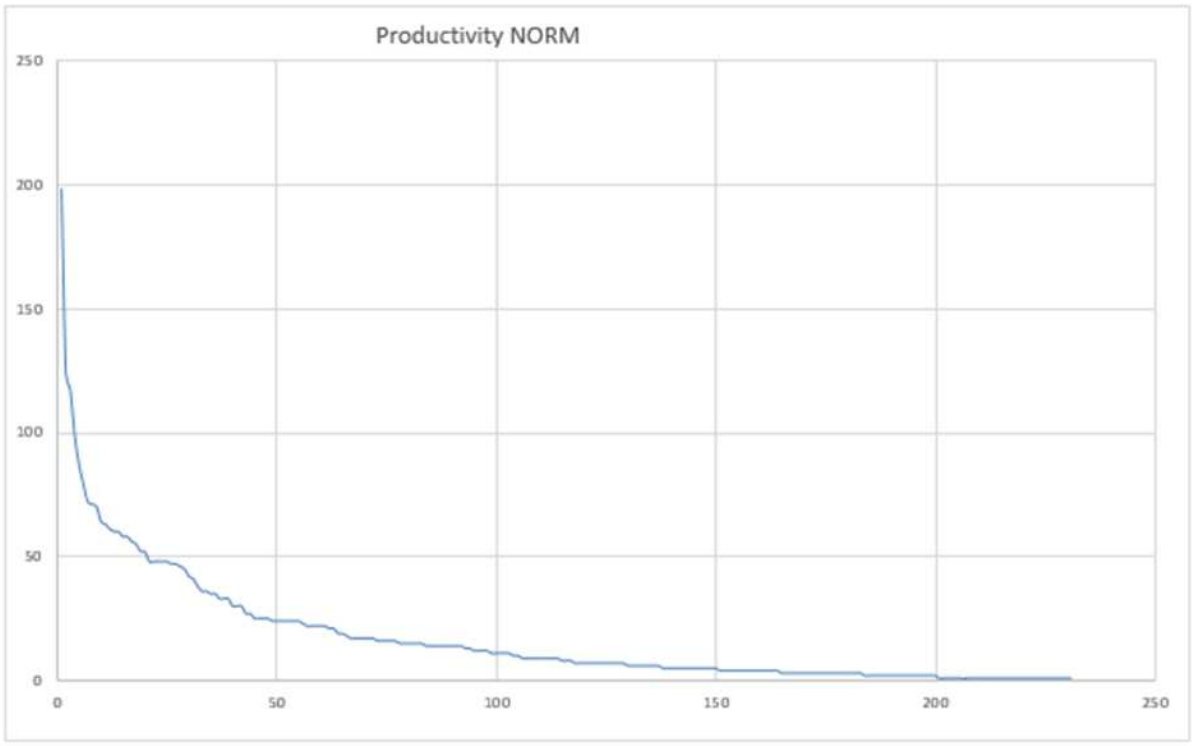
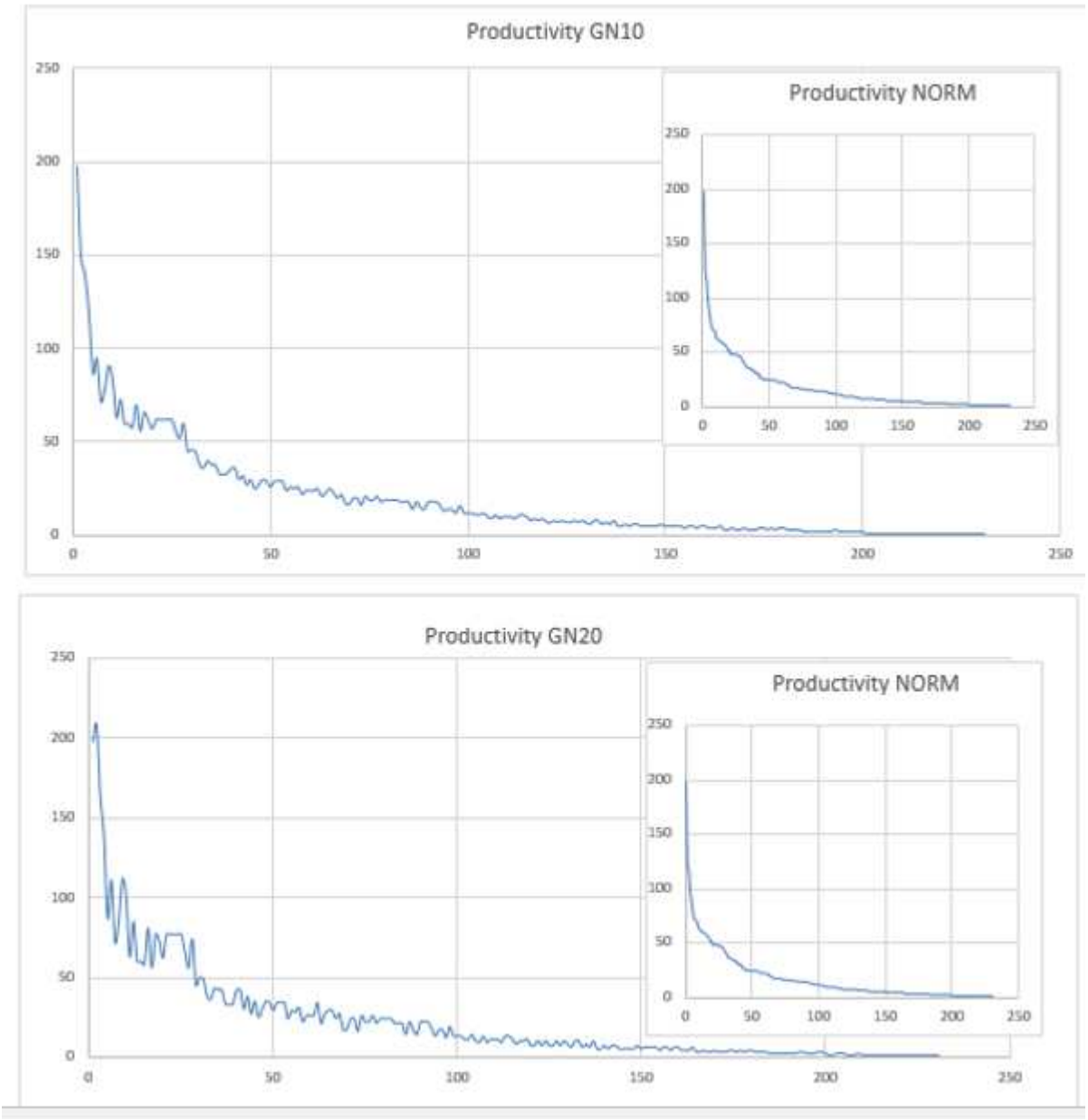


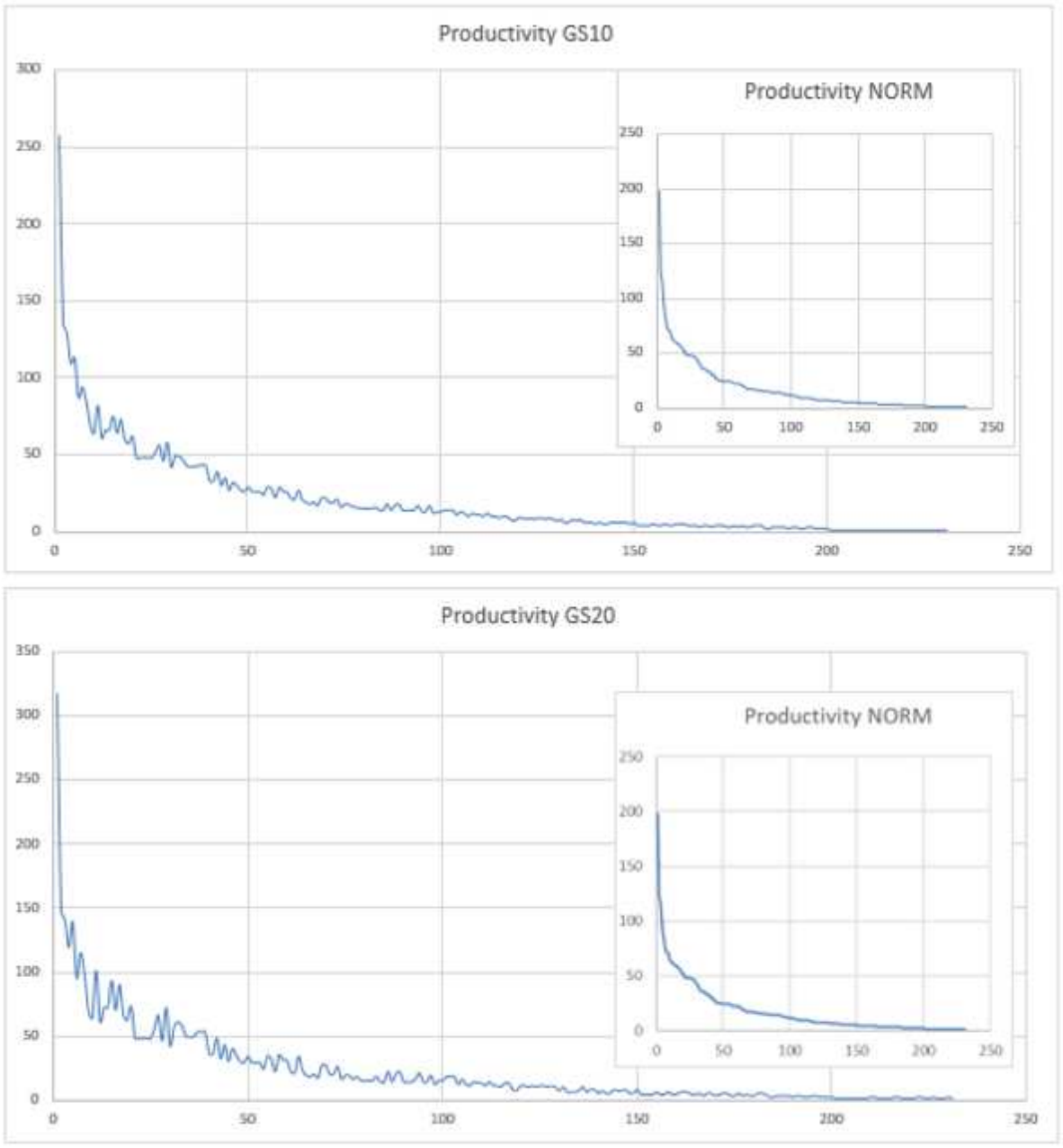
Figure 2 shows the modification of NORM when the calculation starts to weight productivity indices with GN capital. It means that authors with GN education could overtake authors with the same publication output but without the corresponding GN capital. The maximum amount of the overtaking depends on the weighting percentage: with +10% / capital type, a maximum jump of 12 places were found, while with +20% / capital type it was 21 places. It means, for example, that after a GN20 weighting, candidate B on the 31st place of the NORMAL shortlist could actually overtake candidate A who was on the 10th place in spite of the fact that candidate A has much more Scopus-indexed publications. Waves on the curve refer to position shifts in favor of candidates with GN capital.

Fig 2 The weighted productivity indices of GS authors (GN10 and GN20)



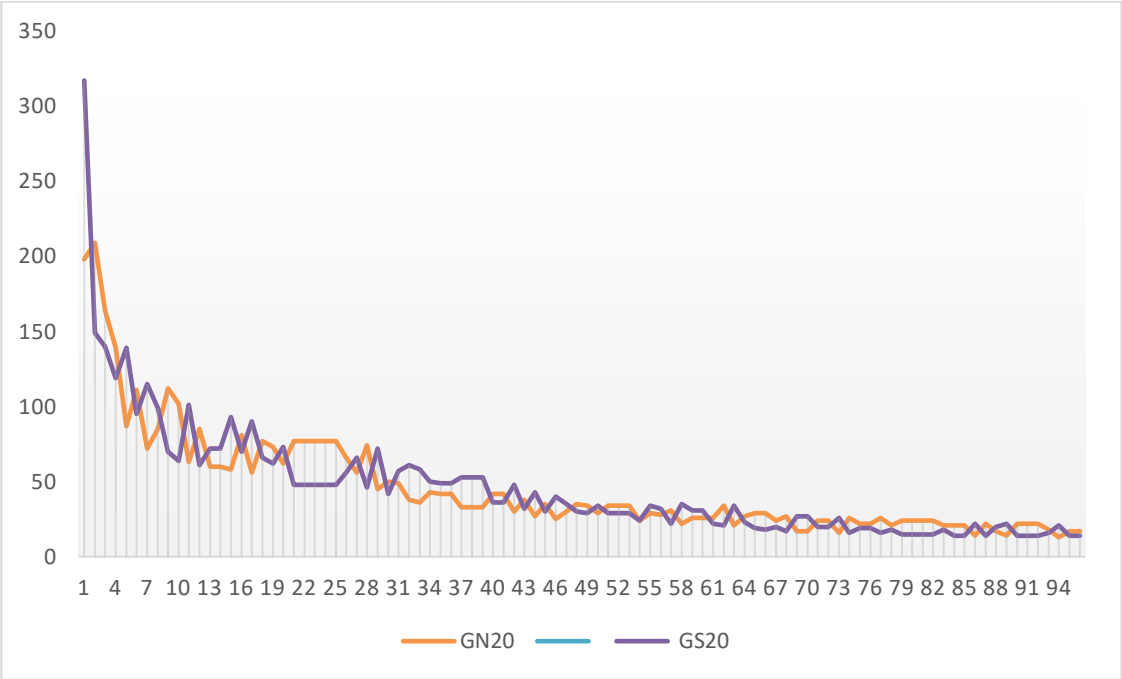
By contrast, Fig 3 shows the modification of NORM when the calculation starts to weight productivity indices with GS capital. It means that authors with GS education could overtake authors with the same publication output but without the corresponding GS capital. The maximum amount of the overtaking depends on the weighting percentage: with +10% / capital type, a maximum jump of 11 places were found, while with +20% / capital type it was 22 places. It means, for example, that after a GS20 weighting, candidate B on the 50th place of the NORM shortlist could actually overtake candidate A who was on the 29th place in spite of the fact that candidate A has much more Scopus-indexed publications. Waves on the curve refer to position shifts in favor of candidates with GS capital.

Fig 3 The weighted productivity indices of GS authors (GS10 and GS20)



As demonstrated here in the cases of all weighted calculations, position shifting was the most characteristic for the most competitive positions. It means that weighting with education as science capital can be meaningful and even determining in the case of the high performing academics, and its significance is only marginal if not indifferent for their less excellent peers. Finally, when the calculation correlates the weighted calculation to not the normal form (NORM) but to each other (GN to GS calculations), very significant modifications could be seen in the ranking of the candidates. Fig 4 shows the most extreme setting when GN20 to GS20 were compared. Data show that position changes are extraordinary frequent when GN20 calculation was commuted to GS20.

Fig 4 The weighted productivity indices of the top 100 GS authors (GN20 vs GS20)



These results definitely confirm the hypothesis that if the GN-weighted calculation had been replaced with its GS-weighted variant, the rank of candidates would significantly transform and it will give a chance to very productive GS educated applicants (H1). It can be seen in Fig 4 that there are several position changes on the top 100 list of applicants when the weighting was changed, and the most dramatic changes occur at the top of the ranking. While the verification of H1 is not an empirical proof in a sense that it does not prove that the modified list is better in an objective sense, this paper has two arguments for the assumption that this new, modified list where GS education is favored is more reasonable than the opposite that shows favor to GN educated scholars. First, since this current paper holds the view that GN education already influences scientific production positively, therefore it should not be counted apart. Second, one could also suggest within reason that GS authors with the same publication output are more prosperous (in the sense of future productivity) than GN educated competitors with the same productivity since they made the same production with less capital. A GN affiliation would boost the productivity of a GS educated candidate in a much bigger extent than that of a GN educated academic because this latter is already familiar with GN knowledge (GN academic capital).

Discussion

Data show that there is no general rule suggesting that GN education will necessarily lead to better performance in terms of science production. In spite of this, in most cases, excellence in education (in the form of GN BA, MA or Ph.D.) serves as a surplus capital in the eyes of selection committee members. To assess the possible roles that capital play in the production of academics, this paper should briefly highlight the differences between academic capital and academic production again. In accordance with the Bourdieusian conception, capital is some implementation of knowledge which could contribute to the publication success of a given academic. In this current case, if GN capital (in the form of BA, MA and Ph.D. degrees from GN universities) do contribute to publication success, then it should be manifested in the greater

number of Scopus-indexed articles. Nevertheless, as it could be seen from the results, GN education of GS scholars does not lead automatically to a boosting in their science publication output.

So one can ask: in what sense could be said that GN education should be conceived as academic capital and should be added to the scientific production of a given candidate as a surplus? Why research committees have to overvalue candidates with elite degrees when their science output is not better than their peer candidates with GS education? In accordance with the three variations of measurement of this paper (NORM, GN+10/20, GS+10/20), three arguments could be constructed regarding the assessment of science production.

The first and simplest argument is that one should not count BA, MA and Ph.D. degrees at all, because they are either incorporated in science production in form of a higher number of articles or they are irrelevant regarding science output. The normal measurement (NORM) shows a calculation of this kind, where the productivity of the candidates equals the number of their Scopus-indexed articles irrespectively from their education history. In this case, selection committees would select the most productive candidates while neglecting their education history. This type of calculation could assume that GN education is a form of academic capital, but it also assumes that it should be incorporated into the publication output. With this, the calculation hypothesizes that the productivity of author A with GN education would be lower without her GN education, and, consequently, it should also assume that author B with GS education might perform better if she had a GN education instead. Without the above-mentioned assumptions, one should suppose that education does not matter at all, which is counterintuitive and contradict to our conception of academic capital.

In this stage of the argumentation, the paper should refer again to the connections between academic capital, production, and productivity. In most cases, capital is conceived as means of tools, knowledge, and courses of action that positively effects on productivity. But capital is always expensive to accumulate, in terms of both time and financial sources. One might ask which worker is more productive: the one producing a given amount of product with more capital or the one producing the same amount of product with less capital? It is beyond question, that the second one, so, in the case of equal production, workers with less capital are more productive than those with more capital. This finding will be very important later when the assessment of the calculation methods will be taken.

The second and most commonly used calculation is when GN education is added to the production of the candidate as a surplus of academic capital (GN10 and GN20). Since most selection committees prefer candidates with GN education history, one can hypothesize that this is the most typical way of calculating the productivity or the general academic value of a candidate. Of course, the exact algorithms by which selection committee members weight the productivity of the candidates are unknown, but data show that even as little as 10% surplus per GN degrees could lead to significant differences regarding the positions of the candidates. Calculations of this kind would eventuate a ranking of applicants where GN educated candidates with less publication success could easily take the lead over GS authors with significantly more publications. As a foundational idea behind this calculation one could find the assumption that GN education is a very important academic capital, so GN experience has to be added to the publication output as a surplus, as an extra value of a given candidate's productivity. But one can easily contradict to the plausibility of this method. Suppose that GN education could be conceived as academic capital. Then, it means better training, better knowledge transmission and it also includes acquiring better familiarity with research methods, academic writing and publication habits. If GN education is a sort of advanced guarantee for research excellence, then one could assume that candidates with GN education will perform better than their GS educated peers. In this case, their GN academic capital will be expressed in their publication output; not as a surplus that should be added to their productivity indices

but as one of the causes of these attractive indices. If GN education is capital then a candidate A with 10 Scopus-indexed articles is someone who published 10 articles owing the fact, at least partly, that she has been educated in a GN institution. When selection committees add extra points to her production (expressed in the number of her articles) then they count the very same thing (her GN education) twice, which is not just unethical but deliberately unreasonable. Still, most tenure committees do the very same calculations.

The third and last calculations show favor towards candidates with GS education but not because of some fairness or GS quota, but because of the connection between capital and production. These candidates have reached given productivity in spite of the fact that they do not have GN academic capital, therefore – based on this calculation – they have to be promoted against GN educated candidates with the same productivity. The explanation here is the same that this paper has already mentioned: if two candidates have the same amount of production (in our case: the same publication output) then the candidates with less capital perform better. Even a slight weighting could rearrange the ranking of candidates: if one weights 10% / GS degree, some candidates could go up by 10 positions, and it could grow up to 22 positions with 20% / GS degree weighting. Note, that these numbers were calculated against the NORM calculation; when we compare the GN 20 ranking with the GS 20 ranking, position changes could go up to 40 places. If the fact that most selection committees use GN-favoring weighting is considered, one could realize that a more just and reasonable calculation which is GS-weighted could significantly affect if not subvert the selection process.

One could say, however, that in the case of this last calculation that favors GS education, it is no use being educated at the GN at all – which is absurd. In answer to this posing one could say, on the one hand, that since it is decidedly thought that GN education is a valid academic capital, it is also suggested that GN education would manifest itself in increased publication output if the candidates with this GN education are talented enough. Thus, GS-favored calculation will hit only those GN educated candidates that perform badly despite their extant academic capital, namely, their GN education. On the other hand, the calculations performed in this paper were related to early-career candidates. On later stages of assessment, one could calculate other factors as well, like GN/GS postdoctoral positions, research grants, fellowships or affiliations. Since one could rightfully assume that most successful candidates that apply for positions at GN institutions will have GN capital in form of GN fellowships or affiliations later in their course of a career, their GS-weighted productivity indices will be more balanced because future committees will calculate with their later-stage GN capital. Thus the GS-weighted calculation appears to be fair for early career researchers and for their senior peers, too. For early-career researchers, the calculation would balance educational inequalities by overvaluing GS education in case of a great number of publications; and, for senior scholars, these overvaluations of former GS academics will be balanced by the fact that they will get, presumably, GN capital in the form of GN research grants, fellowships, and GN affiliations.

Conclusion

Despite the assumptions held by most scholars of academic personnel selection, this current analysis has not found any general rule by which GN education necessarily raises science output of GS authors: there were no significant correlations between GN education and the number of Scopus-indexed articles. It is still presupposed, however, that GN academic experience could be considered as a form of academic capital, but this paper proposes that it should be measured on the level of the individual candidates in a form of weighted calculation of their productivity measures. Since GN education is usually considered as an extra value, as an academic surplus, selection committees usually score candidates with GN education with

extra points. This paper argued that this is a slightly unethical and unreasonable practice since it duplicates the value of GN education. First, it is considered as the extra value in itself, and second, it is incorporated in the raised publication output, too. Moreover, the overvaluation of GN education leads automatically to the undervaluation of GS education which hits most frequently those candidates from the GS. It means that, in the case of equal production, current selection system would decide on the basis of GN/GS education in favor of the GN. It is possible to argue that the underestimation of GS academics on the ground of they are educated at the GS is not less unfair than the underestimation of women or different minority groups by reason of they are who they are. If the global job market in general, and the world of the global academy, in particular, want to act as a field of merit-based work, they should chuck up their preconceptions against GS educated candidates just as they started to abandon the prejudices against women, ethnic groups and LGBTQ people. With this, the global academy might give a good example to other fields of social life like politics, economy, education and any kinds of global collaboration that are subject to international power relations.

This paper maintained the idea that GN education is valuable for GS scholars, not in itself, but because it presumably leads to research excellence that would be manifested in high publication output. Knowing this, one could assume that GN educated candidates would publish less without their GN experience, and GS educated authors would publish more with GN education. This assumption follows directly from the conception of GN education as a source of scientific capital which results in a boosted productivity. Because of the above-mentioned considerations, one can conclude that assessments with GN weighting even deepen the gap of inequality and strengthen the bias against GS educated candidates by counting GN capital twice and by adding it to science productivity. As it has been mentioned formerly, in the case of equal production, candidates with less capital (GS education) are more productive than those with more capital (GN education). Therefore, calculation practices that premiate GN education on the level of science output misunderstand the sensible connections between academic capital and productivity.

Of course, this paper does not argue that education, and especially GN education could not be regarded as a value in itself. There is a lot to say about the advantages of GN education. To name a few: students could learn international English, GN standards of research and academic communication, they could participate in GN academic networks and so on. But the question is: how could selection committees measure these values if not in terms of science output? It is not a random fact that university rankings like the Times Higher Education World University Ranking, the QS World University Ranking or the ARWU calculate with the publication output of university or department staffs (and not with their education history). In other words: while GN education could be conceived as a source of many different and important values; in order to be measurable, it should be manifested in measurable variables that is science output.

Hence, the final conclusion is that – as opposed with the most widespread practices – selection committees have better premiate GS educated candidates if they have equal publication output with their GN educated competitors since those GS educated scholars in question made the same production with less capital, so, they are more productive. Since one should not underestimate the role of GN institutions as academic capital, selection committees have good reasons to presume that the productivity of GS authors will further improve after they get a GN affiliation, because this newly gained capital will be added to their already realized productivity measures. By contrast, a similar amount of improvement could not be expected from GN educated candidates since this kind of academic capital has been already incorporated in their current productivity. This present analysis suggests, therefore, that the most rewarding investment for a GN institution is to hire GS educated candidates with very high research output.

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The South China Sea Dispute and War/Peace Journalism: A Framing Analysis of a Malaysian Newspaper

Yang Lai Fong[1] and Jenny Heng Gek Koon[2]

[1] Department of Journalism, Xiamen University Malaysia, MALAYSIA
[2] School of Media and Communication, Taylor's University, MALAYSIA

Abstract: News coverage of crises, conflicts, and wars is grounded in the notion of news value. Conflict reporting is often sensational and used as a device to boost circulation and ratings. Therefore, Norwegian Professor of Peace Studies Johan Galtung proposed peace journalism as a self-conscious working concept for journalists covering wars and conflicts. In recent years, tension has steadily increased over the South China Sea dispute. There are fears that the overlapping claims in the South China Sea will turn the region into an area of conflict, with potentially serious global consequences. This study aimed to examine the reporting of the South China Sea dispute by *The Star*, the English daily newspaper with the largest circulation in Malaysia. War/peace journalism and framing were employed as the theoretical framework, while content analysis was used as the research method to analyze the news coverage of the South China Sea dispute by *The Star* from 2014-2016. The findings showed that coverage in *The Star* was dominated by the war journalism frame but carried a neutral valence towards China. Implications of the findings to the understanding of war/peace journalism, conflict reporting, and news value studies were discussed.

Keywords: South China Sea dispute, war/peace journalism, framing, conflict reporting, crisis communication

Introduction

In recent years, tension has steadily increased over the South China Sea dispute. It involves both island and maritime claims among several sovereign states within the region. While China claims almost the entire South China Sea, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Vietnam, and Taiwan have also made claims over it. The seabed of the South China Sea contains oil, gas, minerals, and fisheries, which would bring great benefits to any country that can establish their claims to the region's waters. More importantly, the sea's key value is strategic—shipping lanes vital to about 5 trillion US dollars' worth of world trade pass through it every year (Kwan, 2018).

Address for Correspondence: Yang Lai Fong, email: nicoleyanglaifong[at]gmail.com
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China has become a major global power with its multidimensional growth ranging from economic, military, education, scientific to technological. Intellectuals from a variety of backgrounds emphasize that the rise of China will inevitably change the structure of world politics and the global economy (Bing, 2025; Li, 2016). It was also pointed out that Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea reflects China's effort to dislodge the US as the hegemonic power in the East Asian region and establish a Chinese sphere of influence instead (Cotillon, 2017; Golan & Lukito, 2015). Nevertheless, there are fears that the overlapping claims in the South China Sea will turn the region into an area of conflict, with potentially serious global consequences (Guo, Mays, & Wang, 2019).

The rise of China is especially relevant to Malaysia—China is Malaysia's biggest trading partner. Malaysia, on the other hand, is China's third-biggest trading partner in Asia and the biggest trading partner among member countries that make up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In addition, the bilateral ties between Malaysia and China have also been shaped by long historical links (tracing back to the Malacca Sultanate and China's Ming dynasty in the 15th century), geographical proximity, and demographic structure (about 25% of Malaysia's population is ethnic Chinese) (Kuik, 2016). In fact, Malaysia was the first ASEAN member to establish diplomatic relations with China in 1974, thereby subsequently setting a model relationship for the region (Bower & Nguyen, 2015). Kuik (2015) pointed out that China is the key point of reference for Malaysia's foreign policymakers. It is also important to note that bilateral relations between Malaysia and China remain on good terms despite a significant political change in May 2018, when the new government of Mahathir Mohamad announced a change in its relations with China (Hruby & Petru, 2019; Yeoh, 2019).

China's assertiveness towards its neighbors in the South China Sea has been a much-debated topic in the international media and academic literature. However, Kreuzer (2016) addressed that the vast majority of academic studies focused almost exclusively on the Sino-Vietnamese and Sino-Philippine conflicts. It is important to note that China demonstrated much more restraint towards Malaysia, and Kreuzer (2016) argued that it is due to Malaysia's approach for establishing its overall bilateral relationships with China. Specifically, the author observed that China possesses a higher level of tolerance towards its opponent in the South China Sea dispute when the opponent displays recognition and respect for China's national self-rule[1] and world order conceptions. This is because the recognition "allows the Chinese elites to portray China (and by extension themselves) as a highly respected international actor and thereby enhance their domestic legitimacy" (Kreuzer, 2016, p. 240).

In addition, scholars (e.g., Loyn, 2007; Shaw, Lynch, & Hackett, 2011; Zillich et al., 2011) recognized that a range of theoretical approaches has been developed to explain the media's role and function in conflict reporting and crisis communication. The normative approach of peace journalism postulates a media coverage that aims for the solution and de-escalation of conflicts. Peace journalism can be considered a special mode of socially responsible journalism, which aims to translate theoretical notions into practical advice for journalists.

The following sections of the paper will offer a synthesis of the literature on war and peace journalism, focusing on the connection between journalism type and journalistic framing. Considering the potential consequences of the South China Sea dispute, the bilateral relations between Malaysia and China, and the role of media in conflict reporting, this is followed by a content analysis of news articles from *The Star*, the largest circulation English daily newspaper in Malaysia. Analyzing the coverage of the South China Sea dispute between 1 January 2014

[1] National self-role conception includes three elements: a description of national mission in the world, specific notions of interstate relationships, and stability over time (Shih & Yin, 2013).

and 31 December 2016, the findings offer new insights into the dominant frames and framing approaches used by this media as well as its valence toward China in general.

War/Peace Journalism

Norwegian Professor of Peace Studies Johan Galtung proposed peace journalism as a self-conscious working concept for journalists covering wars and conflicts. The proposal of the concept was triggered by the Gulf War of 1991, and it penetrated the field of mass communication in the early 1990s. Galtung (2003) observed that traditional war journalism is modeled after sports journalism, with a focus on winning in a zero-sum game. In Galtung's vision, peace journalism approximates health journalism. A good health reporter describes a patient's battle against cancer and yet informs readers about the cancer's causes as well as the full range of cures and preventive measures. In his advocacy of peace journalism, Tehranian (2002) called it "a system of global media ethics" (p. 58),

War journalism is elite-oriented in its news sourcing practice, whereby leaders and elites are often given the privilege to define and interpret an event or issue in news stories. War journalism also focuses on here and now; it only reports about the what, who, where and when of a conflict, while neglecting the factors contributing to the problem. This mode of journalism plays up conflict as an arena where participants are grouped starkly into two opposing sides ('them vs. us'). It advocates the fate of "our side", and only exposes the untruths and perpetrators of atrocities of the "other side". Meanwhile, the lies and cover-up attempts of "our side" will be supported (Tehranian, 2002).

In addition, war journalism stressed on visible effects of war such as casualties and damage to property (Lee and Maslog, 2005). Given its strong victory orientation, war journalism disapproves of covering peace initiatives – at least as long as it was not yet clear who would win the war. At the conclusion of hostilities, war journalism turns its attention to the next "hot" conflict arena and may return if the old conflict flickers up again (Shaw, Lynch and Hackett, 2011).

In contrast, peace journalism is a broader, fairer and more accurate way of framing stories, drawing on the insights of conflict analysis and transformation (Galtung and Fischer, 2013). It is people-oriented in its news sourcing practice, whereby common people are reported as actors and sources of information in news stories. By taking an advocative and interpretative approach, peace journalists concentrate on stories that highlight peace initiatives, tone down ethnic and religious differences and prevent further conflict (Tehranian, 2002). Peace journalism also reveals the sufferings of all the parties within the conflict, while presenting the invisible effects of violence such as emotional trauma and damage to social structure (Terzis, 2002; Lynch & Galtung, 2010). In addition, it also exposes lies, cover-up attempts and culprits on all sides (Tehranian, 2002).

Lynch and McGoldrick (2007) asserted that peace journalism provides necessary context, which includes the structural and cultural processes involved in the formation and development of conflicts. This would also help to make the issue transparent to the audience. Furthermore, the authors stated that space could be created to identify all parties involved as well as their goals, needs and interests. Due to its orientation towards solutions, this mode of journalism also dedicates particular attention to post-war developments (Lee and Maslog, 2005).

