1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and significance of the study

As we move into the next decade, we are going to have to learn how to better establish and maintain relationships with co-workers so that we can create greater quality and productivity in an ever-changing world. The best way to do this is to fine-tune communication skills and accept the differences. By becoming familiar with the many aspects of gender communication differences, the responsible worker or manager can synthesize those findings into a method that enhances work place communication.

At the beginning of the 21st century, we have before us a complex and contradictory picture of organisations from the viewpoint of gender equality. We find that the gender divisions at work place are diminishing. Women are breaking the glass-ceilings and transforming organisational life. In the business reality today is that there are enormous economic pressures and increasingly large number of women in the work force. Thus it is imperative that men and women work together for achieving organisational goals and one of the important requirements is to achieve an effective inter-gender communication in work place.

Communication is a way of interaction which involves sending and receiving messages or information through verbal and non verbal such as eye contact, voice tone, and gestures. Communication is also a way of exchanging emotions, thoughts and feelings. There is a difference in communication between genders which may
lead sometimes to misunderstandings. In fact, men and women do not communicate in the same way because they interpret the same message differently. So, it is important to first be aware of the differences of communication between males and females, and then try to understand them in order to avoid any misunderstandings and conflicts to arise.

Men and women differ in the way they think, feel, act, and talk. Women and men have often been described as having quite different communication styles. Women are typically described as more expressive, more relationship oriented, and more concerned with creating and maintaining intimacy; whereas men are described as more instrumental, more task oriented, and more concerned with gathering information, or with establishing and maintaining social status or power (Bernard, 1972; Indvik & Fitzpatrick, 1982; Parsons & Bales, 1955).

The idea on women and men different communication have become the theme of many best-selling books on gender differences on communication style such as book written by Gray (1992, 2002) in his books titled Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus and Mars and Venus in the work place. Another book on the difference in gender communication style entitled You just don’t understand: Women and men in conversation by Tannen (1986, 1990). These books claim that there are significant and consistent differences in communication styles between men and women. Book by Gray (1992, 2002) are popular books for the general public and the book by Tannen (1986,1990) is a more professionally oriented and is written based on research.
In the work place, communication differences may impact the way messages are sent and received, causing communication breakdown, misunderstanding and major frustration in the work place. So, it is very essential to have a deeper awareness of gender differences which will help to increase understanding, decrease tension and improve teamwork.

It is crucial to embrace the differences and realize that there may be indeed alternative ways of doing things. It would behoove for us to listen to each other and be more open to learning from our differences rather than allowing them to stifle our growth and ability to communicate with one another.

In these recent years, the communication styles of men and women have been studied in depth. The primary purpose of these intensive investigations is not to determine which communicative style is best or to motivate others to change completely, but actually to identify the differences for the purpose of understanding and adaptation. As men and women better recognize the differences in their communicative styles, they can work to improve their own communication with members of the opposite sex.

Men and women tend to use different types of communication styles in their daily lives especially in the work place. This is because men and women use interaction in the work place to make decisions and for other work related activities in the work place. Communication in the work place plays a very important role as being a good communicator in the work place will have the ability to inspire co-workers and to articulate the organization’s vision of the future.
In today’s organizations, good communications requires us to interface with one another in regards to sharing ideas and work effectively together. Communication is a vital aspect in any organization, as it helps to achieve coordination and fosters confidence in the continuity of a relationship. When we improve communication skills and understand our co-worker’s communication styles, then we are able to reduce stress within the organization and improve relationship between co-workers. With that a good relationship is enhanced in the work place which will lead a better environment for workers of different genders to work together to achieve the objective of the organization.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main goal of the study is to validate the propositions of the type that Tannen (1990) and Gray (1992) have reported in the context of Malaysia. Besides that the study is also to identify the perception and the communication style and working styles of the different gender in the context of Malaysia. Although these two authors suggest a general agreement on ways in which men and women differ, not everyone agrees with them. The study is also to further assess whether there are consistent gender differences in communication styles as mentioned by the two authors.

This research aims to conduct a survey to examine the validity of the claims and statements of the two authors, Gray and Tannen and also to verify if it is an accurate explanation for communication difficulties between the different genders. Differences between the genders in communication and working styles can lead to
misunderstanding and frustrations between the sexes and may ultimately impact in
decision making in the work place.

