

Exploring A New Market for Painting in Malaysia: A Need Assessment Analysis

Khayril Anwar Khairudin, Siti Maryam Ali Yasin, Siti Ermi
Shahira Abdul Jamil, Mohamad Hafiz Yahaya

College of Creative Art Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Perak

Email: Khayr171@uitm.edu.my, sitim645@uitm.edu.my, sitiermi@uitm.edu.my,
hafizyahaya@uitm.edu.my

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Abstract

Modern paintings started in Malaysia as early as 1930s. From its introduction until the present, the development of the painting industry seemed to be very encouraging. This development can be seen through the emergence of many private galleries and the increase in painting sales every year. However, despite this optimistic scenario, few issues need to be looked into. For instance, paintings are still considered challenging to sell in terms of marketing, especially for young artists. Furthermore, the primary art market in Malaysia is concentrated on private collectors whose number is minimal. This creates difficulties among the collectors to access the majority of the artist to buy paintings. This study seeks to explore the potential of new markets for painting in Malaysia. Through the qualitative method, few selected art experts and artists were interviewed. The findings from this study could be used as guidelines in art marketing and are expected to increase the sale of paintings, especially to new artists in Malaysia.

Keywords: Painting, New Marke, Paintings sales, Characteristic, Art Auction.

Introduction

The development of modern art painting can be considered a beginner in Malaysia if it's being compared with the western countries. Though it's only started circa the 1930s, the progress to date can be considered encouraging (Mahmood, 2007). This can be observed through the emergence of various private galleries conducting activities and exhibitions held during that period.

Besides, looking at the available potential in these art painting fields, also causing the increasing numbers of training institutions of higher learning to be it public or privately, are pursuing each other offering a course in this field. This is because, besides generating an artist that will continue the country's artistic legacy, this field also possess considerable potential in spearheading the country's economic growth. Therefore, it is not surprising if the painting courses started to gain a demand because the community begin to realize its potential for a sizable financial return (Marshall et al., 2016).

The report issued through the Art Expo activity, which was held from the year 2007 till 2014, shows that there is a significant increase in the sale of artwork in Malaysia that is as much as RM2.3 million in 2007, mounted up to RM20.1 million in 2014 (Khairudin et al., 2016). This progress is considered a positive thing for the modern painting industry in Malaysia. Indirectly, it is also indicated that the Malaysian community had already accepted the contemporary painting style brought from the west, though the eastern community's different philosophically and life values.

However, from the development that happened, several issues are seen as a threat to the country's painting industry if no initiative and effort is taken to overcome this. Currently, the painting industry development focuses more on improving the number of students and artists in this field only. It's undeniable that it is essential to ensure the sustainability and continuity of this field in the future. However, the student's ability aspect in this field and their survival as artists need to be given serious attention. This ensures that each graduate produced will continue to be involved in the painting field and won't switch to another profession just because of life's insistence.

Besides, the market for the painting industry is also posed as the backbone to spearhead the development of painting in Malaysia, seen only concentrating on one particular source only. Individual art collectors recognized as single support to all the artists (Christoph et al., 2014). This situation is marked as very unhealthy since the number of personal collectors in Malaysia is considered very few compared with the number of local artists in Malaysia. Therefore, the low number of art collectors cannot service all the available artists.

Therefore, effort should be taken to diversify the market for the painting industry. With that, the objectives for this research are 1) to identify which are the primary problem for the survival of Malaysian artists. Second, this research has also been done to understand and recognize a potential market for the painting industry in Malaysia. This matter is essential to ensure the sustainability of the painting industry in the future. Hopefully, this effort can assist in further expanding and developing the painting industry in Malaysia.

Literature Review

It is undeniable that art role is indeed crucial in humans life. With the appreciation of something interesting, beauty and aesthetic, particularly on the art object, the feeling of peace and calm will be presented in a person (Ali, 2015). This means the art object is therapeutic to those who needed it (Botton & Armstrong, 2015). But now, the role of an art object seems to get wider. Apart from being used to fulfil spiritual needs (Joshi et al., 2011; Stroud, 2006), it helps to improve the economy (Centre for Economics and Business Research, 2013; Guetzkow, 2002; Marshall et al., 2016; Sereerat et al., 2015).

Based on the research made by Hayter & Pierce (2009), art and culture could give economic benefits to a community and also the country. This is because it can create job opportunities, as a tourist attraction, to attract foreign investors and profit from tax collection imposed on purchasing the artworks. By this, it is evident that the art object certainly possesses a tremendous interest in the country. Therefore, to ensure continuous growth, a market in arts, mainly painting, needed to be expanded. Perhaps this effort could improve more on art development, primarily painting in Malaysia.

