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The Abuse of BB1M (1Malaysia Book Voucher): Integrity and Time of Distribution

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Abstract: The 1 Malaysia Book Voucher or Baucar Buku 1Malaysia (BB1M), was introduced by the Malaysian government in 2012. The main objective of this initiative is to help ease financial burdens faced by students in higher education institution while purchasing educational books. However, cases have been reported that students were selling their BB1M worth RM250 at prices ranging from RM190 to RM230. Indirectly, this illustrates that the reading culture among Malaysians is still at a low level. This correlation study was conducted to find the relationship of the misused of the BB1M and the factor contributing to the abuse of BB1M. The objectives are to check whether student's integrity, gender, BB1M distribution time, student's appreciation and student's living cost can positively or negatively affect the abuse of BB1M. A set of questionnaires was distributed among 300 students Universiti Teknologi MARA, Raub Campus and descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used in this research to find the result. The data analysis of this research revealed that there is no significant relationship between student's integrity and the abuse of BB1M; between BB1M distribution time and the abuse of the BB1M. However, the result suggested a significant relationship between students' living cost and the abuse of the BB1M and there is a significant relationship between gender and the abuse of the BB1M. Lastly, there is a significant relationship between student's appreciation and the misused of the BB1M. In a nutshell, student's living cost, gender and student's appreciation influence the abuse of the BB1M.

Keywords: 1Malaysia Book Voucher, BB1M abuse, Factors

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has made a way to help students to reduce the cost of the less fortunate by giving away RM250 worth of vouchers (Charles, 2016). Most students undergoing pre-university programs like Matriculation, Form Six, A-Level, Polytechnic, foundation (asasi), diploma or tertiary programs like undergraduate degree at various universities and colleges or even postgraduate programs like Master or PhD degrees are eligible to receive BB1M (Song, 2015). This is given to them every year since 2012 to help students buy books and utilities for their studies. The Malaysia Prime Minister, Dato' Sri Najib Razak is the one who started the initiative. This voucher is not only to help ease the burden of students but also to boost their motivation to study hard as they do not have to think about the financial expenditure for example, the books they need to buy to complete their study. However, this noble initiative was not well utilized by many students. The students gave away their book voucher in exchange of cash money to buy electronic devices such as pen drives, smartphones and computer printers (Rizal, 2015).

According to Leong and Teoh (2016), the students wanted to cover up their daily expenses with the vouchers given from the government. The Star Online (2016) reported that students decided to exchange their vouchers with cash instead of buying books because the vouchers are given too late, that is after their semester has started. In addition, the money they

gained from selling their vouchers can be used to pay for their meals. As the cost of living increased gradually, some students do not have adequate money to even buy food. Thus, by converting the vouchers to cash money, they could help ease their financial burden for a short while.

Based on the research from Wan (n.d.) found out that from 51 respondents, 12 out of 26 male students and 4 out of 25 female students convert the vouchers to cash. Many students exchange it because they need money. Therefore, 30% of the students sold it in exchange for cash. In addition, 28% of the respondents stated that they are planning to do it again. Hence, from the study we know that gender also affects the abuse of the BB1M. Wan (n.d.) further discovered that 5 out of the 12 male students converted their vouchers to cash because they do not like to read while 6 others converted their vouchers to cash because they wanted more money. This study shows that the student did not appreciate the vouchers given by the government to them. In short, there are a lot of factors of contributing to the abuse of BB1M. Therefore, this research was conducted to shed some understanding on the issue so that the abuse of BB1M cases can be reduced in the future.

This study intended to achieve these four objectives which are; 1) to investigate the connection between the student's integrity with the abuse of BB1M, 2) to study the affiliation between the students' opinion about the BB1M distribution time with the misuse of BB1M, 3) to explore the relationship between the students' cost of living and the misuse of the BB1M and 4) to determine the influence of the student's gender and the misuse of the BB1M. Meanwhile, this research was guided by four hypothesis which are 1) H₁: there is a connection between the student's integrity with the misuse of BB1M, 2) H₂: there is an affiliation between the students' opinion about the BB1M distribution time with the misuse of BB1M, 3) H₃: there is a relationship between the student's cost of living and the misuse of the BB1M and 4) H₄: there is an influence of the students' gender and the misuse of the BB1M.

The study for our research covers the population of students in UiTM Raub, Pahang. The students of UiTM Raub consist of 2853 people, and 300 students participated in this study. The campus is made of 5 courses which are CS110, AM110, CS111, BM111, and BM119. The findings of this study are intended to assist the government to identify the problem in which cases of the students abuse the BB1M given by the government. Other than that, this study is to know why the students misused the voucher.

