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THE DOMINANT OF VALUES AND LIFESTYLES (VALS) BETWEEN GENERATIONS IN MALAYSIA

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian citizen consist of four different cohort that are baby boomers, generation-X, generation-Y and millennial. Each generation produces a different value and lifestyles (VALS) dominancy based on their living styles, occupation, and social status. This paper highlighted the dominancy of the Values and Lifestyles (VALS) between each generation in Malaysia. The respondents of the questionnaires were selected by using snowball approach and analyzed using Orange Application. This application produces a graph which is then translated into a readable table.

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1. Introduction

Each individual is born into a different cohort and has been categorized based on their particular sociality and political moments, which will eventually develop their personalities, unique values and belief system and, each cohort have different expectations and personal traits (Queiri, Wan Yusoff, & Dwaikat, 2015). There are several listed cohorts such as Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y and Generation Z (Millennial) around the globe. In 2019, the Malaysian Department of Statistics reported that Malaysia is divided into several ethnics consists of Malay (69%), Chinese (23%), Indians (7%), and other ethnic minorities (1%) (Tjiptono, Khan, Yeong, & Kunchambo, 2020) and each ethnic consists of 4 type of generation named Baby Boomers, Generation-X, Generation-Y and Generation-Z or Millennial. Based on Worldometer in 2020, Generation-Y and Generation-Z represent the largest generation compared to Baby Boomers and Generation-X. Each generation shows different psychographic based on their cohort.

Psychographics is the science of using demographics and psychology to understand consumers in a better way (Naami, Ashouri, & Soleimani, 2017). Moreover, Psychographic is the analysis based on peoples activities, attitudes, interests, opinions, buying behaviour, and how they feel about life (Garg, Swami, & Singh, 2018). However, (Tassiopoulos, Nuntsu, & Haydam, 2004) stated that psychographic also include personalities. Wells (1975) started research on how standardized personality inventory correlates with consumer behaviour. One of the famous methods to verify psychographic segmentation is by using values and lifestyles (VALS) and classified it into eight segments based on a certain set of characteristics (Garg et al., 2018). Values and Lifestyles (VALS) from one person to another person are based on their personalities, personal traits, different expectations and unique values as stated in generational theory (Tjiptono et al., 2020). This paper will highlight the relationship between VALS and generation in Malaysia and the dominancy of each VALS variable and generation in Malaysia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Values and Lifestyles (VALS)

Lifestyles is defines on the pattern followed by the people in their lives including how they spend their money and time, their activities, opinions and interest and also the world around them. In addition, it can be defined by consumer behavior, the taste or preferences that lacks social identity and culture (Naami et al., 2017). The research conducted by (Rohaizat et al., 2009) stated that "products are the building blocks of lifestyles". Rohaizat et al., (2009) stated that customer lifestyles are defined by the consumption choices that they make in a variety of product categories.

The art of viewing people based on their demographic, wants, needs belief and attitude is called values and lifestyles (VALS). VALS can construct a linkage between people buying behavior and personality traits by analyzing and predict their consumer preferences and choices using psychology. SRI International developed the famous method of VALS in 1978 (Garg et al., 2018). This strategic business insights developed VALS framework on the bases of people's demographic, attitudes, beliefs and wants, and explained consumer psychological behavior in a deeper ways (Raj & K., 2015). There are eight segments of VALS system that range from highest motivation and resources called the *Innovators*, to the lowest part of it labeled as the *Survivors*. Between the highest and lowest that are motivated by ideals was labeled as *Thinkers* who have high resources and the *Believers* that come to low resources. In addition, VALS that motivated by achievement are *Achievers* (high resources) and *Strivers* (low resources) and VALS that motivated by self-expression are called *Experiencers* for high resources and *Makers* for low resources (Raj & K., 2015). Figure 1 shows the eight segments of VALS system.