Despite its popularity within peace research, the concept of peace journalism has been widely criticized by communication researchers and practitioners for attributing political and military responsibility to the media (Hanitzsch, 2004). For example, Fawcett (2002) explained that the function of journalism lies in reporting issues for public communication from a system-

theoretical perspective. Therefore, journalism cannot fulfil the roles of other public systems, such as politics, law or the military, to engage in the peaceful settlement of a conflict.

Lynch and McGoldrick (2007) defined peace journalism as an approach undertaken by editors and reporters in making choices about what to report and how to report in order to encourage non-violent responses to conflicts. However, scholars (e.g. Iggers, 1998; Loyn, 2007) criticized that it is against journalistic principle of objectivity because it expects self-conscious intervention by journalists.

Wolfsfeld (1997) also pointed out the structural incompatibility between the needs of a peace process and journalistic imperatives. It was mentioned that many of the significant developments within a peace process take place in closed doors, which consequently exclude journalists who demand for information. The author also argued that a peace process is complicated, however, journalists demand simplicity for news presentation purpose. Furthermore, most of the peace processes are marked by dull and tedious negotiations, whereas journalists require drama and conflict to enhance the news value of their stories.

In addition, Hanitzsch (2007) also argued that the peace journalism advocates underestimated the material conditions for modern news reporting and overestimated the possibilities for journalists to contextualize their stories. The author found that a complex model like Galtung's is not suitable for the highly standardized narrative schemes of modern news production.

Scholars (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2007; Seow and Maslog, 2005) found that war/peace journalism is supported theoretically by the framing theory. Entman (1993, p. 52) defined framing as the process "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described". In addition, Lynch and McGoldrick (2007, p. 258) stated that framing refers to the "construct of a communication – its language, visual and messengers – and the way it signals to the listener or observer how to interpret and classify new information". It was also mentioned that framing means "how messages are encoded with meaning so that they can be efficiently interpreted in relationship to existing beliefs or ideas" (p. 258).

Manheim (1994) mentioned that news framing analyses usually cover three aspects: visibility, valence and frame genres. Visibility refers to both the amount of coverage and the prominence level of an event/issue or a nation receives in the news coverage. Prominence is usually demonstrated by certain typical elements such as the article's placement in the newspaper or web sites, the headline, the visual tools associating with the text, the mention on the evening television news etc. Valence or slant is the tone of a news story or comment regarding certain frames. It is believed to have the potential to generate behavioural effects. By indicating discourse valuations or carrying positive and/or negative elements, valenced news frames present the extent to which the coverage reflects favourably or unfavourably on the event/issue. Entman (2007) also stressed that agenda setting, priming and framing fit together as tools of power, and he connected them to explicit definitions of news slant and bias.

Reviewing the literature on frames and framing, Carter (2013) asserted that one aspect to how the media construct reality concerns the distortion of events. This is because reporting of events requires interpretation, and interpretation can lead to misrepresentations of reality due to subjective opinions of the witnesses or sources. In addition, the author emphasized that time or immediacy is also an important aspect to understanding how news media construct reality. Media outlets work in a temporal setting in which deadlines are common. Therefore, the types of stories and the way in which they are presented are dependent on the readiness of sources, reporters, editors and others to produce stories. Carter (2013) also stressed that social construction of reality deals with media and historical context. Due to time constraints, space limitations and other institutionalized boundaries specific to media, events cannot always be

contextualized sequentially. Therefore, stories are framed apart from their whole, making certain aspects more salient than others.

Similarly, many scholars (e.g. De Vreese, 2014; Holton, Lee & Coleman, 2014; Kim, 2015) have discussed the issue of "episodic framing" as compared to "thematic framing". "Episodic" frames focus on individual cases and encourage an audience to make internal attributions for events (Iyengar, 1996, p. 62). On the contrary, "thematic" frames focus more on broader social issues, such as social, political, and economic forces; these frames encourage viewers to make external attributions (Iyengar, 1996, p. 62). Furthermore, episodic framing describes concrete events that illustrates issues, while thematic framing presents collective or general evidence.

The concept of "focuses on here and now" in war journalism fits into the notion of episodic framing because it only reports about the what, who, where and when of an event. It does not report on the factors contributing to the conflict nor the consequences of it. In contrast, peace journalism emphasizes on "reporting causes and consequences", in which news reports about the factors contributing to the conflict as well as the consequences of it, and the idea is consistent with "thematic framing".

Specifically, this study asked the following questions:

RQ1: What was the visibility of the South China Sea dispute in *The Star's* coverage?

RQ2: What was the dominant frame – war or peace journalism – in *The Star's* coverage on the South China Sea dispute?

RQ3: What were the salient indicators supporting the war/peace journalism frame in *The Star's* coverage on the South China Sea dispute?

RQ4: What was the valence towards China in *The Star's* coverage on the South China Sea dispute?

Research Method

This study was based on a content analysis of news articles from *The Star*, the English daily newspaper with the largest circulation in Malaysia. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations Malaysia, the 2018 average daily circulation of *The Star* was 175,986 (www.abcm.org.my). *The Star* has a national circulation, albeit predominantly within Peninsular Malaysia (Selva, 2018).

Sampling and Coding Procedure

The study investigated the coverage of the South China Sea dispute over three years, that is, from 1 January 2014 to 31 December 2016. There were several important events that took place during this timeframe. The year 2014 was designated as "Malaysia-China Friendship Year" to commemorate the 40th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Nonetheless, diplomatic ties between the two countries were tested in 2015 when the Chinese ambassador to Malaysia visited China Town in the capital Kuala Lumpur before a pro-Malay rally, and warned that Beijing would not fear voicing out against incidents which threaten the interests of China (Sipalan, 1 June 2016). In 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA),

an arbitral tribunal under the United Nations ruled against China, mentioning that China has no historic title over the waters of the South China Sea. Specifically, the PCA ruled that the 1982 UNCLOS supersedes China's nine-dash line (*The Star*, 12 July 2016b).

The articles were collected from *The Star's* library, where they were kept as digital archive and could be accessed by indicating the search term. This study used "South China Sea" as the search term because it is predominantly used in Malaysia as well as other Southeast Asia's regional English-language newspapers – with the exception of Vietnam's and Philippine's press, where "East Sea" and "West Philippine Sea" is preferred by the respective countries (Freeman, 2017). The sample consisted of 384 articles derived from *The Star*'s library online database. The unit of analysis was the article, which included straight news, editorial, opinion columns and letters to the editors.

As mentioned earlier, visibility of coverage refers to the amount of coverage and the prominence level that an event/issue or a nation receives in the news coverage. For the current study, visibility was investigated from two angles: 1) number of news articles, and 2) types of news articles. In addition, this study adopted and modified the war/peace journalism classification suggested by Galtung (1998). This study established eight indicators for each war and peace journalism frame as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Coding Categories for Frames

War Journalism	Peace Journalism
1. Elite-oriented – Focuses on leaders and elites as actors and sources of information.	**1. People-oriented** – Focuses on the common people as actors and sources of information.
2. Differences-oriented – Reports on areas of differences that might lead to the worsening of the conflict.	**2. Reports areas of agreement** – Reports on areas that might lead to a solution to the conflict.
3. Focuses on here and now – Does not report on the factors contributing to the conflict nor the consequences of it. Only reports about the what, who, where and when of an event.	**3. Reports causes and consequences** – Reports on the factors contributing to the conflict as well as the consequences of it.
4. Dichotomizes the good and the bad – Points finger at other quarters as parties responsible for the issue.	**4. Avoids labeling of good guys and bad guys** – Does not point finger at other quarters as parties responsible for the issue.
5. Two-party orientation – One party wins, one party loses.	**5. Multiparty orientation** – Gives voice to the various parties involved in the conflict.
6. Partisan – Biased towards one side in the conflict.	**6. Nonpartisan** – Neutral and not taking sides.
7. Zero-sum orientation	**7. Win-win orientation**

– One goal: to win.	– Many goals and issues; solution-oriented.
8. Uses victimizing/ demonizing/ emotive language	**8. Avoids victimizing/ demonizing/ emotive language**
– Reports what has been done to the people or the environment. Some examples include engendered fear for the rest of the world; eroded trust and confidence; increased regional tension; China criticized the Philippines as "cute little submissive"; exploited natural resources and fish in the sea; permanent loss of coral reef areas in human history; etc.	– Reports what has been done and could be done by the people, and how they are coping.
– Uses language to paint the enemy's image as wicked or threatening. Some examples include bullying; hostility; dangerous; reckless; antagonize; show off; troublemaker; aggressiveness; deliberate blatant provocation; flexing its muscle; undermining peace; security and stability; acting outside of global norms; violations of rights; unabashed nationalism; China liken to Nazi Germany; etc.	– Uses more precise descriptions, titles or names that the people give themselves.
– Uses language to evoke readers' negative emotional reaction towards the enemy. Some examples include unhappiness; outraged; bitter maritime dispute; ugly territorial spat; etc.	– Reserves strongest language only for the gravest situation; does not exaggerate.

Valence of the articles refers to the attitude expressed towards any individual, group, party or institution by its author (Baumgartner and Wirth, 2012). This study used the categories of supportive, critical and neutral for the analysis of attitude expressed towards China in regard to its stance in the South China Sea dispute:

1. Supportive – conveyed a positive or favorable impression towards China's claims, arguments, policy, actions, etc. on the South China Sea dispute.

2. Critical – conveyed a negative or unfavorable impression towards China's claims, arguments, policy, actions, etc. on the South China Sea dispute.

3. Neutral – neither favorably nor unfavorably portrayed China's claims, arguments, policy, actions, etc.

Data Analysis and Inter-Coder Reliability

The 384 articles collected from *The Star*'s were analyzed by the first author using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentage. To ensure the reliability of this study, the second author was also trained as the second coder. During the training session, the first author (who was also the first coder) and the second coder coded 50 articles that were chosen randomly from the sample of this study. Disagreements were analyzed and some additional explanations were included to the coding instruction in the code book.

The inter-coder reliability for this study was established by randomly selecting 10% of the news items, which was equivalent to 38 articles. Using Holsti's formula (cited in Wimmer & Dominick, 2006), it was found that the inter-coder reliability for number of articles ad types of articles was 1.0. In addition, news frames scored 0.95 for inter-coder reliability, while salient indicators for war/peace journalism was recorded as 0.92, and valence obtained 0.99 as inter-coder reliability.

Results

Intensity of Coverage

This study collected 384 news articles published within three years (2014-2016). Table 2 shows the breakdown of the number of articles for each year. *The Star* published the greatest number of articles on the South China Sea dispute in 2016, which amounted to 52.60% of the sample size. This was most probably because in 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), an arbitral tribunal under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), issued its ruling on the arbitration case filed by the then Philippines President Benigno Aquino (*The Star*, 12 July 2016a).

In 2013, the then President Aquino of the Philippines brought the case before the tribunal to dispute China's claim of "indisputable sovereignty" over almost the entire South China Sea through its "nine-dash line" claim (*The Star*, 12 July 2016a). On July 12, 2016, the PCA in The Hague, Netherlands finally ruled that the 1982 UNCLOS supersedes China's "nine-dash line". Therefore, this judgement means that China has interfered with the fishing rights of the Philippines. However, China denounced the tribunal ruling as "null and void and has no binding force" (*The Star*, 12 July 2016b).

Table 2: Number of Articles Covering the South China Sea Dispute

Year	Number of News Articles	Percentage
2014	89	23.18
2015	93	24.22
2016	202	52.60
Total	**384**	**100.00**

As demonstrated in Table 3, most articles were published in the form of straight news (83.46%), followed by opinion columns (15.77%), editorials (0.38%) and letters to the editors (0.38%).

Table 3: Types of Articles Covering the South China Sea Dispute (in percentage)

Type of Articles	**Percentage (*n* = 384)**
Straight news	86.72
Opinion Columns	12.76
Editorials	0.26
Letters to the editors	0.26

War Journalism as the Salient Frame

The findings of this study reflected that the indicators of war journalism ($n = 1216$) were almost 40% more than the indicators of peace journalism ($n = 733$) in *The Star*'s coverage of the South China Sea dispute. Most of the news articles reflected more than one indicator of war journalism (see Table 4). The three strongest indicators of war journalism were elite-oriented (20.72%), differences-oriented (16.53%) and focuses on here and now (15.13%).

Table 4: Indicators of War Journalism in Covering the South China Sea Dispute (in percentage)

Indicators of War Journalism	**Percentage (*n* = 1216)**
Elite-oriented	20.72
Differences-oriented	16.53
Focuses on here and now	15.13
Dichotomizes the good and bad	12.01
Two-party orientation	7.40
Partisan	12.83
Zero-sum orientation	7.24
Uses victimizing/demonizing/emotive language	8.14

The news sourcing practice was elite-oriented as the frequently cited news sources were the Chinese President, the Chinese Premier, Chinese foreign affairs, defense or military officials, the US President, US foreign affairs, defense or military officials, the Malaysian Prime Minister, foreign affairs or defense officials, experts and professionals in politics and officials from other countries.

In its differences-oriented coverage (16.53%), *The Star* reported that President Aquino, then president of the Philippines, warned that China's efforts to claim disputed territories were like Nazi Germany's actions before the World War II, drawing a fierce Chinese response

branding him ignorant and amateurish (*The Star*, 6 February 2014). In January 2016, Vietnam accused China of threatening peace after more Chinese aircraft landed on a contested reef in the South China Sea (*The Star*, 9 January 2016). In addition, the US has called for an immediate end to China's intensifying reclamation works in the South China Sea and has vowed to keep sending military aircrafts and ships to the region. The then US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter was reported as accusing China to be threatening freedom of navigation while saying that "turning an underwater rock into an airfield simply does not afford the rights of sovereignty [for China] or permit restrictions on international air or maritime transit… There should be no mistake: the United States will fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows, as US forces do all around the world" (*The Star*, 31 May 2015a).

In response, China warned that Washington's actions will only make the region less stable. *The Star* reported that the Chinese Ambassador to US Cui Tiankai alerted that the US overreaction to China's moves in the South China Sea is escalating the situation and will make the region less stable (*The Star*, 31 May 2015b). Furthermore, *The Star* also reported that China would pressure Washington over maritime issues during the annual Strategic and Economic Dialogue as the United States' increasing military presence in the South China Sea is among China's major concerns (*The Star*, 1 June 2016). Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi was also quoted as arguing that Beijing's control over the disputed water was justified because China was the first to discover the Sea (The Star, 9 March 2016).

It is also noteworthy that *The Star* published a column article, which was written by the then China Ambassador to Malaysia, Huang Huikang in June 2016. In the article, Huang called for the South China Sea dispute be solved through negotiation and consultation by parties directly concerned. He regretted that the approach of non-conflicting and friendly consultation has been overshadowed by "noise and chaos". He also mentioned that

> As China's close neighbors, Malaysia and the Philippines have enjoyed traditional friendship with China. Both were the first countries to established diplomatic relations with China among ASEAN states. However, while the Malaysia-China relationship is at its best in history and on the path to a new era of Diamond 40 Years, the Philippines-China relationship is experiencing severe difficulties. The reason behind such a striking contrast lies in the different ways the two claimants chose to deal with the dispute with China. While Malaysia has consistently been committed to maintaining friendly relationship, properly handling dispute, strengthening cooperation and enhancing comprehensive strategic partnership with China, the Philippines President Benigno Aquino III, on the contrary, misjudged the international situation, acted as a pawn of an outsider's geopolitical strategy, and chose to confront China (*The Star*, 13 June 2016).

The Star also reported that ASEAN had criticized China's actions in the South China Sea maritime dispute, with the regional body adopting its strongest terms yet in expressing its unhappiness in the 48th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting Joint Communique. The joint statement said land reclamation activities being carried out in the disputed area could undermine the peace, security and stability in the area (*The Star*, 7 August 2015). Nonetheless, *The Star* reported in 2016 that the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting faced a deadlock as Cambodia had refused to form a consensus in fear of China. Although Indonesia insisted that ASEAN should continue to push for the issuance of a statement on the South China Sea acceptable to all of its member states, Cambodia blocked the statement on how to counter China's territorial expansion in the region. It was also reported that Cambodia did not want China to be criticized, while a diplomat who attended the closed-door meetings was quoted by the Associated Press

as describing Cambodia as "a loyalist of the big country C", referring to China (*The Star*, 25 July 2016).

Through focuses on here and now (15.13%), *The Star* reported that Japanese education chiefs instructed schools to teach children that islands at the center of dispute with China and South Korea respectively belong unequivocally to Tokyo. A revised teachers' manual for junior and senior high schools describes both Takeshima and Senkaku islands as integral parts of Japanese territories (*The Star*, 29 January 2014). Furthermore, *The Star* reported that China's use of dredged sand and corals to build artificial islands on seven reefs has done severe harm to one of the most important coral reef systems in South-East Asia (*The Star*, 27 June 2015). These two news stories were reported as episodic events, whereby no historical references were provided to help the readers to understand better about the context of the South China Sea conflict.

Peace Journalism

The top three strongest indicators of peace journalism found in *The Star*'s coverage of the South China Sea dispute were avoids; victimizing/demonizing/emotive language (20.87%), multiparty orientation (15.83%), and avoids labeling of good guys and bad guys (14.73%).

Table 5: Indicators of Peace Journalism in Covering the South China Sea Dispute (in percentage)

Indicators of Peace Journalism	**Percentage (*n* = 733)**
People-oriented	0.82
Reports the areas of agreement	10.64
Reports causes and consequences	9.96
Avoids labeling of good guys and bad guys	14.73
Multiparty orientation	15.83
Nonpartisan	13.64
Win-win orientation	13.51
Avoids victimizing/demonizing/emotive language	20.87

Through avoiding victimizing/ demonizing /emotive language (20.87%), *The Star* reported that the then Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman mentioned that ASEAN would not be confrontational in dealing with China on the South China Sea territorial claims and will continue to explore every avenue to find a solution that will benefit all parties (*The Star*, 27 April 2016). *The Star* also reported that Malaysia's non-confrontational approach towards China demonstrated Kuala Lumpur's own faith in championing China's "peaceful rise" and was needed to reassure other ASEAN states that China's future behavior could be shaped. For Malaysia, it was far better to welcome China as a full participant in ASEAN-led forums to "socialize" the rising power than to prematurely pursue a counter-productive policy of

diplomatic isolation. It was also reported that Kuala Lumpur's approach has met with some success. China has emerged as Malaysia's largest trade partner, even if some elements of both economies such as export-manufacturing in the electronics sectors are in competition as well as complementary (*The Star*, 2 February 2014).

Furthermore, *The Star* also reported that Beijing would not sit by and let the South China Sea issue descend into chaos. Chinese Admiral Sun Jianguo said he believed that parties involved in the dispute have wisdom and patience – like China – in charting a path of peaceful negotiation. He also stressed that the world is undergoing historic changes as never before and the Asia-Pacific countries share good times and bad times together (The Star, 2 June 2016).

Through its multiparty orientation (15.83%) coverage, *The Star* reported that the then Malaysian Defense Minister Hishammuddin Hussein stated that ASEAN must prioritize the security of its region in its entirety and not merely think along sovereign lines. He added that ASEAN must stand united on several key defense issues and not be pulled in different directions. In addition, he asserted that ASEAN nations need to establish clear communication channels and intensify policymaking as a group. Nonetheless, Hishammuddin pointed out that it was unnecessary to adopt a one-size-fits-all defense policy for ASEAN. Instead, they should work together towards establishing a common policy position on important issues such as maritime security and ASEAN relations with major world powers (*The Star*, 1 June 2014).

In 2016, *The Star* reported that China and ASEAN have agreed to explore Singapore's proposal of an expanded Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (Cues) that includes coast guard ships to prevent untoward clashes in the South China Sea. It was also reported that the Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan stated that Singapore was not a claimant of the Sea, and hence it allows the country to play a neutral role in peace negotiation. It was added that Singapore did not want to make any judgement as to the merits of competing arguments but to promote peace and stability in the region. Singapore aimed to focus on peaceful resolution of differences or conflicts, and to be an honest broker (*The Star*, 3 March 2016).

It was also reported that Vietnam Deputy Minister of National Defense, Nguyen Chi Vinh, said his country warmly welcome Chinese warships to visit one of its harbors and was ready to boost cooperation between the two countries' coast guards. Nguyen also mentioned that Chinese vessels were welcome to conduct joint drills with the Vietnamese Navy in humanitarian relief and maritime search and rescue programs. The Star reported that experts said the move would improve interaction for regional security and help ease tensions (*The Star*, 5 June 2016).

In its coverage that avoided the labeling of good guys and bad guys (14.73%), *The Star* reported that Professor Dr David Arase from the John Hopkins University-Nanjing University-Centre for Chinese and American Studies said that Malaysia can play a role in easing regional tensions in the South China Sea dispute. In an interview with *The Star*, Professor Arase stated that nobody wanted war, and hence to minimize the risk, as the 2015 chairman of ASEAN, Malaysia should negotiate for a maritime code of conduct (COC) agreement with China (*The Star*, 22 June 2014). In addition, *The Star* also reported that the then Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah stressed that ASEAN and China have stood together through challenging times. He also emphasized that ASEAN's and China's fates were inextricably intertwined and that prosperity for one was prosperity for the other (*The Star*, 23 April 2015). In 2016, after the tribunal ruling, *The Star* reported that the Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte's administration hoped to quickly begin direct talks with China following the verdict. It was hoped that the negotiation would cover the joint exploitation of the natural gas reserves and fishing grounds within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (*The Star*, 9 July 2016).

Valence

In its reporting on the South China Sea dispute between 2014-2016, 42.97% of the coverage by *The Star* carried a neutral valence towards China. Nonetheless, the coverage that portrayed a critical valence (35.42%) towards China was more than that of the supportive valence (21.61%).

Table 6: Valence of Articles Covering the South China Sea Dispute (in percentage)

Valence of Articles	**Percentage (*n* = 384)**
Supportive towards China	21.61
Critical towards China	35.42
Neutral	42.97

Discussion

Drawing upon War/Peace Journalism and framing theory, this study examined the reporting of the South China Sea dispute by *The Star*, a national English-language daily newspaper with the largest circulation in Malaysia. First, the study examined visibility of the South China Sea dispute in *The Star's* coverage, where it was investigated from two angles: 1) number of news articles, and 2) types of news articles. The number of articles increased gradually from 2014 to 2015, but it raised more than double from 2015 to 2016. This was most probably because in 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), an arbitral tribunal under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), issued its ruling on the arbitration case filed by the then Philippines President Benigno Aquino against China's nine-dash line claim.

Another element of visibility—type of articles—plays an important role too in shaping readers' awareness, perception, and evaluation of an issue. It may even have an effect on governments policies (Zhang, 2019). This is because straight news articles give facts or quote references on general information like who, what, when, where, why, and how, which Palvik and McIntosh (2004) called the "surveillance function of journalism." On the other hand, editorials are opinion pieces that often identify, define, articulate, and address current events or public controversies. Written by members of the editorial board, editorials reflect the stance of the respective newspapers. Palvik and McIntosh (2004) called this type of journalism function "correlation." While editorials reflect the newspaper's official stance on issues, opinion columns are written by members of the editorial staff and typically reflect a more personal point of view than the editorials. Other than these, newspaper opinion pages like letters to the editors provide a ready-made public forum for readers to share information. By devoting most of their coverage to straight news, *The Star* mostly performed surveillance instead of the correlation function.

Furthermore, this study found that *The Star* presented the South China Sea dispute mostly in war journalism framework, which is through "focuses on here and now." This revealed that the episodic framing approach was most frequently used, and little contextualization was offered. Van Dijk (2013) remarked that when straight news dominated the coverage, it left little room for the creativeness of journalists, resulting in a top-down communication format, and this is consistent with the fact that *The Star* relied mostly on elites as its news sources in its straight news reporting.

Second, this study looked at the dominant frame in *The Star's* coverage of the South China Sea dispute. As mentioned in the findings, this study found that the indicators of war journalism were almost 40% more than the indicators of peace journalism. This finding is comparable to previous studies on war and peace journalism, such as Lee and Maslog (2005), who found that the coverage of four Asian conflicts was dominated by war journalism. Siraj (2008) also stated that US elite newspapers employed war journalism frames in their coverage of Pakistan-India conflict. Furthermore, Wolfsfeld (2004) argued that the default mode of operation for the press is to cover tension, conflict, and violence. Shinar (2004) also recorded that the media preferred to use war frames even while covering peace negotiation. Similarly, Fawcett (2002) mentioned that the Irish media found conflict frames more attractive than conciliation frames.

Third, this study investigated the salient indicators supporting the war/peace journalism frame in *The Star's* coverage on the South China Sea dispute. This study found that the three strongest indicators of war journalism were "elite-oriented," "differences-oriented," and "focuses on here and now." Previous studies confirmed that sources from the government tended to dominate news coverage of wars or conflicts. For example, Ibrahim et al. (2011) found that an official spokesperson was usually quoted by Malaysian journalists in war reporting. It was explained that news media favor sources who occupy places highest in the hierarchy as they are deemed more credible by journalists. In addition, Curran (2005) pointed out that the convention of quoting elite sources can lead to an emphasis on the elite or established point of view at the expense of more diverse viewpoints. In addition, Melkote (2009) stressed that the use of sources in news narratives is an extremely important part of not only the story's construction but also of its orientation and, ultimately, the point of view being supported or legitimated in a story. Ross (2007, p. 451) even argued that "if news reports are based on a selective articulation of certain voices about a given topic, then the journalist's power in inviting (or preventing) these voices is considerable."

In their study on news sources used in war reporting, Ibrahim et al. (2011) reminded that one way to provide objective and balanced news is by using balanced facts provided by multilevel sources. The use of multilevel sources enables journalists to assemble various opinions from a multiplicity of perspectives in a single story. Gans (cited in Ibrahim et al., 2011) identified two types of news sources—the knowns and the unknowns. The knowns are the elites and official sources, namely heads of government, ministers and deputy ministers; official spokespersons, usually the public relations practitioners; leaders of NGOs; experts; celebrities and the like. While the unknowns are not persons at the higher hierarchy, but rather ordinary people or non-elites who become relevant sources because of their connections with certain news events as eyewitnesses, victims, and families of victims. It was stated that news sources quoted by the media are primarily those at or near the top of the power hierarchies and on those low in the hierarchies who threaten the top.

According to Francis (2002), when editors and reporters inform readers and audiences about "who, what, when, where, why and how" relating to conflicts or wars, the media practitioners are also corresponding to what peace researchers called "conflict dynamics" (p. 28). The author emphasized that any statement of the dynamics of a conflict must identify "its history, recent causes, and internal composition—the different parties, the nature of their involvement, their perspectives, positions and motivations, and the different relationships between them in terms of power, allegiance and interests" (p. 28). The three strongest indicators of peace journalism found in *The Star*'s coverage of the South China Sea dispute were "avoids victimizing/demonizing/emotive language," "multiparty orientation" and "avoids labeling of good guys and bad guys," while "reports causes and consequences" was the weakest indicator. This is an area the newspaper could look into and improve in its future reporting of the dispute.

Significantly, Rodrigues (2014) observes that peace journalism is when editors and reporters make choices—of what stories to report and about how to report them—that create opportunities at large to consider and value nonviolent responses to conflicts. It was stressed that peace journalism should use the insights of conflict analysis and transformation to update the concepts of balance, fairness, and accuracy in reporting. Editors and reporters should also provide a new route map tracing the connections between media practitioners, their sources, the news stories and the consequences of their journalism, which Lynch and McGoldrick (2007, p. 256) called the "ethics of journalistic intervention."

Fourth, this study examined the valence towards China in *The Star's* coverage on the South China Sea dispute. A closer examination of war journalism coverage in *The Star* revealed that the framing of the South China Sea dispute was mostly dominated by a neutral valence towards China. Given the fact that China has emerged as the largest trade partner of Malaysia since 2009, while Malaysia is the largest trade partner to China among ASEAN countries, it is only natural that *The Star* devoted more coverage that undertook a neutral valence towards China. In addition, these findings are consistent with previous studies, in which scholars (Balakrishnan, 2006; Chinvanno, 2015; Finkbeiner, 2013; Lim 2009, Liu & Lim, 2019) remarked that Malaysia has been adopting a "playing it safe" approach in the South China Sea dispute. This means that Malaysia is pursuing a combination of diplomatic, legal, economic, and security initiatives that can secure its interests as a claimant state while being careful not to disrupt its vital bilateral relationship with China. Kreuzer (2016) succinctly pointed out that the fundamental aim of such a bilateral relation between Malaysia and China is to achieve a reciprocal relationship resulting in long-term stability. Significantly, scholars (e.g., Johnston, 2013; Li & Guo, 2018) also argued that China, preoccupied with upholding stable relationships and minimizing future uncertainty, is willing to make compromises even with weaker opponents and to negotiate short-term interests for the sake of long-term benefits.

This study also found that Malaysian officials often highlighted to other ASEAN nations that there is no need to undertake a confrontational approach in dealing with the South China Sea dispute. It is interesting to note that in 2013, the then Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia, Chai Xi, proclaimed that "Sino-Malaysia relations have embarked on a track of comprehensive, steady and fast development in recent years," and that the bilateral relationship was a "role model for other ASEAN countries" The latter sentiment was repeated by Chinese President Xi Jinping when he visited Malaysia in the same year. During his meeting with the then Malaysian Prime Minister Najib, President Xi stated that the Sino-Malaysia relationship served as "a fine example in the region" (Lee, 2014, p. 67).

In his study to compare Malaysian and Philippine response to China in the South China Sea dispute, Kreuzer (2016) recorded the differences of media coverage in both countries. The author found that the Malaysian strategy of toning down the South China Sea dispute rested on withholding information. In sharp contrast, the Philippine government was giving uttermost publicity to acts of Chinese assertiveness. In addition, it was found that the restraint undertaken by the Malaysian media is inconceivable in the Philippines, where the conflict was widely reported and commented on. The author further explained that regime type might play a certain role in determining the options open to government, with non- or semi-democratic regimes having a higher ability to spin-doctor information.

Conclusion and Suggestion for Future Studies

This study extended war/peace journalism to an international scope while combining the approach with framing theory. In addition to the specific findings for South China Sea dispute, this study contributed to bilateral and power relations literature between Malaysia and China.

A detailed analysis of *The Star* revealed that the coverage of the South China Sea dispute was dominated by a war journalism frame. The top three strongest indicators of war journalism found in *The Star*'s coverage were "elite-oriented," "differences-oriented" and "focuses on here and now." It was also found that episodic framing approach was most frequently used, and little contextualization was offered by *The Star*.

In addition, the top three strongest indicators of peace journalism were "avoids victimizing/demonizing/emotive language," "multiparty orientation," and "avoids labeling of good guys and bad guys." A closer examination of *The Star* revealed that the framing of the South China Sea dispute was mostly dominated by a neutral valence towards China. It revealed that Malaysia is being careful not to disrupt its vital bilateral relationship with China. The English-language daily also reported about Kuala Lumpur's faith in championing China's peaceful rise. Significantly, this study also found that Malaysian officials often highlighted to other ASEAN nations that there is no need to undertake a confrontational approach in dealing with the South China Sea dispute, while Chinese officials stated that the Sino-Malaysia relationship served as an example in the region.

This paper suggests some important questions to be investigated by means of further research, specifically those that are focusing on war/peace framing, conflict reporting, and news value studies.

First, a micro-level analysis that deals with journalists as individuals should be conducted. It is essential to discover the professional views of journalists, especially those who write about crises, conflicts or wars. Future studies could look into journalists' perception of their role in modern society and how they define their communication goals. In addition, future studies could also examine how journalists deal with the structural constraints under which they have to operate.

Second, a meso-level analysis, which investigates journalism as a process of organized news production, should be carried out. Researchers may look into how the structures of editorial work, such as decision-making hierarchy and quality control, influence war/peace framing or conflicts reporting. It is also important to examine how the availability of resources (staff, time, budget, etc.) affect crises, conflicts or wars reporting.

Third, a macro-level analysis, which examines the social function of journalism and the interrelation between journalism and its environment, future studies need to investigate the role of war/peace journalism and its functional contribution to modern society from a non-normative perspective. On this level of analysis, researchers ought to look deeper into the interplay between journalism and other public systems, for example, economy, military, or politics.

Finally, a public opinion survey, which studies how, why, and to what extent does war/peace journalism have an impact on the audience should be carried out. On the one hand, Carter (2013) argued that propaganda is an exercise in framing, which is intended to bring about short-term shifts in public opinion. On another hand, Choi, Watt, and Lynch (2006) believed that media only reinforce existing attitude. Therefore, it is essential for future studies to look into how do media frame influence individual's perception? And how do audiences react to competing frames?