2. Literature Review

By giving BB1M, students' integrity towards the vouchers is being tested by how students used the vouchers. Students' integrity can be defined as the quality of being honest towards the vouchers. According to The Malay Mail Online (2014), the ministry received complaints that the abuse of BB1M was getting serious when recipients bought things like scarves, clothes and spectacles while some vendors openly displayed acceptance of the voucher for non-academic goods. Sario (2016) also stated about integrity of students where the book vouchers were being used to buy junk food, clothes, accessories and mobile phones. The book voucher also being exchanged for holiday packages. Other than that, Rizal (2015) and Edzahar (2015) stated that some students are abusing the vouchers given. They change the book voucher for money to buy electronic devices such as pen drives and computer printers.

Research has shown that one of the factors that contributed to the abuse of BB1M is because of the distribution time of BB1M. Md Zain (2016) stated that BB1M distribution date is not relevant for students in mid- lecture sessions and a few weeks after the study began. Mallow (2016) and Leong and Toeh (2016) stated some students argued that the late distribution of BB1M was one of the reasons the students sell the vouchers for cash which they need to cover their expenses. The students spend a lot on transportation and general expenses. Furthermore, Song (2015) stated the government should monitor the suitable dates to distribute the vouchers to colleges. Students cannot use the voucher when the government gave away RM250 voucher at the end of the semester.

High cost of living has become one of the reasons students misused the vouchers. The Star Online (2016) stated many students are suffering from high cost of living. Therefore, selling the vouchers is a good option to temporarily assist their financial situation. Since the launched of our Government's Rising Cost of Living NKRA in July 2011, the cost of living in Malaysia seems to be on the uptrend stated by Sam (2013). In addition, Yakup (2016) also stated that the financial needs of university students today in a critical condition. Increase in the cost of living distress for students.

Some students did not appreciate with what have been given to them. The Malay Mail Online (2014) have stated that the ministry received complaints that the misuse of BB1M was getting serious when recipients bought things like scarves, clothes and spectacles while some vendors openly displayed acceptance of the voucher for non-academic goods. Ng (2014) stated that students do not agree in which the voucher should be limited to academic books only. They use it to buy novels and stationeries because handouts and notes are already given by their lecturers. Another issue is by limiting the scope of books that can be purchased using BB1M, will unfair to non-academic book publishers. However, Eruwan (2016) stated it really helps student to save their budget in term of assignments. From the BB1M, students also can buy educational books for their siblings. Moreover, The Star Online (2016) stated the government should consider transferring the money directly into the students' account as many undergraduates think giving cash is more practical. The attitude of some students who do not appreciate the blessings that have been entrusted by the government to them to redeem vouchers in respect of academic books and reading is troubling (Abu Hasan et. al., 2012).

3. Methodology

A set of questionnaire had been distributed to 300 students out of 2853 student population among the students. The questionnaire was distributed to the students randomly using stratified sampling technique. The data gained was used for research purposes only and their information will be kept confidentially. There are 61.9% respondents which are male while 38.1% of the respondents are female. Out of 291 students, there are 180 male respondents and 111 female respondents which responded to our questionnaire. Meanwhile, the questionnaire consists of 2 parts with 25 questions; the first part was part (a) which consisted of 4 questions for demographic information and the second part (b) consisted of 4 parts which each consisted of 5 to 6 questions. Part (b) contained four parts of students' opinion towards the factors of the abuse of BB1M, student's integrity, student's opinion towards BB1M distribution time and student's opinion about cost of living. Likert scale was used to measure all the stated variables. For all parts in part (b), there are few items and each scale item has five specific responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Spearman rho analyzed the strength of relationship between the dependent variable (students' opinion towards the factors of the abuse of BB1M) and independent variable (integrity, cost of living, time of distribution, and gender). Chi-square analyzed the strength of relationship between the dependent variable (students' opinion) and independent variable (gender).

4. Results and Discussion

The instrument reliability was checked using internal consistency (cronbach α) and it was found that reliability coefficient ranges from 0.586-0.782 for the scale domains (Table 1). The overall mean is questionable according to the Rules of Thumb about Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient Size but according to Nunnally (1967), all Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values above 0.6 are considered to be acceptable. The student's integrity towards the BB1M has a mean of 0.586 which is poor and unacceptable while the student's opinion about BB1M distribution time and the student's opinion about cost of living with a mean of 0.780 and 0.782 which is acceptable interval consistency.

