Representation of Disabled Community in Mainstream Media

Chan Eang Teng*, Tang Mui Joo**

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ABSTRACT

There are limited research questioning the relationship between the disabled community and media, particularly in Malaysia. The lack of awareness and common assumption of specialty towards the disabled community have caused a small amount of local disability researches that question the relationship between the disabled community and the media. This research aims to find out the types of representation of disability in the Malaysian mainstream media, particularly press. Interview with visual disabled personnel and content analysis from news coverage of mainstream press are deployed in the study. The findings indicated the invalidity of disability culture as the misrepresentation of disabled community in Malaysia is not as severe as depicted by scholars because the news coverage focusing on them is getting more positive. Besides that, disabled people are not defensive towards the terms used to refer them as long as media practitioners do not over amplify their disability. The application of charity approach is still common in news coverage to portray the disabled community as victim, and therefore they are partially marginalized due to the misrepresentation in Malaysian mainstream press.

1. Introduction

Same as Australia, disability research is welcomed in Malaysia but the main topics and debates in these disciplines and its theoretical bases, insights and implications are still not widely understood the scope of analysis is constraint in terms of topics and perspective of justification (Goggin, 2009). Generally, topics of disability research are about their unemployment, misrepresentation and rights. Due to the lack of awareness and the assumption of specialty towards the disabled community, there is a small amount of local disability researches that question about the relationship between disabled community and media. Journalists always fall into the state of uncertainty to cover certain stories due to institutional constraint or personal perception about health disparities or broader patterns of communication inequality in the ownerships and control over traditional media channels

(Niederdeppe et al., 2013). They only reported 'important and major events to gain the attention of the mass media, that usually relates to the activity of major social economy and ethnic groups (Anuar, 1994). The refusal to acknowledge the presence of disabled group in the society caused the 'disappearance' of disabled community (Anuar, 1994). Islam et al. (2014) initiated the academic debate whether disability is the product of social exclusion and how true it is in Malaysia context. There is an absence of literature looking into the question that disability is the product of social exclusion. Nonetheless, majority of the studies from global context suggested that social exclusion is caused by the disability, thus their needs and rights are being marginalized.

In Malaysia, the term 'OKU' (Disabled people) is not entirely accepted by the members of disabled group as some assumed that the word is depicting their disability. Alternatively, there are positive terms to replace the use of 'OKU' such as 'orang kelainanupaya' (differently abled) or even 'orang kelebihanupaya' (more abled) (Norazit, 2010). Norazit opined that there is a continuing and significant change in the representation of disability in the media from one that portrayed people with disabilities as objects of concern and pity to one that stresses their capabilities and rights. The disabled people are often categorized by media as 'object of sympathy/ care' together with kanak-kanak (children) and wargatua/emas (the elderly), unfortunate and marginalized (Norazit, 2010). Their stories were made in comparison with ordinary people as 'the term was frequently contrasted with 'sempurna' (perfect) in expressions such as 'Sepertimereka yang sempurna' (like those who are perfect), 'lahir tidak sempurna' (born as not perfect) and normal in expressions such as 'Hidup seperti orang biasa dibandingkan dengan pelajar normal' (live like ordinary people compared with normal students) (Norazit, 2010). There is still the practice of media in spreading the idea of the disabled community as 'being less than normal, an object of charity, or brave fighter against the odds and bias connotations of the term 'orang kurangupaya' (disabled) (Norazit, 2010). Ogundola (2013) highlights that media misrepresentations of issues about people with disabilities have led to their discrimination in society. This research aims to examine the representation of disability in Malaysian mainstream culture, analyze the mainstream media content from the point of view of disabled community, and, determine the factors of marginalization and misrepresentation of disabled group in Malaysian mainstream media context.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition and concept of disability

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (Goodley, 2010) in Britain defined disability as anyone with a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect upon their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The term 'disability' indicates something missing either fiscally, physically, mentally or legally (Goodley, 2010). Disabled world (2019) produced a formal definition of disability from the conclusion of different scholars: 'A disability is a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual or group. The term is used to refer to individual functioning, including physical impairment, sensory

impairment, cognitive impairment, intellectual impairment mental illness, and various types of chronic disease'.