This research is on the works to detect the differences in communicative activities of
men and women and also to describe and compare communicative styles of men and
women. There are gender differences in ways of speaking and we will need to
understand the differences. In particular, it is critical to understand that even if there
may be average tendencies in the ways men and women communicate, but these
generalizations certainly do not apply to all men and all women. There are certainly
some men who would fit the communication characteristics described here as
common to women, and there are certainly some women who would fit the
characteristics described here as common to men. It may be more useful to understand
that different people may have different ways of communicating than to assume that
all women communicate one way and all men communicate in another way.

The research analyses differences between the ways in which men and women use
language in real work settings. While such differences have already been identified
and explored by several researchers (Case, 1994; Tannen, 1994; Boden, 1994;
Fischer, 1964), this study aims to extend and explore the validation of Gray and
Tannen’s proposition in relation to gender differences in communication style in the
work place.

The empirical study also explores the existence and the extent of similarities and
differences in male and female communication styles as mentioned by Gray (1992)
and Tannen (1990). In the previous research, it has been asserted that the basic uses of
conversation by women are to establish and support intimacy; where else for men it is to establish status. It has also been found that that men tend to interrupt more and they are more resistant to asking questions (Tannen, 1994; Coates, 1996; Lackoff, 1990).

This study is conducted among employees within an organization as the work place presents an opportunity to observe real interaction between men and women in the context of the many constraints as described by Kendall and Tannen (1997). When people come together in organisations to get things done in a work place, they will need to talk. And talk is the lifeblood of all organisations (Boden, 1994). So, it is very clear that communication plays important role in an organization.

1.3 Scope of the study

The study was conducted in Malaysian Postal Services Company or known as Pos Malaysia Berhad. The organization is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The research is to explore and investigate the recognition of the validity of claims and statements reported by Gray (1992) and Tannen (1990) in the scope of Malaysia by conducting the study within the organization.

1.4 Organization of the study

The present study is organized into four distinct chapters where the following chapter gives a thorough analysis on the past literature work done in regards to gender, communication and working styles and the research on gender and communication style. Besides that, the literature review also provides prior studies on the
communication styles of men and women in work place that is contradicting with the scope of the study which relates to statements reported by Gray (2002) and Tannen (1990).

The subsequent chapter will provide a detailed explanation on the specific method of data gathering and data analysis utilized in this study. Next is the chapter focusing fully on the outcome of data analysis, by giving specific explanation on the statistical outcomes such as the results from t-test to identify the significant difference between men and women on the phrases or statements on communication and working styles as found in this survey. The final chapter will provide explanation on the limitation faced in the present study and recommendations for any future studies.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Gender Communication Differences

The literature delivers varied opinions and results as to what is perceived by men and women on the communication difference between them. A variety of research has been done on the role of gender in communication, where researchers have generally used biological sex as the primary indicator of gender. A significant body of research points to evidence that any differences in the communication styles of men and women are matters of degree rather than quality, and that biological differences affecting communication are minimal (Eagly, 1987; Hochschild & Machung, 1989; Hyde, 1981; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1975; Twenge, 1997; Wood, 1982).

Wood (2005) writes, “What gender means depends on a society’s values, beliefs, and preferred ways of organizing collective life” (2005, p. 22). Such values, beliefs and preferred ways of organizing collective life have changed again and again throughout the history of the feminist movement in the western world. Early feminists or first-wave feminists believed that women and men have different needs, abilities and communication styles and were adamant in their declaration that, by nature, women were more morally pure, nurturing, and peaceful.

Feminist theorists have adopted the idea of standpoint to emphasize that power and unique experiences shape the attitudes, views, and understanding of the world held by different groups, such as men and women. Ruddick’s (1989) research into mothering shows that maternal thinking or instinct is not an innate characteristic of women but
comes about rather as a result of position as domestic and caregiver. This view is supported by Risman’s (1986) work with single fathers, which showed that when forced by necessity into the position as primary domestic and caregiver, men were as capable as women of assuming these roles. Research by Snodgrass (1985, 1992) disputed the idea that women are more sensitive of others’ feelings than men. It showed that for both men and women, perception of social role and of subordination was a primary predictor of sensitivity to others’ feelings.