Figure 1: VALS Framework (SBI, 2021)

However, exploratory factor analysis was conducted by (Rohaizat et al., 2009) to identify a common underlying dimensions for Malaysian citizen. From the research, they identified nine factors that possibly refer to Malaysian citizen based on the principal components analysis that are Modern Believers, Aventayle, Contemporary Leaders, Sufficient Makers, Knowledge Thinkers, Confident Conservatives, Excitement Seekers, Disciplined Innovators and Solo Sustainers.

The present study adopts the questionnaire from Rohaizat et. al. (2009). From the questionnaire, there are five questions referring to the person who prefer fashion and can be called as fashionable. The fashionable like to show off and are also trendy. Malaysian citizen who load heavily in this factor is labeled as *Modern Believers*. The researcher believed that this component represents the "core" dimension of Malaysian population. Next, five questions that mainly related to adventurous spirit of lifestyle is called *Aventayle*. The people of this characteristic are likely to attempt new and exciting challenges to feel self-fulfillment. In the questionnaire, there also five questions that referring to leadership characteristics. The respondents who fall in this factor tend to hold favorable views in respect to issues with others. They are called *Contemporary Leaders*.

Three questions in the questionnaire related to creativity and risk taking. The individuals who score highly in this factor place a great deal of emphasis on the tangible aspects of practicality and functionality and are labeled as *Sufficient Makers*. In addition, individuals who highly score in five questions that relates to knowledge are called *Knowledge Thinkers*. A traditional and religious value has also been listed in the questionnaire. This type of person is concern about social environment and a person who highly scores in this type of questions is labeled as *Confident*

Conservatives. There are three questions that correlated with excitement, therefore person who highly scores in this questions is labeled as *Excitement Seekers*. Next, there are questions related to technical skills. Respondents who score highly in this category tend to place high important on the sophisticated and practicality. The respondents is labeled as *Discipline Innovators*. Lastly, several questions is placed to measure the uncertain and insecure behavior of individualistic and been labeled as *Solo Sustainers*.

2.2 Malaysia Generation

Currently, Malaysia consist of three different cohort in a workplace namely as Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1964), Generation-X (born between 1965-1979) and Generation-Y (born between 1980-1999) (Queiri et al., 2015). However, research conducted by (Tjiptono et al., 2020) stated that the generation after Generation-Y is Generation-Z or Millennial that consist of people who born on 2000 until now. The literature of generation gap also reported inconsistent with regards to when generations starts or end. For example, Generation-Y (person who born in 1999) can be interchangeably coined as Millennial or Generation-X if the person born in 1980. It is perceived that during the two decades, fundamental life events are experienced at the developmental stage that signifies a new generation.

However, the Department of Statistics in Malaysia has given classification based on the one's birth year (Queiri et al., 2015). According to Worldometer (2020), the largest generation cohort in Malaysia consists of Generation-Y (18%), and Generation-Z (25%) compared to Generation-X (18%) and the Baby Boomers (13%).The majority population composed by Malay etcnicity followed by Chinese and Indian (Tjiptono et al., 2020) and others etcnicity.

3. Methodology

Google form used to develop the survey and the link of the survey distributed by using social media such as Facebook and Whatsapp application. The target populations are Malaysian citizens who are working in government, private or self employed, respectively. In this study, we used snowball sampling method to gather respondents.

Snowball sampling is a non random sampling method that uses a few cases to help encourage other cases to take part in the study, thereby it would be increasing sample size (Taherdoost, 2018). Snowball sampling method is carried on by distributing the link of the questionnaire to small target population who encourage the others to take part in this study. From 858 respondents who completed the survey, 3.85% of the responds being discarded due to invalid answers . It had identified by analyzing the reserve-score items implemented in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire for this study is adopted from (Rohaizat et al., 2009) and been translated into Malay language from English by a bilingual associate. The translation is needed because the target respondents are Malaysian who are non-natives English speakers. The questionnaire is divided into two parts; part A and part B. Part A include demographic details of the respondents such as gender, date of birth, nationality, marital status, race, level of education, their monthly income and the job position. Part B consists of the 35 items adopted from psychographic

dimensions by Rohaizat et al., (2009). The questions were a four point Likert scale with "1" (Mostly disagree) to "4"(Mostly agree). The data was analyzed using Orange for data mining to interpret the result.