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A case study in news articles, users comments and a Facebook group for Article 3 of the Greek Constitution

Minos-Athanasios Karyotakis[1], **Nikos Antonopoulos**[2], **Theodora Saridou**[3]

[1]School of Communication, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong, HONG KONG
[2]Department of Digital Media and Communication, Ionian University, Kefalonia, GREECE
[3]School of Journalism and Mass Communications, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, GREECE

Abstract: This study is concerned with Article 3 of the Greek Constitution and the relations between the State and the Church in Greece. The scientific views expressed regarding the Third Article of the Constitution were examined with emphasis on the public debate that developed around the interpretation of the terms 'prevailing religion' and 'holy canons'. Moreover, the results of two studies carried out are presented in order to approach the issue from a journalistic perspective. The first research was conducted on websites to see how media are contributing to the debate on what Article 3 stipulates. The second research looked at how citizens directly related to journalism and communication perceive the stipulations of this Article. The results revealed how Article 3 of the Constitution is in question in its current form and how, in the future, it could be fairer to all Greek citizens via an open and multidimensional dialogue.

Keywords: Constitution, Church-State relations, online journalism, Greece

Introduction

The relations between the State and the Church in Greece have monopolized the public discourse from time to time. Historical, social, and political factors have created a multifaceted debate, which, throughout the years, has provoked conflicts between the Greek State and the Church. From a legal point of view, as Papageorgiou (2013) points out, few branches of law, historical experience, emotional ties, and people's basic beliefs are imprinted with so much zeal and influence as in ecclesiastical law. Scientific approaches have been

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Address for Correspondence: Minos-Athanasios Karyotakis, email: minosathkar[at]yahoo.gr
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formulated for centuries by focusing on the interpretation of the first paragraph of Article 3 of the Greek Constitution, resulting in the cultivation of lively dialogue. Clearly, the study of the ideas that have been supported for the relations of the State and the Church in Greece lies within the purpose of this paper. However, it was considered worthy of researching the way online media approach the debate on Article 3, given the key role media play in the public sphere. It is believed that the main purpose of media is to serve the public interest, which is often attributed to the designation of the fourth power. Journalists are engaged in the collection and dissemination of information to the public, and their role in society is directly related to the emergence of topicality and, on the other hand, the problems faced by society. In addition, it was considered important to study the Greek public's discussion on Article 3 of the Greek Constitution. Thus, the current study also collected comments from Greek citizens via a questionnaire.

With regard to the Internet, recent technological developments have led to the expansion of communication network boundaries and information flow, notably through services that websites provide to their users. These technological developments have caused the emergence of the term 'network society'. Castells (2004) argues that the so-called 'network society' is nothing more than a new social structure, made up of networks of Information and Communication Technologies. At the same time, there has been a change in the forms of information due to new methods of communication between citizens-users, who can even contribute to content development. In fact, in some cases citizens became journalists and covered several incidents. This was thought to be a solution to the problem of declining reliability of journalistic coverage (Carr et al., 2014). This development is indissolubly linked to social media, where the produced content (e.g., articles, videos, photographs, etc.) is being created rapidly (Westerman et al., 2014). Moreover, the interaction that social media offers to the public has led to a new, more dynamic relationship with journalists and, thus, it is believed that these new social platforms tend to represent public opinion (Anstead & O'Loughlin, 2014).

In fact, the advent of digital media has shown that the world is made up of heterogeneous information flows. Moreover, mass media can over-emphasize or limit some issues from the public debate, although the relationship of their content with the public is not unique or one-way. For example, policy-makers can disseminate information to the medium spectrum in order to predict how the public responds and how policies need to be shaped to become more effective. Additionally, policy-makers can also predict how their words will be reproduced in different media (Happer & Philo, 2013).

Thus, the first priority of this study was to find if the most prominent news websites in Greece gave in-depth coverage to the importance of Article 3 of the Greek Constitution and its meaning for the separation between the Church and the State. In the meantime, the participation in the comments section of the examined news articles was taken into consideration, as the users who comment on news stories seem to be more active on social media platforms and more interested in hard news content (Kalogeropoulos, 2017). Lastly, in order to approach the public dialogue on the relations between the State and the Church, students and graduates of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki were asked to answer an online questionnaire and reveal their views on the above-mentioned topic.

Church in the Public Sphere and the Greek Case

Before the eighteenth-century, religion was one of the main factors that provoked turmoil amongst communities. This tendency changed after the expansion of the European states and the emergence of states in the Western world. Religion lost its importance and seemed to no longer be an important ideological factor for provoking tensions between different populations until the twenty-first century. At this time, religious bodies across the globe started once again to have a say in politics (Haynes, 2009).

According to Mudrov (2017), Christian Churches have an important role in European integration. Mudrov identified the areas of high, middle, and low influence of Churches in the European Union (hereafter the EU). Therefore, the region with great influence includes Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Romania, Italy, Croatia, and Poland. Middle countries are Germany, Spain, Finland, Ireland, Slovenia, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Hungary. Finally, those with low influence are the following: Estonia, the Czech Republic, France, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Latvia, and the Netherlands. Only countries with a homogenous Catholic or Orthodox population are in the high influence area. The Catholic countries are in all three groups, highlighting that the extent of Church influence at the national level does not depend only on the religious parameter. The influence of the Churches in the public sphere is manifested by their degree of participation in European integration. None of the dominant EU Churches is far from the above process. As a result, there is the possibility of intensified interaction with national governments. The influence of the Church varies according to its historical and religious influence. The more supporters it has, the more it can contribute—either positively or negatively—to solving specific issues. Moreover, their importance for European integration is also related to the fact that they have been involved in the early stages of the process. At the same time, Churches operate as non-state actors. For example, Christian Churches contributed to the creation of European and national identities. Finally, there is another important feature of Christian Churches: namely, the Church-State regime, which sometimes contradicts the core of the idea of European integration (Mudrov, 2017).

Moreover, the Roman Catholic Church has secured its presence in the EU at the diplomatic level through the Embassy of the Holy See in the EU and the presence of Malta's Sovereign Military Order, which is recognized as a diplomatic form by the European Commission, but not by the EU member states. Catholic organizations are dealing with a wide range of relevant activities, including the European Social Center for Jesuits, Caritas Europa, and the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE). Regarding the Orthodox delegations, they are dealing equally with a wide range of subjects. They include representatives of the Churches of Greece, Cyprus, the Patriarchate of Moscow, and the Office of the Interconnection of the Orthodox Church, which belongs to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In addition, the Protestants also represent themselves through various organizations, such as the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), the European Evangelical Alliance, etc. There are also universal organizations or institutions such as the Conference (or Council) of the European Churches (WEU) (Mudrov, 2017). In other words, religion is an important element of European integration (Halikiopoulou et al., 2012) and the invention of the Internet resulted in intensifying the research regarding media relations and religion (Andok, 2018).

Greece is believed to be a prominent case in Western Europe for investigating the relations between the Church and the State, as the Church remains an important agent in shaping the public agenda. This characteristic of the Greek Church goes against the main trend of the last years, in which the influence of the Church in politics has been weakening (Halikiopoulou &

Vasilopoulou, 2013). Moreover, Greece is one of the few countries in Europe where the educational system teaches Christian Orthodox Religion as a compulsory course. From time to time, there are very intense public debates about changing the mandatory form of the aforementioned course—without significance until today. Nevertheless, Greek grassroots movements seem to believe that the current legal system of the country is not helping to change the core relations of religious education in the country (Markoviti, 2019). Nevertheless, it should be highlighted that in the case of Greece, the Orthodox Church, and the Christian Orthodox religion are associated with the creation of the country and the struggle against the Ottoman Empire. In other words, they are a core component of the Greek national identity (Halikiopoulou, 2010; Yannas, 2016; Karagiannis, 2009).
Meanwhile, there were cases in which the Greek Church exploited its significant charity mission in order to support its opinions and ideas (Polyzoidis, 2019). Additionally, the term 'prevailing religion' (see the relevant section of this study) in the Constitution of the country is linked with the heritage of the Byzantine Empire. It is based on a model regarding the importance of Christian Orthodox Religion and the relations between the Church and the State (Kyriazopoulos, 2001). According to Diamantopoulou, there is another paradox in Greece related to the formal recognition of religion except for Christian Orthodox Religion:

> 'Given the fact that there is no formal mechanism or process for a religious group to become recognized as a "known" religion in Greece, and this can usually be achieved through approval of a permit to operate a place of worship serious problems arise with special regard to Muslim immigrants that do not belong to the so-called historic Muslim minority in Western Thrace, which has an official status in Greece, by virtue of the 1923 Lausanne Peace Treaty'. (2016, p. 73)

The Framework of State and Church Relations in the Constitution 1975/1986/2001/2008

As the relations between the State and the Church in Greece are constantly changing, their imprint is possible only at a certain historical moment, while under the Constitution of 1975 they are still directed towards the state supremacy (Konidaris, 2011). This dynamic status often allows deviations from the normal order via State interventions on Church issues (which are often caused or accepted by the Church administration in order to serve its interests), but also with malformations in the ecclesiastical organization. A decisive role in the formation of relations is also played by the individuals who are at the head of the Church and the State administration throughout the years (Konidaris, 2011). In the same vein, it is underlined that the constitutional framework of the relations between the Greek State and the Church cannot be considered to be characterised by stability, because of the great influence it receives from the persons representing the institutions, but also by the state or ecclesiastical policy that is implemented. As a result, the abstract content of the constitutional provisions regulating these relations receives its meaning by the political, historical and ecclesiastical circumstances (Papageorgiou, 2013).

Konidaris (2011) argues that words and phrases in Article 3(1) can be interpreted differently, with serious implications for the final view of what kind of system of Church and State relation exists. There are, at the same time, other constitutional provisions that are quasi-satellites in Article 3 and have a decisive impact on interpretation, such as Article 13(1) and Article 72(1). Specifically, the interpretation of Article 3 in conjunction with Article 13 leads to a more liberal view of the current system of State and Church relations, of

ecclesiastical self-administration and of the power extent of the holy canons. On the other hand, the close connection of Article 3 with Article 72 justifies the view that a state regime prevails and that State and Church relations retrograde (Konidaris, 2011). Stathopoulos (1993) refers to a peculiar system of State and Church relations, which is shaped by interventions of the Greek State in the Greek Orthodox Church and by the interference of the latter in state matters. Moreover, he states that the system of State and Church relations is not for granted under the current Constitution, but it is basically ordinary legislator's responsibility to define it. According to Venizelos (2000), the system of relations in Greece is that of constitutionally regulated relations between the State and the Church. This means that the Constitution limits legislator's and other state bodies' intervention in the Church and that the Church is surrounded by constitutional guarantees as a subject of religious freedom.

According to the prevailing opinion, since 1833 the system of relations between the Greek State and the Orthodox Church is a version of the state supremacy system, the so-called 'state-law rule'. In this system, the State dominates the ecclesiastical, which means that the State intervenes in the Church, but not by violent means. The involvement of the State is bounded by laws and expressed in laws. The Church is a legal entity governed by public law, enjoys preferential treatment, its institutions of organization and operation are drafted in state laws, the State controls and supervises the Church, its acts are recognized as public and the State delegates jurisdictions that are specific to its own authority (Papastathis, 2003).

The prevailing religion

In the first paragraph of Article 3 of the current Constitution, it is stipulated that: 'The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ'. The term 'prevailing religion' is an imperative concept of 'western' origin, which derives its origin from the acute social conflict between Catholics and Protestants and from the period of formation of many national states, largely in relation to the outcome of this conflict (Venizelos, 2000). The concept is historically linked to two considerations. The first is the introduction of a simple and clear criterion for the automatic allocation of Greek citizenship and the constitution of the people of an independent state. The second is the commitment of the future head of the state to the religion of the overwhelming majority of the Greek people, which he ought to have respected (Venizelos, 2000).

The 'declaratory' interpretation

The interpretation of the term 'prevailing religion' has led to lengthy discussions in the context of scientific dialogue. The prevailing opinion supports that it is a simple proclamation that Greeks, in their vast majority, are Christian Orthodox. Consequently, the term is descriptive rather than normative (Papageorgiou, 2013). As early as the middle of the 19th century, Saripolos wrote that the 'prevailing religion' does not in any way mean the extraordinary rights of the Orthodox Church to the protection of laws, and cannot have any other meaning, except that the Holy Catholic Orthodox doctrine is the most prominent in Greece (Dimitropoulos, 2001). Under the 1975 Constitution, the 'declaratory' version was strengthened, due to the assessment that there was a 'relaxation' in the relations between the State and the Church, as religious provisions changed (Dimitropoulos, 2001). Similarly, Stathopoulos (1993) argues that the constitutional legislator simply states that this religion is the 'numerically dominant', the one followed by the overwhelming majority of the Greek people. Lastly, according to another point of view, this provision holds a declaratory

character, but not without regulatory implications, such as celebrations, ceremonies, public holidays or clergy payments (Chrysogonos, 2000; Troianos, 2000; Tsatsos, 1993).

The 'regulatory' interpretation

On the other hand, another viewpoint identifies the prevailing religion with the official religion of the State. Poulis (2007), for example, argues that the reason why the constitutional legislator has established a 'prevailing' religion is that it is followed by the overwhelming majority of the Greek people, i.e. the cause is not the same as the result. According to Papastathis (2003), prevailing religion means that a) the Orthodox cult constitutes the official religion of Greece or religion of the territory or Church of the State; b) the Church which expresses this cult has its own legal existence. It is a legal person of public law regarding its legal relations and its various organizations and (c) the State approaches it with increased interest and it enjoys preferential treatment which does not ipso jure extend to other cults and faiths. This, however, does not mean that the prevailing religion is dominant or that this preferential treatment is contradictory to the constitutional principle of equality. Furthermore, Karasis (2010) underlines that the constitutional provisions, granting the Orthodox Church a special treatment, make it the official state religion.

Systematic interpretation of provisions

Alongside the two above-mentioned views, there is also a series of arguments dealing with the relationship of the prevailing religion and religious freedom through the systematic interpretation of the relevant provisions. According to Tsatsos (1993), the regulation of the whole issue of religious activity (Articles 3(1) and 13(1) to (4) shows a decisive distinction between two separate cycles of legal problems. The first is the legal position of the Churches operating within the Greek territory, which is regulated in Part One, Section II and belongs to the Organization of the State, while the second is the legal position of the believers of the various Churches, is settled in Part Two and falls entirely on the issue of fundamental rights. From this systematic interpretation of the constitutional regulation, it is argued that a possibility of special arrangements in favor of the Church, but not a privilege in favor of the believers is founded.

Holy Canons

The second and third sections of the first paragraph of Article 3 stipulate that: 'The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine, observing unwaveringly, as they do, the holy apostolic and synodal canons and sacred traditions. It is autocephalous and is administered by the Holy Synod of serving Bishops and the Permanent Holy Synod originating thereof and assembled as specified by the Statutory Charter of the Church in compliance with the provisions of the Patriarchal Tome of June 29, 1850 and the Synodal Act of September 4, 1928'. Due to its essential importance to the self-administration of the Church, the problem of the extent to which the Constitution enshrined the holy canons has also been under study both in case law and in legal theory since the early 19th century (Papageorgiou 2013). Three main viewpoints have been supported, aiming to solve this interpretative issue which regards the ecclesiastical origin provisions that organize and regulate the inner life of Church.

According to the first one, the Constitution guarantees without exception all holy canons, whether they have dogmatic content or simply refer to the administrative organization of the Church (Papageorgiou, 2013). Legislator is not allowed to regulate dogmatic and administrative matters of the Church in deviation from its holy canons (Dimitropoulos, 2001), so laws that are against their provisions are unconstitutional (Papastathis, 2003). The second view distinguishes holy canons into doctrinal and administrative ones, with the former being constitutionally and unchanged and the latter being non-regulated and freely modifiable by the legislator (Dimitropoulos, 2001). Therefore, the common legislator can freely regulate all those issues pertaining to the administration and organization of the Church (Papastathis, 2003). Slightly diverging from the second one, the third view supports that the only purpose of this provision is the dogmatic unity of the Church of Greece with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the other Orthodox Churches. It is, therefore, possible to modify by law any rule, even one of the Ecumenical Council, if this law does not contravene the Orthodox doctrine (Papageorgiou, 2013).

The case law of the Council of State originally moved steadily in the context of the second view. Positing that constitutional guarantee is not extended to the administrative holy canons, it held that they may be amended for the common interest of the State and the Church (Papageorgiou, 2012). After the 1952 Constitution implementation, however, the Council introduced a distinction into fundamental and non-fundamental institutions and decided that the ordinary legislator cannot amend fundamental administrative institutions, which are those that have been established in a steadfast and enduring way within the Church (Papageorgiou, 2012). Finally, under the current Constitution, the same Court differentiated its legal substantiation. Thus, now drawing an argument from Article 13, it added that the right to religious freedom also protects the followers of the prevailing religion, safeguarding those holy canons (Papageorgiou, 2012). Council of State decision no. 5057/1987 reverted to the original legal horizon of Article 3 and considered that canonical institutions that do not refer to doctrine and worship are, for example, the administration and management of the ecclesiastical property. These issues are evolving under the influence of time and social conditions. Therefore, it is inevitable that they change for the benefit and the shared interest of Church and State (Papageorgiou, 2012). Furthermore, Venizelos (2000) notes that, under Article 13(1), all holy canons of the Orthodox Church of Greece are protected by the Constitution, whether they refer to doctrine or to administration, because this is the only way to ensure religious freedom for the believers of the prevailing religion as well. This position does not contradict, but is reinforced by the stereotyped wording of Article 3 which does not discriminate in dogmatic and administrative canons.

On the 6th of November 2018, Ieronymos, the Archbishop of Athens and all of Greece and the Prime Minister of Greece, Alexis Tsipras, announced a new deal between the State and the Greek Church that seems to pave the way for the final separation between these two entities. The priests will no longer be considered as civil servants, but they will still be paid by the State (BBC, 2018). Meanwhile, the ‘Church will not oppose moves to make the State ‘religion neutral’ and would drop any claim to property once taken over by the State’ (BBC, 2018).

Methodology

Two studies were conducted to explore more in depth the actual legal aspect of the Article 3 and the separation of the Greek Church and the State. In the first study, the content analysis as a method was chosen as it describes the characteristics of the data and identifies the important

relationships of the content under consideration. In addition, since the categorization and general rules applied are both practical and theoretical on scientific bases, the probability of finding valid results through research is increased (Riffe et al., 2005). The search was conducted using the Google Web Search Engine within five days (3/02/2018-7/02/2018). The search language was Greek and the region was Greece. The search for the articles was set for the period from January 1, 2000 to December 31, 2018. This selection was made to investigate references to Church and State relations starting from the 'Battle of Identities'. At that time, a large crowd of believers participated in rallies to promote the displaying of religion on the Greek identities. The former Archbishop Christodoulos, at the end of August 2001, announced the gathering of more than three million signatures for a referendum on the optional display of religion on new identities The keywords used for the search were 'prevailing religion', 'separation of State and Church', 'holy canons' and 'autocephalous Church', in Greek.

Following the classification of the websites of Antonopoulos and his colleagues (2012; 2015), the websites were divided into four categories (Table 1): a) Mass Media (as Mass Media were defined the websites hosting more than one medium such as radio, television, etc.), b) Portal (the websites that have only online presence as news web portals), c) Newspaper (the websites of Greek newspapers) and d) Television Station (the websites of the Greek Television Stations).

Table 1. The news website of the research.

News Website	Type of medium
alphatv.gr	Television Station
antenna.gr	Television Station
dikaiologitika.gr	Portal
kathimerini.gr	Newspaper
makeleio.gr	Newspaper
news247.gr	Mass Media
protothema.gr	Newspaper
skai.gr	Mass Media
star.gr	Television Station
tilestwra.com	Portal
vice.com/gr	Mass Media
zougla.gr	Portal

In total, for each category, the top three sites were selected in the above-defined category from the list of top sites in Greece based on the ranking on the alexa.com website. The filter under which the aforementioned search was conducted was 'by relevance'. As active participants in the discussion of State and Church relations were considered the users who made at least a comment. According to Kalogeropoulos and his colleagues (2017) the users who comment on news stories tend to be more active on social media and to be more interested in hard news content. The search on the websites aimed to collect the data for answering the first research question of the study. Furthermore, the comments of the users on these articles along with the collected articles were analyzed in greater depth via content

analysis to provide feedback also for the second research question of the this research (for the research questions see the end of this section).

Moreover, a survey was conducted using an online structured questionnaire to collect citizens' views on the issue under consideration. It was desirable for the sample to consist exclusively of journalists/communicators. For this purpose, an invitation to participate in the questionnaire was posted exclusively to a closed Facebook group, which during the survey period numbered 1650 members. The group members were students (undergraduates and graduates), employees and professors of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH). In order to gain access to this closed group and the posts that are made, users need to be related to the School. Then, after check, administrators allow him or her to access. The survey lasted from February 22, 2018 to February 28, 2018. It should be mentioned that on the fourth day of the week the survey was reposted again on the Facebook group to attract more participants. The overall views of the Facebook group posts regarding the survey were 252 (at the time of measurement - Facebook post views change over time) and those that replied to the questions of the survey were 53 participants. During the posting of the survey, the group members were informed for its scientific purposes, so as to be sure about the anonymity provided.

Altogether 53 unique users participated in the survey. In checking the reliability of the responses, it was found that 15 of the participants may not have answered honestly and their answers were not taken into account. In particular, the reasons for deleting the answers to the specific questionnaires are listed: One of the participants stated that he or she was born in 2018. One of the respondents answered that he had completed the high school, while he was born in 1991, a response that was considered inaccurate and was not included in the final sample, based on the distinction of the age groups that follows. In addition, a user answered 'Maybe' and two others replied, 'I do not know or I do not want to answer' to the question whether they responded with honesty to the previous questions. Finally, there was also the question 'Do they spray us?'. Seven users who answered 'Yes' were not included in the survey. This was also the case for three persons who replied 'I do not know or I do not want to answer'. It has to be noted that the people who believe in conspiracy theories 'tend to present lower levels of trust, higher levels of religiosity, and lower levels of education, in relation to citizens who do not believe in conspiracy theories' (Mancosu et al., p. 331). In addition, they seem to believe mostly their vision (Bakalaki, 2016) and not to trust the authorities (Wood & Douglas, 2013). Thus, it was believed that they could not be trusted as the spraying question is related to the 'Chemtrail' conspiracy theory (Bakalaki, 2016).

The questionnaire about Article 3 focused also on participants' demographic characteristics. 38 participants aged between 18-52 years old were asked about content, representation of Greek citizens in the constitutional article and the need of changes in it. The demographic questions included attitude about separation of State from Church, worship frequency, participant education, sex and birthdate. The questionnaire is linked with the third and fourth research questions of this study (see below). Those research questions are associated with the opinions of the students and the graduates of the 'School of Journalism and Mass Communications' and identify the differences between them. At this point, it should be mentioned that the answers could be given by using a desktop computer or laptop, 'smart' mobile phone or tablet. The 'School of Journalism and Mass Communications' group has equal proportions of participants in a large-scale age group. This study investigated all groups of categorical variables. The age of respondents was computed on 05/01/2019.

When participants accessed the questionnaire, they saw the following text:

'Please read the Article 3 of the Constitution of Greece:

1. The prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ. The Orthodox Church of Greece, acknowledging our Lord Jesus Christ as its head, is inseparably united in doctrine with the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople and with every other Church of Christ of the same doctrine, observing unwaveringly, as they do the holy apostolic and synodal canons and sacred traditions. It is autocephalous and is administered by the Holy Synod of serving Bishops and the Permanent Holy Synod originating thereof and assembled as specified by the Statutory Charter of the Church in compliance with the provisions of the Patriarchal Tome of June 29, 1850 and the Synodal Act of September 4, 1928.

2. The ecclesiastical regime existing in certain districts of the State shall not be deemed contrary to the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

3. The text of the Holy Scripture shall be maintained unaltered. Official translation of the text into any other form of language, without prior sanction by the Autocephalous Church of Greece and the Great Church of Christ in Constantinople, is prohibited'.

According to the aforementioned information, this research seeks to explore more closely what is being published on the prominent media websites in Greece in relation to Article 3 of the Greek Constitution and see if the users tend to comment on the articles in order to express their opinions. Furthermore, this study wanted to reveal also the opinions of the students and graduates of the School of Journalism as this topic is associated with their field of expertise.

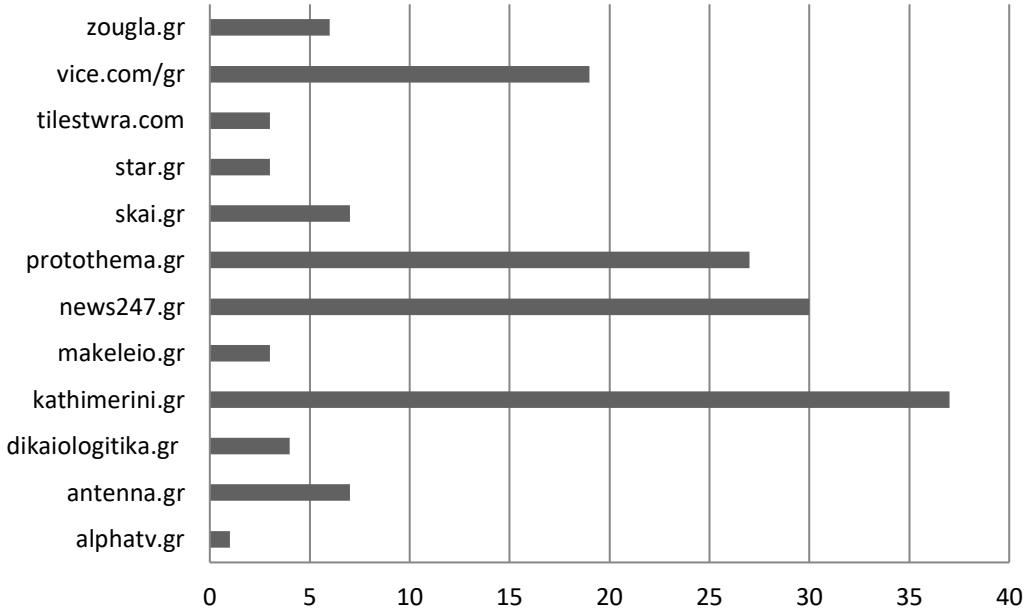
Hence, the following questions arose:

- Research Question 1: Are the examined news websites extensively involved in covering and explaining in details what Article 3 of the Greek Constitution stipulates?
- Research Question 2: Do users actively participate in the discussion of State and Church relations?
- Research Question 3: What is the opinion of the questionnaire participants for the examined topic?
- Research Question 4: Are there differences in proportions of the participants by categories in questions of the study?

Results

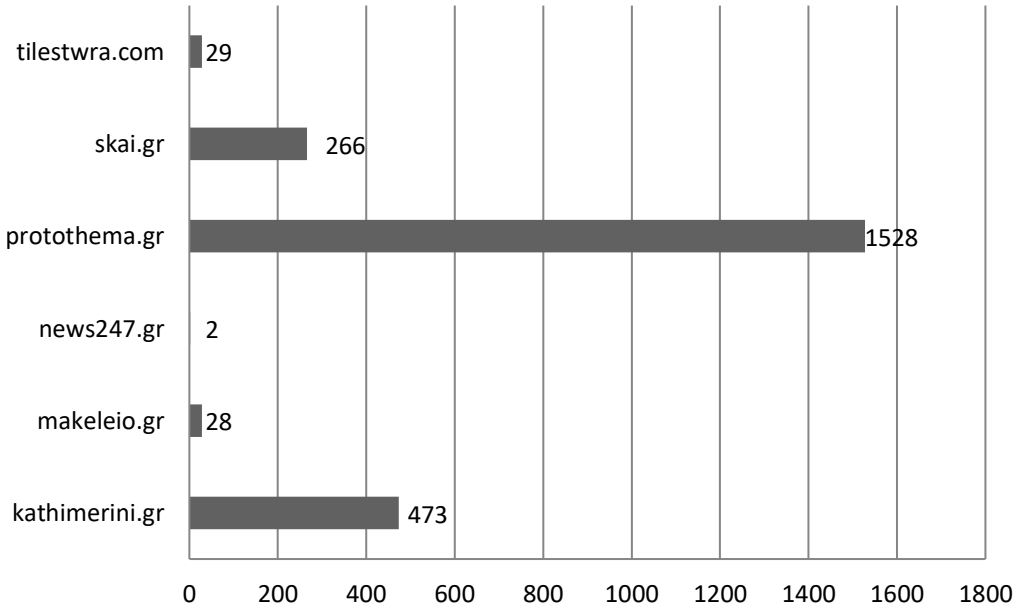
The sample of the news articles for the research consisted of 147 articles: 1 (alphatv.gr), 7 (antenna.gr), 4 (dikaiologitika.gr), 37 (kathimerini.gr), 3 (makeleio.com), 30 (news247.gr), 27 (protothema.gr), 7 (skai.gr), 3 (star.gr), 3 (tilestwra.com), 19 (vice.com/gr), and 6 (zougla.gr). The majority of the news articles was in the category that is defined as Newspapers (67/147), followed by the Mass Media (56/147), the Portal (13/147) and the Television Stations (11/147) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. The news articles of the research.



Additionally, the comments of each article were examined, considering that Antonopoulos et al. (2015) have proven that comments can influence either positively or negatively users' opinion. The total number of the comments for this study was 2.326 (Figure 2).

Figure 2. The number of comments.



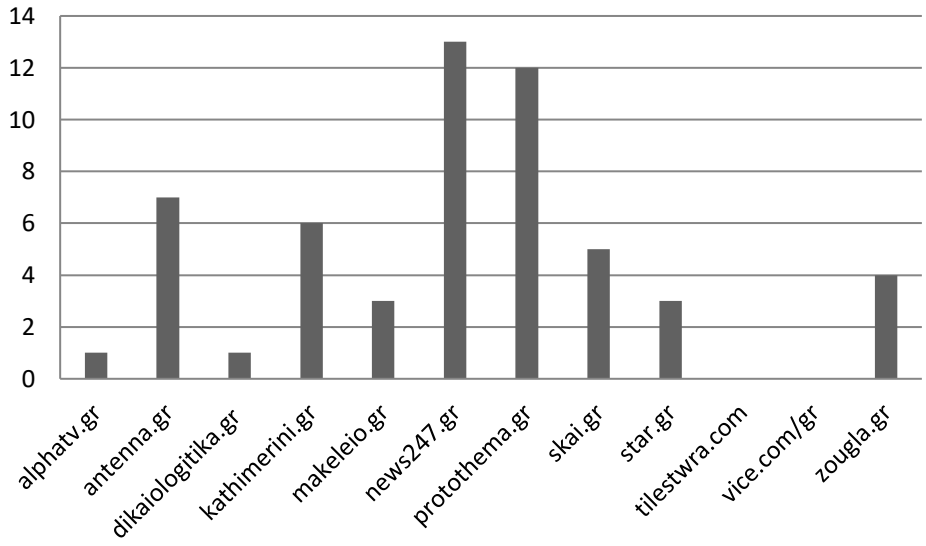
However, it is worth mentioning that many websites did not allow commenting. The news websites alphatv.gr, antenna.gr, dikaiologitika.gr, star.gr, vice.com/gr and zougla.gr did not offer the possibility to comment on the article, so that users can only read what is written and

not contribute to it. In addition, news247.gr, which has just 2 comments in a total of 30 articles, offered commenting only through the Facebook social network. Besides, in 23 articles of kathimerini.gr, such as in the 'Separation of State-Church' and 'Anthimos: I pray for Tsipras more than for others', by the authors NK Karapidakis and Stavros Tzimas respectively, comments have been deactivated. The website with the most comments was protothema.gr (1,528 comments) and the one with the least was news247.gr (2 comments). What's more, although kathimerini.gr had the most articles (37 in total), it did not show a large number of user comments (473 comments). Finally, it is worth mentioning that the users commented many times on the content of skai.gr (the 7 articles of the news outlet had 266 comments).

All comments were also examined to see if there was hate speech in their content. According to the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers' Recommendation (97), hate speech is defined as: 'all forms of expression which spread, incite, promote or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including: intolerance expressed by aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility against minorities, migrants and people of immigrant origin'. In addition, based on Kalogeropoulos and his colleagues (2017) the users who comment on news stories tend to be more active on social media and to be more interested in hard news content. Out of a total of 2,326 comments, 39 users have expressed hate speech: makeleio.gr 7 comments, protothema.gr 26 comments and tilestwra.com 6 comments. These user views were included in this category as they contained abusive words/expressions and aggressive behavior: 'antichrists anti-deists and atheists and Islamic monkeys Syrizakedes [members of Syriza political party]', 'WHY DON'T YOU SHIT US, YOU MASTURBATOR' (sic) (Examples of comments translated from Greek).