In Norazit (2010), the medical model of disability addressed disability/impairment directly within the individual as something to be treated (by the 'doctor') or something to be overcome (by the 'patient') as there is the lack of 'agency' in determining their own affairs. The socio-medical model also maintains the idea that disability is an abnormality locates within the individual, even though recognizing the social factor of disability. While the social model of disability, locates disability within the society and / or in the environment. In referring to Mairian Corker, social model of disability separates disability from impairment and then attributes the creation of disability to the dominant socio-cultural environment (Watson et al., 1998). Thus, disability is an outcome of the external constraints which prevent them from living their life in the way that they would want (Fawcett, 2000).

2.2 Media representation of Disability

Goggin (2009) argued the charity approach of disability in media representation, wherein disability is being known as a tragedy and people with disability need to be looked after, or helped, as they lack the resources, ability or power to survive independently. Through this approach, people with disabilities are conceptualized as structurally vulnerable, and in need of special treatment by those in the media. From the viewpoint of journalists, they fulfill their professional responsibility as they cover important issues in society accordingly. However, from the perspective of people with disabilities, it is unnecessary to allow the establishment of the linkage between disability and vulnerability in media. Byrd and Elliott (1988) stated that the stereotype depiction of disability is prevalent in the classical and model literature because disability has been frequently used as a symbol or embodiment of psychological insight into literary characterizations. Even in children's literature, the disability embodiment is common. Following Byrd and Elliott (1988), televisions have also been a source of well-intentioned, but degrading presentation of people with disabilities. Television presentations do not provide correct information and they even strengthen stereotypes despite the fact that they could contribute to the increase of fund.

Byrd and Elliott (1988) argued that unrealistic and negative portrayals on television and movie widen the communication gap between persons with and without disabilities. Positive attitudes toward disability could be cultivated through interaction, whether portrayals of disability in television and movie are of critical or financial successes. The effort of presenting a neutral view with accurate perspective and information could generate positive interaction between persons with and without disabilities despite economic factors. In Barnes and Mercer study (2011), the misrepresentation of disability in charity advertising is mainly caused by the adoption of representation of people with disabilities from other cultural forms. The study looked into misrepresentation of disabled people in the media and suggested some significant recommendations to curb the problematic media scenario. Positive alternative can be achieved unless it run and controlled by disabled people instead of involving the specialist disability media. In this research, it is to look into the portrayal of disabilities in Malaysian mainstream press.

2.3 Marginalization of Disabled group

Cain (2012) argued that the disabled often suffer of attitudinal barriers and environmental barriers. Attitudinal barriers are about the assumptions about capabilities and dependency, which can lead to overprotection and disempowerment that resulted to the negative attitudes and perception towards persons with disabilities. Environmental barriers are found in the constructed environment, for instance unattainable public buildings and communication infrastructure including absence of information in accessible formats. When environmental barriers meet attitudinal barriers, it can cause the exclusion of person with disabilities in the involvement of social, civil and political processes. This will lead to discrimination and social exclusion, together with the invisibility of persons with disabilities at all levels of society and the lack of positive role-models, persons with disabilities themselves often suffer from low self-esteem, confidence and aspirations, all of which impact on their ability to participate equally in all areas of social, economic and cultural life. Islam et al. (2014) initiated the academic debate whether disability is the product of social exclusion and how true it is in Malaysia context. There is an absence of literature looking into the question that disability is the product of social exclusion. Nonetheless, majority of the studies from global context suggested that social exclusion is caused by the disability, thus their needs and rights are being marginalized.

The European Disability Forum (n.d.) highlighted that the disabled are undoubtedly among the most vulnerable to fall under social exclusion. The significant factors that lead to social exclusion for disabled are the lack or limited access to social environment and unemployment, the lack or limited access to goods and services, stigmatization of disabled people, the lack of adequate training, the lack of specialized services, the inadequacy of the education system, the lack of economic policies to compensate for the extra cost of disability, the structure of the benefit system, and finally living in institutions'. Jenkins & Rigg and Burchardt (Islam et al., 2014) discovered the risk factors of older disabled people with lower average household incomes, are less likely to be in paid work, and have lower educational qualifications, on average. Duffy and Klasen (Islam et al., 2014) stated that social exclusion is related to the inability to participate effectively in economic, social, and cultural life and, in some characteristics, isolation and distance from mainstream society. Burchardt (Islam et al., 2014) emphasized that from social model perspective, disability is seen as the social and economic disadvantage which results from society's failure to respond to the needs of people with impairments. This research is therefore to look into whether the disabled group is marginalized in the Malaysian society from their own perspectives.

