

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY
AND
IDENTIFYING MUSLIM
IDENTITY IN A
DIGITAL AGE

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INTRODUCTION

- Globalization and Muslim Youths
- Challenges for Muslim youths in the social media
 - Western values
 - Muslim views of Muslim youths; generation gap
- Muslim youths':
 - use of social media
 - Expression in Third Space
 - Solidarity in the social media
- Challenging Muslim youths' beliefs and perceptions in the social media

PROBLEM STATEMENT

- Youths or adolescents are going through rapid changes physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.
- The stage of adolescence has been associated with problems and crises (Corey, 2005). Many social problems today in schools and society at large are associated with adolescents.
- Youths are the largest users of social media.
- Third space usage amongst Muslims has been studied in terms of their responses and how they use it to display their beliefs and cultural practices (Pennington, 2018).
- However, limited studies have examined how Muslim adolescents face the challenges of development and grow into resilient and productive adults
- So, there is a need to explore how Malaysian adolescents conceptualise their Muslim identity through the social media

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

How did the practice of critical pedagogy in an Undergraduate class help the students to identify their Muslim identity amidst challenges living in the 21st century of a globalised world

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Erikson's stages of psychosocial development - (5th stage):
Identity vs. Identity diffusion

- Adolescents "are confronted by the need to re-establish [boundaries] for themselves and to do this in the face of an often potentially hostile world." (Stevens, 1983:49).
- This is often challenging since commitments are being asked before particular identity roles have formed.
- At this point, one is in a state of 'identity confusion', but society normally makes allowances for youth to "find themselves."

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

- Critical theory helps to frame the study by critiquing the self concept that is mirrored by the global and Western society to Muslim youths through social media
- ‘Conscientization’ of the Muslim youths towards hegemony in the Third Space

LITERATURE REVIEW

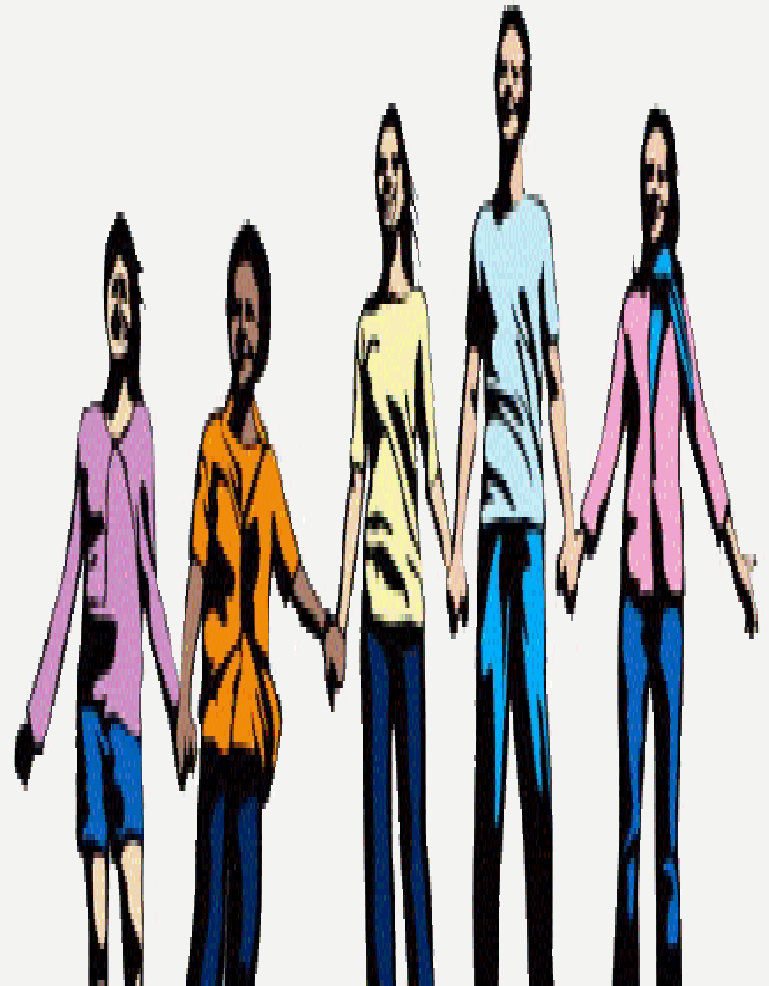
- Several studies have shown that parents, religion, culture, peers, school and teachers play a role in the adolescents' identity formation (Hunsberger *et. al.*, 2002; Dmitrieva *et. al.*, 2004; Vedder *et. al.*, 2005).
- These studies also indicated that adolescents were affected in various domains such as the spiritual, moral, intellectual, emotional, social and physical domains.
- Their interactions through social media represent their inner feelings and beliefs including self concept and identity, particularly as Muslims (Evolvi, 2017)

METHODOLOGY



- A Critical Phenomenological study
- Examined the engagement of 12 Muslim students (8 female and 4 male students) in a practice based class through discourse analysis.
- Using the movie, 'Searching,' I employed critical pedagogy to question, analyse and challenge our practices (my students and mine) of social networking.