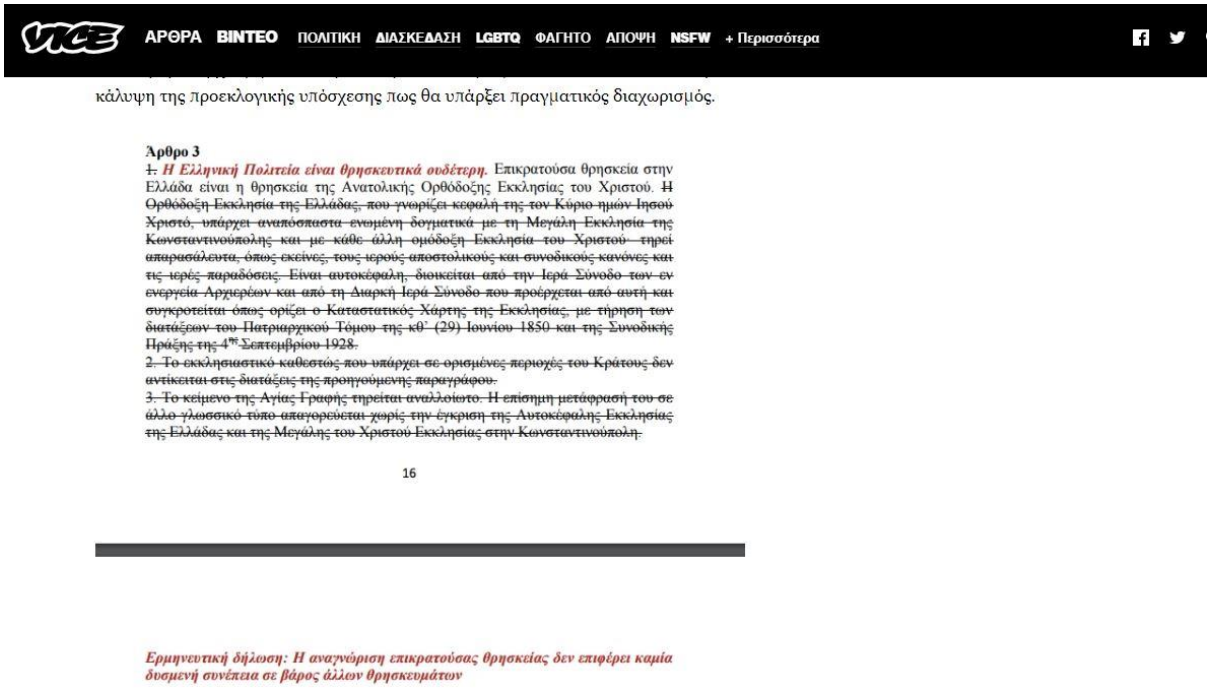
It was also investigated whether and to what extent anonymous articles are published, taking into account the findings of the Pew Research Center (2017), according to which anonymity activates bad behavior and contributes to facilitating non-civil dialogue in the shared online environment. In addition, citizens may be more closely monitored and cases of repression of freedom of speech can take place, shaping social dialogue towards a particular direction. According to the results, the news website that published most anonymous articles is news247.gr (13/30), where almost half have not been signed by an author. At the same time, all the articles on the antenna.gr, alphatv.gr, makeleio.gr and star.gr were anonymous. Moreover, it was interesting that vice.com/gr published only signed articles. Even in the three articles that were found not to have a clear editor, there was the distinct mark 'VICE Staff'. As far as the tilestwra.com site is concerned, all the articles that have been published came from other websites and that is why the article source was cited. From the studied sample, only the websites of TV stations seemed to be those which systematically did not show the name of the author (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Number of anonymous articles on each news website



Regarding the content of the articles, there are no more than five articles that are providing some insights about Article 3 and the actual legal meaning of the separation between the Church and the State. Three of them are from kathimerini.gr ('The separation of State – Church', 2005, 'The issue: the release of the Church by the State', 2016, and "'Open Dialogue' on Church-State Relations", 2017), one from protothema.gr ("Holy Synod: 'No' to the separation of Church-State", 2017), and one from vice.com/gr (Church and State: 'A Love That Lasts Forever', 2017). The two articles of kathimerini.gr are written by scholars who provide a deeper view regarding the actual meaning of the separation between the Church and the State. The last one is about an event that discussed publicly the examined topic with experts of the issue. The article from vice.com/gr provides many insights in relation to the separation of the Church and the State by presenting even changes in Article 3 proposed by the government (Figure 4).

Figure 4. The proposed changes in Article 3 from the Greek government according to vice.com/gr.



The article from protothema.gr presents the opinions of the Holy Synod about the examined topic:

> 'Article 3 currently works in competition with Article 13, as it has consistently been interpreted so far by the courts under Article 3, the State may also legislate on internal religious issues of the Orthodox Church and without the latter's consent, and therefore the Church does not have the full rights of religious autonomy derived from Article 13 for other religious communities…' (Translated from Greek)

The rest of the examined articles almost exclusively deal with the separation between State and Church in the context of the current political affairs by providing conflict opinions and statements from the state officials, the opposition parties, and the Church. Those statements do not analyze what Article 3 says. They just express their endorsement or opposition regarding the separation of the Church and the State.

Regarding the results of the second survey, 65.8% of the participants replied that they did not know the actual content of Article 3 of the Greek constitution. The minority (34.2%) knew its content. The respondents were asked also if Article 3 represents equally the Greek citizens of the country. The majority of them (71.1%) replied negatively, 18.4% answered affirmatively and 10.5% that did not know and so could not answer to the question. In the question about if there is a need of modifying Article 3, 60.5% replied that there is definitely a need for modifying. On the contrary, only 10.5% answered that they do not want the Article to change and 21.1% believed that it needs to be deleted from the Greek Constitution. 7.9%

decided to say that they did not know and therefore could not answer. Furthermore, almost all participants believed that there must be a separation between the Church and the Greek State (84.2%) and only 13.2% had a different opinion.

From the 38 participants, 47.4% answered that they do not worship, 23.7% worship every six months, and 15.8% every three months. Another respondent replied once a month (2.6%), three users (7.9%) replied that they worship once a week and one (2.6%) constantly worships. 39.5% of the participants had received their degree from the Department of Journalism and Mass Communications of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 31.6% had a Master degree and 28.9% had just finished high school. Regarding the last question, which concerned their date of birth, the oldest participant stated that he/she was born in 1966, while the youngest was born in 1999. Participants were divided into four age groups according to their birth date. The first group was born from 1966 to 1988 and had eleven participants. The second group, with ten participants, was born from 1989 to 1994. The third group, with eight participants, was born from 1995 to 1996 (third and fourth-year students) and the fourth group was born from 1997 to 1999 with nine participants (first and second-year students). Lastly, 78.9% of the participants were women and 21.1% men.

Table 2 shows that the mean age of respondents is 27, median 25. The age of participants ranged between 19-52 years old. The first percentile (25 % of answers) lays less than 21.75 age value, 75 percentile after 30. The histogram showed that the age of participants is not normally distributed. There was a higher count of younger participants and a lower count of older.

Table 2: Age of participants

N	Valid	38
	Missing	0
Mean		27.0000
Median		25.0000
Std. Deviation		7.20735
Skewness		1.542
Std. Error of Skewness		.383
Kurtosis		2.789
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.750
Minimum		19.00
Maximum		52.00
Percentiles	25	21.7500
	50	25.0000
	75	30.0000

The percentile division of ages presented in Table 3 divided ages into four categories with 8-11 observations in each. This allowed the comparison for mean values of ordinal and numeric scales using this variable as categorical. This age division was not suitable for chi-tests of variables with more than two categories, because the expected count of responses in a category could be less than five (this is the minimal count of observations for a good fit of chi-tests). That's why the age division by young and adult participants was made as second variable Age Groups 2. Division on two groups allowed computing chi-tests with reliable power for variables with four or less count of categories (Table 4). Moreover, other significant disproportions and associations for four age categories were not found.

Table 3. Age groups by percentile division.

Age	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-21	9	23.7	23.7	23.7
22-24	10	26.3	26.3	50.0
25-30	8	21.1	21.1	71.1
30+	11	28.9	28.9	100.0
Total	38	100	100	

Table 4. Results of chi-tests and association tests for AgeGroups2 variable.

	AgeGroup2	Art3Content	Art3Represent	Art3Modifying	StateChurch	WorkshipFreq	Studied	Sex
AgeGroups2	1							
Art3Content	0.732	1						
Art3Represent	0.558	0.114	1					
Art3Modifying	0.602	0.844	0.005**	1				
StateChurch	0.585	0.446	0.881	0.034*	1			
WorkshipFreq	0.849	0.023*	0.035*	0.025*	0.5	1		
Studied	0.000**	0.705	0.549	0.035**	0.092~	0.552	1	
Sex	0.426	0.058~	0.169	0.269	0.925	0.515	0.275	1

**-0.01 significance, *-0.05 significance, ~-border of significance 0.05-0.1.

Conclusions and Discussion

With regard to the first Research Question (RQ1), the first study revealed that the examined news outlets do not extensively cover the topics related to Article 3 of the Greek Constitution. This is apparent not only from the small number of relevant articles found to have been published over the last 18 years (the research included the articles that were online from January 1, 2000, to December 31, 2018), but also from the fact that among these 147 articles, almost none detail what is stipulated in Article 3. In addition, the positions of the current (February 2018 at the time of the research) members of the coalition government of Radical Left Coalition (SYRIZA) and Independent Greeks (ANEL), as well as the fights with the opposition parties on the issue of segregation, seem to attract media interest. Thus, there is a focus on the statements of politicians rather than the analysis of Article 3, likely trying to create conflict stories. This finding aligns with the relevant media literature as "research has shown that conflict framing is one of the most important mechanisms of political news reporting" (Bartholomé et al., 2015, p. 438). It also aligns with the findings of Hatzimihail (2015), who argues that there is no focus on the actual matter of the separation between the Church and the State, which is the legal aspect. It seems more to be a tool for polarization using a rhetoric of denunciation that is likely opposed to the power of Church.

However, there are also a few new pieces that try to provide a different perspective on the above subject. For example, vice.com/gr published an article titled "What Should Greece Do for the Ultimate Separation of the Church from the State?" This article presented the views of

some members of Europe's atheist and agnostic organizations. The survey results also indicate that print newspapers (67/147) have more strongly emphasized the coverage of the issues related to Article 3 of the Constitution in comparison to other media.

Moreover, it could be argued that there is significant interest among users, since 147 articles examined were found to contain 2,326 comments. In particular, it was noted that newspaper websites gathered almost all users' comments (2,001/2,326). The number, in fact, looked significant, considering that in half of the examined websites (alphatv.gr, antenna.gr, dikaiologitika.gr, star.gr, vice.com/gr, and zougla.gr), comments were not allowed. Amongst these, 39 comments were found containing hate speech, which, among other things, according to George (2016), is also a form of propaganda that encourages even physical attacks towards targeted groups and individuals (RQ2).

Summarizing the answers in the online questionnaire and the users' comments from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications, it is clear that only one-third of the respondents replied that they are aware of the content of Article 3, while only 18.4% believe that this Article fairly represents all Greek citizens. It is also worth noting that 10.5% argued that Article 3 should not be amended, while 84.2% of respondents believe in the separation of the State from the Church. In addition, it is noted that 47.4% of participants said they do not worship. Finally, with regard to the commentary of Article 3 by participants, only one of the 17 participants stated that "there are other issues that should be of concern to us first," while in all other replies there was an interest in the existence and the content of the Article. Of the eleven participants who were asked to comment on what shape this Article should take, nine stated that there must be a future amendment. The discussion for the State and Church relations in Greece revolves mainly around the concept of separation, which is a major factor in Article 3 and its possible abolition or amendment (RQ3).

There were differences in study level and age groups. The people who mentioned the need for modifications of Article 3 are far more numerous than those who do not want changes. There were only eight males in the sample, and that is the reason why there is a difference on the border for sex and content. However, it seems that male participants are more aware of the content of Article 3 than females. According to the crosstab, people who are less religious know less about the content of the article. Comparing to other answers, people who got a degree from the School of Journalism and Mass Communications thought that article had to be deleted. It seems that people who believe in the unity of State and Church have fewer suggestions for the modification of Article 3. However, the subsample is very small and this result is not solid enough. Furthermore, participants who referred to article modifications also reported about non-equal representation. Moreover, participants who seem to be more religious do not want the Article to change, in comparison to people who believe in Church and State separation. Lastly, the differences which were found for ages seem adequate (RQ4).

The research of online media proved that articles from the country's top media companies do not cover (either frequently or in detail) issues related to Article 3 of the Greek Constitution. Their focus is almost exclusively on the issue of the separation between the State and the Church, which is somewhat dictated by timeliness. It seemed to be an attempt to follow developments rather than setting the daily agenda. At the same time, it is noted that, although commenting is not encouraged by all news outlets, users are willing to express their views, as can be seen by a large number of comments in the relevant online articles. In addition, several media companies publish anonymous articles, thereby supporting or promoting unacceptable behaviors and non-civil dialogue (Pew Research Center, 2017). Additionally, the questionnaire participants seemed to be in favor of abstract changes in Article 3 of the Greek Constitution, as it is thought to be an important issue for the current society. This research proves that there is a tendency for action in the relation between the

State and the Church in Greece. Meanwhile, it enhances the relevant bibliography and reveals that there are Greek citizens who are ready to support the separation between the State and the Church. Regarding the limitations of the study, it should be mentioned that broader research including more participants and media organizations would reveal more specific results. Additionally, a different scientific approach could shed light also on various sides of the examined topic. Lastly, a future study could be the content analysis of the collected comments from the news media of this study in order to see more clearly what the users believe about the examined topic.

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The Victim's Experience as Described in Civil Court Judgments for Mobbing: A Gender Difference

Daniela Acquadro Maran[1], Antonella Varetto[2], Matti Ullah Butt[3] and Cristina Civilotti[1]

[1] Department of Psychology, University of Turin, ITALY
[2] City of Health and Science University Hospital, Turin, ITALY
[3] Department of Business Administration, National College of Business Administration and Economics, PAKISTAN

Abstract: The aim of this work is to provide a descriptive analysis of the mobbing phenomenon found in a sampling of Italian civil court judgments in the last fifteen years. The analysis was conducted according to the behaviors that characterize the mobbing, the type of workplace, the power differential between perpetrator and victim, the victim's and the perpetrator's typologies, the motives, and the consequences for the victim. Data were gathered from two free websites on civil judgments involving mobbing. An analysis of the 73 civil judgments showed 34 male victims (46.6%) and 39 female victims (53.4%) of mobbing. In 68 (93.2%) cases, the behavior that characterized the mobbing campaign was an attack on personal and professional life. Female victims of mobbing in particular indicated isolation and attack on reputation. About half of the sample worked in a private company, 16 (21.9%) in public administration, 11 (15.1%) in the educational sector, and nine (12.3%) in the health sector. The time from the beginning of the mobbing campaign to when it was reported was higher among men than women. Moreover, female victims are more prone than male victims to report suffering from an anxiety disorder as a consequence of mobbing, and they perceive the mobbing behavior to be caused by the perpetrator's personal characteristics. Men, on the other hand, more often than women consider the abusive acts casual and more frequently believe they are the "chosen victim" because of perceived personal weaknesses.

Keywords: mobbing, gender difference, workplace violence, coping strategy, court judgment

Introduction

Leymann (1996) defined mobbing as a form of psychological terror that occurs in the workplace:

> "Psychical terror or mobbing in working life means hostile and unethical communication which is directed in a systematic way by one or a number of persons mainly toward one individual. There are also cases where such mobbing is mutual until one of the participants becomes the underdog. These actions take place often (almost

Address for Correspondence: Daniela Acquadro Maran, email: daniela.acquadro[at]unito.it
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> every day) and over a long period (at least for six months) and, because of this frequency and duration, result in considerable psychic, psychosomatic and social misery". (p. 120)

Lippel (2010) underlined that several terms are used in European Countries to describe a systematic violent behavior occurred in workplace, for example 'workplace bullying' or 'harcalement moral'. However, in this paper the term mobbing has been used. As suggested by Einarsen, Hoel, Zapf and Cooper (2010), mobbing is the term referred to "the systematic exhibition of aggressive behaviour at work directed towards a subordinate, a coworker, or even a superior, as well as the perception of being systematically exposed to such mistreatment while at work" (p. 5). The difference between a single instance of misconduct (workplace harassment) and mobbing is the behavior's repetition and the perpetrator's intention (Yamada et al., 2018). These behaviors may involve isolation (e.g., leaving the employee without social contacts); an attack on the victim's personal and professional life (e.g., changing the person's tasks), which can compromise the victim's work–family balance or disrupt the management of leisure; an attack on the victim's reputation (with persistent negative remarks) for the person's professional and/or personal choices (e.g., criticizing them constantly, gossiping, spreading false information); the prevention of the use of instruments or tools for successful job performance or the expression of his or her opinions; threats of violence or retaliation; and physical assault (Korkmaz et al., 2015).

Current academic literature focuses heavily on this topic, considering it from alternative perspectives and embracing various domains of contemporary science, such as sociology, psychology (clinical, social, and organizational), business or management, and economics (Pheko, 2018; Picakciefe et al., 2017; Vveinhard & Žukauskas, 2015).

Today, in Italy legal procedures recognize many harassment behaviors that can be linked with the mobbing phenomenon as described previously. Since did not exist an explicit legislation on the phenomenon, the systematic violence in workplace could be labeled bullying, harassment, mobbing, or even victimization (see Lippel, 2010 for an international overview of the law on workplace bullying).

The term mobbing has entered twenty years ago in the current Italian legal language based on the sociological elaboration and studies of occupational psychology, developed in Italy in the light of a broad Northern European literature. Starting from this date, the mobbing phenomena was identified in persecutory and hostile acts, harassment, and psychological persecution behaviors perpetrated by colleagues (horizontal mobbing) and/or by the employer and the hierarchical superiors (vertical mobbing) against a victim. The first officially recognized cases in Italy dealing with this topic were tried at the Court of Turin (November 16, 1999 and December 30, 1999). Thanks to judgments passed by Italy's Supreme Court of Cassation, the Italian Civil Code has been developing a profile based on contractual and extracontractual responsibilities of the employer. Ege (2014) described variables characterizing a mobbing situation, that are the type of workplace (e.g., a private company, public administration, the educational sector, or the health sector), the duration of the bullying behavior, and the asymmetry of power between perpetrator and victim (the victim cannot properly defend him- or herself due to the differential of power). More specifically, the asymmetry can be horizontal (e.g., the victim and the perpetrator fill the same organizational position/role), vertical (the perpetrator or the victim has a higher position/role), or strategic (the manager enacts the mobbing behavior to exhaust the victim and oust him or her from the workplace). According to Lutgen-Sandvik (2018), the mobbing phenomenon involves actors, begins with a motive, and culminates in psychological and physical consequences for the victim.

Actors in Mobbing

Three actors are involved in a mobbing situation: the victim, the mobber, and the observer. For the purpose of the present work, we will focus only on victims and mobbers, but we also acknowledge the important role of observer as recognized in the literature (see Branch, Ramsay, & Barker, 2013). The victim is the disparaged person whom the perpetrator is belittling (Duffy & Sperry, 2011), a target is a person who experiences mobbing behaviours. As described by Einersen et al. (2003), victims are exposed to persistent insults or offensive remarks, persistent criticism, personal or physical abuse. Analyzing the literature on this phenomenon Ege (2010), identified several types of victims, which are categorized as follows:

- captive: The victim recognizes the phenomenon but does not know effective strategies to prevent it from happening (Coleman, 2006). Additionally, the person cannot find another job or change the situation in his or her current occupation by requesting a transfer, for example.

- passive: The victim is affable, servile, and incapable of saying "no" and can become a mobber's sitting duck. Mobbing actions can be a source of fun for observer. This type of victim is similar to the sensitive or passive victim described by Olweus (2009).

- ambitious: The person works to maintain high levels of effectiveness and efficiency, is determined, and believes in him- or herself and his or her abilities. In this way, he or she elicits envy from colleagues who intend to damage and hinder the victim through mobbing (Acar, Kıyak & Sine, 2014).

- scapegoat: The person is perceived as weak, and his or her colleagues vent their anger at him or her (Zapf & Einarsen, 2003).

- hypochondriac: The individual usually complains, tells anyone about his or her uneasiness, tends to feel depressed, and is always dissatisfied (Raho, Giorgi, Bonfiglio & Argentero, 2008). Consequently, he or she risks creating difficult relationships and isolation.

The mobber is "the executioner," the one who begins and performs the mobbing behaviors. The mobber has a persecutory intent; the victim is harassed, discriminated against, and treated differently from others because of a specific and coherent vexatious intent (Bartalucci, 2010; Ehe, 2010; Safina & Podgornaya, 2014). In their analysis of the phenomenon, Acquadro Maran, Bernardelli and Varetto (2018) found that mobbers could be categorized as follows:

- casual: to create emotional distress and feelings such as anger toward another person (Ironside & Seifert, 2003)
- sadist: to bolster the victim's self-esteem and feeling of power by spreading rumors and then use malice to attack the victim (McCarthy, 2003)
- choleric: to test a fresh destruction strategy (he or she hurts another person for the sake of doing it and is not inclined to let the victim escape) or to drive out a worker (i.e., the victim; he or she is dissatisfied with his

or her life and with other colleagues and creates an unsatisfactory and relatively tense climate) (Leymann, 1996)

- instigator: to progress up the career ladder (he or she tries to make his or her way up the organization using all possible means) or gain power, authority, a higher status, or respect (the mobber has a distorted view of him- or herself, as he or she considers him- or herself superior and thinks that he or she is allowed to become angry and hit colleagues who are inferior) (Keashly & Jagatic, 2003)

Motives for Mobbing

Leymann (1996) identified various potential motives for mobbing, such as failure to comply with social values and norms (e.g., lack of rule observance), ineffective conflict resolution strategies, difficulty in relationships, or disagreement (Elliott & Davenport, 1999). Moreover, some conditions, such as sudden and radical organizational changes, could reinforce attempts to expel other workers (e.g., to reduce the number of employees or replace older personnel with younger ones who are skilled in more current techniques; Yelgecen, Tigrel, & Kokalan, 2009). A stressful work environment can create a workplace characterized by high competition and conflict in which harassment, such as the punishment of a worker, is accepted (Einarsen et al., 2005). Furthermore, motives to begin a mobbing campaign may be caused by discrimination against the victim's political or religious beliefs or refusal of sexual approach (Di Martino et al., 2003; Elliott & Davenport, 1999).

Consequences of the Mobbing Campaign

A mobbing campaign often causes psychogical problems in victims (Zapf & Leymann, 1996). The victimization creates and increases difficulties in relationships with colleagues, superiors, and family members. The most frequent diagnosis is adjustment disorder (Chirico, 2016). The victim may also develop psychological problems, such as mood disorders (Djurkovic et al., 2003) and anxiety disorders. However, in the most extreme cases, victims are sometimes diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (Nielsen et al., 2015). Victims also suffer from medical conditions, such as concentration or sleep difficulties, gastrointestinal disorders, dermatological damage, sexual disorders (Yaman, 2015), cardiovascular diseases, and distress reactions (e.g., excessive sweating, palpitations, shortness of breath; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2015). Mobbing has detrimental effects on not only the victim but also the organization. Consequences for the organization may involve compensation payments imposed by the court (Duffy, 2018; Yelgecen Tigrel & Kokalan, 2009). As underlined by Lippel (1999, 2012), access to compensation for psychological disability related to work related stress is more difficult for women workers than for men, although it is difficult for both men and women to make their case. Women often occupy high demand–low control occupations (Block, Croft & Schmader, 2018), thus employee and women themselves underestimate the stress and the strain to which they are exposed.

Gender Differences in the Mobbing Phenomenon

An important variable to consider in mobbing is gender, but findings from investigations are contradictory. The analyses of large-scale studies conducted by Einarsen and Skogstad (1996) and Vartia (1996), several Scandinavian samples (Leymann, 1996; Leymann and Tallgren,

1993) and the UK studies by Rayner (1997) and Hoel and Cooper (2000) show a balanced picture. However, further research, for example the European Working Conditions Survey (Di Martino et al., 2003), showed that women experience mobbing incidents more frequently than men in most countries in Europe. Salin (2005) emphasized that findings from investigations that involve specific groups showed that members of the underrepresented sex reported higher mobbing rates. Other studies have also found higher rates of exposure of women than of men (Asfaw et al., 2014; Eurofound, 2012; Salin, 2015; Lippel, Vézina, Bourbonnais & Funes, 2016), even if this is not true in all countries (Eurofound, 2012). In the investigation conducted by Picakciefe, Acar, Colak and Kilic (2017), the authors found that women are more likely to be mobbed than men and also there are significant differences in the variables explaining mobbing depending on the victim's gender: while personal and job characteristics were more relevant for males, working conditions were more relevant for females. In Italy, investigations on workplace violence conducted by the National Institute of Statistic (Istat, 2010; 2018) showed that 9% of workers experienced mobbing during their course of professional life. The percentage of female workers that experienced mobbing during their professional life was 9.9.

Çögenli et al. (2017) argued that gender is one of the main causes of mobbing (see also Carnero et al., 2010; Cogenli & Barli, 2013; Hoel et al., 2001; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2001; Sloan et al., 2010). Regarding the experience of mobbing victimization, men appear to be more prone to same-gender victimization by a superior, and women experienced more superior–subordinate and colleague victimization, both inter-gender and same-gender (Salin, 2005). Interestingly, men identified personal failure as the root of their victimization, describing the victimization in terms of passivity, weakness, and lack of competence. In contrast, women attributed mobbing situations to a group dynamic, with victims as the scapegoats and the mobber exhibiting tyrannical behaviors (Salin, 2005). Moreover, Carnero et al. (2010) underscored that males and females suffered from different violent behaviors, with males suffering more from physical violence and most often females suffering from psychological violence (e.g., spreading of rumors, isolation, and silencing).

Current study

In the literature, clinical data are usually collected by occupational medicine centers, which administer self-report questionnaires or interview victims of mobbing (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Valentine et al., 2018). These data are highly informative because a large percentage of mobbing cases are not denounced (Parent-Thirion et al., 2007), but at the same time, these studies may suffer from interpersonal negative bias because the subjects participating in the studies are the victims and the evaluators of the phenomena. Our study is meant to bypass these limitations by using the legal proceedings from lawsuits brought by the victims of individual or organizational mobbing.

Court judgments are extremely important for understanding how and when a case of workplace harassment, physical harm, or psychological violence is considered mobbing. Moreover, the Italian Guarantor of Privacy (2018) emphasized that the diffusion of jurisdictional measures is a precious source for the study and growth of legal culture and is an indispensable instrument for citizens to exercise jurisdictional control.

In a previous work on this matter, we found differences in mobbing perpetrator, behaviors, consequences and compensation based on different typology of victims. The civil court judgement analyzed were found in an online database available to everybody and were refereed to last 15 years (2001-2016). In the present work, our aim is to provide a more refined descriptive analysis than the previous. We analyze the Civil Italian judgement of mobbing found in two online databases referred to last 15 years (2002-2017). These judgements

represent a sampling of those given on mobbing in the Italian context. The analysis was conducted according to the definition of the phenomenon provided earlier: the behaviors that characterize the mobbing, the type of workplace, the power differential between perpetrator and victim, the victim's and the mobber's typologies, the motives, and the consequences for the victim.

Method

The earlier description of the phenomenon was used as a checklist to analyze the mobbing campaign's characteristics and the consequences for male and female victims (see the Appendix for three examples of judgement coding). The method for analyzing judgments came from a previous study in Italy on the various types of victims and their experiences of victimization (Acquadro Maran et al., 2018); we revised and adapted this method for the purpose of this investigation. Using yes/no responses, we classified behaviors into the following six categories: isolation (e.g., the colleagues did not include the victim in social activities), attacks on personal and professional life (e.g., change in shift work, silencing), attack on reputation (e.g., rumors), preventing work (e.g., not giving the tools needed for a specific job), threats (e.g., a change in workplace), or physical assault (e.g., pushing). The workplace can be categorized as individual items for public administration (e.g., city hall, police force), a private organization (e.g., service company, bank, insurance), the education sector (e.g., school, university, kindergarten), or a health organization (e.g., hospital, housing assistance). The duration of the campaign was calculated in months (one item). To describe the gap between perpetrator and victim, the type of mobbing was classified as horizontal, vertical, or strategic (one item each, yes/no responses). The victim was categorized as captive, passive, ambitious, scapegoat, or hypochondriac (yes/no responses, five items), and the mobber was categorized as casual, sadist, choleric, or instigator (yes/no responses, four items). The motives were categorized as a failure to comply with rules (written and unwritten), conflict due to difficult relationships, an attempt to expel the victim from the workplace (e.g., the victim's skills could cause failure), punishment for a behavior that made the functioning of the group or the leader difficult, discrimination for diversity (e.g., ethnicity, physical, or psychological impairment), or sexual denial (e.g., denial of requests for a sexual relationship; yes/no responses, six items). The consequences of victimization were classified as adjustment disorder, mood disorder, anxiety disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder, or medical conditions (yes/no responses, five items).

Materials

Data were gathered from two free websites on civil judgments involving mobbing. To have the most complete data possible, the two websites used databases with various aims and input modalities and are addressed to diverse populations. Specifically, one of the websites is considered a useful tool for enhancing knowledge on legislative matters (https://www.altalex.com/), while the other website is devoted to informing visitors interested in the mobbing phenomenon (http://www.mobbing-prima.it/). The former is constantly updated with the latest information on initiatives (e.g., seminars, open lessons for the public, books, and legislative proposals) about the phenomenon.

We collected the data using a qualitative research design for archiving data (Parry & Mauthner, 2004). Ethics approval was not required because all data used are publicly available. All the judgments have been treated in accordance with the Italian laws about privacy (D.Lgs 196/200), the Declaration of Helsinki (2001), and under the recommendations of the Bioethics Committee of the University of Turin and Article 10 of the National Board of Italian

Psychologists Code of Ethics for the Psychologist (2018), which regulates research activities for Italian psychologists. Any data personally identifying mobbers and victims who were involved in each legal case were omitted.

The inclusion criteria for the judgments in this analysis were the last 15 years civil judgment recognizing the case as mobbing (those judgments include the definition of mobbing, as previously described), the identification of the victim(s) and the perpetrator(s), the type of behavior, the duration of the mobbing campaign, and the consequences of the victimization (as proved by the legal reports, which refer to objective assessments conducted by legal medical experts and/or to clinical reports that accompany the court final judgments). Therefore, we excluded cases in which the judgment was pronounced to be another type of workplace harassment, such as occupational stalking. Moreover, in cases of mobbing with more than one judgment (e.g., various grades of judgments for the first instance and for those on appeal), only the judgment of the highest grade according to the Italian justice system was considered for inclusion.

Procedure

The websites were visited in September 2017. The files that constituted the corpus of the court judgments on mobbing were saved in a folder. Overall, the sample contained 96 judgments, 43 from the website on legislative matters and 49 from the website devoted to the dissemination of information about the phenomenon. Twenty-three judgments were excluded: three were not in favor of the victim, 10 had lower grades than were referred to in the same case, and 10 were the same case on the two websites. Therefore, 73 judgments were included in the present work: 35 originated from the website on legislative matters, and 38 came from the website that disseminates information on mobbing.

Data analysis

Directed content analysis was used to categorize all information (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Three collaborators read the judgments. Two of them (Coders 2 and 3) were trained by the authors for the specific purpose of categorizing information as previously described and entering it into the database. They were invited to indicate any doubt about the type of victim, the mobber, or the behavior. One of the authors (Coder 1) intervened only when the two collaborators disagreed. When a divergence arose in the categorization process, the authors discussed the meaning attributed to the data until they reached an agreement on the categorization of the information. Consistency was guaranteed by reproducibility or intercoder reliability (Burla et al., 2008; Cohen's $k = .86$). Descriptive statistics were calculated using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 24. Descriptive measures (mean ± *SD*) were calculated for all the continuous variables. Because of the categorical nature of the data, χ^2 tests were used to examine gender differences, followed by effect-size calculations (Phi and Cramer's V) to estimate the practical significance of the differences. As a post hoc test, standardized Pearson residuals (SPRs) were calculated for each cell to determine which cell differences contribute to the χ^2 test results. SPRs whose absolute values were greater than 1.96 indicated that the number of cases in that cell was significantly larger than would be expected (in terms of over- or underrepresentation) if the null hypothesis was true, with a significance level of .05 (Agresti, 2002). *T*-tests were used to examine the gender differences among the mean scores (number and duration of mobbing behaviors). Cohen's *d* was used to calculate the effect size. Differences were considered statistically significant if $p < .05$.

