Communication Strategies Benefits to NGOs Sustainability: A Case of Malaysian Elderly Care Centres

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Abstract

Malaysia is experiencing a significant surge in the population of the elderly, leading to a higher demand for elderly care centres run by NGOs. As a result, effective communication is essential for NGOs, particularly the elderly care sector as both aspects are connected to public affairs and resource management. To sustain their organisations, they depend heavily on the way they communicate their vision, mission which at the same time being transparent with the wider stakeholders. This study explores how communication strategies lead to sustainability of elderly care centres of Malaysia. In order to achieve a better and more in-depth understanding, a qualitative research strategy and semi-structured interview technique were adopted to collect the data. The sample comprised ten (10) elderly care centres of NGOs in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia. The findings revealed that NGOs have integrated effective communication strategies into their organisations, which have a higher impact on their sustainability. Based on the findings, a recommendation plan has been proposed. This study presents a proposed layout that incorporates effective communication strategies in elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOs. Thus, identifying the communication strategies which relevant to Malaysia will add to the existing body of knowledge and this study will benefit the board of NGOs as well as assist policymakers in formulating strategic communication within NGOs.

Keywords: *Communication, Sustainability, Elderly Care Centres, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, NGOs have mushroomed around the world, including Malaysia. This is due to the widespread notion that NGOs are more adaptable, rapid, and flexible in addressing to people's needs (Hasnan, Abidin, Mohamad and Kamarudin, 2012). As a result, the number of NGOs is steadily expanding as they increasingly widen their operations to include greater responsibilities related to public welfare (Ahmad and Arshad, 2022). Due to the rising profile of NGOs amongst Malaysians, sustainability has emerged as a critical determinant of NGO's ability to continue operating in society and the economy (Abdullah and Othman, 2023). However, despite increased pressure for greater openness and transparency, most NGOs are unwilling to share information regarding their organisations (Zaharudin and Zakaria, 2021). This issue is also linked to a lack of communication between the board and the key stakeholders. Besides that, although NGOs are well-known for employing a variety of communication strategies to impact society, (Couttenier, Fleckinger, Glachant and Hatte, 2016), there is still a scarcity of study on the communication aspects of NGOs. Some studies concentrated on the NGOs' communication methods to boost donor retention (Jameson, 2017). On the other hand, few studies have looked at how NGO management uses communication with employees and other key stakeholders to achieve its goal and objectives (Daniel and Denise, 2020; Duong, 2017). According to Maloney (2016), effective communication improves relationships and leads to a better working environment in organisations. In essence, effective communication and improved participation, promote employees' motivation in the organisations. Most crucially, better communication can lead to improved organisational sustainability, i.e. to establish financial reserves; build and maintain adequate funding support; both long and short term; and participate in advertising, promoting and branding activities (Duong, 2019). In a nutshell, effective organisational communication is necessary for sustainability of the organisation. Mahmud, Zulfikri, Ismail and Miskam (2020) found that effective communication was one of the organizational elements that had a substantial impact on

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the sustainability of NGO initiatives in Malaysia. Furthermore, Malaysia's population is ageing, as is the case in many other countries (The Malaysian Reserve, 2022). Presently, the number of senior aged 65 and above is predicted to make up 15.3% of the population of the country, or 5.8 million people by 2030, showing a transition towards an ageing society (Ab Hamid, Othman, Salam, Abd Rahman, Nor and Khan 2023). This demographic shift provides both obstacles and opportunities for the operation of aged care services, notably in the NGOs sector (Arlotti and Aguilar-Hendrickson 2018). Therefore, it is critical to comprehend how the NGOs that provide care for the elderly implement their communication strategies in order to ensure that they are operating transparently and effectively. As a result, this study investigated the practical function of communication in influencing the sustainability of Malaysian NGOs, particularly, the elderly care centres. Theoretically, this study will attempt to fill a vacuum in the literature by doing exploratory research on the function of communication in the operation of elderly care centres by Malaysian NGOs.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research questions are designed to support the research study. The following research questions are formulated as follow:

How is communication being practiced in the elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOs?