2.4 Disability culture

Disability is presumed as a kind of mainstream culture to aid the understanding of the conformation of the disability framing in mainstream media that affected the representation of disability. Barnes and Mercer (2011) indicated disability as a form of culture. A wide interpretation has formed by sociological studies of culture to include symbolic characteristics of human society, for instance rituals, beliefs, customs, work patterns, leisure, values, activities, and material goods. 'Culture consists

of the values the members of a given group hold, the norms they follow, and the material goods they create (Giddens, 1989)'. Values depict 'abstract ideals' while norms are the rules that fit into the social life. This emphasized the 'common perspective of culture as a "way of life" as culture is "signifying system" through which practices, meanings, and values are "communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored."

Davis (1995) outlined the development of the concept of disability in accordance with the social construction of 'normalcy'. 'The implications of the hegemony of normalcy are profound and extend into the very heart of cultural production (Davis, 1995). Davis (1995) proposed that 'one can find in almost any novel... a kind of surveying of the terrain of the body, an attention to difference...physical, mental and national'. The two deep-rooted cultural extremes in the society: medical and social model have created continuous impacts on the conception of disability, and further promoted and entrenched by the media representation. Unconsciously, this has become a common sense that presumed by almost everyone, including government, teachers, media practitioners and children. Due to the cultural extremes, there are negative portrayal of disabled community in media through vulnerability connotation and disability embodiment in classic literature. The misrepresentation also appeared in television programmes, movie and advertising.

A sense of common identity and interests produced by disability culture group disabled people together yet separated them from the counterparts of nondisabled (Barnes & Mercer, 2011). Historically, representations of disability are formed by non-disabled people. To fit into the regime of disability culture, it is inevitable that the manipulation of journalists in news writing has influenced the perception and mindset of public towards disabled community. Subsequently, it has led to the reinforcement of social and cultural divisions between disabled and non-disabled people through persistent disability representation in media. The representation of disability poses a significant role in presenting the status of disabled community. When the disability culture is prevalent in the society, people with disabilities have become the victim of the social exclusion and marginalization. Meanwhile, there is also the concern of the absence of local literature highlighting disability as the product of social exclusion. The collaboration of ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme's project with disabled association in Thailand and UNICEF disabled children project have shed positive lights in the media scenario. Although Malaysian media are always chained under controls, restrictions and ownerships, if changes can be made, disabled people will no longer needing to suffer from misrepresentation and marginalization in the future. However, there is the limitation of disability culture as it does not scrutinize the culture from the perspective of people with disabilities. Disability culture just discusses on the common culture that hold by abled-people towards disability instead of people with disabilities. Therefore, the research methods formed will include the perspective from people with visual impairment as the representative of disabled group to resolve the limitation.

Nonetheless, it is true to admit that disability culture is such a powerful and influential culture that capable in shaping the mindset of the society towards disability, especially through media representation. Naturally, mainstream media adopted the hegemony of the culture and spread this conception back to the media consumers in a form of cycle. Generally, the non-disabled readers have conformed to the pattern of disability culture in news coverage, so they do not assume this

as a critical problem. Awareness should be raised by media practitioners to address the misrepresentation of disabled community in mainstream media generally.

3. Methods

To include variety of perspectives, the interviews (refer Appendix IV) will be conducted with three interviewees, including a journalist from local print media (Mun), visual impaired personnel (YK), and representative from National Council for the Blind, Malaysia (Moses). The Star (an English newspaper), Sin Chew (a Chinese newspaper) and Utusan Malaysia (A Malay newspaper) were selected for content analysis. The brief information about chosen newspapers is presented as below:

- The Star is Malaysia's leading daily English newspaper, with its comprehensive coverage of local and international news. There are insights on current business issues and articles on entertainment and lifestyle. Among all the English dailies, The Star has the highest readership with approximately 1.39 million readers (AdQrate, 2014).
- Sin Chew Daily, or Sin Chew JitPoh is daily Mandarin newspaper in Malaysia founded in 1929. It attained the large amount of readership from Chinese readers and plays a significant role in Malaysia's media landscape. With the largest circulation of Chinese newspaper in Southeast Asia, Sin Chew Daily is also the largest Chinese daily outside mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (AdQrate, 2014).
- Utusan Malaysia is Malaysia's weekly Malay newspaper, founded since 1938. It is one of the key newspapers from Utusan Group with highest readerships and circulations based on a poll survey performed on Malaysian publications by AC Nielson.