Results

Characteristics of the Mobbing Campaigns

An analysis of the judgments showed 34 male victims (46.6%) and 39 female victims (53.4%) of mobbing. Overall, most of the participants (26, 35.6%) were 41–50 years old, 20 (27.4%) were 31–40 years old, 20 (27.4%) were 51 or older, and 7 (9.6%) were 20–30 years old. In 68 (93.2%) cases, the behavior that characterized the mobbing campaign was an attack on personal and professional life (Table 1). Female victims of mobbing in particular indicated isolation and attack on reputation (respectively, phi = 0.23 and 0.27). About half of them worked in a private company (37, 50.7%), 16 (21.9%) in public administration, 11 (15.1%) in the educational sector, and nine (12.3%) in the health sector. The duration of the mobbing campaign varied from 1 to 60.25 months (M = 10.21, SD = 11.05), with a statistically significant difference between genders (t = 2.41, p = .025, Cohen's d = 0.77). The time from the beginning of the mobbing campaign to when it was reported was higher among men than women. In most cases (61, 83.6%), the asymmetry between the perpetrator and victim was vertical, which meant that the mobbing campaign occurred between a boss (the perpetrator) and a subordinate (the victim).

Table 1
Characteristics of Mobbing Campaigns for Male and Female Victims of Mobbing

	Male n = 34 n (%)	Female n = 39 n (%)	χ^2	p	φ
Behavior					
- isolation	16 (47)	**27 (69.2)**	3.69	.046	0.23
- attack on personal and professional life	31 (91.1)	37 (94.9)	0.39	n.s.	
- attack on reputation	26 (76.5)	**37 (94.9)**	5.02	.025	0.27
- preventing work	30 (88.2)	34 (87.2)	0.02	n.s.	
- threats	22 (64.7)	30 (76.9)	1.32	n.s.	
- physical assault	26 (76.5)	21 (53.8)	0.19	n.s.	
Workplace			2.08	n.s.	
- private company	19 (55.9)	18 (46.2)			
- public administration	8 (23.6)	8 (20.5)			
- education sector	3 (8.8)	8 (20.5)			
- health sector	4 (11.8)	5 (12.8)			
Duration	M = 14.56, $s.d.$ = 14.62	M = 6.06, $s.d.$ = 5.00			
Type of mobbing					
- horizontal	7 (20.6)	5 (12.8)	0.80	n.s.	
- vertical	30 (88.2)	35 (89.7)	0.42	n.s.	
- strategic	2(5.9)	3(7.7)	0.93	n.s.	

Note. (N = 73). χ^2 = chi-square; $p = p$ values; n.s. = not statistically significant; φ = phi value. Cells with overrepresentation of subjects (male vs. female) are indicated in bold.

Actors in Mobbing

An analysis of victims of mobbing showed that the victim type was equally distributed between genders. No victim was classified as suffering from hypochondria. More than a quarter (21, 28.8%) indicated that the mobber was an instigator (Table 2). The casual mobber was referenced significantly more frequently by male victims than female victims (SPR = |2.2|), and choleric mobbers were indicated more in the judgments of female victims than of male victims (SPR = |2.3|, Cramer's V = 0.25).

Table 2
Actors in Mobbing Behaviors for Male and Female Victims of Mobbing

	Male n = 34 n (%)	Female n = 39 n (%)	χ^2	*p*	*V*
Victim:			1.95	n.s.	
- Captive	10 (29.4)	10 (25.6)			
- Passive	9 (26.5)	6 (15.4)			
- Ambitious	9 (26.5)	14 (35.9)			
- Scapegoat	6 (17.6)	9 (23.1)			
- Hypochondriac	-	-			
Mobber:			9.09	.028	0.35
- Casual	**13 (38.2)**	6 (15.4)			
- Sadist	10 (29.4)	8 (20.5)			
- Choleric	3 (8.8)	**12 (30.7)**			
- Instigator	8 (23.5)	13 (33.3)			

Note. (N = 73). χ^2 = chi-square; *p* = *p* values; n.s. = not statistically significant; *V* = Cramer's *V* effect size. Cells with overrepresentation of subjects (male vs. female) are indicated in bold.

Motives for Mobbing

Victims can list multiple motives for mobbing. They often range from one to four motives, but the average number of motives listed by a victim was 2.14 (M_{men} = 2.18, M_{wom} = 2.10). Overall, the most frequently indicated motive for the beginning of the mobbing campaign was difficulty in the relationship (45, 61.6%). Discrimination for diversity was found in seven (9.6%) judgments, and the victim's disability was a motive in four cases. Denial of sexual approach was found in five (6.8%) cases. No statistically significant differences emerged between genders (see Table 3).

Table 3
Motives in a Mobbing Campaign for Male and Female Victims of Mobbing

	Male n = 34 n (%)	Female n = 39 n (%)	χ^2	*p*
Failure to comply with rules	11 (32.4)	20 (51.3)	2.66	n.s.
Difficulties in relationships	21 (61.8)	24 (61.5)	0.00	n.s.
Attempt to expel	17 (50)	15 (38.5)	0.98	n.s.
Punishment	19 (55.9)	20 (51.3)	0.15	n.s.
Discrimination for diversity	5 (12.8)	2 (5.1)	1.92	n.s.
Sexual denial	1 (2.6)	4 (10.3)	1.52	n.s.

Note. (N = 73). χ^2 = chi-square; *p* = *p* values; n.s. = not statistically significant.

Consequences of Mobbing Campaigns

The consequences of mobbing were indicated in all judgments and ranged from one to six consequences (M = 2.9, M_{men} = 2.79, M_{wom} = 3.0). The most common consequences were anxiety disorders (53, 72.6%) and medical conditions (62, 84.9%; Table 4). Anxiety disorders were more common in judgments in which a woman was the victim than in those in which a man was the victim. In judgments, the legal medical experts indicated that victims (female and male) often reported medical conditions in cases of preventing work (χ^2= 6.92, p = .009, SPR = |2.6|; especially for females: χ^2= 8.77, p = .003, SPR = |3|), attack on reputation (χ^2= 5.63, p = .018,

SPR = |2.4|; especially for men: χ^2= 10.39, p = .001, SPR = |3.2|), and threats (χ^2= 7.68, p = .006, SPR = |2.8|; especially for men: χ^2= 10.75, p = .001, SPR = |3.3|). Mood disorders were more common, as indicated by legal medical experts, in cases of isolation among both genders (χ^2= 5.06, p = .024, SPR = |2.3|) and in cases of attack on reputation among females (χ^2= 4.22, p = .004, SPR = |2.1|; Table 5). Adjustment disorder was indicated more often in judgements in which the victim was a female and the misconduct was the threat (χ^2= 4.32, p = .038, SPR = |2.1|). Posttraumatic stress disorder was indicated in two (2.7%) cases.

Table 4
Consequences of the Mobbing Campaign for Male and Female Victims of Mobbing

	Male n = 34 n (%)	Female n = 39 n (%)	$\chi2$	p	
Adjustment disorder	14 (37.8)	11 (28.2)	1.36	n.s.	
Mood disorder	7 (20.6)	13 (33.3)	1.48	n.s.	
Anxiety disorder	20 (58.8)	**33 (84.6)**	6.01	.014	0.29
Posttraumatic stress disorder	1 (2.9)	1 (2.6)	0.01	n.s.	
Medical conditions	29 (85.3)	33 (84.6)	0.01	n.s.	

Note. (N = 73). χ^2 = chi-square; $p = p$ values; n.s. = not statistically significant. Cells with overrepresentation of subjects (male vs. female) are indicated in bold.

Table 5
Consequences of the Mobbing Campaign for Male and Female Victims of Mobbing for Behavior Types

	Isolation N = 43		Attack on life N = 68		Attack on reputation N = 63		Threats N = 52		Preventing work N = 64		Physical assault N = 47	
	Male n = 16 *n* (%)	Female n = 27 *n* (%)	Male n = 31 *n* (%)	Female n = 37 *n* (%)	Male n = 26 *n* (%)	Female n = 37 *n* (%)	Male n = 22 *n* (%)	Female n = 30 *n* (%)	Male n = 30 *n* (%)	Female n = 34 *n* (%)	Male n = 21 *n* (%)	Female n = 26 *n* (%)
Adjustment disorder	9(56.3)	9(33.3)	12(38.7)	11(29.7)	10(38.5)	10(27)	10(45.5)	6(20)*	11(36.7)	9(26.5)	8(38.1)	5(19.2)
Mood disorder	13(81.3)	17(40.7)	7(20.6)	13(35.1)	4(15.4)	11(29.7)*	2(9.1)	11(36.7)	**7(23.3)**	**11(32.4)**	3(14.3)	9(34.6)
Anxiety disorder	10(62.5)	24(88.9)	19(61.3)	32(86.5)	14(53.8)	32(86.5)	14(63.6)	27(90)	19(63.3)	28(82.4)	12(57.1)	23(88.5)
PTSD	-	1(3.7)	-	1(2.7)	1(3.8)	1(2.7)	1(4.5)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	1(2.9)	-	-
Medical conditions	12(75)	23(85.2)	26(83.9)	32(86.5)	**25(96.2)***	**31(83.8)**	**22(100)***	**26(86.7)**	**26(86.7)**	**31(91.2)***	19(90.5)	22(84.6)

Note. (N = 73). Cells with overrepresentation of subjects, male and female, are indicated in bold. * = p > .05.

Discussion

The aim of this work was to analyze mobbing in terms of characteristics of mobbing behaviors for male and female victims, the actors involved, the workplace, the motives, and the consequences as described in a sample of Italian civil court judgments. In most large-scale studies, those based on clinical data (Einarsen & Skogstad, 1996; Hoel & Cooper, 2000; Leymann, 1992; Vartia, 1996) and this study, the findings showed fairly equal victimization of men and women. We did not find significant differences in terms of motivation; women and men reported that the most frequent perpetrator was a person who had a superior position in the work hierarchy (vertical mobbing), as already shown in literature (Ege, 2010; Salin, 2005; Woodrow & Guest, 2017).

Despite these similarities and with the aim of having an accurate description of the mobbing phenomenon as recently suggested by Attell et al. (2017), our research went beyond prior studies and explored legal records to determine whether the mobbing trajectories differed based on gender. We aimed to identify possible differences between male and female victims in terms of the role of the actors involved, the misconduct, and the consequences. An interesting finding was the consequences of mobbing behavior: female victims were more prone than males to

suffer from anxiety disorder as a consequence of the misconduct. The gender variable seemed to influence a person's reactions to experienced mobbing threats. For example, females were more prone to developing a mood disorder whereas males seemed more likely to develop an adjustment disorder as a consequence of experienced mobbing behaviors. As a confirmation of findings presented in the literature, a higher vulnerability to mood disorders was found in women than in men (Acquadro Maran & Varetto, 2018; Simon & Nath, 2004). Similarly, Escartin, Salin, and Rodriguez-Carballeira (2011) showed that female employees accentuate emotional abuse and that men emphasize abusive work conditions more frequently than women.

Regarding mobbing pathways when the victim is a woman, it seems that mobbing behaviors manifest due to the perpetrator's personal characteristics and/or in dysfunctional groups and organizational processes. Men, instead, perceive the abusive acts as casual; they feel that they are the "chosen victim" because of personal weaknesses, accentuating the perception of them as weak and part of the problem. As described in this study, women tend to experience more anxiety than men; this finding may be linked to the concept that women belong to a disadvantaged group in terms of equal rights and work opportunities and usually have a lower work status than men (Hakim, 2016). They might be less visible and more exposed and therefore feel more vulnerable when perceiving negative acts, as Salin (2005) stated. In the case of men, our study clearly demonstrated that they wait longer before suing the perpetrator. Even though feelings of shame and of being isolated are common across both genders (Felblinger, 2008; Hewett et al., 2018; Lewis, 2004), men may encounter more difficulties in recognizing themselves as a "victim" and asking for help (Acquadro Maran & Varetto, 2018; Addis & Mahalik, 2003). These difficulties may be linked to the social stigma of the "weak man" and the social construct of masculinity (Giorgi et al., 2015).

Research Limitations

Some limitations of this research should be underscored. For the content, an element of novelty in this study comes from its investigation of the mobbing phenomena using legal records instead of a traditional research design that normally involves the use of self-report questionnaires and/or interviews. It is a strength of our study, but it also presents several important possible biases that must be taken into account in the interpretation of our results. First, we do not have standardized research material. We analyzed many judgments with styles of reports, which we tried to make homogeneous through the classification procedure, but this process included a subjective component, which must be contemplated in every narrative analysis (Acquadro Maran, Bernardelli, & Varetto, 2018). Second, it is important to consider it a possible source of distortion in assuming total objectivity because the court's judgment may be inherently contaminated by the information offered by the parts (with more or less interest in obtaining compensation) and by other legal elements involved in the case. Moreover, a large percentage of cases cannot be included because the victims often do not report their victimization. Only 10% or less of cases that are actioned (sued) are actually litigated. The other 90% are mediated or resolved between legal representatives before the actual trial. In addition, most cases of workplace mobbing are resolved at the workplace and do not go to litigation at all. Perhaps it is just the most aggressive of cases that end up getting through the entire process in order to generate of legal judgment (McCulloch, 2010). Furthermore, some data was missing. For example, we know that victims of mobbing need lawyers to exercise these recourses and that the access to medical evidence is equal for everybody. But we did not know if the access to the courts differs for men and women in terms of ability to raise issues. As underlined by Lippel (1999), claims by women (or men) may have been disproportionately denied which will skew

the portrait if only successful claims are identified. An analysis of the rejected civil court judgment in mobbing case could give information about the motive of claims accepted/denied.

Moreover, the mobber's age and gender were sometimes not available. Therefore, same- and intergender victimization were not analyzed. Another piece of data that could have been interesting to analyze is the role of witnesses in the mobbing behaviors. Their presence could determine whether the misconduct was stopped (i.e., supporting the victim), or they could take part in the phenomenon directly, thereby supporting and cooperating with the mobber (Acar et al., 2014). Their presence could also explain some variables; for example, the duration of the mobbing could be linked to their fear of possible retaliation for intervening in favor of the victim(s) (Bàez Leòn et al., 2016). Easier access to court judgments, regarding privacy law, could permit researchers to perform a detailed analysis of the phenomenon. Overall, our results should be interpreted carefully because the number of cases is limited and no other analysis (such as on workplace differences) was conducted. Moreover, we did not consider a comparison between the court judgments in favor of or against mobbing. Future researchers should analyze the difference to better understand when the court considered harassment in the workplace mobbing. The results should therefore be considered with respect to their restriction to court judgments considered in this study. Finally, in the interpretation of the results, we did not use some useful theory, such as the attribution theory (Martinko , Douglas & Harvey, 2006), the social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 2001) or the social learning theory (Martinko & Zellars, 1998) that could help explain the difference between women and men in perceived misconduct and its consequences. For example, in light of attribution theory (Foschi, 1996; Kelley, 1967), men's problems should be seen as much more serious. Future researchers could use the same text utilized in this investigation in light of attribution theory, social dominance theory or social learning theory to better understand the phenomenon as experienced by women and men.

Conclusion

Mobbing is a serious issue in the workplace, causing unproductive work behaviors (Hoel, Sparks & Cooper, 2001). Interest in prevention, recognition, and intervention against mobbing in the workplace therefore is of fundamental importance and is largely supported by copious scientific evidence, but the need to deepen our knowledge remains, especially in descriptive terms and dynamic frameworks that need to consider the characteristics of all actors as we did in our study. Gender-related differences are only one of the aspects that are important to consider; many other variables require a broader perspective. For these reasons, further research from various viewpoints is strongly encouraged. Finally, organizations should contribute to prevent the phenomenon and should intervene when it appears in workplace. Prevention programs could be useful and include, for example, information courses on the phenomena (e.g., underlying the prevalence of victimization among workers), the risk of victimization (underlining differences among male and female), and defense strategies offered by the Italian law. Workplaces should also offer individual measures, such as intervention programs, counseling, and psychological help, to reflect not only on victimization experienced by the victim, but also how this experience affected the well-being of those who attended the violent episodes. A more comprehensive understanding of the social impact of the mobbing in the workplace could help to improve strategies to help victims. This could disrupt the climate that permits the victimization, benefiting not only victims and perpetrators but also the organization as a whole.

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Ritualistic self-display: The interruptions in a Chinese academic talk

Ying Tong[1,2] and Chaoqun Xie[1]

[1] College of Foreign Languages, Fujian Normal University, CHINA
[2] School of Foreign Languages, Nanjing Xiaozhuang Univeristy, CHINA

Abstract: This paper engages in a politeness-based investigation of cases when forms of interruption operate as ritualistic self-display. By "ritualistic self-display" we refer to instances of language use in which an interruption is a form of "showing off," by means of which the interrupting person indicates their skill, power, social status, and so on. We point out that such instances of language use may not merely trigger complex evaluations. Even in hierarchical settings in which ritualistic self-display could be easily condoned, paradoxically it may be utilized by the interrupted person as an interactional resource to boost her or his self-image, i.e., ritualistic self-display is a leeway for a counter-display. As a case study, we examine an incident that took place in a Chinese institutional setting. Chinese data has particular relevance to the study of ritualistic self-display, considering that Chinese is often perceived as a lingua-culture in which interruption is not tolerated due to prevailing social hierarchies.

Keywords: interruption; ritualistic behaviour; self-display; politeness research, scholarly communication

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore how interruption operates as a form of ritualistic self-display.[1] Interruption is a complex concept in that there might be dissonance between observable structural disruptions in discourse and participants' understanding of the interaction (Bennett 1978). Conversation analysts hold that it is moral aspect in the common sense account of interruption that matters to participants (Hutchby 1992:368), that it involves giving considerations not just to how the interrupter does interrupting but also how the interrupted does being interrupted (Hutchby 2008:227). Evaluations are of natural and major concerns in this process of interaction. We intend to examine this phenomenon from the point of view of

1 Although inspired by Goffman's *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), the paper adopts the term "self-display" in a more general sense.

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Address for Correspondence: Chaoqun Xie, email: xie_chaoqun@foxmail.com
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linguistic (im)politeness research within the theoretical framework of ritual interaction (cf. Kádár 2017). The connection between the interruptions under study and (im)politeness in general takes various forms of identity-face issues in interactions (Spencer-Oatey 2007; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2013). We adopt the term 'ritualistic self-display' to refer to instances of language use in which interruption is used as a form of 'showing off', to indicate the interrupting person's skill, power, status, and so on. We intentionally use the expression 'ritualistic' instead of 'ritual': while the instances of language behavior that we are exploring here have many similar characteristics with medieval ritual ceremonies of self-display such as ritual duels (see an overview in Bax 1999), they are not conventionalised practices and as such lack the pragmatic fixedness of proper rituals. Such forms of interruption are interconnected with ritual (see an overview in Kádár 2017a) by the following charactersitics:

- they usually occur in interactions that have a complex participatory framework (Goffman 1981),
- they represent communally-oriented interactional behaviour in that they index willingness to align with others;
- and, most importantly for us here, just like rituals, they trigger participation in the form of counter self-display (cf. Collins 2004).

In a similar way to any ritual, rights and obligations play a central role in the operation of interruption as ritualistic self-display (see Kádár 2013; Kádár and House 2019). The person who ritualistically interrupts someone else may be perceived to have trespassed their and the other person's contextually situated rights, and as such their behaviours may be highly controversial – in a similar way to any form of interruption (see Murata 1994). At the same time, the raison d'être of such interruptions is that the interrupting person somehow feels entitled or empowered to let their voice heard, and somewhat paradoxically ritualistic self-display may be tolerated because it creates an opportunity for the interrupted person to engage in a counter self-display. Such counter-action may not even need to be hostile: i.e. the person who is interrupted may showcase his competence by handling the interruption with a relationally constructive form of professional humour. Thus, ritualistic self-display has the potential to create a ritual frame (see Kádár and House forthcoming) in which the participants can (even mutually) enhance their faces (i.e. public self-image, Goffman 1955).

By approaching interruption as a ritualistic phenomenon, we aim to contribute to previous research on interruption from an alternative angle. In a body of research, interruption has been divided into the types of interactionally 'supportive' and 'non-supportive' (e.g., Ali Al-Roubaie 2008; Cusen 2017; Murata 1994). Its occurrence can be interpreted as a willingness of the interrupter to participate in an ongoing conversation as a means for social interaction, or it may be considered as rude, aggressive or disrespectful to the speaker in terms of trespassing individual security. Associated with their institutional roles, speakers may formulate their own talk as interruptive as a means to accomplish the rights and responsibilities (Schegloff 2006), which includes launching new or managing existing courses of action. Thus, interruption may only benefit a single party in an interaction (i.e., the interruptor); as has been argued, speakers may formulate their own talks as interruptive as a means to "exert their deontic authority to determine the trajectory of an institutional interaction" (Weatherall and Edmonds 2018: 22). An exception to these is the above-discussed case of relationally constructive 'supportive' interruption which may reflect the interrupting person's solidarity and involvement with the speaker, and as such it may be beneficial to both the interrupter and the interrupted person (Tannen 1986/1992: 157).

Interruption as ritualistic self-display is a noteworthy case as it does not fit perfectly into the dichotomy of 'supportive vs. non-supportive'. It also takes a sense of self-oriented form of behaviour (Chen 2001). While such a kind of interruption may not always be relationally

supportive, its ritualistic nature creates an opportunity for the interrupted person to enhance his or her professional face by tactfully framing the uptake of the interruptions into that of interactions (see details in section 4). An additional reason why interruption as ritualistic self-display is relavant to previous research is that to date little to no research has been done on the role of interruption situated in interactions with complex participation framework (Goffman 1981), in which interruption is not *ad hoc* in the sense that it represents recurrent moves (or 'strategies'). By taking into consideration the participation order (Haugh 2013; Kádár and Haugh 2013), the present paper demonstrates that if interruption becomes a form of ritualistic self-display among a group of ratified participants, it can be understood and evaluated in significantly different ways by different participants at different "evaluative moments" (Eelen 2001: 35) of an interaction.

Along with contributing to research on interruption, the present study also hopes to contribute to previous research on interactional rituals. Erving Goffman's (1967) seminal work on urban rituals has influenced both bottom-up pragmalinguistics (e.g., Coulmas 1979; Edmondson 1981) and sociopragmatics (e.g., Kádár 2012, 2013, 2017a; Kádár and Bax 2013, Kádár and Ran 2015; Horgan 2019) research on ritual. Unlike Durkheim's ritual (1995/1912) theory which is anchored in religious studies and regards ritual as a sacred phenomenon that only takes place in specific times and spaces, Goffman (1967: 19, emphasis added), views ritual as the *face-sustaining* expressive order, i.e., as an interactionally-created order, which helps the interactants to maintain their own and others' public self-image in everyday and mundane interpersonal encounters. Goffman argues that enhancing the public self-image – i.e., the faces of both speaker and hearer – is the "main principle of ritual order" (Goffman 1967: 44), and so in any human interaction people organise their daily interactional activities vis-à-vis "interpersonal rituals" including salutations, compliments and apologies (Goffman 1967: 57), as well as presentation rituals and avoidance rituals that specify what is to be done and what is not (Goffman 1967: 71). Pragmatics and social interactional research on ritual theory has mainly focused on conventionalised ritual practices, in which rights and obligations and the subsequent order of the interaction relatively lack ambiguity. The ritualistic self-display under study contributes to previous research by exploring the ambiguous nature of this phenomenon. We intend to argue that ritualistic behaviour – just like its ritual counterpart – can help the interactants maintain their own and others' faces, or public self-image in Goffman's sense.

Interruptions under study

In the present inquiry, we approach interruption by examining a talk delivered by an invited guest speaker to a hall of graduate students at a Chinese university. This data is noteworthy because it features interruption in a talk which was monologic but which was delivered in an interactive fashion. That is, since it was the first time for the speaker to deliver the talk in front of the audience, the speaker wanted to encourage some form of supportive (albeit arguably not interruptive) audience involvement in the course of his lecture. This intention was evidenced by a number of rhetorical strategies the speaker deployed: for instance, he addressed the audience frequently in a direct fashion, peppered his talk with rhetorical questions, and inserted pauses in his talk and requested feedback from time to time. This dialogical story-telling and interactive style was well-received by the audience: many members of the audience broke out in laughter more than 50 times during the approximately 134-minute talk.[2] Thus in a sense, the seeds of interruption as ritualistic self-display were planted in the interactional context, despite

2 The present analysis does not focus on the intensity of laugher, even though we made a distinction between chuckle (heh-heh) and laughter (haha).

the fact that the talk delivered by a high-profile academic could have discouraged many to engage in a self-propelled action outside of the interactional boundaries that the speaker's rhetorical strategies encouraged. As laughter can be a resource for the participants to manage their divergence of evaluative positions (Raclaw and Ford 2017) and a source of reference for evaluations of interruption (Haugh 2010), we will deploy audience laughter as a reference point in the present analysis. Note that in this context – in which the speaker encouraged audience participation – an audience member's single utterance made at the wrong time would have not been unanimously interpreted as interruptive. Rather, perception of interruption emerged when an audience member *continuously trespassed* his or her ratified role and related rights and obligations.

The Chinese context (cf. Pan and Kádár 2011a; 2011b) makes the study of ritualistic interruption particularly relevant. In the academic event studied, the speaker was interrupted by someone who was 'below' him both in terms of physical distance (in the sense that the interrupting student was sitting down in the middle of the hall while the speaker was standing up on the stage) and academic power. Both the physical setting (the talk took place in a lecture hall that can sit more than 200 persons) and the authority of the speaker (who is a renowned academic) could have rendered interruption highly inappropriate (see also Section 4). This is particularly the case due to the importance attributed to institutional authority in Chinese culture (cf. Kádár 2017b). While the speaker holds less institutionalized power over the students given the absence of responsibility for assigning the grades, it is still safe in claiming that he is more powerful in terms of greater knowledge, academic status and age. Brown and Levison's (1987) model of strategies for performing face-threatening acts and the factors influencing the choice of the strategies would predict that the students would utilize more polite forms with more redress of disagreement. The case under study does not apply: in the present data the interrupting student did not use hedges, nor markers of hesitation, nor mitigation devices. Still in the actual interaction the interruptions seemed rather welcome – at least to a certain point – as shown by both the speaker's reaction and supportive laughter from the audience (see Section 4).

The case studied demonstrates the importance of bottom-up explorations of communicative behaviour in Chinese context, which tend to be described in stereotypical terms such as 'hierarchical'. While of course a university lecture is far less a hierarchical setting than e.g., a company, in Chinese culture there is a traditional sense of respect associated with the role of lecturer, and as such the context studied illustrates that stereotypical views on a lingua-culture have limited use when it comes to complex interactional phenomena such as ritualistic self-display. Approached from this perspective, our inquiry is broken down into the following research questions:

1) What collaboratively triggered the ritualistic self-display in the talk?
2) What are the discourse features that mark the interruption as different from the interaction?
3) In what sense would the interrupter's behavior enhance or damage the speaker's face?

These questions will be addressed in our analysis of the data (see Section 4).

Data

Conversation analytic research has proposed that there are no objective criteria for what counts as an interruption. Interruption can take place without any actual overlapping and can instead show solidarity by sustaining the conversational topic. Our CA-informed analysis is based on

the partial transcription of a 134-minute audiorecording of the lecture. As our focus is on interruption in particular, the transcript consists of approximately 6,500 characters covering mainly the interactions between the speaker and the interrupting student as well as the audience as a whole. It includes both linguistic and paralinguistic features, i.e., laughter and murmuring among the audience. To highlight the focus of the analysis, the data transcription adopts a simple pattern (cf. Rees-Miller 2000:1092) that operates with the following symbols:

(…) omitted words
[xxx] editorial gloss or other information
… pause (with indeterminate length but easily perceptibly long)
** extended sound
/ interrupted place
} overlap

For ethical reasons, real names were replaced by simple codes in our transcript: "S" for the speaker, "T" for the interrupting student, "H" for the host and "X" for other audience members.

Analysis

Since the beginning of the interaction, the speaker and the interrupting student have engaged in a series of relationally constructive ritualistic interruptions. The following excerpt illustrates how this ritualistic exchange started:

(1) 3 minutes 12 second into the talk

S = speaker
T = interrupting student
H = host of the event
X = other members of the audience

01 S: (…)呵呵应该听过的，是吧，[人名$_1$] 这个名字应该是如雷贯耳，是吧?
→ 实际上今天下午其实我本来是说要给大家介绍一下，如果大家对这个人还不是太了解的话，给大家介绍一下[人名$_1$]这个生平情况，当然了/
02 T: 介绍一下，介绍一下，我不懂。
03 X: 呵呵
04 → S: 介绍一下是吧
05 T: 嗯
06 S: 好的。额，大家知道我在介绍哲学家的生平传记呢，也是围绕他的哲学思想，而不是纯粹单纯地谈他的个人事迹(…)

01 S: (…) hah-hah [You] must have heard about him, right? The fame of [name$_1$] must reverberate like thunder, right? As a matter of fact, for the talk in the afternoon
→ I planned to make an introduction to you, if you do not know much of this person, to make an introduction to you about [name$_1$]'s life. **Surely/**
02 T: Go on, go on, I don't know
03 X: heh-heh
04 → S: with an introduction right?
05 T: hmmm.

06 S: [smiling] Alright. Well, you know when I introduce the life of a philosopher, I would thread the story around his philosophical ideology, rather than a simple account of his anecdotes (…)

In this extract, the interrupting student (T) began to talk as the speaker uttered "Surely" (Line 1 in boldface), which is not a turn-constructional unit (TCU, Sacks et al. 1974). The interrupting student's utterance might have been perceived as interruption by many because the rest of the audience was quietly expecting S at this stage to expand on the argument that "surely" initiated. Previous research (cf. Rees-Miller 2000) has pointed out that in institutional scenarios like the one studied here, the powerful party would expect "Excuse me" or an address term like "Professor" (in classroom settings) to mitigate the interruption, in particular in the Chinese context. However, the interruption did not seem to be evaluated negatively by the speaker. This might be because the interrupting student made the interruption in a 'vivid' fashion, i.e. her eagerness for knowledge might enhance the speaker's face, and also it might indicate alignment with S's strategy to engage his audience (the underlined parts in Lines 1 & 4). Note that there are various reasons – apart from institutional power difference and the sociocultural context – why the interruption could have been evaluated negatively in the present context:

a) The interrupting student is a total stranger to the speaker. The lack of relational history (cf. Locher and Watts 2005) could render the utterance "go on, go on" (Line 2) inappropriate[3] in spite of the apparent intention of the interrupter to align herself with the speaker because it trespassed situated rights and obligations.
b) The interrupting student's weak form of response (the less enthusiastic sound "hmm (Line 5)" instead of a more powerful "yes") and the lack of gratitude token that many would expect (e.g., "thank you") could also trigger negative evaluations.
c) The audience reaction – in particular, the chuckling at the particular moment of interruption ("heh-heh" [Line 3]) – indicates that the interrupting student's behaviour was evaluated as unconventional (e.g., Ruhi 2007; Terkourafi 2008).

Yet, no visible negative evaluation occured: the speaker appeared to be undisturbed, which was also evidenced by the fact that he responded cheerfully with a smiling facial expression, and that he immediately accepted the request the interrupting student had made (Line 6). In so doing he interactionally positioned the interrupting student as a legitimate communicator, and himself as an approachable and amiable speaker. This initial interactional exchange set the frame for the interrupting student's frequent ritualitic self-display afterwards and triggered the ritualistic interactional chain exchanges between the interrupting student and the speaker (Collins 2004).

Importantly, as the interaction unfolded it became evident that while all forms of interruption as ritualistic self-displaying were interconnected and influenced each other in the process, they might fulfill different contextually situated functions. If we note down all the interruptions (35) embedded in the talk between the speaker and the interrupting student along the time line, we would get the following diagram:

3 Following Culpeper's (2012) corpus studies on the strong link between inappropriateness and impoliteness, we use these two terms as synonyms in the paper.