How do communication strategies influence the sustainability of the elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOs?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication and NGOs

Communication is a process of establishing and increasing comprehension rather than knowledge transmission as the foundation for growth (Couttenier et al, 2016). Furthermore, communication must encompass the perception of social relationships between individuals. The primary aim of NGO communication is to equip employees with the necessary information to accomplish the project duties of their particular operations and to urge stakeholders to participate in the activities (Duong, 2019). Currently, the working environment in NGOs is rapidly evolving. NGOs need to address the concerns of transferring and receiving information that is strategically significant and precisely (Namisango and Kang, 2018). Duong (2019) indicated that trust is linked to reliable knowledge exchange. In addition, the higher trust levels in NGOs indicate increased communication among individuals, organisations, and stakeholders (Daniel and Denise, 2020). Furthermore, top management of every NGO must prioritise communication as part of its internal and external development strategy (Kyalimpa et al., 2017). A proper communication with employees and other stakeholders permits to improve a high level of engagement and emphasises to better organisational performance (Reinhardt and Enke, 2020). Moreover, Namisango and Kang (2018) show that communication and stakeholder engagement in NGOs are inextricably connected. To achieve an internal power balance and societal change, the process of defining and implementing a communication strategy in NGOs is strategic and dynamic. Additionally, the structure of the communication strategy can be used, and the study of an organisational communication strategy can benefit from outlining how NGO communication is targeted at specific stakeholders (Jameson, 2017). According to Stacho et al. (2019), in order for NGOs to achieve their organisational goals, their communication strategies must satisfy a wide range of stakeholders, including donors, beneficiaries, governments, and so on. NGOs must ensure that communications are delivered to each target demographic in accordance with organisational aims. For instance, communication with donor organisations will differ from communication with beneficiaries, depending on the input and reactions that NGOs expect from these groups (Jameson, 2017). On top of that, the strategies must be concentrated on approaches and procedures that allow NGOs to reach a diverse variety of consumers via effective complaint and communication channels.

NGOs in Malaysia

NGOs are often distinguished by their status as private institutions that serve public interests. (Zaharrudin and Zakaria, 2021). In nearly every country, the NGO sector is now regarded as an important social and economic force. NGOs in Malaysia can register with two major regulatory bodies: the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM) and the Registry of Societies (ROS). According to Noor (2015), NGOs formed under the

CCM are incorporated under the Companies Act 1965, and those registered under the ROS are managed under the Societies Act 1966. NGOs registered under CCM must adhere to the Malaysia Financial Reporting Standards (MFRS) established by the Malaysian Accounting Standard Board (MASB) and be audited, just like the rest of Malaysia's private organisations (Hasnan et al., 2012; Zainon et al., 2014). On the other hand, those registered under ROS are only required to comply with MFRS and are not forced to have their financial statements audited, though they are urged to do so on a voluntary basis (Societies Act 1966). The ROS within the Ministry of Home Affairs is the major government department in charge of monitoring and regulating the activity of NGOs in Malaysia (Noor, 2015). This role is overseen by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The ROS organises NGOs into broad groups, which then categorise the services they perform based on their distinguishing characteristics. There are thirteen ROS categories as follows: Religious, Social Welfare, Social and Recreation, Women, Culture, Mutual Benefit Societies, Trade Associations, Sports, Youth, Education, Political, Employment Associations and General (Zainon et al., 2014). Section 14(d) of the Societies Act 1966 (Act 335) and Regulations Act 1984 requires organisations to file the annual return (Form 9) for the previous fiscal year, along with the Statement of Receipt and Payments and Balance Sheet, within 60 days of their annual general meeting. NGOs registered under ROS may face governance challenges as a result of their non-profit nature and emphasis on social, charitable, or communal goals. This may influence their communication strategies and approaches. Unlike for-profit businesses, ROS-registered NGOs' sustainability is judged by its social benefit rather than financial profit (Zaharrudin and Zakaria, 2021). Consequently, their communication strategies and sustainability practices may differ from other non-profit organisations. Examining these particular problems will help us acquire a better understanding of the role of communication in the lack of explicit legislation, as well as its impact on organisational sustainability. As a result, the current study seeks to bridge the gap by focusing on elderly care centres, specifically Malaysian NGOs registered under ROS.