Maltz and Borker (1982) described three ways in which men and women communicate differently: minimal responses, the use of questions, and attitudes toward problem-sharing and advice-giving. In each area, they observed that men establish their dominance, whereas women enhance their relational intimacy. Studies of workplace communication reveal many of these same findings. Coates (2004) portrays how the tendency of women to talk more when giving orders to male subordinates creates in the male a distance that the woman then interprets as resentment. In their studies of communication in the workplace, Wilkins and Andersen (1991) and Canary and Hause (1993) found communication differences between males and females to be minimal and of little social significance.

Redding (2006) puts it that “internal communication can be subdivided into two areas which are organizational and interpersonal”. Theories about how interpersonal influences affect gender differences include two psychological explanations. First, social learning theory, or cognitive social learning, says that individuals learn “appropriate behaviour” by observing others (Bandura, 1977). Adults offer primary reinforcement of appropriate gender-role behaviour to children through everything
from the toys they provide to their urging lady-like behaviour and asserting that “big boys don’t cry,” to their own interaction with and reaction to the opposite sex. This theory states that children learn more by what they see adults doing than by what they hear the same adults say (Bandura & Walters, 1963).

Gender differences in the amount of communication and stronger orientation of men and women towards interpersonal communication have been described (Bodalev, 1996). Girls are reported to be more relaxed in their communication with boys than vice versa. Moreover, they communicate more passively, but tend to be more friendly and selective (Groshev, 2002). Men are shown to communicate more practically with fewer tools and methods used and stricter control over their emotions. Women are more expressive and tend towards internality (i.e., active social self-regulation; that is, relying on one’s own knowledge, power, and opportunities in interpersonal contacts and the belief that one’s communicative relations with partners depend on one’s own initiative) in the self-regulation of communication (Tyrnova, 1996).

Communication from the organizational perspectives which is the heart of an organizational communication system is the close and personal relations between supervisor and worker or among employees themselves. According to Eisenberg (2006), people in organizations confront multiple situational requirements which require them to develop multiple and often conflicting goals, and respond with communicative strategies. As Farace (1977) put it in the multiple-goal approach, communication is instrumental in building and maintaining self-image, in facilitating interpersonal relationships, and in advancing innovation, as well as in aiding
production. The typical problem faced by organizational member is in creating a balance between being understood, not offending others, and maintaining self-image.

The literature available on gender communication differences, when analyzed is able to display some themes of discussion such as verbal differences, non verbal differences, how messages are interpreted between the different genders and stereotypes of men and women in regards to communication styles.

Other themes that are related to communication characteristic categories at work place are also looked into such as how one values power at work place and works in a team. Discussion on gender communication difference is further extended to measure in relation to the ways genders differ in judgmental, problem solving, competitiveness and competency at work place. In regards to communication problem at work place, gender differences are identified as in the ways they ask questions, whether being direct or indirect in the way they communicate to co workers, trouble talk, talk time and the conversational topics that they indulge in most of the time.

2.1.1 Verbal

The most basic studies of gender communication differences, such as those by Rosner, Cangemi, and Chambers, list several findings they claim to be strictly observable behaviours. For example, Rosner (2001) states that men speak to convey facts, not details, and utilize language as a means of independence; that is they speak to maintain or demonstrate deservedness of authority. This same author describes the speech patterns of women as being driven toward detail and a sense of developing relationships, rather than sustaining independence. According to Rosner (2001), males and females use language to control the level of intimacy. Both Cangemi and Chambers mark the use of qualifying statements by females, such as “Don’t you
think?” as an attempt to engender a non-hostile atmosphere, where as men do the exact opposite in an attempt to spur confrontation and competition (Cangemi, 2001)(Chambers, 2003).

As most literature reveals that both genders use the same language. Then, definitely the question of where then does the difference between the two genders arises. This question of gender differences and whether those found in communication styles are significant enough to be deemed valid is a long-standing point of contention among gender theorists. Extensive studies by Dindia (1987) and Dindia and Allen (1992) showed differences in verbal strategy choices (e.g. interruption versus self-disclosure) to be consistent and significant.

The linguist Lakoff (1975) maintained that societal and interpersonal differences in communicative styles affect the speech of both genders. Lakoff (1975) argued that women in society are at disadvantage in relation to men. Women’s communicative styles are described as hesitant compared to men (p.12). Lakoff (1990) also said that women who use “women’s language’ that is, language which deviates from the masculine, are typically thought of as weak an uncertain, which ultimately situates women in a position of less power.