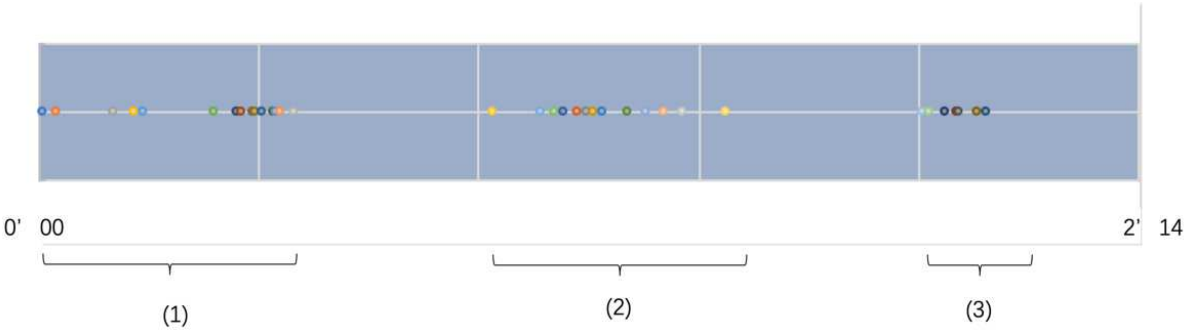

Figure 1: The time nodes of the interruptions from the interrupting student in the talk

As the diagram presents, after the initial ritualistic interaction, the student started more egagement in the talk that roughly clustered at different periods. The pattern of the time nodes mirrors the life-cycle of ritualistic self-display in the interaction: from cooperative interruption (1) through intrusive interruption (2) to finally being used as face-enhancing resources by both parties (3). The following analysis focuses on these functions to overview the whole spectrum of how ritualistic self-display operates in our case study.

Cooperative interruption: Affiliative self-display

(2) 15 minutes 17 seconds into the talk

01		S:	他没有自己家庭，也没有自己的孩子，所以他最大的乐趣， 就是哲学思考，我说这样的哲学家他不成为伟大的哲学家才怪呢/
02		X:	呵呵(…)
03		S:	[1分钟的家庭介绍]他出生在一个巨富的家庭，富到什么程度？富可敌国的家庭 /
04		X:	哇
05	→	T:	那他真的只要做一件事就好了
06		X:	呵呵
07		S:	对/
08		X:	呵呵
09	→	S:	[指着屏幕上的照片]小的、矮的是他(…)

01		S:	He didn't start a family of his own, nor did he have any child. So, his biggest pleasure was to do philosophical speculations. It would surprise me if such a philosopher wouldn't turn out to be a great one /
02		X:	heh-heh (…)
03		S:	[one-minute introduction of the family background]. He was born into an extremely rich family. How rich could it be? His family had more money than a whole nation /
04		X:	wow
05	→	T:	Well then in that case all he needed to do was but thinking.
06		X:	heh-heh
07		S:	Correct/
08		X:	heh-heh
09	→	S:	[Pointing to the photo on the screen] The smaller, shorter one, was him (…)

Despite the apparently fully-fledged closure at the end of the speaker's first turn, the interrupting student's cut-in (Line 5) might have been unexpected since the speaker immediately resumed his talk by directing the audience's attention back to the screen (Line 9). The interruption was evaluated as *cooperative*, in that the interrupting student rehearsed the speaker's claim through a form of agreement. While agreement tends to be preferred in a public talk (Brown and Levinson 1978/1987:112ff; Sacks 1973/1987: 54ff), the interruption disrupted the order of the interaction. Unlike other audience members who marveled at the speaker's analogy of the philosopher's wealthy background, which was normally expected in this setting (in particular in the Chinese context), the interrupting student made a loud and clear evaluation. This evaluative move accentuated her self-claimed identity as a 'figurehead' of the audience, i.e. it is clearly a form of ritualistic self-display. Arguably, through this direct alignment with the speaker, the interrupting student enhanced her own face by ritually showing off her competence against the audience.

Such cases of affiliative self-display count as fairly standard in the data, as the following extract illustrates:

(3) 39 minutes into the talk

01	S:	在[人名$_1$]看来很糟糕的导言当中，[人名$_2$]却极力推崇这本著作的哲学价值，他是这么说的，他说，虽然我不能够肯定这本书说了什么/
02	X:	呵呵
03	S:	但是我可以毫无保留的向大家推荐这本书/
04	X:	呵呵**
05	T:	说明他没看懂。
06	S:	<u>You are right</u> 他没看懂/
07	X:	呵呵
08	S:	他没看懂或许在他看来正因为没看懂，才显得更重要。
09	X:	哈哈**

01	S:	In the preface that [name$_1$] himself deemed terrible, [name $_2$] made a very strong recommendation of the philosophical value of the book. He said something like this. He said, 'although I am not very sure of what it says' /
02	X:	heh-heh
03	S:	'I can recommend it to you all, wholeheartedly'/
04	X:	heh-heh**
05	T:	So he couldn't follow the book.
06 →	S:	<u>You are right [sic].</u> He couldn't follow the book /
07	X:	heh-heh
08 →	S:	He couldn't follow, and most probably it is just because he couldn't follow that he saw the significance of this book.
09	X:	haha**

Similar to Extract (2), this interruption was interpreted as cooperative: the speaker picked up what the interrupting student said and used it as a summation of the prior talk (both Lines 6 & 8). As previous literature (Clayman 2002) points out, the unmitigated delivery of opinion could be a solidary act, so the speaker made a positive response. It is relevant to note here that the speaker switched the code of the interaction by saying "You are right" in English (the underlined part in Line 6). Research on code switching indicates that this move may be

disaffiliative in the sense of setting boundaries (Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou 2003: 11). This could be a possible reading for the expression *per se* and indicate the speaker's discomfort with the situation of being interrupted. Yet, this potential implication was counterbalanced by the word-by-word repetition the speaker was giving to confirm the response, and it is possible that – instead of indicating disaffiliation – codeswitching here actually helped the speaker to intensify the positive tone of his feedback to the interrupting student. The English version thematised "you", and as such credited the interrupting student as a legitimate receiver of the compliment and as such enhanced the interrupting student's face. Uttering "Correct" or its Chinese counterpart "*duì* (对)" would have been a weaker form to express the same meaning in the given context. Note that the audience – which already delivered an endorsement laughter in reaction to the speaker's anecdote during the talk – laughed out in a more intense way (the underlined part, from ("heh-heh**" [Lines 2, 4 & 7] to "haha**" [Line 9]) as the speaker responded positively to the interrupting student. This indicated that various members of the audience evaluated the interruption-response chains within the frame of ritualistic self-display as a form of behaviour that provided an opportunity for the speaker to enhance his own face.

The endorsement of the speaker prompted the interrupting student to engage in ritualistic interruption in a more aggressive way, as the following section illustrates.

Intrusive interruption: Disaffiliative self-display

(4) 21 minutes 15 secondes into the talk
[The speaker described the philosopher's wealthy family background]

01	S:	(…) 专门请到了教希腊语的来自希腊的老师，专门请到了教风英语的来自英国的老师，专门请到了教法语的. 来自法国的老师 …
02	X:	哇**
03 →	T:	现在孩子都也这样了。
04 →	S:	[语气急促]现在孩子也做不到，现在孩子也，他想这样，他即使有这个条件他也不会这么做(…)

01	S:	(…They) have hired specifically the Greek teacher from Greece, the English teacher from the UK, and the French teacher from France …
02	X:	Wow**
03 →	T:	Nowadays children can also enjoy such treatment.
04 →	S:	[said in an urgent tone] Nowadays children cannot enjoy such treatment. Nowadays children, even they had such privileges, would not choose to do so (…)

This interruption took place after a series of relationally constructive affiliative interruptions. On this occasion, the interrupting student seemed to have trespassed her rights: her apparently naïve yet provocative remark (Line 3) triggered the speaker's spontaneous reply (Line 4). The interrupting student's unmitigated disagreement (the underlined part) might have hardly been viewed as an attempt to affiliate herself with the speaker. She might disagree in order to present herself as a "as skilful contester", "capable of engaging in an intellectual discussion" (Sifianou, 2012:1560), yet her impulsive analogy was, at least from the speaker's perspective, rather uncalled-for, or he wouldn't have formulated his denial in such a haste (as the underlined part in Line 4 indicates). Although the challenge was targeted at the stance taken by the speaker, to

a certain degree the interruption questioned the speaker's identity as an expert on the topic, and unlike in other situations in which the speaker's response to the interrupting student would trigger laughter among the audience, the interruption in this extract was met with silence.

However, this clash did not result in the end of the ritualistic self-display: as the talk further unfolded, the interrupting student made further interruptions in the form of an 'intellectual discussion'. Interestingly, both the interrupting student and the speaker engaged in an exchange again, supposedly to enhance their faces:

(5) 1 hour 33 minutes and 25 seconds into the talk

01	S:	人最重要的能力，动物最大的区别是什么，就是人不仅能够创造使用工具，最重要的是. 还可以携带工具。
02	X:	[低语]
03	T:	可是猩猩也会携带工具。
04	S:	不，猩猩携带工具只是为了满足单项任务，他不会保持在身上，让它成为自己身体的一部分，只有人才能把这个工具变成人的身体的一部分而这个被变成身体一部分的工具是什么？就是我们的语言…
05 →	T:	哈哈！
06	S:	就是我们的语言/
07 →	T:	他说我们有带工具，这个工具是语言/
08	T:	[被高音覆盖]
09	S:	[高音]因为我们说话，因为我们能用语言表征那些不在当下存在的对象

01	S:	The most significant ability of mankind, the one that distinguishes human from animals, is not simply the ability to create and use the tools. The most significant ability, is to carry the tools all along.
02	X:	[murmured]
03	T:	But chimpanzees are also able to carry the tools all along.
04	S:	No. Chimpanzees carry tools only for a single task. They will not make the tools part of their bodies. Only mankind is able to turn the tool into part of the body and do you know what part of body it is? It's our language….
05 →	T:	Haha!
06	S:	It is our language/
07 →	T:	He said that we carry our tool all along and this tool is our language/
08		[inaudible overlap]
09	S:	[volume up] Because we can talk. We can use our language to represent those objects that are absent at the moment.

As this extract reveals, at the beginning of the interaction the speaker used the interruption to ritualistically display his knowledge, by transforming the interruption into an intellectual dialogue (Line 4). The interrupter's last turn is too inaudible to be transcribed (Line 9). Neither the speaker nor the interrupter dropped out in each TCU (Lines 7, 8 & 9) but judging from the adjacent pair, this elongated overlapping was the speaker's orientations to the interruption and possibly that of the interrupter: both the speaker and the interrupter intended to speak through the overlap, showcasing that neither of them assumed their position of being the addressee. By virtue of greater knowledge, the professor has an institutionalised right to disagree with students; in contrast, a student's disagreement with a professor is potentially face-threatening that challenges the professor's professional identity, and the force of the challenge can increase

with the directness of the utterance (Norrick 1991: 72ff). What is noteworthy here, however, is that the speaker did not simply silence the interrupting student (Line 4). Rather, he took an argumentative stance in negating the proposition of the interrupting student (a simple "No" as underlined in the transcription) without making her the target of the criticism (as "you are wrong" would do).

Following this response, the interrupting student made another attempt to ritualistically display herself as a knowledgeable person, on this occasion by addressing other audience members rather than the speaker himself. First, she made a loud laughter (Line 5) and then talked about the speaker in third person (Line 7). While one can only speculate about what might have motivated the interrupting student to engage in this form of interruption, it is possible that the intellectual 'exchange' encouraged her to trespass her normal rights. It is relevant here to refer to the fact that ritual chains (Collins 2004) tend to occur in an increasingly active fashion, therefore, it might be that the interrupting student acted under what ritual scholars (Goffman 1967; Durkheim 1995; Collins 2004) would define as *the spell of the ritual moment*. Irrespective of the motivation of the interrupting student, the speaker seemed to evaluate her behaviour negatively on this occasion, as his raised volume of voice indicates. This final ritualistic self-display disrupted the "one-at-a-time" (Drew 2009: 72) interaction that had been progressively formed all along.

The examples studied in this section illustrate the limited life-cycle of ritualistic self-display in the interaction. With the development of the interaction, this ritualistic practice that enhanced face to a certain point started to trigger negative evaluations, which is logical if one considers that the practice of the interrupter was only ritualistic but not ritual, and as such it lacked conventionalisation and unavoidably trespassed basic rights and obligations. As a result, the interaction became more and more hostile. Following the interaction featured in extract (5), the interrupting student went silent for a while. However, ritualistic self-display, like any interactional ritual, has the potential to be reactivated when situation changes, as the following section illustrates.

Ritualistic self-display as a shared face-saving/enhancing resource

When the talk ended, the host launched the conventional question-and-answer section. Once this section was formally opened, the interrupting student and the speaker re-engaged in an interaction, on this occasion in a highly face-conscious manner:

(6) 1 hour 45 minutes and 45 seconds into the talk

01		H:	大家有没有什么问题来问 S老师 . . . 有没有什么问题。
02	→	S:	那她的问题最多让她来说，给她说，她的问题最多。
03		H:	你的问题。
04	→	T:	我没有问题，<u>就是我无法用语言来表达，是因为我还没有想好。</u>
05		X:	哈哈**
06		S:	好，呵呵，活学活用，呵呵，那就好好想想，想清楚再告诉我。

01		H:	Does anyone have any question to ask Professor S…Is there any question
02	→	S:	She seems to have the most questions. Pick her. Give her the opportunity, since she has the most questions.
03		H:	What's your question

04 → T: I don't have any question. It's just that I can't use words to express myself, because I haven't figured it out.
05 X: haha**
06 S: Well, heh-heh, this is called creative learning, heh-heh. Think it over and talk to me when [you] have figured it out.

The underlined utterance in the transcript (Line 4) indicated a reformulation of the speaker's viewpoint in the middle of his talk (not included in the data), which elicited another gale of laughter. According to interactional ritual theory (Collins 2004), the long pause after an invitation to ask questions in public does not indicate that the audience has nothing to say, or that the speech has been boring (which was certainly not the case here). Rather, this pause may be simply due to that the speaker is "elevated into too remote a realm, surrounded by too much of an aura of respect to be approached" (Collins 2004: 72). At this point, the interactional trajectory prompted the speaker to nominate the previous interrupter as the first questioner (Line 2), supposedly not only to enhance audience participation but also to boost his own image. What is worth to note here is that the interrupting student managed to minimise the face-loss of both parties by opting out: In this face-sensitive situation, she attributed her rejection to her incompetence by quoting the speaker (Line 4). By so doing, she decreased the imposition of her negatively assessed interruption (Section 4.2) and presented herself as an attentive listener. This move opened up the way for the speaker to make a jocular response. Arguably, by appointing the interrupting student the speaker attempted to restore the face-threat the awkward situation triggered (see Extracts 4 and 5) and also to present himself as an open-minded person.

Discussion and conclusion

It has been argued that giving face is about respecting someone's personality, and as such, it interrelates with identity (Spencer-Oatey 2007; Ting-Toomey 2009; Spencer-Oatey and Kadar 2016). In Chinese social interactions, in particular, face "defines not only the Chinese social self, but also the self-concept and the relational self" (Gao 2009: 179). In this paper, this sense of "social self" is to a large extent pre-set in the institutional context. Considering the reputation of Chinese institutional contexts as hierarchical, one could have assumed that in the face-sensitive context the interruption may not be tolerated. However, as the data in this paper has illustrated, the self-concept and the relational self can be negotiated dynamically as an interaction progresses, i.e., interruption - in particular, the ritualistic type that we have studied here – may trigger complex interactional evaluations. This finding, in turn, illustrates the importance of bottom-up and interaction-based research in the investigation of Chinese phenomena of hierarchy.

In technical interactional terms, the interruptions in the data illustrate that the sequentially interruptive moves can be interactionally cooperative as well as intrusive. This shows that interruption as a ritualistic self-display can have multiple functions at the interpersonal level, ranging from constructing (or destructing) solidarity to enhancing (or damaging) identity associated face when an awkward situation emerges. Ritualistic interruption is triggered by interpersonal scenarios in which the interrupting person feels somehow entitled to interrupt, either because interruption is deemed to be capable of enhancing the interrupted speaker's face (e.g., "Alright" in Extract 1), or because by so doing the interrupting person may enhance her or his face, especially when such interruption earns a compliment in return (e.g., "You are right" in Extract 3). In a similar way with other interruptive interpersonal scenarios such as heckling - in which responding to the heckler is normative and expected behavior - in the data studied the interrupted speaker was expected to respond to preserve his face and related positive

identity (cf. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2013). The way in which one manages to handle interruption is essential. For instance, in our data the lecturer managed to impress the audience by keeping the responses flexible and humorous in most of the time, hence enhancing his face as a tolerant or open-minded lecturer. While there was a situational pressure on him to protect and enhance his professional face by attending to the voice from "below," he ultimately encouraged ritualistic self-display, hence triggering a chain of interruptive ritual interactions in which he could boost his own image. And the interrupting student's ritualistic self-display created an opportunity for the interrupted speaker to affiliate himself with the audience and enhance his relational face by encouraging more interruptions.

Simply describing ritualistic self-display in interruption as "socially appropriate" would not properly capture its multifunctions and complexities in interpersonal interaction. The Chinese context of this study has been particularly relevant to illustrate this point, considering the conventional power distance between Chinese lecturers and students. The operation of self-display in this context illustrates that ritualistic self-display is a noteworthy phenomenon, which will hopefully be explored in other situations and in other lingua-cultures.

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Social Media, Political Discussion, and Political Protest: A Case Study of the 2018 Political Protests in Iran

Mahmoudreza Rahbarqazi[1] and Seyed Morteza Noei Baghban[2]

[1] University of Isfahan, Department of Political Sciences, IRAN
[2] Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Department of Theology and Islamic Studies, IRAN

Abstract: The present paper examines the role of social media as a platform for political discussion and its effects on political protest. Social media users are expected to increase their political discussion within these social media, which will also boost their protest spirit in society. The statistical population of the study is Mashhad, the second-largest city in Iran, where 860 people were analyzed as a sample. The results depict that social media, either directly or indirectly, through the mediating variable of political discussion, reinforces the tendency to protest in society. Moreover, using social media for social interaction does not directly impact political protest, but this variable can indirectly increase the inclination to protest in society through the mediating variable of political discussion.

Keywords: Social Media, Political Discussion, Political Protest, Iran.

Introduction

Researchers have noted the tremendous advances in the field of information and communication technology in the past few decades as the basis for a new era called the Information Age in the process of transforming human civilization. In this era, communication and information technology is not merely an element like other elements, but it is the pivot and the main engine of the phenomenon of globalization because globalization of communications in the third millennium increasingly extends its effects to all cultural, economic, political spheres, and the social life of human life, and transforms the face of the world. The most important element in the process of this transformation is Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Now, in the early years of the new century, the domination of information and communication over public opinion, politics, economy, culture, and other areas of human life is unprecedented and has unique complexities. Since the second half of the 1990s, using the Internet in the economic, political, and social spheres has expanded in developed countries and to some extent in developing countries, and because of its widespread influence in various aspects of life, terms such as "the Global Village," "Planetary Awareness," and "the End of Geography" have become commonplace in academic circles. Today, mass media has dramatic effects on politics. As an increasing number of civil society actors use the Internet at

Address for Correspondence: Seyed Morteza Noei Baghban, email: noeibaghban[at]um.ac.ir
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the national, transnational, regional and global levels, the Internet's role becomes more evident in political interactions and challenges.

On the one hand, by accommodating a wide range of actors and political actors in society, the Internet and virtual social networks are instruments of political expression and dissemination of political, social, and cultural symbols, and beliefs of various social actors. On the other hand, this political discussion itself is a factor in protesting the existing political situation. Therefore, social networks are the most important manifestation of political protests in the new era, and politics and political developments are largely dependent on this massive and global medium.

Statistics show that there is a tendency in Iran towards membership and activity in social media, and Iranians always account for a significant portion of social media users. A good example is the presence of the Orkut social network in Iran in 2004, which could be considered the first emergence of social media in Iran. It grew so rapidly that Iran became the third-largest Orkut user after Brazil and America. Regarding the mobile-based communications media, Telegram is estimated to have about 24 million, WhatsApp 14 million, and Instagram 12 to 14 million Iranian users. This high volume of viewing and tracking news and content shared on social media by Iranian users shows the ability and capability of these social media to disseminate news and information in the community (Shams & Forghani, 2019). One of the reasons why the Internet and social media are becoming increasingly important in Iran is that, according to Iran Freedom House's (2019) data, Iran is an undemocratic country in which various online and offline media are under censorship and strict monitoring. However, the important thing here that doubles the importance of social media in Iran is that many people in Iran can circumvent the filtering system through proxies and filters, and to some extent freely access their desired information. In other words, after filtering out social media, many people try to re-access their favorite channels through the use of filtering tools instead of going to other sites and tools. Unlike other communication tools, social media continues to maintain its influence in Iranian society in order to influence various political, social, and cultural sectors of the society (Khodabakhshi, 2019).

Another point that makes this research significant is that Iranian society, in contrast to many other societies, is facing difficulties at the moment, which has made the issue more critical. From the first half of 2018, by withdrawing from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the United States has severely undermined the Iranian economy, leading to rising inflation, unemployment, and the devaluation of the national currency (Landler, 2018). These economic sanctions and other sanctions imposed in the past have, in some cases, led to an increase in popular dissatisfaction with the desire for political protests in Iran. Of course, since many dissidents cannot make other people aware of their protests due to government control over many offline media such as radio, television, newspapers and magazines, so the only place they can achieve their goals is social media (Nouri & Gholipour, 2018). This has increased the importance of social media in Iranian society.

Accordingly, before investigating the research model, the present study will first discuss the political evidence and factors influencing it on the basis of research literature. Then it will empirically explore how social media may increase political discussion via expanding political protests.

Use of social media and political protests

The role played by mass media such as radio and television in influencing and directing public opinion on the basis of the minority interests of political elites has led the media, especially in authoritarian societies, to move away from their traditional function as the fourth pillar of

democracy (Chen, 2014: 101). Dominance of the interests of political and economic elites over media has undermined any hope of restoring their lost role in the process of democracy, and in such a situation the emergence of cyberspace with unique characteristics such as having discursive space (Quintelier and Vissers, 2008), synchronization of communication (Mills, 1991), interactivity (Kellner, 1997), learning and decentralization (Poster, 1997) facilitates free and equal access to public information for all and facilitates rational-critical conversations in cyberspace, contributing to the formation of public opinion and, ultimately, collective political action.

Most of the major arguments, however, contend that the Internet has strengthened participatory culture and democracy, but the volume of these effects seems to change under various political regimes. Unlike democratic governments where information circulated rather freely before the introduction of the Internet in their country, in authoritarian countries, despite all the efforts of these regimes to control cyberspace, the use of the Internet has made a major difference in their citizens' access to information (Ruijgrok, 2017). For this reason, it seems that the Internet and social media in authoritarian countries have a greater impact on the attitudes and activities of citizens in different political issues than in democracies. In this regard, Golkar (2015: 61) argues that although the political system in Iran has exercised widespread control over society in the past few decades, since the 1990s Iranian students have tried to make the best of cyberspace, and create a new space in order to cope with the dominant power of the Iranian government. In other words, while citizens of democratic countries can influence political issues in various ways (parties, political groups, newspapers, etc.), they are probably the only means available in many authoritarian countries to oppose government policies Online arenas.

Some scholars argue that from the second half of the 1990s, the Internet has been very effective in encouraging and organizing massive national, regional, and global protests in different societies either virtually or in real life. By rapidly spreading information about critical human issues and disseminating protest symbols, the internet has had an important role in instigating emotions leading to mass protests (Tufekci and Wilson, 2012). Most importantly, the networking of social movements through the Internet leads to the attraction of more supporters and internal cohesion and creating a coalition between them and other social actors (Anduiza and et al., 2014). Both of these cases can provide promising behavior by providing important political opportunities. Similarly, lack of networking is likely to lead to failure and interruption in protest movements. Therefore, cyberspace has great potential for peer searching, creating coalitions and coordinating campaign goals and tactics (Breuer, 2012).

One of the most important functions of cyberspace is networking and organizing activists and supporters within the social movements of the protest. In fact, the Internet and social media have the most important technical opportunities and facilities for the movements through which they organize the protests (Van Laer and Van Aelst, 2010). Social media, with the compression of time and place, have increased the speed of communications and interconnections between activists and supporters of protest movements who are geographically apart from each other (Kaun, 2015). The new instrument has also been able to strengthen the weak links between activists and members of the movement, and the transfer of beliefs, ideals, institutions, goals and concerns of the movement to members through social media in intra-organizational cohesion and coordination of actions and protest activities (Gerbaudo, 2018).

Jost et al. (2018) argue that social media may have three reasons for facilitating political protests: firstly, social media facilitate information and news exchanges among protesters which is vital for the continuation of protests. Secondly, social media make it easier for protesters to exchange information with emotional and motivational content. And thirdly, the unique structural features of online social networks, which can be different from the political

context of that society, such as its political ideology, have a major impact on the disclosure of important information and thus the likelihood of the victory of political activists.

Use of social media and political discussion

Turning to virtual social networks enables Internet users to find the right answer for most of their online needs on those websites. On social networking sites, users can create personal profiles for themselves, including profiles, images, interests, and more. But the networking of these websites starts from the point where each user generates a list of friends, and these personal profiles are connected to each other. Each user can add friends who are on the same social network to their friends list. Users can also meet new people by searching for user profiles, viewing their profiles, and expanding their friends list. These are the most basic features of social networks and these websites have been working in recent years to provide more options for their users. Platforms like blogs and microblogging for writing short stories and daily and spatial notes, photo websites for putting personal photos, creating chat-like spaces for instant conversations among users, the ability to create conversation rooms, and fan pages similar to Internet forms are among the simplest of these possibilities (Van Dijck, 2013).

Anderson Analytics' website (www.andersonanalytics.com) claims that the most common reasons of joining social networks among users over time and among generations are as follow: friendship (75%), entertainment (55%), family contact (41%), invitations from an acquaintance (30%), contact with classmates (30%), contact with work network (5%), job search (4%), business development (3%), and others (5%). Given these results, it may seem at the outset that social networks are less political in nature, but it is undeniable that cyberspace has provided a new arena for discussion; a striking example of those blogs and social networking sites are women's in which they write and deal with subjects about which there is little possibility to talk in the real atmosphere of conversation (Howard and Parks, 2012).

Meanwhile, the field of politics has been influenced by this feature, or more precisely, by this ability of cyberspace, so that this space has become an arena for dialogue, political, party, and political events, and at times when important political events such as election is taking place, the atmosphere is affected (Shirky, 2011).

Nowadays virtual social networks are not the only new technological tools available to Internet users. Social networks can be considered beyond web sites, as media that have made changes by strengthening political dialogue in social, cultural, economic and political structures (Joseph, 2012). The challenges that social networks have faced in recent years have affected areas beyond the cyberspace. Social networks, as a type of social media, have provided significant interactive capabilities for Internet users and have contributed to increasing citizen participation in some processes. These networks have also transformed the field of political communication. Political events of recent years, from Barack Obama's election to the US presidency (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez, 2011) to unrest after the 2009 presidential election of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Rahimi, 2011), all have been influenced by the activities of social network users. Given the fact that social networks provide spaces for in-group and outsourced communication as well as interaction between adversaries and opponents, they are considered suitable tools for political dialogue, so that, to some extent, these functions and capabilities of social networks can create a new "public domain" (Garnham, 1992). In a detailed account of Habermas's views on the public sphere and the discussion of Internet capabilities, Minavand (2008) concludes that the Internet has the ability to perform three functions of the public domain, namely, providing universal access, shaping public opinion and carrying out collective political action. Referring to Internet capabilities, he points out that the technical and communication capabilities of the Internet allow for the

implementation of the functions of the public domain as a means of dialogue; however, in the meantime, the availability of political, social and cultural conditions is necessary for the realization of such an issue.

Colman believes that the new information space can be a public neutral forum for exchanging democratic discussion, independent of government control. Theoretically, this forum can be consistent with the ideal dialogue conditions considered by Habermas in the field of the public domain (Colman, 1999: 206). Thus, the usefulness of social media in political life can be seen at every level of political decision-making; from the initial motivation and the provision of information from the political dialogue to the final decision-making stage. In the first place, access to programs, documents of political plans, reports, backgrounds and other documents will be facilitated through the use of the Internet and other modern communication tools. In the next steps, new cyberspace will provide diverse opportunities for citizens and social groups to communicate with policy makers to use virtual methods instead of traditional forms of participation. In addition, contacts between people and political and social institutions through social media reduces costs and eliminates the effects of time and space constraints (Margolis and Moreno-Riaño, 2016).

Political discussion and political protests

The differential gains model proposed by Scheufele et al. (2002) shows that the effects of the media are mainly based on increasing political discussions among people; in other words, the relationship between the media and the desire for political participation is stronger predominantly among individuals who discuss political issues. Various views have been presented by researchers as to why political discussions and dialogues as a mediating variable affect the relationship between social media and political participation. In this regard, Hardy and Scheufele (2005) argue that, firstly, dialogue between people can regulate the information obtained by the media. In this context, it is argued that the information available in the media, and in particular the new online media, hampers the adoption of effective decisions by individuals to engage in political activities because of the presentation of complex and sometimes contradictory news; for this reason, researchers argue that interpersonal political interactions and conversations in their online or offline forms make it possible for them to overcome the complexities and contradictions in such networks, and to better understand the true meaning of news. Secondly, interpersonal political discussions, either online or offline, facilitate the process of news and information that lead to participatory behaviors. In other words, political discussions with friends and relatives increase the motivation of individuals to try to understand events and political phenomena. In addition, this makes it possible for such people to have more information and news resources; resources that, according to Verba et al. (1995), are also influential factors in citizen participation in political processes.

The mediating role of political discussions in the relationship between social networks and political participation has been the subject of various experimental studies. For example, results obtained by Nisbet and Scheufele (2004) and Yamamoto et al. (2013) suggest that individuals who use social media and then actively engage in political discussion with others, have a more participatory attitude than others in political affairs. But the important point is that, given that social media often advocate democratization of society (Loader, B. D., & Mercea, 2012), it is only natural that such tools reinforce critical and protest thinking and discussions in closed and authoritarian societies (Valenzuela and et al, 2012).

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: We expect the use of social media networks to increase positive tendency to participate in political protests in this study.

Hypothesis 2: This research expects that social media have a positive impact on the development of political discussion among individuals and can be strengthened.

Hypothesis 3: We expect the political discussion to expand the willingness of individuals to protest politically.

Methodology

Population and sample

In early 2018, riots broke out in Mashhad and then spread out to other Iranian cities. A survey of government officials showed that social media, especially Telegram, and the flow of news and information from them were one of the main reasons for the spread of riots in other cities of Iran (Kjaran, 2019; 11). And that is why, in addition to Facebook and Twitter which were blocked in the past, security agencies blocked some other social media, including the Telegram, shortly after the start of the protests (Kargar and McManamen, 2018).

Though different age groups participated in these roles, it seems that young people, especially students, were more active than other groups. As a result, we decided to examine the youth of Mashhad in a survey method. Research data was collected in January 2018 in Mashhad. According to the Statistical Centre of Iran, Mashhad has a population of 3,372,660 people making it the second largest city in Iran after Tehran (Iran's capital)[1]. About 900 copies of a questionnaire were distributed among the participants who were selected via cluster sampling method. About 860 returned copies of the questionnaire were considered appropriate for data analysis.

Mashhad has 13 metropolitan zones. We first randomly selected 5 zones. Then, considering that the zones were still very wide, we randomly selected three neighborhoods from each zone as the basis for sampling. After completing these steps, we had 15 neighborhoods among which we attempted to randomly select some alleys. We were personally present in the alleys to select participants in the age range of 18 to 30 for submitting them the questionnaires for completion. Of course, given the unique political context in Iran, which the security institutions of the country show to political polls, prior to the release of questionnaires, we obtained the necessary permissions from the Mashhad University's security department to solve this problem. During the release of the questionnaires, respondents were reassured that the responses were completely confidential and should not be worried about this.

The mean age of participants and their standard deviations were 21.33 and 3.67, respectively (ranging from 18 to 30 years). Moreover, 59.9% of them were male and 40.1% were female. Also, 13.47% of the participants had low family income, 79.9% had moderate family income, and 6.7% had high family income. Finally, the results of the descriptive data of the research show that 86.2% of the participants had a diploma or BA/BSc degree, and only 13.8% had higher education degrees such as MA/MSc or PhD.

[1] https://www.amar.org.ir/english

Measures

1. *Using social media for news*: According to Zúñiga et al. (2012), four items were used to measure the use of social media indicators for news: to what extent social network sites helped individuals to stay informed and get news "about current events and public affairs," "about their local community," "about current events from mainstream media," and "about current events through friends and family", where 0 means never and 5 means all the time (4 items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.79$, M = 3.32, SD = 0.94).

2. *Using social media for social interaction*: Consistent with Zúñiga et al.'s (2014) research, three items were used to examine this indicator. We specifically asked, "Thinking about the social networking site you use most often, how would you classify the following statements? (where 0 means never and 5 means all the time)" The statements were "I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto it for a day," "I rely on it to stay in touch with friends and family," and "I do not rely on it to meet people who share my interests (recoded)". (3 items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$, M = 2.90, SD = 1.10).