Sustainability and NGOs

Sustainability has a broader meaning, including economic, social, cultural, and environmental components (Kerine, 2015). It includes a set of aspects and qualities aimed at ensuring the survival and wellbeing of communities, associations, and informal groupings, as well as protecting all shared goods (Jameson, 2017; Kerine, 2015). The definition of sustainability may change significantly between for-profit and non-profit organisations (Kaimenyi and Wanyonyi, 2019). To remain competitive, for-profit organisations participate in sustainability for economic reasons, while others do so to meet growing shareholder and consumer demands for ethical concerns and regulatory compliance (Figueira, Domingues, Caeiro, Painho, Antunes, Santos, Ramos, 2018). Meanwhile, for NGOs, sustainability entails continuing to operate in order to serve their local communities (Murdock and Barber, 2020). In doing so, NGOs can acquire the trust of the communities they serve by meeting their commitments to those communities, their staff, and society as a whole (Awashreh, 2018). Financial sustainability is a vital feature of NGOs' long-term survival and activity since it allows them to consistently supply services to their communities, even in the face of significant shifts in their funding (Gitonga, 2018). Interestingly, on the other hand, leadership concerns were also identified as the important human resource variables that were discovered to be essential for the NGOs' sustainability (Kyalimpa et al., 2017). These involve managers who instil a sense of teamwork and engagement between the employees. Abrokwah, Yuhui, Agyare, and Asamany (2018) discovered in their study that management leadership is critical for the development and sustainability of NGOs today. Kaimenyi and Wanyonyi (2019) proposed that transparent communication, strong motivation, and supervisory responsibilities may be used to promote sustainability. Gitonga (2018) supported this viewpoint, arguing that strong communication methods between donors and NGOs can help to create and maintain long-term partnerships in order to obtain ongoing financial assistance. Communication not only facilitates the exchange of information between NGOs and donors, but it may also foster trust, loyalty, and satisfaction, all of which are vital in increasing donor support (Hassan, 2020; Gitonga, 2018). Additionally, this two-way communication between NGOs and donors is very important for promoting understanding between the two groups and helps NGOs to understand the donor's interests while also sharing the organisation's goals, mostly based on their requests, opinions, and viewpoints (Gitonga, 2018). Therefore, NGOs must use effective communication strategies to build rapport with donors in order to increase their loyalty and secure long-term support (Du Toit, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

This study used a method of qualitative approachis since it analyses qualitative areas of experience, perspective, and meanings from the respondents' perspective (Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey 2016). The researcher discovered that a qualitative approach and inductive data analysis were the most appropriate considering the researcher intended to become more familiar with the phenomenon of interest in order to gain a deep understanding of how people think about the topic and describe in great detail the perspectives of the research participants, which would have been lost if quantitative or experimental strategies were used. The study comprised ten (10) registered elderly care centres of NGOs based on their availability to gather information that was relevant to answering the research questions and objectives. The purposive sampling technique was used to identify ten (10) participants from the selected elderly care centres, or until the findings reached a saturation point and the samples that were chosen consisted of top management (i.e. chairman/owners/directors) of the centres. This study adopted a qualitative exploratory method, collecting data through semi-structured interviews with the top management of the centres. The interviews were conducted using an in-depth approach to gain insights into the research topic (Belotto, 2018). In this study, specific criteria were utilized to guarantee that the selected NGOs reflected Malaysia's diverse landscape and representation of elderly care centres in the country. Geographic location, specifically the Klang Valley area, was chosen because of its diversity and the organisations' ability to communicate effectively. Furthermore, the operating term criterion required NGOs to be in operation for at least three years or more, to assure a level of stability and experience among the selected NGOs. Malaysia faces numerous issues in managing and administering the needs of the elderly, notably in their residential circumstances (The Star, 2023). As a result, this study underlined the need of establishing effective communication in NGOs' elderly care sector. The researcher conducted a thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). In this study, thematic analysis was used in six stages: (1) data familiarisation; (2) initial code development; (3) topics seeking; (4) themes reviewing; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) report production.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The study's findings were based on the interpretation and analysis of data gathered through in-depth interviews with ten (10) respondents from elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOs. In addition, secondary data sources such as reports, newspaper articles, websites, and social media profiles were thoroughly examined. This study employed a triangulation strategy to validate and cross-reference data from both primary and secondary sources. Merriam (2009) described methodological triangulation as a primary strategy for data collection that employs a variety of methodologies including interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents. According to Yin (1994), triangulating a study's findings and conclusions with multiple sources of information makes them appear more persuasive and accurate. Thus, this approach strengthens the validity and dependability of discovered themes, providing a more comprehensive knowledge of the communication function within Malaysian NGOs concerning to their sustainability. With regard to Research Objective and Research Question, interviews were conducted with the top management of ten (10) different elderly care centres of NGOs using the communication strategies. Table 1 and Table 2 shows the interview questions correspond to Research Objective.

