THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR MICROSOURCING CHALLENGES IN MALAYSIA

Siti Sarah Maidin[1], Liza Azizun Rahman[2]*

[1*]Asia Pacific University (APU), Malaysia.

[2]Asia Pacific University (APU), Malaysia.

[1]*dr.sitisarah@apu.edu.my, [2]TP038712@mail.apu.edu.my

ABSTRACT:
Microsourcing is a subset of outsourcing. In Malaysia, microsourcing is still at the infancy stage. The idea of microsourcing is to help people, specifically from the B40 group, to earn their side income through the use of the Internet. Microsourcing has the potential to uplift the society economy as a whole. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the challenges which prevents the people from engaging in microsourcing. This paper aims to illustrate the process of constructing the interview protocol for microsourcing challenges in Malaysia. The process involved in the development includes: setting up interview questions, designing the interview protocol, getting an expert review, conducting a pilot test, and update the exiting pilot study. The validated interview protocol will be used for the real data collection.

INTRODUCTION
The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become a crucial aspect in determining the success of marginalized communities in improving their development in the knowledge economy [1]. In recent years, ICT has been widely used by users from all generations to access information locally and around the globe. Freelancers are defined as individuals who work for different companies on assignments on an independent and contract basis [2].

This group of people is not the permanent staff in the organization, and they have the potential to move on to other projects and companies when their contract has ended [3]. According to [4], the number of freelancers has been increasing due to the rising cost of living, causing Malaysians to seek for financial stability and to stay competitive. Likewise, microsourcing involves one individual undertakes an assignment more cheaply. With the help of

microsourcing, it can assist the freelancer to find a suitable task which they are comfortable to engage with.

According to [5] as illustrated in Fig. 1, over 59% of companies are said to adopt outsourcing as a cost-cutting tool, while 57% of companies agreed that it enables them to focus on their core business. Microsourcing has been implemented in many developing countries such as India, China, and Indonesia, using a designated platform allowing companies to post jobs and communicate with microsourcees. In order to ensure all levels of society are aware of microsourcing, there are several factors need to be take into account including the enablers, the challenges, awareness campaign and support from the stakeholders.

In Malaysia, the POKOK platform was launched by Digital Malaysia under the government initiatives program, which is aimed to provide additional income opportunities targeted for the Bottom 40 percent (B40) group. This initiative has been implemented in Malaysia as early as 2013 [6]. However, local awareness is still at a low level. Therefore, this research will be exploring on the awareness of the B40 group towards microsourcing in Malaysia and how it affects the other attributes, including task clarity, quality, and trust. This research will be using a quantitative data approach to explore the awareness and challenges of microsourcing practices among the B40 group, and it mainly focuses on the development of interview questions.

The main aim of this paper is to ensure all the raised interview questions are reliable, valid, and answering the research objectives. Hence, this paper will elaborate on the construction of the interview questions, the pilot test, and the outcome from the pilot test, which initially contributes to the development of the interview protocol.
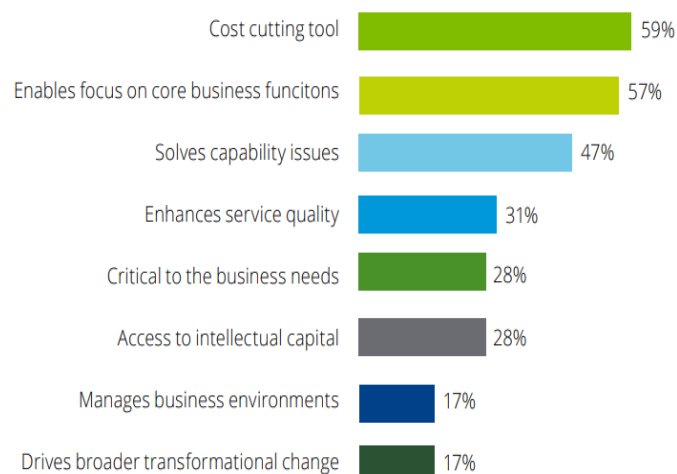

Figure 1 Outsourcing Reason

LITERATURE REVIEW
The flourishing micro sourcing market demand is due to its flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and speedy task completion. A study by [7] indicates the rise in the statistical number of workers engaged in micro-task. Micro sourcing has

been recognized as a platform that provides oceans of opportunity for the workers to generate income.

Micro-task involved three (3) parties, which are job providers, platform, and workers. Job providers offer tasks and provide monetary rewards upon completion of the task; the platform provides infrastructure and services for both job providers and workers while the workers need to complete the task for monetary reward.

The task level is varying from an easy task to a complex task. The microtask has been utilized in several domains such as urban planning project [8], translation, transcription, designing surveys [9], natural disaster [10], geographical information system [12][13][14].

There were three (3) crucial phases identified in microtask, which include: evaluation phase, task design, and integration [15]. The evaluation phase deals with the identification of tasks associated with linking the task with the present process. Task design refers to the task creation process.