The coding sheet (refer Appendix I) is designed as research instrument, to ease the process of analyzing data obtained from the three online news sites. A content analysis should include comprehensive coding design, coder instruction (refer Appendix II) and coder training with the expertise of the researcher. Coding process will be carried out by referring to the coding sheet. Firstly, the data will be categorized based on the category of newspapers, whether is from Sin Chew Daily, Utusan Malaysia, follow by the indication of date. To identify the exact placement of the news, data will be grouped based on the sections and categories, such as home news, business news, sport, technology and so forth. To allow specific grouping of the news, the page labels consists of nation, regional, world, community, environment, education and others. Pictures inside the news articles will be included in the analysis to examine the representation of the group presented through images and captions. The degree of central representation of people with visual impairment will also be included in coder, in the scale of 1, 2, 3, 4, to rate how central it is presented in the news. To ensure the reliability of the content analysis, another 2 coders are trained to carry out the task to test the consistency of the result (refer Appendix III).

4. Results

4.1 Representation of disabled community portrayed by mainstream media

In the interview, both YK and Moses shared the opinion that the news of disabled are all about their misfortunes, desperate cases, and excellent achievements. Most of the times, cases of miseries are being highlighted and to a lesser extent there are news about their excellent achievement. However, from the result of content analysis, there are news coverage achievement of the visually impaired as mentioned by them, for instance 'a blind student scored straight As in SPM', and the world news of the 'first vision-impaired candidate who aspire to become an English teacher by taking the International English Language Testing System in China'. Other than reporting about allegations and achievements, there are few news covered on the technologies that could help the visually impaired, including the 'blind mother seeing the baby for the first time', 'electronic dictionary for the blinds', 'the launching of the new Maybank-MAB Cinema for the visually impaired'. Comparing the result from both interview and content analysis, Mun has not seen any issue of marginalization of disabled group in media coverage, indeed the disabled group has been highlighted positively and some are published as headlines.

The arrangement of the news stories could affect the representation of people with visual impairment as it can show the level of importance of a particular news. According to Mun, the news of people with visual impairment are concerned and published under home news section in order to create more awareness of the society particularly activities related to blind associations. The findings of content analysis also depicted the allocation of blinds' news stories through grouping them based on the section, category and label. Most of the news stories gathered are from main sections, including home news and technology news. For page label, majority of the news are nation news, whereas some are regional news, world news, sport news, and community news. Most of the news stories accompanied with the picture of disabled and focused on disabled as main subject in the news story. The misrepresentations of the visually impaired in news coverage are known to the three interviewees. They notice and are aware of the misrepresentations as mainstream news always portrays the visually impaired people as victims, by describing how pathetic they are. Mun pointed that disabled are always being categorized under the same group with kids, pregnant women in the news coverage as minorities, to highlight the need for special care and help.

The news about disabled are politically dominated as how politicians offer the help towards the disabled. The association of news are frequently appeared during major festivals in the country. There is always the combination of sympathy and encouragement in news coverage by implying a disabled people who needs extra effort to achieve something compared to others. It is common to see the portrayal of news that 'they are disabled yet they achieved', as highlighted by YK. YK once highlighted this issue to the reporter of a local Chinese newspaper to ensure the portrayal as 'everyone can make it' since everyone has own strengths and weaknesses. Media should not over amplify someone's disability. However, the amplification in word usage in portrayal of disabled news still exists as usual.

However, Moses was disturbed with the misleading message in newspaper such as 'leading a

blind with a cane to cross the road' which he deemed as lacking respect and misleading. Moses opined that holding their hands will be the best way to guide them but sadly most of the people have misunderstood and do not realize this problem. A remarkable finding obtained from the interview is that disabled people will not be offended with the terms used to refer them. To Moses, journalists should be straight forward in using the words and it is unnecessary to think of any nicer term to refer the blind, such as 'sightless' and 'visually impaired'. Through the content analysis in selected newspaper, the terms appeared in the news stories are 'blind', 'visually impaired', 'blind student', 'blind mother', blind, visually impaired, people with visual impairment, 'buta' (blind), 'cacat pengliha-tan' (visually impaired) and 'orang buta' (blind people). For the disabled group, they are comfortable and accept to be called as 'blind'.