Table 1 Interview Questions Correspond to Research Objective

To investigate the strategies of communication used in the elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOs.	
Type of respondent	**Interview question**
Chairman/Owner/Director	Do you share with your staff the strategic goals and direction of the organisation?
	Do you communicate with your staff about their roles and responsibilities in the organisation?

	Does the staff are given a chance to raise and speak dissatisfaction issues to the higher level?
	Do you give your staff to share view and ideas to participate in decision-making process? Or only the involvement between the board? Do you provide Complaint and Suggestion board to your staff?
	Do you share with the stakeholders (i.e., donors, beneficiaries and communities) about on-going issues and new developments of the organisation?

Note: Adapted from Jameson (2017); Zaharrudin and Zakaria (2021)

Table 2 Interview Questions Correspond to Research Objective

To identify the influence of communication strategies towards sustainability of the elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOs.		
Type of respondent	**Interview question**	**Total no. of respondents**
Chairman/Owner/Director	How do you keep the centre sustain until now? Do you formulate long-term strategy in your centre?	
	What do you plan to do to get continuous support for the centre? List your strategies.	
	What factors contribute to effective communication in your centre? (i.e. strategy)	
	To what extent communication strategies influence the sustainability of the centre?	10

Note: Adapted from Daniel and Denise, 2020; Duong (2017)

Information Profile of the Respondents

In this study, ten (10) respondents were interviewed from ten (10) different Malaysian Elderly Care Centres of NGOs using a structured questionnaire matrix. Among these respondents, five of them are the owners of the NGOs, others include four executive directors and one vice chairman. They all have at least 3-5 years of experience working in the elderly care centre of NGOs in Malaysia. Table 3 provides the information profile of respondents.

Table 3. Information Profile of the Respondents

No.	Organisation code	Position	Qualification	Gender	Ethnicity
1.	C01	Executive Director	Bachelor of Finance (Hons)	Male	Malay
2.	C02	Vice Chairman	Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons)	Male	Malay
3.	C03	Executive Director	Diploma	Male	Malay
4.	C04	Executive Director	Bachelor Degree	Male	Indian
5.	C05	Executive Director	Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons)	Female	Malay
6.	C06	Owner	Diploma	Female	Malay
7.	C07	Owner	Diploma	Male	Chinese
8.	C08	Owner	Bachelor of Quantity Surveying (Hons)	Male	Malay
9.	C09	Owner	Bachelor Degree	Male	Malay
10.	C10	Owner	Diploma in Nursing	Female	Malay

Background of the Case Study

The study sought to investigate the role of communication in Malaysian the elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOs in the area of Klang Valley. The results of this study showed that the NGOs that were registered under ROS can be broadly divided into two categories: large and small NGOs. This was discovered during the process of gathering data for investigation. However, there was no established scale for measuring the size of NGOs. Therefore, Abiddin, Ibrahim, and Abdul Aziz (2022) proposed that the model for defining size utilised for SMEs was the most applicable to NGOs. As stated in Table 4, the NGOs were divided into two (2) groups: large NGOs (C01, C02, C03, C04, and C05) and small NGOs (C06, C07, C08, C09, and C10). According to the SMEs definition of size, the number of staff members and budgetary allocation distinguish the various sizes of NGOs. The Groupings of elderly care centres of NGOs were illustrated below.