Integration is related to combining the outcome from the microtask into the whole process. The astonishing growth of micro sourcing has gained the researcher's attention worldwide. There was extensive research has been conducted about the micro sourcing domain, specifically in the platform, models and techniques [16][17] components and function [18] and computation [19][20][21][22] Several researchers have pointed out some of the challenges in micro sourcing, particularly in task clarity, quality, and trust issues [23][24][25]. Prior research did not take into account the impact of task clarity in micro sourcing [23].

A case study has been conducted by [23] to investigate the impact of task clarity on task performance.

The findings revealed that workers had frequent difficulties due to unclear tasks. The workers encountered the problem by relying on the information from external help, dictionary, and translator. From the study, it can be concluded that there is a need to have a specific mechanism to tackle the task clarity issue to ensure the microtask is performed optimally. Task clarity is interrelated with the quality of the outcome produced from a process.

Hence, this research views the emergence of micro sourcing as a paradigm that goes beyond the economic, social, governance, technological spheres, and business operation. The micro sourcing task designation ecosystem is very crucial as the success of micro sourcing depends on the whole ecosystem between the job provider, platform, and workers. The study attempt to investigate the challenges in implementing micro sourcing in Malaysia, specifically in task designation.[26] have pointed out that quality issues are an inherent problem in micro sourcing. [25] [23] and [24] also agreed that micro sourcing suffers from quality issues.

The job provider discovered that it was challenging to evaluate the outcome produced by the workers. From the job provider's perspective, they have the authority to accept or refuse the poor quality task completed by the workers [25] [27].

On the other angle, the workers also suffer from several issues such as communication, trust, and privacy. The virtual environment between the job providers and the workers leads to miscommunication problems. In certain cases, the workers ignore the quality of the outcome due to the time constraint and unclear instructions [23].

According to [28], workers may be considered to be replaceable and untrustworthy. Their rights may also not be guaranteed. The workers need to share their location with the server for the task assignment purpose.

This has raised concern among the workers of the possibility of their privacy being threatened [20]. Some of the researchers agreed that trust issue is the common problem in micro sourcing [23][24][20]. Trust is defined as an attitude of optimistic anticipation that one's weaknesses will not be abused [29]. [20] also agreed that the major challenge in crowdsourcing is related to the trust issue, specifically in the workers' motivation and trust in the payment mechanism. Workers are considered as trustworthy for their ability to accomplish the task within the given time.

However, [24] argued that the interpretation of trust is an unfair assessment and incomplete due to the evaluation, which ignores the expertise and motivation of the workers. Often, the complexity and clarity of the task are ignored for the evaluation purpose. To date, little research has been done on the relationship between trust issues and the workers' participation [20].

METHODS

This research uses a quantitative research method for data collection and data analysis before the questionnaire is distributed. This method is one of the methods used to collect data from targeted respondents from various backgrounds, including their race, gender, occupation, and other related variables. The process of developing a questionnaire is shown in Fig. 2.

The first step is the development of questionnaire questions. The questions were developed to answer the research questions and also to gather related information while focusing on how it affects the variables of this research. Hence, the questions designed for the questionnaire addresses their awareness towards microsourcing and the challenges they encounter while practicing microsourcing.

The next step is where the pilot test is conducted using the questionnaire. The outcome of the pilot study is then used to improve the questions to suit better to the research questions and objectives.

Interview technique is generally used in ethnographic data collection [30]. The characteristics of the interview, which offer flexibility in exploring the

respondent's experience, opinions, and perception, has motivated the research worldwide to adopt it [31]. According to [32], the interview is useful specifically to gain insights into the participant's experience. Based on each of the individual interview sessions, the researcher able to probe further the issues that the researcher is currently investigating.

A semi-structured interview is often used in social science research due to its flexibility, which allows the researcher to ask more open-ended questions, which is useful in collecting rich data sets. In this research, semi-structured is used due to its suitability in allowing the researcher to navigate between the questions and allowing the researcher to probe further into the questions which requires further explanation and clarification.

When conducting an interview, the main crucial instrument is the interview protocol. The respondents selected are the people from the B40 group in Klang Valley, which earns RM4000.00 and below every month.

The income may come from a variety of sources paid employment, self-employed, property and investments, and current transfer received. Fig.3. illustrates the key statistics on income and basic amenities from 2016.
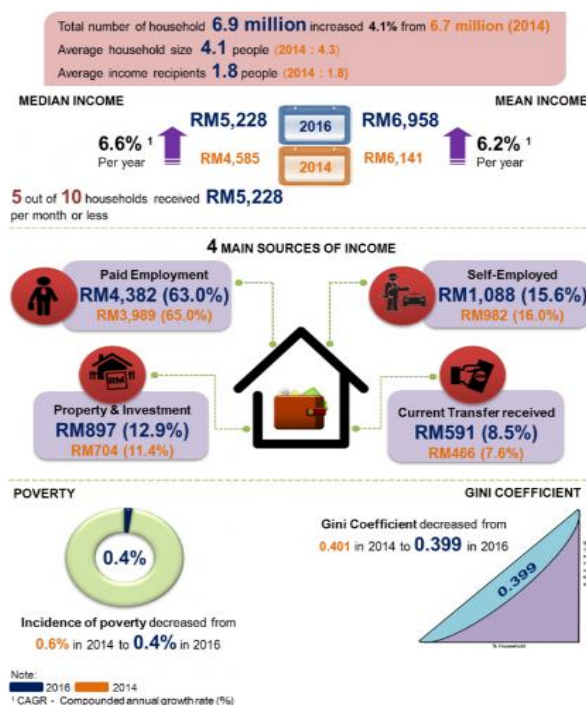