- The three hour classroom discourse was analysed through Wodak's critical discourse analysis.
- I employed Hikmah Pedagogy (Philosophical Inquiry) in class and generate 10 questions to stimulate the discussion.
- The questions were categorised into 2 broad themes, i.e. (1) Third Space Users' Intention (Why) and (2) Practices of Social Networking (How)



PROCEDURES

- Community of Inquiry
- Discussion/Dialogues in a Circle
- Movie – ‘SEARCHING’ as a Stimuli
- Generate Questions
- Categorised into themes
- Explore answers to the questions – Inquiry based
- Unveiled and Challenged ‘given beliefs’ and practices’
- Whose beliefs? ; Whose practices?
- Owning Beliefs and Practices vs Hegemony

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

PARTICIPANTS':

- Why?
 - Sense of belonging
 - Socialization
 - Communication

- PRACTICES
 - Popular Culture
 - Sharing

Why use Social Media?

Socializing

- Socialising as a source of happiness. Being with friends is important part of growing up which include going out, spend time with them. Inability to do that we make them feel isolated from the peers. Peer as their source of emotional support. Friends complement each other.
- Third space an alternative for socialising.



Quotations

- *Friends. Like my backup, protecting me. When I don't have any money and asked for help, they will help. And when they are in trouble, I will help them in return.*
- *"It is better not to live if we don't have any friends."*
- *Keeping in touch*

Why..

Communication

- To keep in touch with parents, best friends etc.
- For group class work, assignment
- To help internet friends when in plight
- A platform for da'wah
- To give positive vibes



Quotations

- *Friends. Like my backup, protecting me. When I don't have any money and asked for help, they will help. And when they are in trouble, I will help them in return."*
- *"It is better not to live if we don't have any friends."*
- *"Sharing posts of lunch, dinner or meal times is a form of keeping in touch."*

HOW?

Popular Culture

- Sense of belonging
- 'Sameness'; I relate to you; 'Likes'; 'Followers'; viral/share
- Dislikes; thumbs down

QUOTATIONS

- *It gives me a good vibe!*
- *I relate to you; We are the same*
- *We are 'bawal girl'*
- Lofahaters; Fashion Valet

HOW?

Sharing Turmoils

- Having negative emotions (anger, betrayal of trust) always relate to not being able to do things they like and the lack of trust from parents to give the freedom in their life (parents' control and limitation of their freedom such as in making decision).
- Being vulnerable and emotionally challenged when it comes to love and relationship, failing exam, family conflict, and parental nag.
- In the end, their Islamic consciousness helped to regulate these feelings



- *"Black Monday."*
- 🙄
- Save me Allah; I return to YOU ❤️

WHY

- To be updated with local and global news
- Ascertain veracity of news or information
- Identify fake or real users
- Ignorance of posts or stop sharing info/video leads to stop of viral and trending news
- Posts intelligently
- Pseudo friends and friendships

Grounding & Owning Beliefs
Examining Roots of Practices

HOW

- *Boycott of charity drive needs to be checked*
- Sharing of good things even Hadith need to verify the authenticity of the posted Hadith
- I never talk to him but he is my insta friend

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

- The study found that participants referred to their parents and family members as important figures in their identity formation.
- There were also views that being with friends and being included in a group is important. It is a source of happiness where they can find space and freedom for themselves.
- They also experienced a crisis in forming their identity due to the different values held by themselves and their parents, particularly with the use of social media.
- Their beliefs, views and practices are shared through social media, which may not be known to parents but shared with friends.
- This could drive the gap with their parents wider.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

- In terms of spiritual domain, they believed that the role of religion is important to prevent them from being involved in immoral behaviors.
- In forming a good identity and developing a good feeling about themselves, they needed to be respected and understood by the society and adults.
- They also needed to be given freedom, perceived with trust and treated as adults.
- Thus, society and adults need to develop a good relationship and continue to engage with the adolescents as they need positive referents in forming their identity.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

- The study found that the engagement in critical pedagogy has helped them to be critical of their perceptions and practices of social networking.
- Students identified a sense of belonging and an 'in group sameness' in terms of their responses to popular culture and interactions in social media.
- Students' responses and interactions were varied but tend to converge into a salient pattern, i.e. bordered within their' conscience and critical consciousness as Muslims, identifying Islam as the tie that binds them in their personal identification and collective association.
- They realised that their practices are governed by the Islamic values that they believed in.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

- They are critical of their own practices but have not come to the level of expressing their voice as critical third space users.
- This requires a more critical mind.
- But engaging in critical pedagogy through the community of inquiry has helped them to be more critical of their beliefs, views and practices of the other (non Muslim Malaysians).
- Through the community of inquiry, they have learned to understand the action and reaction of non Muslims toward issues dealing with Muslims in Malaysia.
- They have also realised how their dominant views have disabled them to understand others' views and practices

CONCLUSION

- Engaging in critical pedagogy results in promoting students' critical thinking.
- It has also challenged and changed views, knowledge and roots of practices of social networking (of students' and facilitator's).
- It is important that students are allowed to engage in Community of Inquiry if we want to develop a more critical and active Muslim youths in expressing their voice and identity in the social media so that they are given equal footage as users in the Third Space.

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