Other than individual art collectors and a private sector that becomes among the patrons for the art industry to date, the hotel industry saw considerable potential to be explored and then made into a new market for arts. This has been proven by Sereerat et al., (2015) research that art and culture adapted in a hotel certainly improve the hotel's business. This is also

supported by Heide & Gronhaug, (2008) and Heide et al., (2009) emphasized that the art object such as painting displayed in a hotel can provide a good atmosphere. Therefore, it also cooperates to attract tourists to return to the hotel for being mesmerized by the peaceful and pleasant environment. This clearly shows the importance of painting for creating an atmosphere in the hotel.

Research Methodology

This research is conducted by using a qualitative method with a practicing interview approach to collect data. This considering there's no clear theory ever made in this research that can be used to obtain the required data. This research likewise involves the observation process and content analysis, then the case study approach is seen as the most suitable method to be applied.

Zainal (1997) mentioned that a case study is a method that enables a researcher to study in more detail within a context. Besides, Yin (2009) also stated that a case study from the research was conducted using various sources to obtain clear evidence when the phenomenon and context don't carry clear proof. For the execution of the interview process, as many as seven experts have been chosen. They consist of policymakers from their respective fields, academicians, gallery curators, art consultant, and artists. This interview process has also been done with the application of the semi-structured interview method. Then, the data obtained from this process interview will be analyzed using Atlas.ti software. Finally, the content analysis process will be executed to get a result to respond to the objectives of this study.

Research Process/ Flowchart

Table 1

Research Process/Flowchart

	Process Flowchart	Research Design & Strategy	Instrumentation
Stage 1	Collecting Data (Literature Review & Selecting 7 expert for interview)	Interview (Semi-structured)	Atlas.ti.
Stage 2	Analysing the data from interviewing process	Qualitative Method	Content Analysis Atlas.ti.
Stage 3	Result		

As shown in Table 1 above is the research process or flowchart has been done in this study. Besides, in the present study, three stages are undertaken to achieve the two main objectives set out in this research. For the first stage, collecting material from the literature review was done to identify the key issues and issues faced by the young artists in Malaysia today. Additionally, at this stage, expert selection has also been made in obtaining their views on these issues and suggestions on how to resolve them. As explained above, the experts were selected according to experts such as policymakers, gallery curators, artists, consultants and academics. The primary purpose of this expert selected from different fields is to get insights from different perspectives in addressing the sale of artworks for this new artist. Besides, it also seeks to find common ground for problems and suggestions in finding answers to the issues raised.

Also, this interview process was semi-structured. Nine questions were asked based on three main categories defined as category 1. survival issue, category 2. painting market in Malaysia

and category 3. a new potential market for painting in Malaysia. All of the questions provided are also based on the research question in this study in response to the research objective. Although the questions for this interview process were prepared according to the priorities of the study, respondents were given the freedom to answer and share their views on the issues or questions raised. It is crucial to have a comprehensive overview of the issues confronted and their opinions on exploring new markets for the art of painting. This is as described by Heide et al., (2009), who suggest that this semi-structured interview allows for two-way communication to be obtained to acquire accurate data. Therefore, if the respondent has touched on the issue or question provided for the next question, the question will not be asked again as the answer will respond to that question.

Besides, all of the data from this interview process was analyzed using Atlas. ti application to perform the content analysis process. Furthermore, all the essential points of this answer have been compiled based on the coding developed by the research question in this study. The process of content analysis will be described in more detail below.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a method used in analyzing a document. Bryman (2016) stated that there are two approaches in conducting the content analysis process: quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis. Furthermore, Elo & Kyngäs (2008) also assert that content analysis is used to examine writing such as a document. Therefore, taking into account the views from (Bryman, 2016; Elo & Kyngas, 2008), this content analysis method is selected in analyzing the data from the interview process.

In conducting this content analysis process, coding for this study has been generated (see table 2 below). As suggested by Bryman (2016), this is necessary to use coding in analyzing the data obtained. In this study, there are three main codings generated based on the research question of this study which is 1) Survival Issue, 2) Painting Market, and 3) New Potential Market in Malaysia. Therefore, any answers or views that may be found concerning these coding will be used and analyzed to obtain results for this research.