Figure 2 Key Statistics on household income 2016 [33]

Fig.4. illustrates the processes involved in the development of the interview protocol. The interview questions are developed based on suggestions by [34], which emphasizes that all the questions raised are in line with the research objectives. Therefore, all the interview questions designed are aligned with the research objectives, which include the awareness of the respondents in microsourcing and the challenges, which include task clarity, quality, and trust. The interview questions mainly divided into three (3) main sections and Two (2) subsections.
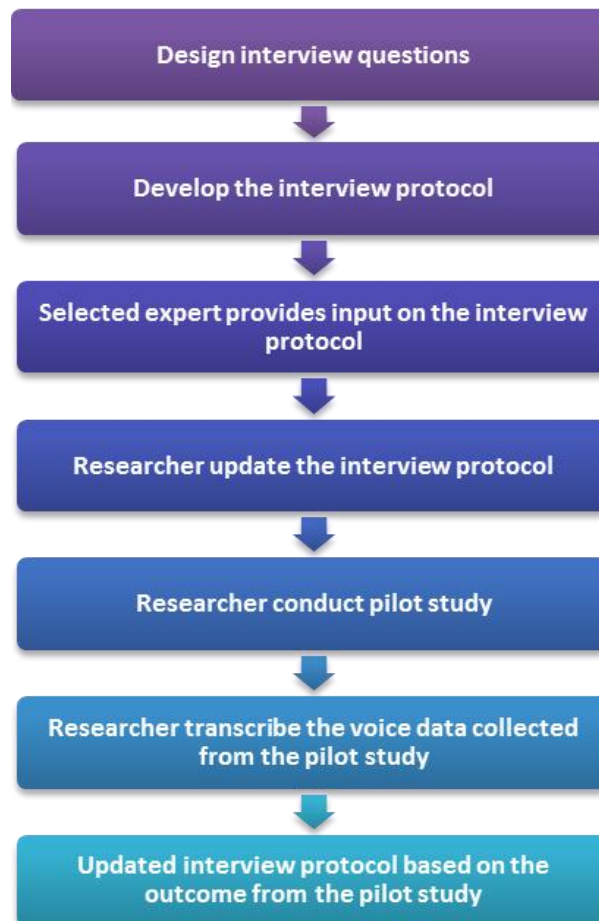
Figure 3 Processes in the Development of Interview Protocol

The first process is the development of the interview questions. The first section starts with the questions about the respondent's demographic profile, which includes focuses on their personal information, including age, gender, educational background, and monthly income.

The second section of the interview questions aims to investigate further the respondent's awareness in microsourcing and to what extent they practice microsourcing.

The third section's objective is to probe into the challenges in microsourcing. The subsection includes questions on task clarity, quality, and trust.

Task clarity questions emphasize about their opinion on the clarity of the task assigned. The quality questions look into how the quality of outcome produced is measured and rewarded by the company. Trust related questions aimed to explore to what extent does the respondent trusts the platform where they applied for the job.

The next steps after designing the interview question are to develop the interview protocol. According to [35] [36] [30], the interview protocol is crucial in any qualitative research, which involves the interview technique. The interview protocol is a script that compiles all interview questions which will be used in the interview.

The third step is to submit the interview protocol, which has been prepared earlier to the selected expert.

The goal of this process is to gain input from the expert. The expert is research in the Business Information Systems field with various knowledge in the Business and Information Technology domain. The outcome from the expert review indicates that some questions need further clarity to ensure the respondent's ability to understand the questions.

Later, a pilot study was conducted, and the responses were recorded. The main aim of the pilot study is to test the constructed interview questions in the context of completeness and clarity. Based on the input from the pilot study, some questions need to be added to the awareness sections to differentiate the respondents who are practicing microsourcing and the respondents who are not practicing microsourcing. Finally, the researcher compiled all the input gathered from the pilot study and then updated the interview protocol for the actual interview session.

The iterative process of conducting the interview protocol are due to several reasons, which includes (i) to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructed interview questions, (ii) the completeness of the questions and (iii) the respondents perspective and understanding towards the questions.

CONCLUSIONS
The findings from the pilot study indicate that the questions developed are complete and clear. As suggested by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), the interview questions need to be reviewed by an expert, and the constructed questions need to be informative and clear. Therefore, the interview questions which will be used in this research need to be tested via pilot study to ensure the validity and clarity of the questions. The finalized interview protocol is the instrument that will be used for actual data collection. By doing this research, it is hoped that the B40 group of people can fully utilize the microsourcing platform to earn income and thus to uplift the society economy. Nevertheless, it is hope that more research will be undertaken in microsourcing domain specifically in Malaysia.

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