2.1.2 Non Verbal

The second-most prevalent theme of discussion regarding gender communication differences are the study of non-verbal differences. Many of the authors are in agreement about the types and effects of non-verbal communication, resulting in fewer areas of investigation. Wharton (2005) explains how a female manager giving
directions to a male subordinate may invoke in the male a belief of her incompetence. This is because her body language suggests to the man that she is too nervous, when this is actually not the case (Wharton, 2005). On the other hand, Kitchen describes how a woman subordinate may believe her male manager to be angry with her when he is merely being direct and succinct (2001). In yet a different perspective, Sorenson (2001) depicts the nodding of heads by women to be interpreted by their male co-workers as agreement and acceptance, when they are merely intended by the women as an indication of attention.

A secondary trend in the literature detailing non-verbal communication behavior in the workplace deals with the issue of sexual harassment, represented here by Gustafsson, 2000. He argues that while overt (verbal) sexual harassment occurs, there are more subtle ways in which men create a communication gap through unconscious attitudes or mannerisms that put women on the defensive (Gustafsson, 2000). All of these pieces of literature are valuable by providing to the reader different scenarios that encapsulate the essence of the gender communication gap.

2.1.3 Interpret Messages

Researches in organizational communication range from studies of information flow, and superior-subordinate communication to recent work on perceived environmental uncertainty, information acquisition and decision making (Putnam, 2006; Eisenberg, 2006). These focuses on how employees suppress unpleasant messages, distort and withhold information, sharpen and assimilate message, and concentrate primarily on what senders believe that receivers want to hear have been established in early studies. (Putnam, 1996)
Eisenberg (2006) further states that, while trying to be clear with others, individuals take into account the possible interpretive contexts in messages by the receiver, and attempt to narrow the possible interpretations. This is because clarity is a continuum which reflects the degree to which a source has narrowed the possible interpretations of a message and succeeded in achieving a correspondence between his or her intentions and the interpretations of the receiver. These attempts will thus lead to different employment of communicator styles among the organizational peers. Meanwhile, it may be evident that organizational peers do not all the time endeavor to produce the connection between goals and understandings. Eisenberg (2006) asserts this by stating that, “It is often preferable to omit purposefully contextual cues and to allow for multiple interpretations on the part of receivers.

When communicating with close friends, incomplete phrases and vague references may engender high degrees of clarity, through the use of a restricted code. The same message strategies applied in less close relationships may lead to confusion and ambiguity. The direction of organizational communication studies have lingered around the issues and interests of how organizational peers or members, at different levels, inter relate, network and interact with each other.

Even then, not much is discussed on the different individual styles of communication among the organizational peers. In spite of various studies pursued on the different communication styles, there is a lack of information on what actually influences communication styles when someone is communicating in an organization with the organizational peers.
2.1.4 Stereotypes

Collins’ Dictionary of Sociology (Jary and Jary 1995: 656) defines a stereotype as a set of inaccurate, simplistic generalizations about a group of individuals which enables others to categorize members of the group and treat them routinely according to these expectations. According to Jandt (2004:94) “Psychologists have attempted to explain stereotyping as mistakes that our brains make in the perception of other people that are similar to those mistakes our brains make in the perception of visual illusions.”

In everyday use, the concept of stereotype is used in various contexts such as that we may label someone as stereotypical which means that he or she lacks spontaneity and individuality, or we may comment on someone’s statement by saying that it was very stereotypical. But usually the word stereotype is used to refer to members of particular collectives: females are less aggressive than men.

Often one’s perceptions of others are based solely on generalizations about the characteristics of the group to which they belong. People make generalizations about various groups, gender and lifestyle groups, inhabitants of a given area, ethnic groups, cultures, and nations. Such generalizations assume that the members of a group share certain values, certain personality traits and behave in a predictable way, which is in accordance with the group’s expectations.

This may influence the processes of inference and decision making on a subconscious level; very often we are unaware what role they play in our opinion formation in
everyday situations. A female job applicant who behaves too assertively and a man whose behaviour is too soft, may be regarded in a work interview as socially deficient and less likeable than men and women whose behaviour is congruent with the prevailing gender stereotypes, and they will be therefore discriminated against in hiring decision.

In the same way, an assertive female manager who is expected to apply, according to the stereotype, a more people-oriented style, may be evaluated more negatively than an assertive male manager. People’s reaction to counter-stereotypic behaviour is termed the backlash effect. According to Rudman and Fairchild (2004) this kind of social judgment process may, in part, help to promote and maintain cultural stereotypes.