Table 2

Coding Manual Schedule

EXPERTS	Survival Issue			Painting Market			New Painting Market in Malaysia		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3
PM1									
CS1									
CG2									
A1									
A2									
A3									
AC1									

Data Analysis, Result and Finding

Table 3 below shows the result retrieved from the content analysis conducted on all the seven experts interviewed and responded to these research objectives. From the data obtained, it has been identified that all the interviewed respondents agree that the survival issue is the main dilemma faced by all the artists in Malaysia, especially the newcomer.

Besides, the entire respondents also thought that most new artists were not ready to face challenges as full-time artists. Some of the respondents reflect that these issues are caused by the educational institute itself that does not have thorough and elaborate planning by providing training for the graduates to bear with the careers life. Eventually, this issue will cause most new artists to quit paint then, followed by switching their careers.

Table 3

Result Analysis of Interview From 7 Expert Related to Painting Market Issues in Malaysia

Survival issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A new artist was challenging to survive in the art scene. - The graduate is not prepared with survival knowledge in the real world. - Most of the new artists stop producing the painting and choose to change their carrier.
Painting Market in Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal Collector - Privet Collector (Bank, Company, etc.) - Museum/Gallery
New Painting Market in Malaysia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hospitality (Hotel Industry, restaurants, hospital, etc.)

As for the available market for art, each respondent agreed that the market is minimal. There are only three categories of art collectors that have been recorded in Malaysia. They are insisted that the majority of the Malaysian community are not ready to spend much on arts. This matter occurred probably because of strong cultural influence, adhered by the community in Malaysia that believed in the importance of function in arts. Besides, the image that has been applied in a painting also become a factor and the main reason for the difficulties in the market of the artworks.

To discuss the new market that can be explored in Malaysia, all the respondents thought that it is an effort that needs to be implemented. However, each of the respondents also agreed that hospitality is the new market that can be highlighted to be explored for the demand for arts in Malaysia. This is because the business scope for hospitality is extensive, and the nature of hospitality depends on the artworks to provide the best service to the guest.

One of the businesses that can be explored in the hospitality industry is the hotel industry. As it is known that the hotel industry is indeed very related to an engaging environmental atmosphere to attract a visitor to stay in their hotel. Therefore, a painting poses as one of the mandatory items needed to create an exciting ambience in the hotel.

Besides, the Director-General of the National Art Gallery, who is one of the experts interviewed and patron in the field of art in Malaysia, also proposes making the hotel a new opportunity for the country's art market. This is in line with the nature of this hotel's business, which is seen in need of art such as painting used in decorating the rooms in the hotel as Strannegård & Strannegård (2012) points out, the importance of including an art element in a hotel to maintain the reputation and brand of a hotel. This is also in line with the opinion of Morten Heide et al (2007), who argued that ambience is an essential factor that should be emphasized in every hotel. Therefore, the use of decoration such as painting is seen as one of the alternatives that can create an attractive environment.

On the other hand, Braun (2011) also argues that aesthetic product is an essential element that must be applied in a space within a hotel to add value to the hotel. This will further enhance the customer satisfaction of the hotel's services.

Besides, one of the main requirements for a hotel to gain a star rating is displaying artworks in their hotel. As a result of this, it is now clear that the hotel industry is becoming a new market for painting in Malaysia.

Conclusion and Discussion

In conclusion, the survival of a visual artist is a challenging endeavour that requires artistic talent, entrepreneurial skills, and adaptability in the ever-changing art world landscape. Visual artists face numerous obstacles in their pursuit of success, including financial instability, limited exposure, and the need to be proactive in order to develop their careers.

As many are aware, economic issues are a significant factor affecting an artist's ability to survive. Many artists, particularly new artists, have difficulty generating a stable income from their art alone. Consistent financial stability is also essential for these artists to create and promote their work without difficulty. Obviously, if the artwork produced is not sold, all of these endeavours will cease.

In addition, the relatively limited painting market in Malaysia is seen as a contributing factor to the survival problems of these artists. As stated previously, the painting market in Malaysia is limited to private collectors and corporations. Due to the fact that the number of artists increases each year, it is unfeasible for private collectors and corporations to finance all of them simultaneously. This circumstance will result in intense competition within the local art industry. As a consequence, many of these painters discontinued their careers as painters.

Educational institutions, in particular, may need to increase the number of related courses in order to strengthen these students mentally and physically as a solution to this survival issue. This is essential in preparing them for the challenges they will face in the actual world of work.

In addition, an initiative must be taken to develop this art market in Malaysia by exploring new, potentially lucrative markets, such as the hospitality industry. This is due to the perception that the hospitality industry relies on aesthetics to promote its operations. By examining this new market for the painting art industry, it may be possible to assist new painters in marketing their works. Then they will be able to pursue their painting career.

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