Table 1. Reliability test

Student’s integrity towards BB1M.	0.586
Student’s opinion about BB1M distribution time.	0.780
Student’s opinion about cost of living.	0.782

Table 1 illustrates that there are 74.2% of the respondents received the BB1M while the percentage of respondents who do not received the BB1M is 25.8%. Out of 291 respondents, 216 of the respondents received the BB1M and 75 respondents received the BB1M. The data indicates that there are 80 students answered yes to the question ‘have you misused the BB1M?’ This shows that 27.5 percent of the students have abused the vouchers while the other 72.5 percent which 211 respondents did not abuse the vouchers. Based on factor 1 & 4 about the students’ integrity towards BB1M the average students answer is 2.989. This shows that the student does not care about the giving factors. Other than that, based on the data collected students agree on the factor related to student’s opinion about cost of living. This is shown on table 1 where the mean is 2.221. The results suggested that the cost of living is high for the students and the distribution time is not suitable for the students.

Table 2. Chi-square test for gender and the abuse of BB1M

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.127	1	0.042
Continuity Correction	3.596	1	0.058
N of Valid Cases	291		

Table 2 illustrates chi-square test for gender and the abuse of BB1M. The result shows that there is significant relationship between the abuse of the BB1M and gender. (Chi-Square with one degree of freedom = 4.127, $p = 0.042$). As shown in Table 2.0, there appears to be a very weak correlation between students’ gender and the misused of the BB1M. The two-tailed significance showed above is 0.042 which is less than 0.05. The findings suggest to accept H_4 and conclude that there is significance relationship between student’s gender and the misused of the BB1M.

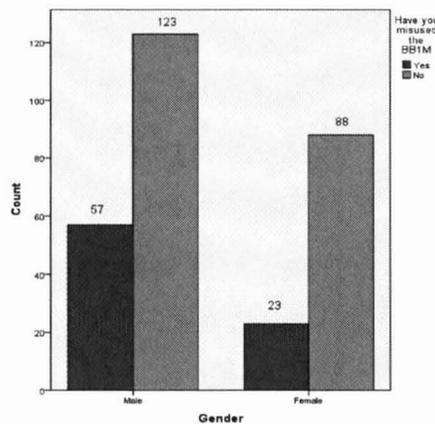


Fig. 1 Bar chart between gender and have you abuse BB1M?

The graph above (Fig. 1) shows the number between the genders and misused of the BB1M. It shows that 57 males and 23 females has abuse the BB1M while 123 males and 88 females did not abuse the BB1M.

Table 3. Spearman’s correlation for student’s integrity

		Have you abuse the BB1M?	Student’s integrity
Have you abuse the BB1M?	Correlation	1.000	-0.105
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.073

As shown in Table 3, the Spearman correlation coefficient value of -0.105 confirms that was seen from the graph. There appears to be a very weak correlation between student’s integrity and the misused of the BB1M. The two-tailed significance showed above is 0.073 which is more than 0.05. The findings suggest to reject H_1 and conclude that there is no significant relationship between students’ integrity and the misuse of the BB1M.

Table 4. Spearman’s correlation for BB1M distribution time

		Have you abuse the BB1M?	BB1M distribution time
Have you abuse the BB1M?	Correlation	1.000	-0.074
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.207

As shown in Table 4, the Spearman correlation coefficient value of -0.074 suggests that appears to be a very weak correlation between the BB1M distribution time and the misuse of the BB1M. The two-tailed significance showed above is 0.2073 which is more than 0.05. Therefore, H_2 is rejected and it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between the BB1M distribution time and the misuse of the BB1M.

Table 5. Spearman’s correlation for students’ cost of living

		Have you abuse the BB1M?	Student’s cost of living
Have you abuse the BB1M?	Correlation	1.000	0.159
	Coefficient		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.007

As shown in Table 5, the Spearman correlation coefficient value of 0.159 confirms that there appears to be a very weak correlation between the students’ cost of living and the abuse of the BB1M. The two-tailed significant showed above is 0.007 which is less than 0.05. The results suggested to accept H_3 and concluded that there is a significant relationship between the students’ cost of living and the misused of BB1M.

5. Conclusion

This study was carried out to identify about the relationship between students’ opinion and the abuse of BB1M by using demographic factors such as BB1M acceptance, part, gender, and abuse of the BB1M. The findings show that students’ integrity does not influence the

misused of the BB1M. Based on the results, it shows that some students are dishonest with their actions upon using the BB1M. In addition, BB1M distribution time is not the factor of contributing to the abuse of BB1M which means that the time given does not affect the misused of the BB1M. Moreover, students living cost is the factor of the abuse of the BB1M where student agree that living cost make them misused the BB1M such as exchanged the voucher to cash to manage their financial expenses. Other than that gender also influence the abuse of the BB1M whereby male student is likely misused the BB1M than female student. Therefore, it can be seen that the whole regression model is significant which indicate that there are factors that influence the misused of the BB1M. It is highly hope that this study can be a guideline to the government and school or university administrators in terms of managing BB1M so that unethical acts such as exchanging book voucher for cash will not go rampant among students in Malaysia.

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