4.2 Factors of marginalization of disabled group in mainstream media

According to Mun, she believes that it is not about whether someone is disabled or not, if there is a disabled person belonging to the dominated group, it is possible to create the similar impact in grabbing media attention, such as the former National Chairman of the Democratic Action Party (DAP), Karpah Singh who had to be in his wheelchair due to an accident. As in the context of economy, the contents of newspapers are predetermined by what the chief editor asked to highlight. The newspapers tend to have selective reporting by covering news that contain values and with better human interests.

Misrepresentation of disabled could be explained by social stereotype culture, as mentioned by YK, because the public always conceive disabled community as victims. At times mainstream media are just simulating the common thoughts of the society, and this is the reflection of the mainstream society. Consequently, this will form general perspective of the society towards disabled group as public tend follow the agenda set by mainstream media, which continuously cause misrepresentations. All the three interviewees do not think 'disability culture' is prevalent in Malaysia and treat it as part of the mainstream cultures as the term is way too heavy. According to YK, there is no clear definition to describe the context between media and disabled group, but it is more inclined to social cultural perspective. However, according to Moses, he would rather define the phenomenon as the lack of focus. It is not about the domination of culture, but the representation of disabled group is unsatisfying.

4.3 Ways to represent disabled community through media in a better way

Moses suggests a column to be created for the disabled group just like the column of Wheel Power of The Star, which catered to the disabled community to contribute their viewpoints towards social issues. Mun mentioned that politicians have influential power in setting the agenda. If they can actively concern and discuss more about the issues of disabled community, the disabled group can easily grab the attention of media and help in raising awareness of the public. Another common problem is, some of the blinds still conceive themselves as victims, as well as the blind associations. According to YK and Mun, the blind association itself should be more proactive in getting their

news to be published. Awareness can be raised by changing the mindset of blind association and the blinds. The members of blind association shall be able to promote the scheme, appearance and reality of the blinds for mainstream media to cover, rather than accepting their portrayal as victims in a passive way.

Mainstream media should be improved to enhance the representation of disabled community. According to YK, he thinks the mainstream media could help by reporting the reality of what they are going through, especially social issues pertaining to job seeking. Some employers are willing to hire the disabled but simply ignorant of what they can do for them. This is because media have not educated them well about disabled community. In content analysis, out of the 17 news, there is one news from Utusan Malaysia that covered on their occupation, which is 'Menyelami kehidupan tukang urut buta' (Life of blind chiropractors) on 11 April 2015. It covers about the well-trained blind chiropractors from Malaysian Association of the Blind (MAB). Another news from Sin Chew Daily on 17 February 2015 also partially covered about occupation of the blind crafter who made handicrafts of gold sheep in conjunction of the Chinese New Year.

According to Moses, newspaper do not really play a great role in educating public. This has led to the phenomenon that most of the people are ignorant of the struggles faced by disabled community. In order to let public to understand better towards disabled community, it is necessary to educate them through improvising the content of mainstream media. Apart from that, YK stresses that it is not about how frequent the representation will be, but how in-depth the issues of disabled community to be explored, and the initiatives of scrutinizing it from various angles. Thus, journalists of mainstream media ought to work on the content of news to construct positive values among the readers towards disabled community. The results of content analysis help in supporting the viewpoints of the interviewees. The opinions given by the interviewees have shed some positive lights to the research in addressing the types of representation, the problems of the representations and ways to rectify misrepresentations in mainstream media content. Although the portion of the news coverage of blind community is relatively lesser, most of their news stories are positive rather than typical misrepresentations which portray them as the subject of traumatic stories. However, the charity approach of misrepresenting them as victim in news stories is still a common tactic, which resulted in the widening of the gap between disabled people and non-disabled people. Despite the disapproval of interviewees to define such phenomenon as marginalization and put the blame on the domination of disability culture, two factors that led to misrepresentations are socioeconomic status and sociocultural perspective. Lastly, the recommendations to rectify misrepresentations are given by the interviewees based on personal experiences, included the allocation of special column for disabled community, cooperation of different parties in raising the awareness of the public and improvement that can be made on mainstream media content.