Table 4. Grouping of Elderly Care Centres of NGOs

Group	Size of NGOs	No. of Staff	Budgetary Allocation
Group 1	Large (C01-C05)	5-30	> RM300,000
Group 2	Small (C06-C10)	< 5	< RM300,000

Source: SME Corp. Malaysia website, 2023

Responses of Respondents on Communication Strategies applied in their NGOs

The top management were asked about the strategies of communication utilised in their NGOs. Majority of respondents value an open communication and participation in their organisations, share organisation needs and issues with staff, community is allowed to share their views/ideas and the NGOs also share strategic goals and direction with community (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C08, C09 & C10). There were nine (9) respondents who shares the strategic goals with staff and management as well as their staff understand the given task or instruction (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C08 & C09). Further respondents commented on the board get regular updates from staff on issue affecting organisation (C02, C04, C06, C07, C08, C09 & C10). They also revealed that they regular updates to community regarding development plans/programmes/activities and they also organise awareness/special events with community (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C09 & C10). Lastly, the respondents further discussed on arrangement of meeting with interested stakeholders regularly (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C07 & C10). The responses of the respondents are provided below.

"When we recruit new employees, we will go through all of the task and duties that must be accomplished. So, their role is clear and they understand what they must do. Taking care of the elderly is not the same as taking care of children. We also ensure that any concerns that arise in our organisation with our employees are addressed" C03 (Group 1)

"We have fostered an open communication and involvement for the staffs and volunteers. We provide a channel for them share their concerns and issues as the individuals who came to us are diverse; our organisation provides a forum for people to share their perspectives. We must leverage on this potential and recognise everyone based on their contribution" C06 (Group 2)

"We organise events on occasion, such as Maulidurasul. Up to 10,000 people will travel from all over the states to join us. We also convene a town hall meeting, provide breakfast and begin discussing our plan/direction. We will inform them of the most recent developments in our organisation as well as any on-going concerns occur in our facility. The reason why we always hold a special event is to ensure that our donors felt associated with the organisation" C01 (Group 1).

Table 5. Findings and Themes generated from Communication Strategies correspond to Research Objective 1

Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Group 1					Group 2				
		C01	C02	C03	C04	C05	C06	C07	C08	C09	C10
Internal (within organisation)	Staff understand the given task/instruction	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×
	Shares strategic goals with staff and management	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×
	Shares organisation needs and issues with staff	√	√	×	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Open communication, participation is encouraged in organisation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Board gets regular updates from staff on issue affecting organisation	×	√	×	√	×	√	√	√	√	√
External (outside organisation)	Regular updates to community regarding development plans/programmes/activities	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√
	Community is allowed to share their views/ideas	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Organise awareness/special events with community	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√
	Shares strategic goals and direction with community	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Arrange meetings with interested stakeholders regularly	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	×	×	√

RO-1 To investigate the strategies of communication used in the elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOs

Communication Strategies in NGOs

Group 1 = Staff understand the given task/instruction, Shares strategic goals with staff and management, Shares organisation needs and issues with staff, Open communication, participation is encouraged in organisation, Regular updates to community regarding development plans/programmes/activities, Community is allowed to share their views/ideas, Organise awareness/special events with community, Shares strategic goals and direction with community, Arrange meetings with interested stakeholders regularly

Group 2 = Staff understand the given task/instruction, Shares strategic goals with staff and management, Shares organisation needs and issues with staff, Open communication, participation is encouraged in organisation, Regular updates to community regarding development plans/programmes/activities, Community is allowed to share their views/ideas, Organise awareness/special events with community, Shares strategic goals and direction with community

Responses of Respondents on Communication Strategies that influence Sustainability of NGOs

The top management were asked about how they sustain their organisations until today. Majority of the respondents revealed that it is due to the beneficial programmes/events such as programme awareness (C01, C02, C03, C05, C06, C07, & C10), special events (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C09 & C10), collaboration with Government (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06 & C10), collaboration with universities (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C09 & C10) and also they have a collaboration with private agencies (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, & C10). Further respondents commented on their organisational resources where they revealed that volunteers' commitment was also one of the reasons why they can sustain until now (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C08, C09 & C10). On the other hand, majority of respondents indicated that public donations (C01, C02, C03, C04, C05, C06, C07, C08, C09 & C10) were also assisted them to smooth their operation and indirectly incur them to have long term operation for their NGOs.