4. Results

The total population samples are 858 (n = 858) and are divided by gender. The male respondents comprise about 344 (40.1%) and female respondents consist of 514 (59.9%). Number of married respondents is about 463 (54%), whereas 366 (42.7%) are single and 29 respondents are divorced (3.4%). Respondents that are working in a public sector is about 565 (65.9%) and the other 293 (34.1%) are respondents who are working in a private sector. Malay respondents comprised of 707 (82.4%), 44 (5.1) respondents are Chinese, 62 (7.2%) are Indian and the others are 45 (5.3%). Table 1 shows distribution of the details above.

Table 1:
Gender of respondents

Percentage Gender of Respondents				
Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Validity	Male	344	40.1	40.1
	Female	514	59.9	100.0
	Total	858	100.0	100.0

From the result generated by Orange in figure 2 below, Millennials score high on modern believers (M_B) followed by Baby Boomers, Generation-Y and Generation-X. Adventurous style or Aventure (AVEN) was scored highly by Generation-Y, followed by Generation-X, Millennial and Baby Boomers. Contemporary leaders (C_L) show that Baby Boomers are dominant followed by Generation-Y. However, Generation-X and Millennial shown slightly difference. Sufficient makers (S_M) show a little difference between generations. The results show that Generation-X is dominant and slightly higher followed by Generation-Y. Baby Boomers and Millennial share the same result for sufficient makers. Next, knowledge thinkers (K_T) show that two-generation (Baby Boomers and Generation-Y) scores high in the graph (figure 2) followed by Generation-X and Millennial. Figure 2 below show that Generation-X score slightly higher than Generation-Y for confident conservatives (C_C) followed by Baby Boomers and Millennial. Excitement seekers (E_S) also have a slightly difference between Generation-Y and Millennial followed by Baby Boomers and Generation-X. The results also show a slightly difference for discipline innovators (D_I) when Millennial score slightly higher than Generation-Y followed by Baby Boomers and Generation-X. Lastly, solo sustainer (S_S) show that Baby Boomers scores high than Millennial followed by Generation-Y and Generation-X. The results are shown in figure 2 and table 2 below.

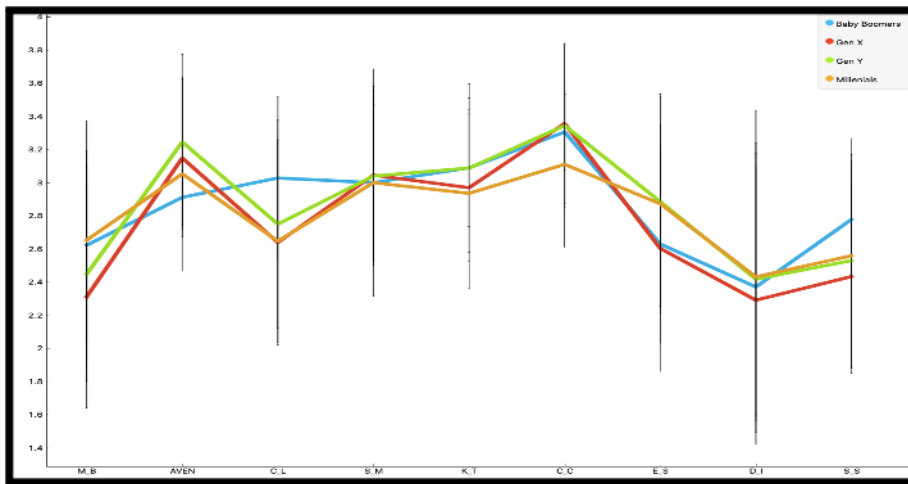


Figure 2 : Graph of Malaysian VALS among generation

Table 2:

The score of Malaysian VALS dominancy among generation

GEN	M_B	AVEN	C_L	S_M	K_T	C_C	E_S	D_I	S_S
Baby Boomers	2	4	1	3	1	3	3	3	1
Gen-X	4	2	4	1	2	1	4	4	4
Gen-Y	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	3
Millennial	1	3	3	3	3	4	2	1	2

1= Dominant, 4 = Less Dominant

5. Discussion

This paper aims to highlight about the dominance of VALS among generations in Malaysia. The generations highlighted in this study are Baby Boomers, Generation-X, Generation-Y and Millennials. The result shows that Baby Boomers score high in solo sustainers, contemporary leaders, and knowledge thinkers. Teng (2020) found Baby Boomers generations work to live and they portrayed their mind focusing on working. That makes them among the faithful and committed workers. Similarly, we found that solo sustainers are reluctant in their health factor.

The Baby Boomers generation are too committed with their work and neglecting their health. In addition, Baby Boomers possess a great tactical knowledge and currently in supervisory roles or in a management level (Mauricio, 2017). Therefore, Baby Boomers score higher in leadership who respect others' idea and is respected in their working environment. They are now being called as collaborative leadership. In addition, Baby Boomers value knowledge because they are exposing variety of training programs where different skills were acquired (Teng, 2020), hence their dominance in knowledge thinkers.

Caution and practicality are the two terms that define Generation-X. This generation tends to be more conservative and skepticism toward liberalism and anticorporate mentality and intolerant about the "equality for all" rhetoric (Foley, 2000). This generation constantly seeking a balance between working, their family and personal life. They least likely to sacrifice their leisure time or weekend for work and most of this generation are likely to get along with their families (Wong, 2013). This is likely supporting the result for this generation that are dominant in holding traditional and religious value and concerning about social environment as stated by the previous study. In addition, Generation-X are risk taking because they are less interested to remain long in certain place (Wong, 2013). From that, the result shows Generation-X are more dominant in confident conservatives and sufficient makers.

Generation-Y are excited to fill their self-fulfilment as they are called as technology savvy as they grabbing for wider knowledge and multitasking as stated by (Wong, 2013). This Generation tends to make their jobs interesting, entertaining and challenging. In Addition, this generation also value knowledge because of the interesting and challenging part of their life as the Internet plays a major role in their day to-day lives (Teng, 2020; Valentine & Powers, 2013). This generation are likely to seek for more fun and exciting ways of live. Hence, based on our study, Generation-Y are dominant in adventurous style (aventayle), knowledge thinkers and excitement seekers because they want to fulfill their self satisfaction.

Young generation or Millennials are preferable to look trendy and fashionable. They are likely to have a technicality and practicality on what they are doing to achieve their goals. Moreover, Millennials generation are more sophisticated. As stated in the previous research, Millennials have evolving needs, prefer in-person communications and preferring to do something personally (Wiasuti, Lestari, Mulyadi, & Masatip, 2020). From the youngest age, this generation are adapting with technology and internet usage that making them as a technically fluent and seamlessly

integrate the technology into most of their lifestyle (Kirchmayer & Fratričová, 2018). They are also be seen as electronic multitasker. In line with previous research, Millennials achieve more dominant in modern believers and disciplined innovators this research.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Malaysian generation holds specialties depending on their social behavior, status, living standard, daily life and occupation. The differences of these specialties will produce a different result and different cohort of generation that dominant for the variables. The generation cohorts in Malaysia have various Values and Lifestyles (VALS) and each generation can have several VALS value depends on their lifestyles, occupation and social life. However, there are limitations such as the research only focused on Value and Lifestyles. For future works, the researcher can include several theories from different schools of thought such as from psychology and political perspective. The result may be different based on the theories to be embed in the research.

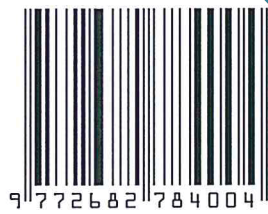
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