5. Discussion

The finding showed the improvement of representation of the disabled community as there are more positive news coverage about them. Public will get to understand more and aware of their

existence in the society through news coverage. Although the majority of their news coverage seemed to be positive, however the portion of their news is relatively smaller than other types of news coverage. Hence, news stories of blinds are not dominant and do not appear frequently in mainstream news. The findings of content analysis also helped in recognizing the arrangement of news stories of visually impaired group inside newspaper. Majority of the news are scattered on main section of newspaper and under the categorization of nation news. This indicated that the news stories of visually impaired group are noticeable and concerned as mentioned. The charity approach of disability in media representation still occurs because most of the news stories intended to portray them as the object to be 'looked after, or helped, as they lack of the resources, ability or power to survive independently' (Goggin, 2009). Even though the representation is getting improved due to the increasing of positive stories than 'sympathetic' stories, several news stories in content analysis were covered on something gained or received by the blind community from a body. There is a common style of journalist in reporting the news of the disabled community to trigger sympathy and motivational effects. Sometimes, journalist might over amplify the news by using certain terms or adjectives which causes people to focus more on their impairment. They tend to portray disabled people as pathetic and incapable people as they need extra effort than others to achieve things that abled-person could do. Another problem with the misrepresentation of disabled people is that the public might obtain misleading information from mainstream media that cause stereotype and bias towards disabled people. Since newspaper is the major source of the public to refer, it shall play a good role in transmitting the truthful information through positive representation of the disabled group.

The idea of creating specific column in newspaper for disabled community could ensure them to have a platform to voice out their opinions towards social issues, instead of publishing the perspective of journalists and citizens. Another way to have better representation is the cooperation of different parties. In order to raise awareness, politicians could help in setting the agenda despite their socio-economic status whereas the non-government organizations and blind associations should also play their roles by being proactive to express the difficulties and demands, in order to engage in mainstream media attention. With the cooperation of different parties, it is possible to improve the representation of disabled community, just like the UNICEF project conducted to grant disabled children the opportunities to create mainstream media content through producing own radio programs and newspapers. Meanwhile, various perspectives should be involved in covering social issues of disabled community as news coverage always focus on mainstream perspective. As discussed, the ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Program's PEPDEL project in Thailand can be taken as a good example to adopt as it helped in stimulating positive representation of disabled people and the inclusion of human rights issues and their perspectives.

The sustainable framework suggests that disability is a form of mainstream culture that grouped disabled together yet separated them from the counterparts of nondisabled (Barnes & Mercer, 2011). This has led to the misconception and further reinforced by the media representation. However, contrary to the existing studies, this research did not prove the existence and domination of disability culture as all interviewees suggest that misrepresentation of disabled people is not severe to the point of needing to define it as 'disability culture'. Furthermore, 'disability culture' is prominent

only from the perspective of scholars, but they do not include disabled's perspective towards this culture. The research invites disabled people to discuss about 'disability culture' and take in their point of views as findings. Another factor of the variation of the research with existing researches is the difference of context for different countries as those foreign researches are not based on Malaysia's context. The research helps in understanding the level of domination of disability culture in Malaysia and surprisingly it is not prominent in Malaysia. People with disabilities do not deserve to bear the psychological and physical consequences that caused by the portrayal of media although they do not urge for the sympathy from public. Despite the fact that disabled can live independently, they are not meant to be excluded from the society and marginalized by the mainstream media. Inevitably, their path is always challenging and tough. Since mainstream media is a great tool that can shape people's consciousness and idea, therefore it shall play an important role in serving the rights of the disabled group. Through the cultivation of civil awareness and positive ideas in mainstream media, there would have better facilities, technologies, careers and education opportunities to support them in social development. By having better representations, they can feel the sense of belonging and 'sameness' as being part of the society.

6. Conclusion

Before presenting the final conclusion, there were several limitations of the research that should be acknowledged. These are as follows:

- Only blinds were covered as on behalf of disabled community
- Only newspaper was used as the source of mainstream media for content analysis
- Only the terms related to 'blind' were investigated

Give that different mainstream media might have different types of representation of disabled people, the focus of blind community by solely using newspaper as the only source in content analysis will not be able to present a comprehensive finding of the representation of disabled community.