"When we talk about sustainability, we are not concerned much about the financial aspects as there will always be those who are concerned about how to preserve the existence of our organisation. We are survived because of volunteers who are committed to work. People enjoy coming here to offer their services" C03 (Group 1)

"This centre survives due to public's assistance over the years. We rely heavily on donations and community involvement to keep going. We have had a lot of issues over the past two months due to pandemic, but we are still able to operate because of donors who come here to contribute and also, we easily get rapport with the University and private agencies. Sometimes, we're able to develop good programmes with them to meet their needs and I believe that's the reason why we're still relevant until now" C01 (Group 1)

"The staffs here maybe the reason this centre is still in operation and performing. We consider them family and constantly encourage them to express themselves. When I notice my staffs are fatigued from working, I advise them to resign but they refuse. They have probably been with us for 6 years now and they really enjoy working here" C09 (Group 2**)**

Findings and themes generated from Sustainability correspond to Research Objective 2

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

RO-2 To identify the influence of communication strategies on the elderly care centres' sustainability.											
SUSTAINABILITY											
Main Themes	Sub-Themes	Group 1					Group 2				
		C01	C02	C03	C04	C05	C06	C07	C08	C09	C10
Beneficial Programme/Events	Programme awareness	√	√	√	×	√	√	√	×	×	√
	Special events	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	×	√	√
	Collaboration with Government	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	×	×	√
	Collaboration with universities	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√
	Collaboration with private agencies	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	×	√
Organisational Resources	Volunteers Commitment	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Increasing demand of residence	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√
	Staff loyalty	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	×	√	√
Financial Strategy	Self-Financing	×	×	×	×	×	√	√	√	√	√
	Public donations	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Sustainability of NGOs											

Group 1 = Programme awareness, Special events, Collaboration with Government, Collaboration with universities, Collaboration with private agencies, Volunteers Commitment, Increasing demand of residence, Staff loyalty, Public donations

Group 2 = Programme awareness, Special events, Collaboration with universities, Staff loyalty, , Increasing demand of residence, Self-Financing, Public donations

This study was intended to investigate the communication strategies that influence the sustainability of NGOs, particularly in Malaysian elderly care sector. As can be seen from the findings, the researcher's thought led to the question of whether the sustainability of elderly care centres operated by Malaysian NGOs is influenced by communication strategies. The findings of the study align with relevant literature in suggesting that organisational communication is the cornerstone of every organisation for creating and shaping its surroundings (Lee and Li, 2020). In this present study, both groups noted that information concerning the activities and developments of NGOs was made available to stakeholders in a way that allowed them to access it directly. This was done as part of an effort to improve effective communication in the organisations. This finding is supported by previous research (Khoso et al., 2020; Jameson, 2017), who contended that sharing information represents a transparent process in which key stakeholders can clearly see how their contributions (whether monetary or in kind) are being used. It has been revealed that improving NGOs' ability to communicate openly could be one of the approaches used to increase their sustainability. On the other hand, the findings showed that the stakeholders may communicate their concerns and thoughts concerning NGOs' activities and developments.

This proposes that NGOs keep open channels of communication with their respective communities. Scholars have also supported the idea of sharing perspectives and opinions (Ahmed et al., 2019; Ali et al., 2020). The most significant insights of the study are that most NGOs make an effort to communicate with their stakeholders they serve about their developments and operations. Furthermore, this study suggests that elderly care centres of NGOs provide a monitoring and feedback system. By using this system, the employees of