Collective stereotypes are generalizations that are assumed to be common among the members of a given in-group and which concern the members of a given collective, one’s own or another, who are assumed to share the same attitudes, personality traits and behavioural predispositions. This notion agrees very well with the fact that Malaysians live in a collective society hence, the importance of the organization comes first as compared to individual needs and desires. Collectivism is defined as a society or a culture that emphasizes group-based values such as loyalty, harmony, cooperation, unity, conformity, and the unquestioning acceptance of norms, attitudes, and values in an organization as its most important values as opposed to the individualist nature of the Western and European people whom emphasize more on the individual needs (Hofstede, 1980, 1991).
Another strand of theory suggests that stereotypes are a subgroup of cognitive schemata, generalized, highly abstract beliefs about groups and their members. Example of such stereotypes could be beliefs about gender differences: men are more aggressive while women are socially more sensitive etc. So-called country images often belong to this category. Such concepts as corporate image, reputation, and corporate or product brand typically exploit this kind of stereotyping. If the company or brand has a positive image among the public the plus sign is expected to be added to all information concerning the company or its products.

Gender stereotypes have important implications for gender roles, gender-role identity and gender typing. They eventually guide individuals, behavior and affect their well being. These four terms have been defined in literature clearly. Gender stereotypes have been defined as a set of widely held beliefs about characteristics deemed appropriate for males and females in a particular culture. They include information about physical appearance, attitudes and interests, psychological traits, social relations and occupations (Ashmore, DelBoca and Wohlers, 1986; Deause and Lewis, 1984; Huston, 1983, 1985).

Gender roles are a reflection of these stereotypes in everyday behaviour (Ruble and Ruble, 1982). Gender role identity refers to the perception of the self as relatively masculine or feminine in characteristics, abilities and behaviours, whereas gender typing refers to the process of developing gender-linked beliefs, gender roles and a gender-role identity. (Huston, 1983).
2.1.5 Power

Power is the potential or ability to influence, control and/or modify another’s behaviour (Rollins & Bahr, 1976) and requires the perception that one party has some basis for power (Wolfe, 1959). Johnson (1994) found that men and women display similar patterns of conversation when they are formally granted the same level of power or authority in their work. Julia Wood argues that while gender can and often does play a large role in communication styles, the findings of such work place studies are generalized and do not rule out the idea that “gender is less useful than power in explaining many general differences between men and women” (Wood, 1998, p. 21).

Research shows that males use verbal interruption as a mechanism of power and dominance in conversations (Aries, 1996). Many gender theorists link gender differences to power differentials rather than to anything innate (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1990). Standpoint theory states that one’s position in a culture is dependent upon one’s social situation, including gender, race, and socio-economic standing (Hartsock, 1983; Wood, 2005). The foundation of standpoint theory is found in the work of German philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel (1807), who wrote that in any society where power does exists, there can never be just one perspective of reality.

Eisenberg, Martin, and Fabes (1996) contend that theories based on the idea that inherently male or inherently female characteristics and behaviours exist may be guilty of gender stereotyping, and that it is power and unique experiences that shape the attitudes, views, and understanding of the world held by men and women.
2.1.6 Team work

Interdependence and cooperativeness in teams has been found to be related to constructive interchange (Tjosvold, 1988). And since females behave more cooperatively in negotiations than males (Walters, Stuhlmacher & Meyer, 1998), female-homogeneous groups may be more effective than male-homogeneous groups.

2.1.7 Judgemental

In 1955, when Parsons and Bales opened the door to gender difference theory by describing women as expressive and men as instrumental, they laid the groundwork for Gilligan's (1982) declaration that women have a relational self that allows them to measure everything in terms of relationships, while men measure in terms of logic.