In a nutshell, the representation of disabled community in Malaysia is not as severe and negative as depicted by the scholars because the news coverage focusing on them is getting more positive. However, the portion of the coverage is comparatively lesser. The issue of misrepresentations still occurs where the portrayals are constructed as such that disabled people are 'pathetic', 'vulnerable', and require extra efforts to do something that others could do easily. Despite the difference in the scholars' findings and interviewees' viewpoints, this research would conclude that disabled people are partially marginalized due to the misrepresentation in mainstream media content. Another significant finding is that disabled people are not defensive towards the terms used to refer them which is different with the common mindset of non-disabled people. Nonetheless, the habit of emphasizing someone's disability is a cliché that is persistent in news coverage, which has resulted in mis-representation at all time. To discover more holistic findings, the suggestion for future research is that more variations could be included in content analysis rather than solely looking into newspaper,

for instance analyzing the portrayal of disabled people in commercial advertisements and television programs. Since the definition of disability could be broad as there are many categories of specific disabilities, researcher shall be clear of what types of disability to include before conducting disability research, particularly whether to focus on mental disabilities or physical disabilities, or to cover both kinds of disabilities.

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[About the authors]

Chan Eang Teng (CET) is a Senior Lecturer of Tunku Abdul Rahman University College in Malaysia, possesses a Master Degree in Strategic and Defense and a Bachelor Degree in the area of International Relations from University of Malaya (Malaysia). Research areas have been diversified, not limited to International Relations but politics and media, online blogging and politics, political participation, political communication, PR and CSR, advertising, film analysis, cultural issues and visual communications.

Tang Mui Joo (TMJ) is a Principal Lecturer of Tunku Abdul Rahman University College in Malaysia, possesses PhD from University of Malaya (Malaysia), in the area of Media Studies, Publishing and Book Marketing. Research areas have been diversified, not limited to Publishing and Book Marketing but film analysis, cultural issues, visual communications, online blogging and politics, PR and CSR, and advertising.

Appendix. I

Coding sheet for newspaper

A. PAPER Paper
  1 = Sin Chew Daily; 2 = The Star; 3 = Utusan Malaysia

B. STORY ID Newspaper Date (6 digit) − Story # (2 digit)

C. SECTION Section
  0 = other than main section
  1 = main section

D. CATEGORIES Categories:
  1 = Home news; 2 = Business news; 3 = Sport; 4 = Technology;
  5 = Lifestyle; 6 = Travel; 7 = Opinion; 8 = Others

E. LABEL Page Label:
  1 = Nation; 2 = Regional; 3 = World; 4 = Community;
  5 = Environment; 6 = Education; 7 = Others

F. PHOTO Story accompanied by pictures of representative
  0 = [none]
  1 = With picture(s)

G. CENTRAL How central is the named representative to the story?
  1 = Main
  2 = Secondary
  3 = List
  4 = Incidental

Appendix. II

Coder Sheet Instructions

A. Paper:

Categorization of news according to the types of newspaper

1 - *Sin Chew Daily*
2 - *The Star*
3 - *Utusan Malaysia*

B. Story ID:

November 11, 2001 newspaper story 4 would be: 111101-04

If analyzing more than one newspaper title, add another code at the front indicating paper. For example 2-111101-04

C. Section

Mark 1 if the story belongs to main section, mark 0 if it doesn't.

D. Categories

Mark the category that the story appears in from the list below using the appropriate number. (Note: you can modify this list to reflect your newspaper specifically.)

1 - *Home news*
2 - *Business news*
3 - *Sport*
4 - *Technology*
5 - *Lifestyle*
6 - *Travel*
7 - *Opinion*
8 - *Others*

E. Page Label:

Mark the page label that the story appears in from the list below using the appropriate number. (Note: you can modify this list to reflect your newspaper specifically.)