NGOs, beneficiaries, and the general public will be able to review and criticise the organisations' general operations, which serves as both internal and external communication tools. For instance, NGOs may establish a system for reporting and complaining about any issues arise. Using this system, a member of an NGO's staff or the general public can not only report or register a complaint about inappropriate behaviour within the organisation, but also about any corrupt practices that may be going place within the NGOs. It is also a method for collecting feedback on project activities from key stakeholders and beneficiaries. Previous scholars have also consented on these proposals (Couttenier et al., 2016; Daniel and Denise, 2020; Duong, 2017). Besides that, the findings revealed that maintaining transparency in communication with various stakeholders by NGOs is a crucial organisational approach that allows NGOs to successfully carry out their mandate and generates long-term trust in the organisations. Based on the findings of this qualitative study, it is clear that NGOs, particularly in elderly care centres, must implement effective communication strategies in order to be sustainable in the long run. Figure 1 demonstrate the illustration of communication strategies in the elderly care centres of Malaysian NGOS that has being proposed by the researcher.
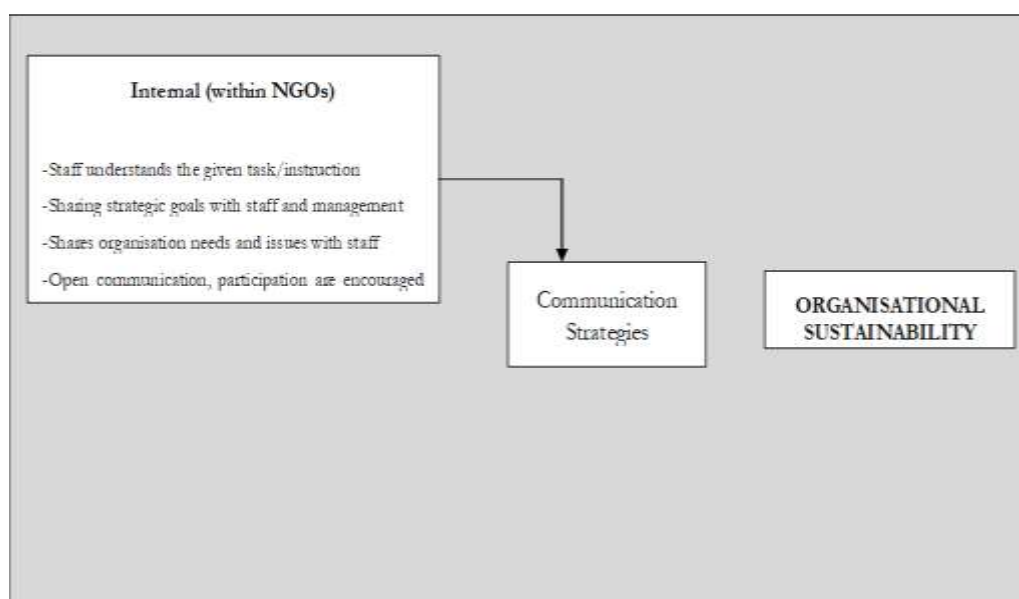

Figure 1. Effective Communication Strategies in Elderly Care Centres of Malaysian NGOs

Source: Developed by Researcher

RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This section presented several recommendations that future research should examine. To begin, this study focused on elderly care centres run by NGOs that were registered with the ROS. As a result, further research might be undertaken in other contexts by incorporating diverse backgrounds of NGOs into the study, increasing the generalisability and robustness of the findings in various situations within the Malaysian environment. This would help to ensure that the findings are applicable to a wider range of situations. Furthermore, this would raise understanding of how to handle various NGOs in terms of type and scope, as well as their communication strategies, which may have an impact on the organisations' sustainability. Future research may explore performing a comparison study between two different groups of NGOs registered under ROS and CCM. This comparison would demonstrate how the regulatory requirement is carried out in compliance with two major regulatory authorities. Secondly, future research should look at combining qualitative and quantitative data collection approaches to gain better comprehend on the communication practices of NGOs as compared to that of corporate organisations. This will allow for a more in-depth comprehension of the role that communication play in NGOs. Quantitative research approaches provide views of a phenomenon while discounting respondents' experiences and interpretations. This will be a useful

supplement to qualitative research, which may yield deeper insights and understanding of the NGOs under investigation. In this sense, future research may improve on this current study by employing a "mixed-method" approach to compensate for the constraints that would arise from utilising only one approach.

CONCLUSION

The present study was geared towards exploring the communication strategies on the sustainability of Malaysian elderly care centres of NGOs. On the other side, this study's findings indicate that NGOs have established effective communication strategies in their organisations. This finding is significant to the field of communication. The process of building mutual understanding between NGOs and important stakeholders depends heavily on the two-way communication that occurs between the two groups. This will not only assist the NGOs to identify the target audience for their funding, but it will also enable those same stakeholders to discuss their own needs, reasons for giving, and opinions about the organisations. This is going to be advantageous to all parties. This study highlights the crucial role of communication in improving the long-term functioning of Malaysian NGOs, mainly the elderly care centres. In conclusion, it is stipulated that the results of this research will assist the top management of NGOs in their strategic decision-making process concerning communication strategies. Besides, this will enable them to enhance the overall performance of their organisations and guarantee their long-term sustainability. This study may also help policymakers develop strategies for NGOs to strengthen their regulatory structure so that it is more in line with systems used by other NGOs from other countries. These strategies could be developed with the assistance of this study.

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