2.1.8 Problem Solving

One of the biggest differences between men and women in the workplace is how they approach solving problems. There are differences in how women solve problems as compared to men. When faced with a dilemma, men’s first reaction is to go to his cave and solve it on his own, but women’s first reaction is to reach out and include others through talking about it. (Gray, 1992)

2.1.9 Competitiveness

Men’s communication in teams tends to be more competitive and is used to express dominance (Briton & Hall, 1995; LaFrance & Henley, 1994). In one study, interruption behavior increased among men in groups with higher proportions of males (Karakowsy, McBey & Miller, 2004). These results suggest that males may be
more competitive with other males when working in a team setting. Men are competitive speakers who are more likely to engage in conflict by arguing and issuing commands, while women are cooperative and likely to avoid conflict by agreeing and making suggestions rather than commands (Tannen, 1993). Some studies have supported the long-standing assumption, based on cultural stereotypes that women have a more cooperative orientation than men and that men are more competitive than women (Rubin & Brown, 1975). When interacting women are expected to communicate in ways that stress cooperation, collaboration and sensitivity to others’ feelings, while men in ways that exert control, establish status and maintain independence.

2.1.10 Competency

There is research that shows that men tend to value male input over female input and assume that men are more competent than women (Martin, 1996; Pierce, 1995; C. L. Williams, 1995). The ways that men accomplish something they have been identified as competent as compared to women. Males are also more likely than females to intentionally withhold information to further their own positions or harm another’s position (Deal, 2000).

Conversation style differences frequently lead to women being evaluated as less competent than men. Tannen reported that not to do so would be detrimental to women as well as to men who, “speak to women as they would to men, and are nonplussed when their words don’t work as they expected, or even spark resentment and anger” (1990, p. 16).
Gray’s support of traditional, power-based relationships is evident. He writes, “men value power, competency, efficiency and achievement” (1992, p.16). Women, on the other hand, are completely at the mercy of their hormones and feel no connection between self-esteem and their own accomplishments: “A woman’s self-esteem generally rises and falls in a cycle not necessarily in sync with her menstrual cycle, but it does average out at twenty-eight days” (1992, p. 21). Women who go out of home to work “put on the Martian suits” (1993) and leave behind daily tasks such as housework and childcare that are their primary responsibility. Men are encouraged to help with domestic tasks on an occasional basis strictly as a method of “keeping her love tank full and the score even” (1992, p. 186).

Men or also known as Martians by Gray (1992) value power, competency, efficiency, action, achievement, and accomplishment. His view on women’s sense of self in the work place is defined primarily by the quality of her work relationships. In the work place women respect efficiency and achievement, but values support, trust, and communication are more important. He also claimed that women are more interested in quality of work relationships, personal expression, and mutual support than Martians. They experience fulfillment by sharing, collaborating, and cooperating in the process of achieving greater success.

2.1.11 Ask Questions

Like other linguistic forms, questions can carry out several functions at once. Questions can ask for information at the same time as inviting another speaker to expand a point. They can initiate a story or introduce a topic at the same time as
bringing in another speaker. They may ask for information at the same time as disclaiming expertise.

Asking questions means different things to men and women, and thus the complexity underpinning the significance of asking questions will be managed in different ways. According to Tannen (1994), the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport for women: a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships, and for men, talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order; a language of report.

Women are more likely than men to ask questions and agree with others, and women are less likely than men to challenge others’ statements and frame others’ arguments. These differences are theorized to reflect women’s greater concerns for cooperation and connection in their relationships. These conclusions are consistent with Tannen’s notion that men are more likely to interpret messages according to levels of dominance, whereas women are more likely to interpret them according to levels of supportiveness.

2.1.12 Directness and indirectness

Several studies have shown that women tend to soften their demands and statements, whereas men tend to be more direct (Coates, 1989; Tannen, 1996; Spender, 1980; Case, 1994). Women often use tagged phrases like “don’t you think” following the presentation of an idea, “if you don’t mind” following a demand or “this may be a silly idea, but” preceding a suggestion.
The important thing to remember is that tentative communication does not necessarily mean that the speaker actually feels tentative or is lacking in confidence. Similarly, more direct communication, as seen with some men and, some women too, does not necessarily mean that the person is arrogant, bossy or feels superior.

Tannen (1994) describes how, when questioned about why more women were not hired or promoted, male managers used statements about women lacking confidence. One behavior that may be seen by others as a lack of confidence may be the indirect way women give orders. Men and women often differ in the way they manage people and give orders.

2.1.13 Trouble Talk

Tannen (1990) asserts that men are confused by the various ways in which women use conversation to be intimate with others. One of these ways she calls “trouble talk”. She claims that for women, talking about troubles is the essence of connection. It signifies and creates closeness. Men, however, may interpret troubles talk as a request for advice, and thus, could respond with a solution. The impasse that occurs may result in a feeling of weakness by the female, where she may feel cut off and her problem diminished as male tend to provide support when women actually needs to talk about her problem to create some relationship rather than solution.