1 - *Nation*
2 - *Regional*
3 - *World*
4 - *Community*
5 - *Environment*
6 - *Education*
7 - *Others*

F. Photo: Story accompanied by pictures of representative
Mark 0 if there is no picture of the representative, and mark 1 if the news comes with picture(s)of representative with caption

G. Central: How central is the named representative to the story
   1 - *Main:* Representative is the main subject of the story or one of several main subjects of the story (must be mentioned in headline and/or first three paragraphs)
   2 - *Secondary:* Representative is a secondary subject in the story
   3 - *List:* Representative is mentioned only on a list
   4 - *Incidental:* Representative is an incidental subject (only computer would notice)

Appendix. III

Content analysis

First Coder's Data

SIN CHEW DAILY						
A. PAPER	B. STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
1	011515-01	1	1	1	1	1
1	180315-02	1	1	1	1	1
1	100315-03	1	1	1	1	2
1	030315-04	1	1	1	1	1
1	170215-05	1	1	1	1	1
1	150515-06	0	1	4	0	2

THE STAR						
A. PAPER	B. STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
2	300415-07	1	1	1	0	1
2	270115-08	0	4	3	1	1
2	050615-09	1	1	3	0	1
2	100615-10	0	8	6	1	4
2	160115-11	1	4	1	1	2
2	040315-12	0	8	4	1	1
2	160515-13	0	8	4	0	2
2	010515-14	0	8	4	1	1

UTUSAN MALAYSIA						
A. PAPER	B. STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
3	110415-15	0	5	4	1	2
3	110615-16	1	1	1	1	1
3	170315-17	1	1	2	0	4

Second coder's data

SIN CHEW DAILY						
A. PAPER	B. STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
1	011515-01	0	8	1	1	2
1	180315-02	0	8	1	1	1
1	100315-03	0	8	2	0	1
1	030315-04	0	8	1	1	1
1	170215-05	0	8	1	1	1
1	150515-06	1	1	1	1	2

THE STAR						
A. PAPER	B. STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
2	300415-07	0	8	1	0	2
2	270115-08	0	8	3	1	1
2	050615-09	0	8	2	0	2
2	100615-10	0	8	4	1	1
2	160115-11	0	8	1	1	1
2	040315-12	0	8	4	1	1
2	160515-13	0	8	4	1	2
2	010515-14	0	8	4	0	1
UTUSAN MALAYSIA						
A. PAPER	B. STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
3	110415-15	0	5	4	1	3
3	110615-16	1	1	1	1	1
3	170315-17	0	1	2	1	1

Third coder's data

SIN CHEW DAILY						
A. PAPER	B.STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
1	011515-01	1	1	1	1	1
1	180315-02	1	1	4	1	2
1	100315-03	1	4	1	1	2
1	030315-04	1	1	6	1	1
1	170215-05	1	8	7	1	1
1	150515-06	1	1	4	1	3
THE STAR						
A. PAPER	B.STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
2	300415-07	1	1	4	0	2
2	270115-08	1	4	3	1	1
2	050615-09	1	1	3	0	1
2	100615-10	1	1	6	1	1
2	160115-11	1	4	1	1	1
2	040315-12	1	1	1	1	1
2	160515-13	1	1	4	1	1
2	010515-14	1	1	4	0	1
UTUSAN MALAYSIA						
A. PAPER	B.STORY ID	C. SECTION	D. CATEGORIES	E. LABEL	F. PHOTO	G. CENTRAL
3	110415-15	1	8	1	1	2
3	110615-16	1	1	1	1	1
3	170315-17	1	1	1	1	2

Appendix. IV

Intensive Interview question

- What is your opinion towards social exclusion of people with disabilities?
- What are the factors of marginalization of disabled group in mainstream media content?
- In your opinion, what do you find about mainstream media?
- What kind of news you normally look for from newspaper?
- From the point of view of people with visual impairment, what do they think about their news representation?
- How do you aware of the misrepresentation mainstream media?
- What kind of representation of the visual impaired group normally portray by newspaper?
- Are local media made user-friendly for the people with visual impairment? Why?
- Do mainstream media promote stereotype or bias of public towards the visual impaired group?
- How do mainstream media portray the visual impaired group?
- How can mainstream media help the visual impaired group?
- Do you satisfy with the current media representation and coverage of visual impaired group? Why?
- How to raise the awareness of different parties towards the addressing of representation?
- Do you think disability culture is prevalent in Malaysia and treated as part of the mainstream cultures?
- What are the alternative media for people with visual impairment?
- What is your expectation towards representation of people with visual impairment in media?
- Do you have any recommendation to improve the representation and rights of visual impaired group in media?
- Do you have any example indicating the revolution of representation?
- What are the ways to represent disabled community through media in a better way?