3. *Political discussion on social media*: This variable which consists of four items tries to identify to what extent people use social media to "write their own opinions about political issues and send it to friends and/or other people", "share photos or political clips," "discuss political issues," and "forward political commentary and news to friends or other people." (where 0 means never and 5 means all the time (4 items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .76$; M= 1.58, SD = 1.30).

4. *Political protest*: In this research, by political protest, we mean its attitudinal form that has been measured as the willingness of individuals to participate in various protest activities during the 2018 political protest. For this variable, 5 items were designed to ask people how much they would take part in activities such as "signing protest petitions", "participating in demonstrations", "participating in labor and trade strikes", "using anti-government symbols" and "distributing of anti-government declarations" (4 items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.72$; M=1.79, SD =1.43).

5. *Network size*: Individuals' political discussion network size can have a significant impact on citizens' political participation (Mutz, 2002). Accordingly, this research tries to achieve more accurate results by controlling this variable. Accordingly, participants were asked two questions about the number of people they talk online or face-to-face on political and public issues. For people with a network size of 1 to 5 people were given score 1, 6 to 10 people score 2, 11 to 15 score 3, 16 to 20 score 4, and bigger than 20 score 5. Moreover, participants who did not exchange in political discussions to anyone about political were scored 0 (2 items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$; M=1.57, SD =1.19).

6. *Improving party identification*: related literature suggests that improving party identification plays an important role in rising levels of participation (Lee and et al, 2013). There are currently two major political parties in the country, identified as reformist and principlist, each of which consists of the combination of several small parties. Accordingly, we tried to investigate the party identification using an 11-point variable. In this variable, number 1 represents highly conservative individuals. So as we approach towards number 11, the reformist degree of a person increases (M= 6.78, SD = 2.21).

7. *Internal political efficacy*: This study controls the variable of political efficacy. Findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between increasing political efficacy and political protest. In the study, two questions were used to measure internal political effectiveness: "People, like me, can influence government policies", "I have a good understanding of my country's political issues." where 0 means never and 5 means all the time (2 items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .73$, $M = 1.57$, $SD = 1.38$).

8. *News media use*: Respondents separately rated how frequently they use a variety of outlets to get news. Specifically, they were asked about their frequency of exposure to news through national TV, satirical news programs, national newspapers, radio, (4 items averaged scale, Cronbach's $\alpha = .71$; $M = 2.14$ $SD = 1.09$).

Although the content of these media is sometimes different, Cronbach's alpha indicates that there is a fairly consistent correlation between the degrees of news media consumption, which is the main objective of measuring this variable.

Statistical analyses

To test the research hypotheses, hierarchical regressions were used. However, considering the fact that mediating variables have also been used in this study, structural equations utilizing AMOS 20 were employed to examine the theoretical model and to investigate the indirect effects of variables. Variance inflation factor was a multicollinearity between the use of social media for interactions and news items as 1.15, indicating that there is no multicollinearity among these variables.

Results

In line with the literature and the research hypotheses, it was observed that the use of social media, in both dimensions of interactions and news, has a positive correlation with the desire to protest. Nevertheless, in the fifth and final research model, it was only the use of social media for the purpose of acquiring news that had a significant effect on protest activity ($\beta = 0.145$, $p < 0.001$). Based on the final model of the research, results show that the total of the five models accounts for 24.24% of the final variance of political protest (see Table 1). In the final research model, among the control variables, the strengthening of party loyalty (identification) ($\beta = 0.066$, $p < 0.05$) and the size of networks ($\beta = 0.367$, $p < 0.001$) had a positive effect on political protest leading to improved protest activity among individuals, but the level of education ($\beta = .111$, $p < .01$) is the only one that has had a negative effect on political protest.

Furthermore, according to the results of the research, political discussion on social media is another variable that has a positive and significant effect on the increase of political protest ($\beta = .082$, $p < 0.05$), which is also consistent with the theoretical literature. Finally, the results of the research model indicate that the F-value is significant in all of the investigated models and therefore, the five models seem to be acceptable.

Table 1. Hierarchical Logistic Regression Analysis of Political Protest

Predictor	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Age	.065	.065	.020	.025	.024
Female	.106**	.101**	.052	.049	.047
Education	-.054	-.067	-.111**	-.109**	-.111**
Income	.017	.009	-.014	-.025	-.019
Political efficacy		.133***	.053	.048	.046
Strength Partisanship		0.084*	0.082**	0.062*	0.066*
Network Size			0.441***	0.414***	0.367***
Media Use			0.048	0.020	0.013
S.M. News Use				0.152***	0.145***
S.M. Social Interaction				0.013	0.000
S.M. Pol. Discussion					0.082*
Total R2	0.015	0.033	0.226	0.246	0.249
F	3.308***	5.877***	32.303***	29.046***	26.848***

Notes: Standardized regression coefficients reported. N = 860. *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

Table 2 indicates the effect of a set of predictive variables on political discussion within the social media. The results also indicate that both variables of using social media for news (β = 0.085, p <0.01) and using social media for interactions (β = 0.157, p <0.001) have a positive and significant effect on political discussion within the social media. In addition, the R-Squared obtained in the final model of the research shows that the variance level explained by research variables is about 49.4, indicating that the predictive variables considered in the explanation of the political discussion are significant.

Among the research control variables, the two variables of income level (β = -0.064, p <.01) and party loyalty (identification) (β = -0.05, p <0.05) had a negative effect on political discussion in social media, meaning that high-income individuals, as well as those who support more conservative political parties and political groups, tend to have less political discussion on social media. Moreover, two variables of network size (β = 0.581, p <0.001) and the use of news media (β = 0.085, p <0.01) had a positive effect on political discussion among the research control variables, and increased the probability of participating in political discussions. The F-value and its significant level indicate that all the research models are significant and have the potential to explain the dependent variable of the political discussion.

Table 2. Hierarchical Logistic Regression Analysis of political discussion on social media

Predictor	**Model 1**	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**
Age	0.053**	0.055	-0.011	0.006
Female	0.092	0.080**	0.013	0.022
Education	0.120**	0.097**	0.032	0.027
Income	-0.004	-0.010	-0.045	-.064**
Political efficacy		0.152***	0.031	0.025
Strength Partisanship		-0.029	-0.030	-0.054*
Network Size			0.615***	0.581***
Media Use			0.107***	0.085**
S.M. News Use				0.085**
S.M. Social Interaction				0.157***

Total R2	0.037	0.060	0.456	0.494
F	8.103***	9.013***	88.998***	82.779***

Notes: Standardized regression coefficients reported. N = 860. *p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001

In addition, AMOS software was employed to study the structural relationships between the main research variables. The goodness of fit of the research model shows that it is well-fitted (Figure 1). The coefficient of determination indicates that 11% of the variance of online political discussions is influenced by social media and social media, either directly or indirectly, can explain the variance of the variable of political protest through the mediating variable of political discussion.

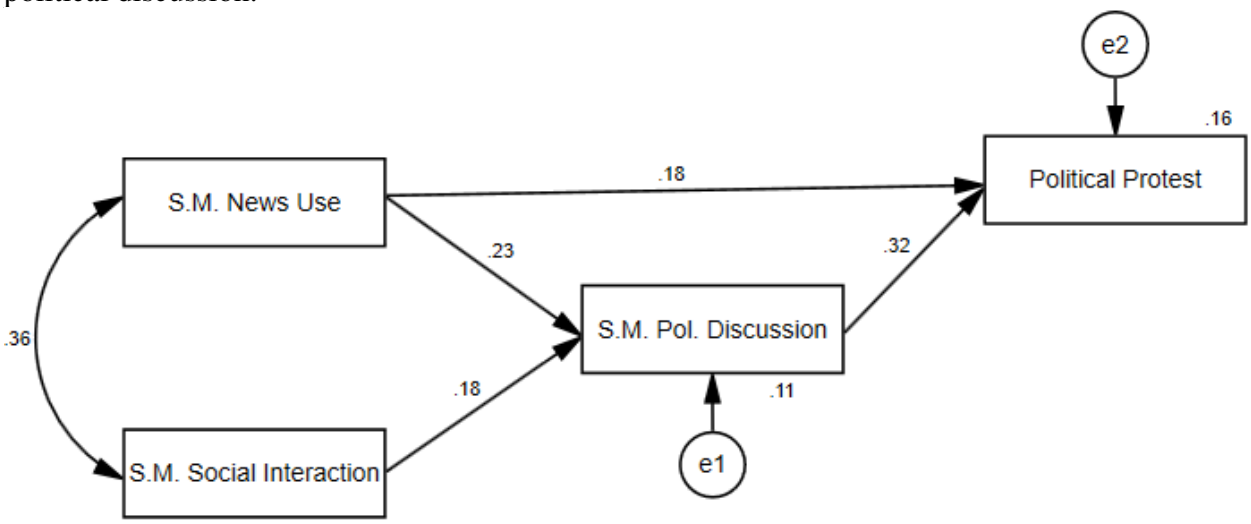

Figure 1 Results of SEM model of social media uses, social media political discussion, and political protest.

Note: Sample size = 860. Path entries are standardized SEM coefficients (betas) at p < .05 or better. Model goodness of fit: $\chi 2$ = .59; df = 1; p = .43; RMSEA = 0.000, CFI = 1.000, GFI = 1.000, RMR = 0.011. Explained variance of criterion variables: Political discussion R2 =11.2%; political protest R2 = 16.4. This theoretical model was also bootstrapped based on the standard errors with 1,000 iterations and with a 95% confidence interval.

The results obtained from the SEM indicate that both components of social media have had a positive and significant effect on strengthening political discussion within the online space. Discussions on social media have also had a positive and significant effect on increased protest behaviors in political subjects. The research results regarding the direct correlations of variables are consistent with the results obtained in the hierarchical regression previously mentioned.

Table 3 Direct and Indirect Effects of Social Media Use on Political Participation.

					β
		S.M. Pol. Discussion	<---	S.M. News Use	0.228***
		S.M. Pol. Discussion	<---	S.M. Social Interaction	0.177***
		political protest	<---	S.M. News Use	0.177***
		political protest	<---	S.M. Pol. Discussion	0.316***
political protest	<---	S.M. Pol. Discussion	<---	S.M. News Use	0.072***
political protest	<---	S.M. Pol. Discussion	<---	S.M. Social Interaction	0.055***

Notes: Standardized regression coefficients reported. N = 860 *p < 0.05 **p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001

The table indexes the direct and indirect results of social media on political protest. Standard coefficients show that the use of social media for news (β = 0.072, p <0.001) and the use of

social media for social interactions ($\beta = 0.55$, $p < 0.001$) indirectly and through political discussions within social media has had a positive effect on political protest. The Sobel test was used to determine the significance of the indirect effects of social media. As a result, a t-value of 5.48 was obtained for the indirect effects of using social media for news, and a t-value of 4.50 for using social media for interactions. Thus, it can be argued that considering the high t-value of 1.96, both social media dimensions have had a significant and positive effect on political protest. The important point in this regard is that although the regression tests in Table 1 show that the use of social media to interact directly did not have a significant effect on political protest, this variable may indirectly contribute to increasing of protest activities through online political discussions.

Discussion

The study aimed to explore the effect of social media on political protests in the Iranian society in 2018. Previous theoretical literature showed that social media, through the creation of communication opportunities (Van Laer and Van Aelst, 2010), facilitate the speed of communication and improve interpersonal relationships (Kaun, 2015), thus enabling transfer of beliefs and goals of social movements to their members (Gerbaudo, 2018). Furthermore, the structural difference between social media content and the political context of authoritarian societies (Jost et al., 2018) may increase protest activities in individuals. By dividing social media consumption in two different categories, i.e. using social media for news and using social media for interactions, this study found out that although using social media for social interactions did not have any direct and significant effect on people's willingness to protest politics, using social media for news has been able to directly and significantly increase the participants' willingness to protest. It seems that this component is consistent with the findings of reviewed literature.

The second hypothesis dealt with investigating the relationship between social media and political discussions. Ideas in this field showed that social media, by strengthening intragroup and intergroup interactions (Garnham, 1992), creates an environment beyond the control of governments (Coleman, 1999) and eliminates the effects of temporal and spatial limitations (Margolis and Moreno-Riaño, 2016), thus increasing online political discussion among individuals. Consistent with reviewed literature, findings of this research showed that both using social media for news and for social interactions had a positive and significant effect on online political discussions, and have been able to discuss the extent of political discussions. The third hypothesis of the study addressed the role of the variable of online political discussions as a mediating variable in the relationship between social media and a tendency towards political protest. The Difference Gains Model (Scheufele et al., 2002) showed that the media, mainly through the spread of political dialogues among individuals, could enhance individuals' political activities. Moreover, some other researchers, arguing that information obtained through social media can be processed and understood better by political discussions, emphasized the role of mediating online political discussions (Hardy and Scheufele, 2005). Accordingly, the results of SEM, which are consistent with theoretical literature, showed that, firstly, political discussions had a significant and positive effect on the tendency towards political protests. Secondly, online political discussion as a mediating variable can play a positive and meaningful role in the relationship between the two dimensions of social media with a tendency to political protests. In other words, the results in this regard, in line with the views of Nisbet and Scheufele (2004), show that social media, with such characteristics as anonymous identity, lower likelihood of government censorships, and availability and ease of access to news, increase online political discussions among users by creating the right

opportunities for accessing information, which in turn can increase individuals' willingness to engage in activities associated with public and political affairs. However, as Valencia et al. (2012) point out, individuals express their demands and concerns in a critical and protest way because of the limited open spaces available for political activities in non-democratic societies. Therefore, in such a space, social media increase individuals' information and awareness and convince them to challenge the current situation and protest against the government through political discussions.

Conclusion

The findings from R-squared indicate that social media strengthens online political discussion in the community more than control and bipartite variables, indicating the significance of new communication tools compared to traditional ones. As a result, it can be argued that today, virtual social media platforms are not just novel technological tools providing interesting facilities for Internet users, but social media beyond websites can be considered as a medium that has changed social, cultural, economic, and political structures. Social media, as a new type of communication tool, has provided significant interactive interactions to Internet users and has contributed to increasing citizen participation in some processes. According to the results of this study, one of the effects of these media platforms is seen in expanding the participation of individuals in political discussion.

Nevertheless, research findings show that the positive effect of social media on political discussion was not the only significant effect of these new technological tools. Social media can also directly and indirectly affect the desire of individuals to engage in political protests in society. Social media has the power of mobilizing, that is, bringing people together in real time at one time or place, or bringing them together online in a virtual environment. These media, the interactive environment, are the daring people who see activity in these networks as a kind of civil activity and even civil struggle. Therefore, they do not hide from the brutal critique of sovereignty, politicians, and official media; that is why their language seems different from other media. Social movements are generated by the mobilization or gathering of groups of people. This mobility, on the one hand, means the displacement of the population, and on the other hand, means speeding up ideas, communications, and contacts. In this situation, those who are less likely to be linked to each other will have the opportunity to find one another.

Social media, on the one hand, increases political dialogue and, on the other hand, affects them in political relations, and since the public space of the city, especially in authoritarian countries, rarely exists for dialogue; as a result, the cyberspace becomes an area for dialogue. The main characteristic of this space and these virtual social networks is their dynamism, which, given the tools provided to users, makes people better able to show their political tendencies. On social media, space has been created that compensates for the limitations and barriers of real-life situations. Virtual media provides an opportunity for interactions, communication and message transmission, and other functions that the younger generation uses well. The functions of social networks and social media are different in any society, and their role in various issues can be acknowledged that social upheavals in Iran over the past few months are an example of the political function of these networks.

Why have social media and online political debate contributed to the formation of political protests in 2018 in Iran? To answer this question, first of all, it should be pointed out that most traditional media such as radio, television, newspapers, etc. are largely in the hands of the government, so that no radio and television station is at the disposal of the opposition, and in general, radio and television are completely run by the government. Even newspapers licensed by the government are at risk of having their license revoked if they publish articles

against the Islamic Republic of Iran (Faris & Rahim, 2015). In this regard, the annual Report of the World Press Freedom Index (2019) by the organization of Reporters Without Borders reports that Iran's position fell in 2018, with a 6-fold decline, with the exception of 11 countries that suppress media freedom. Thus, the status of Iran is at the bottom of the Freedom Index table, the 170th country in the world. This seems to be the result of a lack of free access to many traditional media such as radio and television, newspapers, and magazines, which has led many opponents to move toward social media. As Nissabet and Schoffel (2004) argue, social media is inherently less filterable than other media, and this helps the opposition to spread information and news. In this regard, the results on the Google Trends (2019) show that the number of searches on Google sites to download filter breakers to bypass social media filtering during political protests in Iran, especially in early 2018, when political protests reached their peak, has risen sharply.

Reviewing social media, especially Telegram, which many users in Iran are members of, shows that some of the channels presented by the regime of the Islamic Republic of Iran as opposed and filtered are readily available in such media. They are working and delivering their news to audiences. For example, at the BBC Persian-language channel, there are currently over 930,000 members of the public, whose information can, at times, be fostered at the community level by political discussions that are not in line with government's views. Moreover, the Telegram Channel @sedaiemardom, containing a lot of deconstructionist content against the Iranian government, has over one million, two hundred thousand members, with news and information that has the potential to influence the political mentality of many people. In this regard, given the critical news available on many social media platforms, an atmosphere of discussion about issues that were once assumed to be obvious is provided. In other words, as Giddens (2013) argued, people doubt the thoughts that once seemed obvious and tried to rethink their consciousness in the new age. In Iran, social media has also been criticized for challenging the existing social, cultural, and political order. For this reason, such a space makes it possible for many people to discuss political issues in the country and the changes they desire in the political system of the country. But since many parties in the country are banned for various reasons, some people cannot transfer their requests to the political system of the country in a standardized and peaceful way. This puts the country's political atmosphere in the face of street protests.

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Is the Purchasing Behavior of Suburban Millennials Affected by Social Media Marketing? Empirical Evidence from Malaysia

Amran Harun[1,2] and Wann Huzida Roza Husin[1]

[1]Faculty of Technology Management and Business, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, MALAYSIA
[2]Institute for Social Transformation and Regional Development (TRANSFORM), Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, MALAYSIA

Abstract: An abundance of social media marketing research has been conducted on urban consumers, but notably, only a few attempts have been made in understanding suburban consumers, especially on low involvement products. Due to this lack of research, this study aims to understand how social media marketing influences online purchasing behavior of Millennials in suburban areas of low involvement products. This study adapts the theory of uses and gratification to justify online purchasing behavior among Millennials. This study also seeks to understand the role of consumer engagement as a moderator. A total of 384 respondents, aged between 18-35 years old who have experience purchasing low involvement products through online websites took part in this study. The results indicated that three (3) social media marketing dimensions, namely online communities, entertainment, and perceived trust, had significant effects on the Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products. However, consumer engagement did not moderate the relationship between social media marketing dimensions and the online purchasing behavior of Millennials regarding low involvement products. This study contributes to the integration of two new dimensions, namely entertainment and perceived trust in the concept of social media marketing. The findings have supported the uses and gratification theory, whereby Millennials in suburban areas inclined to choose their favorite online websites to fulfill their needs and wants. This finding also helped marketing managers to design their websites to cater to the unique trends of Millennials. Apart from that, this study also contributes to the marketing literature in relation to the space of low involvement products, consumer engagement, and Millennials' online purchasing behavior.

Keywords: online purchasing behavior, low involvement products, Malaysian e-commerce, social media marketing, consumer engagement, uses and gratification theory

Address for Correspondence: Amran Harun, email: amranh[at]uthm.edu.my
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Introduction

Notably, purchase intention has been widely investigated in the marketing literature, for example, in the studies of Darsono and Huarng (2015), Harshini (2015), Kosarizadeh and Hamdi (2015), Sharifi fard et al. (2016), Hajli et al. (2017), Sabri (2019), and Teo, Leng, and Phua (2019). In addition, there are also numerous studies that investigated consumer online purchasing intention, such as those conducted by Bilgihan (2016), Lim, Heng, Ng, and Cheah (2016), Muda et al. (2016), Nadeem, Andreini, Salo, and Laukkanen (2015), Krbová and Pavelek (2015), San, Omar, and Thurasamy (2015), Trisna and Sefnedi (2018), and Roudposhti et al. (2018).

A review of the available literature indicated that there is a distinction between purchase intention and actual purchase behavior. Purchase intention is basically when an individual is aware of their effort to purchase a brand or product (Harshini, 2015). However, purchase behavior is a choice, purchase, and utilization of goods and services for the utilization of what the consumer wants (Ramya & Ali, 2016). There is currently a scarcity of research on understanding purchasing behavior, especially among Millennials, relating to low involvement products. Therefore, the focus of this study is on the online purchasing behavior of Millennials to further understand their online purchasing habits. Only Millennials who had previous experiences with online purchasing were selected to participate in this study.

It can be observed that studies conducted in Asian countries involving millennials online purchasing behavior have been conducted in urban areas such as Lahore, Pakistan (Bashir, Mehboob, & Bahtti, 2015); Dhaka city, Bangladesh (Rahman et al., 2018); Kota Malang, Indonesia (Puspitasari, Al Musadieq, & Kusumawati, 2017); Klang Valley, Malaysia (Muda et al., 2016; Dhanapal, Vashu, & Subramaniam, 2015). There were only a few research studies dedicated to understanding Millennials' online purchasing behavior in suburban areas. Thus, to close the gap, this study aims to examine the online purchasing behavior of Malaysian Millennial consumers in suburban areas.

Millennials represent the biggest population group in Malaysia who use social media marketing as a medium for online purchasing (Muda, Mohd, & Hassan, 2016). According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2017), there are a total of 11,679,000 Malaysians whose ages range between 20 to 39 years old. Millennials, in the context of this study, refer to those who were born between 1980 and the early 1990s. This population is the largest group of users of the internet for online shopping (Muda et al., 2016). According to Yaz (2016), Millennials, or Generation Y, are born between 1980 and 1999, and they are a cooperative, imaginative, and entrepreneurial group that will force the development of the global luxury industry over the next era.

Currently, due to the increasing appeal of the internet in Malaysia, Millennials spend a significant amount of their time on social media, and this subsequently affects their buying behavior. Millennials, regardless of their location, are heavy users of social media. Given that fact, the focus of this study is to identify the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing behavior of Millennials in suburban areas regarding low involvement products. Currently, low involvement products are popular among Millennials, as reflected by their online purchasing behavior (Wong, 2016). Low involvement products can be defined as less important products that have less perceived risk, low symbolic value, and low emotional appeal (Park & Yoon, 2017). Low involvement products can be classified as convenience products that are frequently purchased, with low prices and they require minimal comparison or shopping effort compared to high involvement products. Some of the usual or common low involvement products purchased by Millennials include apparel, beauty products, books, and inexpensive electronic gadgets.

To understand Millennials purchasing behavior of low involvement products from several websites, this study employs the theory of uses and gratification from Katz and Blumler (1974). It aims to explain how social media marketing influences Millennials' online purchasing behavior since it is closely related to media and mass communication. According to Katz and Blumler (1974), the theory of uses and gratifications is a sociological influence of how and why individuals actively seek out a particular form of social media to satisfy specific needs. This current study conceptualizes that social media marketing comprises four dimensions, namely 1) online communities, 2) interaction, 3) entertainment, and 4) perceived trust, which are new dimensions integrated into the social media concept introduced by Karman (2015). Therefore, this study examines the influences of social media marketing (online communities, interaction, entertainment, and perceived trust) on the online purchasing behavior of Millennials and investigates the moderating effect of consumer engagement on the relationship between social media marketing and Millennials' online purchasing behavior.

Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT)

This study applies the uses and gratification theory (UGT) developed by Katz and Blumler (1974). As mentioned earlier, the UGT is a sociological influence on how and why individuals actively seek out specific social media to satisfy specific needs. In social media research, Dholakia, Bagozzi, and Klein (2004) stated that the theory can be used to identify consumers' needs and satisfaction factors to encourage them to participate in social networks, and they developed a social influence model to encourage consumer participation in virtual communities. Wu, Wang, and Tsai (2010) proposed three important assumptions for this theory, such as people are actively choosing media based on their needs; people choose media based on their wants and interests to fulfill their needs, and communication behavior is different due to social and psychological factors.

A previous study by Toor, Husnain, and Hussain (2017) employed this theory to investigate how social media influences consumers' purchasing intentions. Based on the study's assumptions, consumers actively contribute to media choice. Also, consumers' personal goals are comparatively more important than the influence of the media. The theory assumes that consumers seek out suitable media that fulfills their needs and gratifications. Thus, this theory is supported, which fits well with this study on the influence of social media marketing on Millennials' online purchasing behavior.

Online Purchase Behavior

Online shopping behavior is an individual's overall perception and evaluation of the product or services during shopping online, which could result in positive or negative feedback (Katta & Patro, 2016). Li and Zhang (2002) stated that online shopping behavior relates to a customer's psychological condition about the completion of the online buying process. Moreover, online buying or shopping refers to the process of exploring and buying products or services across the internet (Varma & Argawal, 2014). Lee and Johnson (2002) mentioned that people receive several different results, which are products, information, and pleasure in terms of shopping activity. Additionally, shopping includes information on both searching behaviors and purchasing behaviors.

Social Media Marketing

Some social media terms used in previous research studies include "social networking," "social media," and "social media marketing." According to Wells (2011), social networking can be considered as social media tools to create a direct interaction with people they are already connected to or potential individuals they wish to be connected with. Social media is an advanced technology that facilitates interactivity and co-creation and allows the improvement and sharing of user-generated content among organizations and individuals (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015). Maoyan, Zhujunxuan, and Sangyang (2014) explained that social media is a network and technology that creates hot news for internet users and conveys information to others.

Social media marketing is a medium through which consumers and businesses can communicate within a limited time, allowing all parties to use, experience, and gain benefits (Dwivedi, Kapoor, & Chen, 2015). Apart from that, social media marketing uses social media technologies, channels, and software to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange offerings that are valuable for organizations and stakeholders (Tuten & Solomon, 2015). According to Farook and Abeysekara (2016), social media marketing creates new variations of the conventional options, increases the ability of firm-to-firm interaction and customer dialogue, and strengthens communications between the purchaser and seller. In this study, social media marketing consists of four dimensions, which are online communities, interaction, entertainment, and perceived trust. The following section explains the definitions and relationships of each social media marketing dimension.

Online Communities

Online communities can be divided into two categories, which are either based on offline or online sites. Offline sites refer to communities whose interest surrounds a product while online communities conduct their activities through social media (Taprial & Kanwar, 2012). According to Pitta and Flower (2005), online communities are known as forums, which are formed for a specific reason, such as product information. Consumers can post their opinions regarding their satisfaction with a particular product after the consumption of said product. Within the areas of online communities, the consumer can initiate a forum thread about different topics, and these topics will continue for a year for new readers' upcoming reference and to widen their knowledge (Pitta & Fowler, 2005). Balakrishnan, Dahnil, and Yi (2014) claimed that the commitment given by community members to a brand could lead to purchasing intentions through positive word of mouth.

According to Hong and Kim (2012), the relationship between online communities and purchasing behavior includes online forums and keeping good affiliation with customers to understand customers' purchasing behavior. Consumers stay up-to-date on the developments of certain brands and products through online communities (Bilal, Ahmed, & Shahzad, 2014). According to Malmivaara (2011), customers find information convenient as online communities expose them to information and marketing messages that will affect their purchasing behavior. Wasko and Faraj (2000) found that people are more likely to participate in online communities due to physical reappearances such as promotions, raises, and discount or intangible returns such as status, moral requirement, and relationships. Bowden (2009) reported that customers interact with each other in online communities, and potential marketers found that it is necessary to put themselves in these communities. From the perspective of As'ad and Alhadid (2014), the score items of online communities return the highest mean in their studies. This shows that customers search for information about services and get information

from each other. Therefore, previous studies indicate a positive influence of the online communities on purchase intention. This study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: When Millennials are involved in online communities in social media marketing, this will have a positive influence on their online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

Interaction

According to Taprial and Kanwar (2012), interaction means the ability to add and invite friends to internet networking sites. Also, interaction helps users connect, share, and communicate with each other in real-time. Gallaugher and Ransbotham (2010) and Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) stated that social media interaction is the key to changing communication between brands and consumers. In order to meet mutual interests related to a product or service, social interaction acts as a platform for contributing ideas (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011). According to Kim and Ko (2010), interaction on social media is important; hence, social media itself acts as a communication tool to improve the consumer experience.

The relationship between interaction and purchasing behavior can be found in studies conducted by Balakrishnan et al. (2014), which suggests interactions in virtual communities can lead to trust developing among online consumers. Therefore, current technological advancements help online retailers to further understand their customers' needs through participating and engaging their customers in virtual communities. Moreover, instant recommendations and responses from customers help online marketers plan their marketing tactics effectively to capture market share (Balakrishnan et al., 2014). Kim and Ko (2010) said that interaction in social media is important as it enables communication, whereby social media as a communication tool may improve user experience. Kim and Ko (2010) argued that social media can happen in the form of a two-way communication. Therefore, previous studies indicate a positive influence of interactions on purchasing intention. This study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Interaction in social media marketing positively influences Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

Entertainment

Babin and Attaway (2000) defined entertainment as dimensions of aesthetic response and value and is related to intangible and hedonic attributes in shopping. Agichtein, Castillo, Donato et al. (2008) maintained that social media experiences are a form of entertainment. Being entertained, amused, and experiencing enjoyable experiences is a hedonic view of social media users as pleasure seekers (Manthiou, Chiang, & Tang, 2013). Entertainment is the capacity to fulfill an individual needs for escapism, diversion, aesthetic enjoyment or emotional enjoyment (Harshini, 2015).

The relationship between entertainment and purchasing behavior can be found in studies conducted by Kim and Ko (2010), where it was found that entertainment affects more variables than other properties. According to Lin and Lu (2011) and Sledgianowski and Kulviwat (2009), the most crucial factor affecting the behavior of social network sites users is entertainment. On top of that, Raney, Arpan, Pashupati, and Brill (2003) reported a positive evaluation of information enriched with entertaining elements to lead recipients to or re-visit a website to compare information without the entertainment features. Khan, Dongping, and Wahab (2016)

proposed in their studies that the entertaining content inspires and influences brand fans to consume and participate.

Various studies from Kaye (2007), Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011), and Park, Kee and Valenzuela (2009) defined entertainment as a strong reason for social media use. Park et al. (2009) mentioned that social media participation to some degree is driven by entertainment. Muntinga et al. (2011) found that social media customers reach brands with connected content such as enjoyment, relaxation, and pastime. Therefore, based on previous studies, there is a positive influence of entertainment on purchase intention. This study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Entertainment in social media marketing has a positive influence on Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

Perceived Trust

According to Garbariono and Johnson (1999), trust can be defined as the customers' confidence in the quality and reliability of the services that are offered by a particular organization. Besides this, the trust will increase the customers' intentions to buy a product or service from a company (Bilgihan & Bujisic, 2015; Lynch, Kent, & Srinivasan, 2001). Fundamentally, both offline and online marketing increase customers' perception of a company's trustworthiness (Diamantopoulos & Winklhofer, 2001; Gefen, 2002; Lynch, Kent, & Srinivasan et al., 2001).

The relationship of perceived trust and purchasing behavior can be discovered from studies conducted by Muda et al. (2016), which suggested that trust is the main factor since the virtual environment is higher in transaction doubt compared to the traditional setting. The studies highlight that perceived trust has a highly significant relationship with the intention of Millennials to purchase products online. According to Kim and Ko (2012), customers love the entertainment and communication provided by company websites, which result in significantly increased trust towards these websites; subsequently, profits will be increased as well. According to Razak et al. (2014), the effect of customer trust on online shopping is to eliminate any doubt even though people have different ideas about online trust. Also, online trust is becoming the main feature of e-commerce surroundings. This is supported by Kimery and McCard (2002), where they claim that customers have both positive and negative probabilities on online trust that affect whether they are willing to enable and accept the online transaction in the future. According to Gefen and Straub (2004) and Pavlou and Fygenson (2006), trust is the main factor affecting purchase behavior in retail outlets and on the internet. In research performed by Kiran, Sharma, and Mittal (2008), various factors affecting online buying behavior and attitude towards online shopping focus are based on trust. This finding is supported by previous studies strongly indicating a positive influence of perceived trust on purchase intention. This study highlights that:

H4: Strong perceived trust in social media marketing will have a positive influence on Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement is a central element of social media that enables connection, communication, and engagement of brands with consumers (Kujur & Singh, 2017). Consumer engagement can be described as the cognitive and affective commitment to an active relationship by means of a website to communicate brand value (Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Zailskaite-Jakste and Kuvykaitė (2013) viewed consumer engagement as a strategic factor to

help and maintain a competitive advantage and allow anticipation for future directions of business development. Besides, Vivek, Beatty, and Morgan (2012) defined consumer engagement as the intensity and connection of the individual's participation with the organization whose activities are initiated by customers or the organization. In other words, Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric and Ilic et al. (2011) confirmed that consumer engagement is a co-creative and interactive consumer experience with the object that prompts a specific psychological state.