Tannen went on to argue that, as a consequence of these general differences in communication style, women and men may tend to choose different behavioral responses (such as giving advice, giving sympathy) when confronted with "trouble talk". Women and men may also interpret and evaluate these behaviors differently,
and therefore feel different emotional responses to advice and sympathy. These gender differences can lead to problems and misunderstandings in communication between women and men.

2.1.14 Talk time

There has been stereotypes of how women and men talk which portray women as talking more than men (Coates, 1993). However, it is shown that men and boys talk more in mixed sex groups than women and girls (Fishman, 1978; Spender, 1980; Swann, 1989). The studies predominantly show that in a mixed sex conversation, the average amount of time for which a man will talk will be approximately twice as long as the average amount for which a woman will talk. Women may perceive men’s conversational dominance as an exercise of power. As a consequence, women who talk for more than one third of the available time may be regarded by others as talking too much.

2.1.15 Conversational topics

Linguistic variance between men and women takes place in the topics they choose to discuss. Women, is said to select more personal type topics to discuss for instance about their family, their emotions, and their friendships. Besides that, women are not afraid to embed details in their speech in order to involve people in the events being described. Men, however, use more abstract communication, speaking in general terms (Kramarae and Treicher, 1983; Schaef, 1985).

Men tend to use linear speech, moving sequentially through points unlike women. Women use a personal, concrete style, allowing them to divulge details of experience
and personal disclosures. Linear speech requires less intimacy and also reaffirms the conversational goal as being one of information exchange. Women’s conversations focus more on the development and maintenance of conversations and the relationships between the speakers through supportive listening.

2.2 Findings by Tannen and Gray

Tannen (1991) has shown that men and women follow different rules of communication behaviour. Tannen (1991) notes that a conversation between men and women is an interaction of opposite cultures. In another analysis of gender differences in communication style, Tannen (1990, p. 77) stated that "For most women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport which is a way of establishing connections and negotiating relationships. Emphasis is placed on displaying similarities and matching experiences. For most men, talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order.

Gray (1992) took Tannen’s findings a step further and declared that men and women not only communicate differently, they have so little in common as to be from completely different planets. Gray in his book on Mars and Venus at Work place, (2002) portrays men and women as foreign entities struggling to comprehend one another in the work place. The book is on improving communication between male and female in the work place so that they would understand each other better and able to reduce the communication gap in work place to reduce the job dissatisfaction and productivity decrease.
Many gender scholars do not dispute evidence arguing that some differences exist in men’s and women’s approaches to relationships (Basow & Rubenfeld, 2003; Cole, 2004; Hekman, 1999; Wood, 1982, 2005). In the decade and since Gray’s book was published, the phrase "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus” has become a metaphor for expressing the existence and acceptance of innate gender differences, despite a growing body of evidence that reveals such differences are not significant.

Gray’s metaphor also does not leave room for the long validated results of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Wong, 1990), which argues men and women can and do develop attributes in both masculine and feminine gender domains, nor for the empirically supported premise that human communication styles are a social construction which encourages women more and men less to develop traits that enhance interpersonal problem-based communication (Baird, 1976; Basow & Rubenfeld, 2003).

Gray fails to cite any empirical evidence to support his theories about specific communication characteristics, and his findings frequently conflict with reputable scholarly research in these areas. For example, Kim and Bresnahan (1996) examined the determination of intention or motive behind verbal strategy choices and found no significant differences in what men and women perceive as important in communication. Men and women, across four cultures, both found constraints such as interruptions and self-disclosure to be important in communication behaviour.

When Gray writes that men constantly interrupt their partners and offer solutions while “Venusians never offer solutions while someone else is talking” (1992, p. 22).
Gray perpetuates a disputed finding of studies on sex differences in communication. While studies exist that found men interrupt women more often than women interrupt men, often as a show of power (Berryman-Fink & Brunner, 1987), a meta-analysis of studies on interruptions by Dindia (1987) found that such studies failed to account for the fact that communication behaviour is often interdependent. So those who interrupt may have an effect on their partner’s interrupting behaviour.