The relationship between online communities and consumer engagement is that consumers purchase goods from a company's website and give product reviews on the website of the product's page after making their purchase (Wu, Fan, & Zhao, 2017). Wu, Fan, and Zhao's (2017) study identified that online community pages include a significant amount of common area and groups for specific discussion boards in which customers seek or deliver information regarding various aspects of the products and the brand. Additionally, consumers can use their accounts to access the community on the e-commerce website. Then, consumers can post messages and reply to the posts made by other community members (Wu, Fan, & Zhao, 2017).

In a study by Wu, Fan, and Zhao (2017), the relationship between interaction and consumer engagement is demonstrated via company-established community pages that act as a platform to engage and interact with their consumers and also enable interaction among consumers. The study found that a coefficient of the interaction term is positive and significant, implying that the effect of community engagement on doing online product reviews is moderated by the customer's tenure. Also, community engagement may include interactions with other customers as well as individual behavior.

The relationship between social media marketing dimensions, which is entertainment and consumer engagement can be referred to a study by Heinonen (2018). The study stated that the entertainment factor has an emotional influence on the engagement. In many methods, reading community conversations serves as an addition to reading gossip magazines.

According to Thakur (2018), there seems to be a minimal focus on existing literature regarding the relationship between customer engagement and trust. Consumers' trust towards a retailer is influenced by consumer engagement that exists when consumers visit or download content from a retailer's mobile site or app.

The relationship between consumer engagement and purchasing behavior can be discovered in a study conducted by Barhemmati and Ahmad (2015). In this study, it was found that after the process of engaging consumers through social network marketing, where the emotional connection occurs between the marketer and the consumer, there is a substantial chance for that business to achieve the core objectives of the link marketing by persuading the consumer to buy the product or service.

Consumer engagement is conceptualized as a unidimensional variable, and it has a moderating role in anticipating the influences of social media marketing on Millennials' purchasing behavior towards low involvement products. Therefore, based on previous studies, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H5: Consumer engagement moderates the relationship between online communities and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

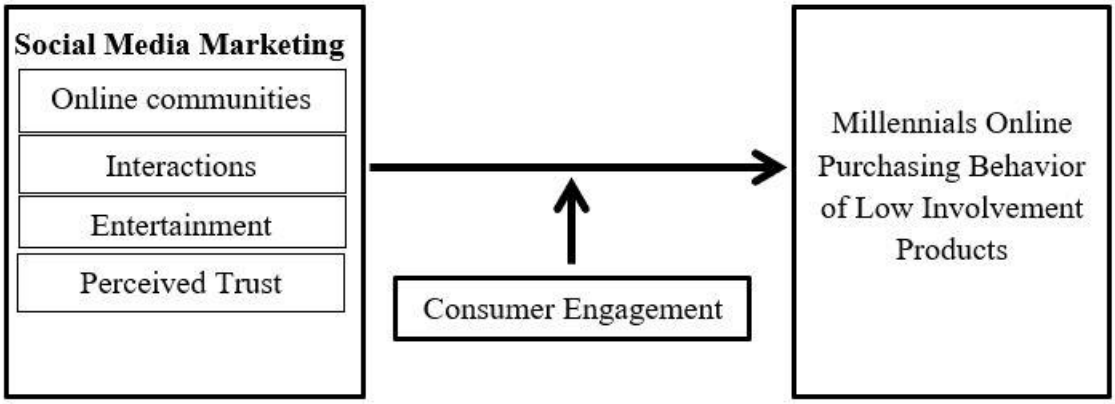
H6: Consumer engagement moderates the relationship between interactions and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

H7: Consumer engagement moderates the relationship between entertainment and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

H8: Consumer engagement moderates the relationship between perceived trust and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

Figure 1 shows the theoretical framework, which was initially adapted from Karman's model. The independent variables in this study consisted of four (4) social media marketing dimensions, namely online communities, interactions, entertainment, and perceived trust. The dependent variable is the Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products. Also, this study integrates two new social media marketing dimensions, which are entertainment, proposed by Karman (2015), and perceived trust, proposed by Muda et al. (2016). The framework for this study is as follows:

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Methodology

This study used a quantitative approach via a survey which involved Millennials. The targeted respondents were aged between 18 to 35 years old and had purchased low involvement products like apparel, beauty products, inexpensive gadgets and books from online platforms. The sampling design of this study used non-probability sampling techniques. The population of Millennials in suburban areas in the southern region of Malaysia is 1,229.5 (dosm.gov.my, 2017). Hence, the sample sizes of this study are 384 respondents, referring to Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size table because the population of Millennials in suburban areas is more than one (1) million. The research questionnaire was split into five (5) sections. Section One (1) contains the screening questions, which consist of three (3) questions: (1) to determine if the Millennials have online purchasing experience; (2) to ensure that the Millennials' range in age between 18 to 35 years old; and (3) to identify if the Millennials have experience purchasing low involvement products. For Section Two (2), the questions were divided into four (4) sub-categories; online communities (Karman, 2015; Liao, To, & Hsu, 2013), interactions (Karman, 2015; Kim & Ko, 2010), entertainment (Kim and Ko, 2010; Kesharwani, Sreeram, & Desai, 2017; Mathwick, Malhotra, & Edward, 2001), and perceived trust (Hajli, 2015; Shang, Wu, & Sie, 2017; Chu & Kim, 2011). Section Three focused on online purchasing behavior questions (Tiruwa, Yadav, & Suri, 2016; Toor et al., 2017), whereas Section Four was related to consumer engagement questions (Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlstrom, 2012; Toor et al., 2017) and Section Five focused on the respondent's demographic information. All of the measurement items for Section Two (ii), Three (iii) and Four (iv) use a five-point Likert Scale, which is a form of interval scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software to help provide the research hypothesis and to achieve the research objectives.

The data were analysed using multiple methods. We used descriptive statistical analysis to analyze the respondents' online purchasing background, and factor analysis was used to reduce the number of variables into a set of smaller ones that summarize the essential information contained in the variables. We also examined the consistency and stability of the measurement variables through reliability analysis; and correlation analysis was conducted to examine the strength and directions of the relationship between all the constructs. Finally, hierarchical regression analysis was used to test the moderating effect on the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Also, screening questions aimed to verify whether the respondents had experience making online purchases from sites such as Lazada, 11Street, Shopee.my, and My Fave.

Data Analysis and Results

All of the respondents agreed that they had experience in online purchasing, that their age ranged between 18-35 years old, and they often purchase low involvement products such as apparel, beauty products, inexpensive gadgets and books through websites. The gender distribution of the respondents was 45.6% male and 54.4% female. As shown in Table 1, more than half of the respondents (64.3%) made a purchase online in the last 1-3 months. The most popular category of low involvement products bought online is beauty products (25.8%). In terms of favorite online websites to shop low involvement products, the majority of the respondents choose Lazada (39.3%). Examples of top online websites that respondents in Malaysia love to shop at are Lazada, 11Street, Shopee.my, and My Fave (Astro Awani, 2017).

Table 1: Respondent's Online Purchase Background

Online Purchase Background	Categories	Frequency (N = 384)	Percentage (%)
Last Time Made Purchase Online	1-3 months ago	247	64.3
	4-6 months ago	137	35.7
	Total	384	100.0
Frequency Purchase Past 6 Months	Often	129	33.6
	Very Often	76	19.8
	Rarely	131	34.1
	Very Rare	48	12.5
	Total	384	100.0
Product Category Most Bought Online	Apparel	93	24.2
	Beauty Products	99	25.8
	Books	32	8.3
	Inexpensive Gadget	78	20.3
	Others	82	21.4
	Total	384	100.0
Favourite Online Websites to Shop	Lazada	151	39.3
	11Street	49	12.8
	Shopee.my	84	21.9
	My Fave	3	0.8
	Others	97	25.3
	Total	384	100.0

Factor Analysis

According to Zulkepli, Sipan, and Jibril (2017), an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted to examine the factor structure of the scale. Next, a reliability analysis was carried out to assess the reliability of the questionnaires. Exploratory factor analysis using principal component analysis with varimax rotation was chosen to identify the reliability of the social media marketing dimensions and Millennials' online purchasing behavior. According to Malhotra (2010), the varimax procedure is an orthogonal technique of factor rotation that reduces the number of variables with high loadings on a factor, thereby increasing the interpretability of the factors.

As mentioned in the methodology section, all the measurement items of social media marketing dimensions, online purchase behavior and consumer engagement were adapted from previous studies (Karman, 2015; Liao, To & Hsu, 2013; Kim & Ko, 2010; Kesharwani, Sreeram, & Desai, 2017; Mathwick, Malhotra, & Edward, 2001; Hajli, 2015; Shang, Wu, & Sie, 2017; Chu & Kim, 2011; Tiruwa, Yadav, & Suri, 2016; Toor et al., 2017; Gummerus et al., 2012). Based on Table 2, the factor analysis of social media marketing dimensions includes twenty (20) items. For social media marketing dimensions (independent variable), it results in four (4) factors as conceptualized earlier in the study. The four (4) factors are online communities (four items); interaction (five items); entertainment (four items); and perceived trust (five items). Two (2) items are removed in the factor analysis due to cross factor loading.

Table 2: Factor Analysis of Social Media Marketing

	Items	F1	F2	F3	F4
	Perceived Trust				
3	Social media marketing gives me an impression that they keep my privacy information safe.	0.796			
5	I have confidence in the contacts on my friends list on social media marketing.	0.765			
4	I trust most contacts on my friends list on the social media marketing.	0.756			
2	I expect that the advice given by social media marketing is their best judgment.	0.719			
1	Promises made by social media marketing are likely to be reliable.	0.713			
	Interactions				
3	It is possible to do two-way interaction between an administrator and user through social media marketing.		0.769		
2	It is possible to exchange opinions or conversations with other users through social media marketing.		0.728		

1	It is possible to add or invite more friends to the social media marketing online community.		0.708		
4	It is possible to share information with other users through social media marketing.		0.702		
5	It is easy to convey my opinion through social media marketing.		0.661		
	Entertainment				
4	I think the online shopping website for a low involvement product is very entertaining.			0.760	
3	It is exciting to use social media marketing.			0.749	
2	It is fun to collect information on low involvement products through social media marketing.			0.697	
5	The online shopping website gives me a sense of enthusiasm when going through it.			0.639	
	Online Communities				
1	Social media marketing online communities allow direct user input or posting on the site.				0.715
4	We are continuously encouraged to bring new knowledge about low involvement products into these online communities.				0.675
2	Social media marketing online communities are useful for gathering information about opinions of the low involvement products.				0.645
3	At least some of the members of social media marketing online community know me.				0.543
	Eigenvalues	6.94	1.92	1.47	1.11
	Percent of Variance Explained	18.65	17.47	15.53	11.92
	Total Variance Explained				63.56
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)				0.875
	Barlett's Test of Sphericity				3334.45
	Significant				0.000

The factor analysis for Millennials' online purchase behavior (dependent variable) has one (1) factor with six (6) items, and no item is removed. All the commonalities are over 0.50, and the range of factor loading values range between 0.722 and 0.867, which meet all the criteria according to Hair et al. (2010), who stated that commonalities of the variables must be greater

than 0.50. Table 3 shows the result of the factor analysis of Millennials' online purchasing behavior.

Table 3: Factor Analysis of Millennials' Online Purchasing Behavior

	Items	F1
1	I will repeat buying low involvement products in the future through the online websites.	0.850
2	I will refer to online websites to my family for low involvement products.	0.839
3	I will refer to online websites to my friends for low involvement products.	0.867
4	Using online websites increase my interest in repeat buying of low involvement products.	0.843
5	I am very likely to buy low involvement products recommended by my friends on social media marketing.	0.768
6	Using social media marketing help me make decisions better before purchasing a low involvement product.	0.722
	Eigenvalues	4.00
	Percent of Variance Explained	66.67
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	0.869
	Barlett's Test of Sphericity	1374.75
	Significant	0.000

Consumer engagement (moderator variable) items are not removed, and the analysis produced one (1) factor comprising of five (5) items. All the commonalities are over 0.50, and the range of factor loading values is between 0.759 and 0.855; which means it meets all the criteria according to Hair et al. (2010), the commonalities of the variables must be greater than 0.50. Table 4 illustrates the result of factor analysis of consumer engagement.

Table 4: Factor Analysis of Consumer Engagement

	Items	F1
1	I often visit pages of low involvement products I follow on social media marketing.	0.855
2	I often read posts of low involvement products I follow on social media marketing.	0.844
3	I often use the "like" option on low involvement products posts; I follow on social media marketing.	0.809
4	I follow brand pages of my interest to get information (e.g., new products).	0.759
5	Being part of low involvement products I follow on social media marketing, increased my trust on the products.	0.844
	Eigenvalues	3.37
	Percent of Variance Explained	67.71
	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)	0.849
	Barlett's Test of Sphericity	987.53
	Significant	0.000

Reliability Analysis

Table 5 shows the reliability analysis of social media marketing dimensions such as online communities, interaction, entertainment, and perceived trust. The findings indicate the Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.736, 0.842, 0.793, and 0.855, accordingly. As for the variable of Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products, the result shows a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.898 while consumer engagement has a value of 0.878. This indicates that all of the studied variables have Cronbach's alpha values that are greater than 0.70. Cronbach's alpha value that is more than 0.70 and closer to the value of 1 indicates high internal consistency reliability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Table 5: Reliability Analysis

Construct	Variables	No of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Social Media Marketing	Online Communities	4	0.736
	Interaction	5	0.842
	Entertainment	4	0.793
	Perceived trust	5	0.855
Millennials Online Purchase Behavior on Low Involvement Product		5	0.898
Consumer Engagement		5	0.878

Correlation Analysis

Table 6 illustrates the intercorrelations between social media marketing dimensions (online communities, interactions, entertainment, and perceived trust), Millennials' online purchasing behavior and consumer engagement are dominant at 0.01 and are positively correlated, with values in the range of 0.430 to 0.482. The results of the correlation analysis indicate that all the dimensions of social media marketing are positively and significantly correlated with the Millennials' online purchasing behavior and consumer engagement.

Table 6: Correlation Analysis

		1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Online communities	1					
2	Interactions	.565**	1				
3	Entertainment	.528**	.475**	1			
4	Perceived trust	.516**	.512**	.401**	1		
5	Millennial online purchase behavior	.528**	.427**	.671**	.576**	1	
6	Consumer engagement	.440**	.468**	.430**	.439**	.482**	1

Hierarchical Regression Analysis

As shown in Table 7, the results of the hierarchical regressions analysis reveal that all three (3) variables – online communities, entertainment, and perceived trust, are found to have significant and positive influences toward the Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products. The results show that social media marketing dimensions for online communities (0.010, $p<0.01$), entertainment (0.000, $p<0.01$), and perceived trust (0.000, $p<0.01$) are strongly influenced by the Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products. The finding indicates that three (3) of the social media marketing dimensions (online communities, entertainment, and perceived trust) have a positive influence on the Millennials' online purchasing behavior with $p<0.01$. Thus, it supports the hypotheses (H1), (H3), and (H4). Meanwhile, the social media marketing dimensions of interaction are found not to be significantly influenced by Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products as illustrated by the results (0.266, $p>0.01$). Thus, hypothesis (H2) is rejected.

Hierarchical regression analyses are used to determine the moderators' relationship in the study. The analysis for the moderator effect indicates that consumer engagement does not moderate the relationship between social media marketing with Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products as the interaction terms are not significant. Thus, hypotheses H5, H6, H7, and H8 are rejected.

Table 7: Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Dependent Variable	**Variables**	**Std Beta Step 1**	**Std Beta Step 2**	**Std Beta Step 3**
Millennials online purchase behavior	**Independent Variable**			
	Social Media Marketing:			
	Online Communities	0.118	0.102	-0.298
	Interaction	-0.049	-0.077	0.042
	Entertainment	0.494	0.470	0.884
	Perceived Trust	0.342	0.316	0.475
	Moderating Variable:			
	Consumer Engagement		0.132	0.504
	Interaction Terms:			
	Online Communities X Consumer Engagement			0.717
	Interaction X Consumer Engagement			-0.221
	Entertainment X Consumer Engagement			-0.822

	Perceived Trust X Consumer Engagement			-0.245
R^2		0.570	0.582	0.587
Adjusted R^2		0.565	0.576	0.577
R^2 Change		0.570	0.012	0.006
F Change		125.42	10.80	1.31
Sig. F Change		0.000	0.001	0.268

Discussion of supported hypotheses

H1: When Millennials are involved in online communities in social media marketing, this will have a positive influence on their online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

The results show that online communities have a positive effect on the Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products and have a significant coefficient beta (β) of 0.118. Thus, online communities are found to significantly influence Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products (0.010, P<0.01). The positive and significant effects of online communities are supported by a previous study by Balakrishnan et al. (2014). Balakrishnan et al. (2014) suggested that online consumers can develop trust by interacting in virtual communities. Besides, online retailers should use the consumer interaction platform to recognize their customers, thus investing and engaging in virtual communities on websites is considered critical. Furthermore, Karman (2015) also had related findings on the positive influence of the online communities on purchase intention.

As far as Millennials are concerned, the studies show that they are interested in making online purchases of low involvement products such as apparel, beauty products, books, and inexpensive gadgets because of convenience, reasonable pricing, and affordability. In addition to that, Millennials could chat with others about their personal opinions, stories, and perceptions. They expect to learn more about the products, services or brands in a social network environment. Also, this study shows that the Millennials expose their actual behavior through online communities, especially after purchasing low involvement products through online platforms such as Lazada, 11Street, Shopee.my, and My Fave. Millennials in suburban areas in the southern region of Malaysia, namely Negeri Sembilan, Melaka, and Johor, seek more information about their favorite low involvement products from online communities. The advanced technology helps Millennials in suburban areas to use the internet to explore and widen their interactions. They receive more information through the internet. Therefore, it is easier for them to make online purchases compared to in-store customers. This would save their transportation cost and time. Also, some of the online websites provide free shipping. Thus, favorite consumer items can be directly delivered to their homes.

This current trend is in line with the theory of uses and gratification applied in this study. For example, people seek out different social media usage to fulfill their specific purchase needs. Millennials in suburban areas purchase low involvement products through online sites such as Lazada, 11Street, Shopee.my, My Fave, Facebook, Instagram, Mudah.my, Go Shop, Zalora, Chillindo, Tabao, AliExpress, eBay, and Alibaba. Also, different online websites have unique benefits and advantages such as offering more discounts, cash on delivery (COD), free membership, collecting points and redemption of rewards, discounts on birthdays, lucky draw

prizes, and free shipping. Thus, Millennials tend to choose their favorite online websites to fulfill their specific needs and wants.

H3: Entertainment in social media marketing has a positive influence on Millennials online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

The element of entertainment in social media marketing shows a positive and significant relationship with Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products, and it has a standard coefficient beta (β) of 0.494. Entertainment has a value of 0.000 ($p<0.01$). This is in line with previous studies conducted by Kim and Ko (2010) in relation to the context of luxury brands, in which they too found that entertainment has a positive influence on purchase intention. Thus, the element of entertainment aspect is vital in the social media content. Besides that, all activities in social media should be entertaining, such as creating relationship with others, providing customized service, free entertainment content, and obtaining genuine information on personal interests (Kim & Ko, 2010).

As discussed earlier, entertainment is the new dimension integrated into Karman's (2015) framework. The results of this study show that entertainment has a positive influence on the Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products. The entertainment variable has a positive impact on online purchasing behavior due to Millennials' characteristics that can be described as trendy, youthful, and technologically savvy. Entertainment value influences Millennials' online purchasing behavior as they feel that the environment and performance of online websites are considerably interesting and enjoyable while using online websites. It is, indeed, an important dimension in social media marketing. The designs of online websites are also important to attract consumers. Thus, entertainment value could help influence Millennials' purchasing decision because it could change their perception and mood while they scroll through pictures to get information about low involvement products. According to Song and Yoo (2016), a hedonic benefit such as entertainment has a positive relationship with purchasing decisions.

Katz and Blumler (1974) used the uses and gratification theory to explain that people actively chose specific media for their specific needs. According to Diddi and LaRose (2006), this theory could be used to understand social media users' need, such as entertainment. Millennials choose specific online websites to fulfill their needs due to their attitude of always being up-to-date with the current trends in social media such as fashion, beauty products, books and gadget. Besides that, the uses and gratification theory helps marketing managers plan and design their online websites well to develop customer experience and to engage with consumers (Ngai, Moon, Lam et al. 2015). According to Toor et al. (2017), social networking sites continuously provide more features, which enables consumers to connect and chat, upload videos and promote concepts and ideas with others. Therefore, consumers, especially Millennials, enjoy using social media marketing because these online websites provide more features to entertain them during the process of making a purchase.

H4: Strong perceived trust in social media marketing will have a positive influence on Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

The findings of this study indicated a positive and significant effect of perceived trust and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products, which has a standard coefficient beta (β) of 0.342. Perceived trust has a significant value at 0.000 ($p<0.01$). This study, which is aligned with previous studies, is supported by a study by Razak et al. (2014) who found a significant relationship between online trust and repurchase intention. Furthermore, the findings are also supported by Shah Alam, Bakar, Ismail, and Ahsan's (2008)

study. The researchers found that trust has a significant relationship with online shopping. They also claim that trust is important to add value to the online shopping experience and to build relationships. In addition, Saleem, Zahra, and Yaseen (2017) found that trust is directly and positively related to repurchase intention. Besides that, Hajli, Sims, Zadeh, and Richard (2017) found a positive relationship between trust and purchase intention in the context of social networking sites. Significantly, in this study, it is shown that perceived trust is important for influencing repurchase intention among Millennials.

Perceived trust is one of the main contributions of this current study, which was initially presumed to be a significant dimension in social media marketing. The study results indicate perceived trust as an important dimension that has a positive influence on Millennials' online purchasing behavior. Millennials place trust as a vital aspect, especially in terms of payment transaction, shipping process, and product information on a website. Also, positive feedback from existing and loyal consumers creates solid trust on websites.

In relation to the theory of uses and gratification, Millennials choose social media marketing that fulfills their specific needs and wants because they trust the marketers and websites. Thus, Millennials will stay loyal to online websites that they trust most. Moreover, marketers must grab this opportunity to maintain trust to achieve a long-term relationship with consumers. This study indicates that Millennials in suburban areas also have strong perceived trust in social media marketing, and this influences their online purchasing behavior. Therefore, Millennials trust the procedure of online websites such as payment transactions and shipping processes. They place value on the fact that the delivered item must be the same as the ordered items and are well packaged.

Discussion of not supported hypotheses

H2: Interaction in social media marketing positively influences Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

Surprisingly, this current study found that interaction has no significant effect on Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products, which has a standard coefficient beta (β) of (-0.049). Interaction has a significant value at 0.266 ($p>0.01$). The current finding is inconsistent with many past research findings. For instance, Karman (2015) found that interaction has a positive impact on purchase intention. Similarly, Kim and Ko's (2010) study found that interaction had a positive influence on purchase intention. However, interaction in this study has no positive influence on Millennials' online purchasing behavior. This might be due to the poor execution by marketers and online websites in maintaining their engagement with customers, which results in poor relationships with existing consumers. In addition, this might also be due to the customer service team not properly assisting customers and resolving their issues, such as providing better understanding of the needs, problems, and interests of Millennials.

The study results show that there is no interaction on the social media marketing between suburban Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement product. This could be due to the characteristics of Millennials from suburban areas as they generally have less interaction and are shy to communicate with others. Also, this might be because social interaction in suburban areas is comparatively lower than urban areas because of limited contact with outsiders.

Apart from that, Millennials in suburban areas might face problems adapting to new changes, especially to technology. It is commonly understood that internet coverage in suburban areas is relatively poor. Due to this limitation, Millennials need to find a place that

has strong internet connection to stay connected with social media marketing. Besides that, there is no interaction between marketers and Millennials due to a lack of interactivity in online shopping. For instance, the consumer cannot have face-to-face negotiations with the seller. Also, consumers do not receive personal attention from the sales representatives to help them make purchases.

H5: Consumer engagement moderates the relationship between online communities and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

H6: Consumer engagement moderates the relationship between interactions and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

H7: Consumer engagement moderates the relationship between entertainment and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

H8: Consumer engagement moderates the relationship between perceived trust and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

None of these hypotheses were supported: The results of a hierarchical regression analysis showed that the relationship between social media marketing dimensions and the online purchasing behavior of Millennials of low involvement products is not moderated by consumer engagement. The result indicates that the relationships between the interactions of online communities, interaction, entertainment, and perceived trust with consumer engagement are not significant (F change = 0.131, $p>0.05$). Therefore, H5, H6, H7, and H8 are rejected.

This study shows that consumer engagement does not moderate between social media marketing dimensions (online communities, interaction, entertainment, and perceived trust) and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products. This might be because online marketers lack the desire to encourage consumer engagement, especially online. It is also observed that there is insufficient participation from members in the online communities in sharing and communicating their experiences of products or services. Moreover, online marketers should revise their current online website activities to engage the consumer in staying connected with social media marketing.

It is recommended that online marketers invest in placing more entertainment content to ensure consumer satisfaction while surfing their online websites. A study done by Greve (2014) found that brand image is negatively moderated by engagement activity and negative engagement activity has an effect on brand image and brand loyalty. Thus, a higher level of engagement could weaken the major link between brand image and brand loyalty. The findings in this study are not in line with the past research from Barhemmati and Ahmad (2015), whose study found that a positive correlation between consumer engagement and consumer purchase behavior was present.

Thus, customer participation is a benefit for firms to encourage consumers to make decisions. In this study, the Millennials do not participate in online communities because there is no interaction between them and the marketers. Similarly, Toor et al. (2017) supported the claim that consumer engagement has a significantly positive relationship with consumer purchasing intention. Therefore, consumers are more engaged with the sites because social network marketing activities encourage their engagement. The study results show that consumer engagement is not moderated by social media marketing dimensions and the online purchasing behavior of Millennials regarding low involvement products because marketers do not provide attractive marketing activities to attract consumers towards their products. Also, there is limited two-way communication between marketers and consumers.

Conclusion

In this study, social media marketing is a multi-dimensional variable consisting of four (4) dimensions, namely online communities, interaction, entertainment, and perceived trust. The framework of the study was adapted from Karman (2015). The result of the study confirms the significant and positive effects of social media marketing (online communities, entertainment, and perceived trust) on Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products. The integration of new dimensions of social media marketing consists of entertainment and perceived trust, as proposed by Karman (2015) and Muda et al. (2016). The results of this study illustrate that entertainment and perceived trust have positive and significant impacts on Millennials' online purchasing behaviors. However, the moderating effect of consumers shows that consumer engagement does not significantly moderate the relationship between social media marketing dimensions and Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products. This study uses theory from Katz and Blumler (1974), namely the uses and gratification theory. This study is made compatible with the theory to highlight the result of the influences of social media marketing on Millennials' online purchasing behavior of low involvement products.

The findings of this study provide several managerial implications for management personnel, especially marketing managers of Malaysian e-commerce marketplaces like Lazada, 11Street, Shopee.my and My Fave. The findings of this study provide marketing managers with a better understanding of suburban Millennials' online purchasing behavior. Additionally, the findings of this study suggest that marketers should be more concerned about consumers' complaints, suggestions, or recommendations regarding the products offered. Besides that, marketers should follow technological trends and be prepared for the emergence of evolving changes in market demand.

There are several limitations to this study. First, this study was conducted in suburban areas in the southern region of Malaysia. Secondly, this study does not differentiate which source of device Millennials use to do online purchasing—whether by using an online website or mobile application.

It is recommended that future researchers use the population of Millennials in suburban areas in the northern region and east coast region in Malaysia. Second, further research could provide more specific platforms for online website users or mobile applications for online purchasing purposes. Third, future research can follow the current framework and include additional variables like the mediating variables. Finally, a future study can be carried out using consumer engagement as the moderator, similar to the study conducted by Greve (2014). Such a study should focus on analyzing customer engagement from a longitudinal perspective with a longer timeframe.

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Aamir Memon	dpt.aamir[at]gmail.com
Ahmed Al-Rawi	aalrawi[at]sfu.ca
Ali-Akbar Mahdi	aamahdi[at]owu.edu
Antonio Caballero-Gálvez	antonio.caballero[at]urv.cat
Bene Márton	Bene.Marton[at]tk.mta.hu
Bradley Freeman	bfreeman[at]aud.edu
Brent Hale	brjhale[at]iu.edu
Brunilda Pali	brunilda.pali[at]kuleuven.be
Charmaine Du Plessis	dplestc[at]unisa.ac.za
D.Anthony Miles	drderekx[at]yahoo.com
Dan-Cristian Dabija	dabijadancristian[at]gmail.com
Danielle K. Kilgo	dkilgo[at]iu.edu
David Chack	chack[at]iglou.com
Dino Villegas	Dino.Villegas[at]ttu.edu
Elliot I. Gaines	elliot.gaines[at]wright.edu
Eunjin (Anna) Kim	eunjink[at]usc.edu
Fergal Quinn	Fergal.Quinn[at]ul.ie
Frank R. Baumgartner	fbaum[at]email.unc.edu
Grace O'Farrell	g.ofarrell[at]uwinnipeg.ca
Guangwu Feng	guangwuf[at]yahoo.com
Guillermo Lopez Garcia	guilopez[at]gmail.com
Harold Braswell	harold.braswell[at]slu.edu
Ionna Vovou	vovou[at]panteion.gr
Janina Wildfeuer	wildfeuer[at]uni-bremen.de
Jiří Holý	Jiri.Holy[at]ff.cuni.cz
Johanna Isosävi	johanna.isosavi[at]helsinki.fi
Jose Antonio Garcia del Castillo	jagr[at]umh.es

Katherine Taken Smith	Katherine.Smith[at]tamucc.edu
Kathy Burell	K.Burrell[at]liverpool.ac.uk
Kay Emblen-Perry	k.emblenperry[at]worc.ac.uk
Kenneth C. C. Yang	cyang[at]utep.edu
Lauri Haapanen	lauri.m.haapanen[at]jyu.fi
Leen d'Haenens	leen.dhaenens[at]kuleuven.be
Marcia Holmes	m.holmes[at]bbk.ac.uk
Marek Urban	marek.m.urban[at]gmail.com
Maria Petrova Bakardjieva	bakardji[at]ucalgary.ca
Marie McAuliffe	marie.mcauliffe[at]anu.edu.au
Markus Ojala	markus.ojala[at]helsinki.fi
Matthew W. Dunne	MDunne[at]hcc.commnet.edu
Max Hanska-Ahy	M.T.Hanska-Ahy[at]lse.ac.uk
Miguel Franquet Dos Santos Silva	miguelfd[at]blanquerna.url.edu
Miroslava R. Ristić	Miroslava.Ristic[at]uf.bg.ac.rs
Monika Metykova	M.Metykova[at]sussex.ac.uk
Monika.Vrzgulová	Monika.Vrzgulova[at]savba.sk
Murat Akser	m.akser[at]ulster.ac.uk
Nick Cull	cull[at]usc.edu
Nicole Yang Lai Fong	laifong.yang[at]taylors.edu.my
Nina Gronlykke Mollerup	ninagm[at]hum.ku.dk
Peter Jones	pjones[at]glos.ac.uk
Rafał Klepka	rafal.klepka[at]up.krakow.pl
Ramón Salaverría Aliaga	rsalaver[at]unav.es
Raquel Tarullo	raqueltarullo[at]gmail.com
Rebecca Wallace	r.wallace[at]queensu.ca
Richard R. Halverson	rich.halverson[at]wisc.edu
Rolando Marini	Rolando.Marini[at]unistrapg.it
Romele Alberto	Alberto.Romele[at]univ-catholille.fr
Sahana Udupa	sahana.udupa[at]lmu.de
Samantha Mitschke	sxm553[at]alumni.bham.ac.uk
Samuel Parker	ParkerS16[at]cardiff.ac.uk
Sara Sylvester	SylvesterSM[at]cardiff.ac.uk
Scott Selisker	selisker[at]email.arizona.edu
Seong Choul Hong	hong21[at]kyonggi.ac.kr
Sharmila Pixy Ferris	FerrisS[at]wpunj.edu
Shuk Mei Agnes KU	soagnes[at]ust.hk
Tanya Notley	T.Notley[at]westernsydney.edu.au
Virginás Andrea	virginas.andrea[at]kv.sapientia.ro
Zhengdao Ye	zhengdao.ye[at]anu.edu.au
Zsolt Gyenge	zsengezsolt[at]yahoo.com