In Gray’s world, women continually self-disclose, sharing their “process of inner discovery” (1992, p.19) with anyone who will listen, while men quite often stop communicating all together and become silent. A Martian world never “burden” another man with his problems and would rather watch TV or work on his car than discuss his problems with a woman. Gray states, “Instead he becomes very quiet and goes to his private cave to think about his problem, mulling it over to find a solution.” When he has found a solution, he feels much better and comes out of his cave” (p. 30).

### 2.3 Studies contradict to Tannen (1992) and Gray (2002)

Dindia (1987) discovered that both sexes interrupt, that men do not interrupt significantly more often than women interrupt, especially in mixed-sex dyads, and that women’s interruptions are no less assertive than men’s interruptions. In fact, Dindia (2006) coined the metaphor, “men are from North Dakota, women are from South Dakota” in an effort to emphasize that any existent differences between male and female communication practices are not planetary.
Dindia’s and Allen’s (1992) meta-analysis on sex differences in self-disclosure concurred with previous findings that women disclose more than men but revealed that this is only true in same-sex dyads.

Another important point to consider when comparing Gray’s work to scholarly findings is that individuals who argue there are inherently male and inherently female characteristics and behaviours may be guilty of gender stereotyping (Eisenberg, Martin, & Fabes, 1996). This assumption that certain distinct characteristics are the essence of woman while other, different and equally distinct characteristics are the essence of man is known as essentializing (Wood, 1993). Generalized statements that specific characteristics or behaviours are true for all men, while others are true for all women, are based in the idea that behaviour is inherent and constant. Essentializing and gender stereotyping leave no room for individuality or for views such as those found in standpoint theory.

Another important aspect in term of research is that Gray did not conduct any scientific research and his pronouncements are based on theory not supported by empirical research (Wood & Dindia, 1998). In fact, Gray’s statements are contradicted by the findings of many respected scholars.

Murphy (2001) concurs and argues that Gray’s work provides a “disturbing interpretive framework” (p. 151) for understanding communication based on a “sexist form of anthropology” (p. 164). Murphy implies that what makes Gray’s arguments dangerous is that there is an elementary nature to the solutions he presents as common sense.
Dindia protests that the solutions Gray prescribes perform a disservice to the women and men who follow them because they are not based on theory supported by empirical research (Wood & Dindia, 1998). Dindia and Allen conclude, “it is time to stop perpetuating the myth that there are large differences in men’s and women’s self-disclosure” (p. 118). Dindia mentioned that when talking with men, women do not disclose any more than their male partners disclose.

In contrast to Reissman’s findings, Gray (1992) states that men and women have different values when it comes to intimacy and only a woman needs to feel cherished. He declares that “a man feels empowered when he is trusted, accepted, appreciated, admired, approved of, and encouraged” (p.136) and yet “a woman thrives when she feels adored and special” (p. 145). He does not acknowledge the possibility that these may be two approaches to the same end.

While Parsons and Bales (1955) described women as expressive and men as instrumental, Gilligan (1982) asserted that women measure everything in terms of relationships and men measure in terms of logic, and Tannen (1990) declared that scholars and individuals must acknowledge that men and women communicate differently, many others see these determinations as limiting.

Wood (2001) objects to efforts to essentialize women and men and claims that communication practices are innate and unchangeable. She argues that gender is a social construction, which designates cultural and social categories (Wood & Dindia, 1998).
Many as elaborated earlier describes the contradictions on the findings from Tannen (1990) and Gray (1992, 2002). And the research of male and female communication is of theoretical and practical value as the studies of the structure is of communicative activity and its place in the person’s individuality will clarify the psychology of optimal and obstructed communication between men and women.

In such, there is a need for the research as it is identified due to the fact that the communication styles and working styles of an organization can be enhanced and any gap between men and women can be improved for a better understanding between the two genders in the work place. So, basically this research further examines on popular arguments concerning gender and communication by Tannen (1990) and Gray (1992, 2002). In several important areas of popular cultural discourse, conflicts between men and women are regularly explained as misunderstandings caused by differences in communication style.

Men define their sense of self through their actions, their ability to achieve results at work and in the world. In the work place, men always do things to prove themselves and develop their power and skills. And we are also aware that women are becoming increasingly representative in various professional while, on the other hand, stereotypes and traditional unfair social prejudices based on sex still have negative impact on women, leading to inferiority complex and lower self-esteem. And there are many different strategies that are used to handle conflicting interactional goals such as avoiding interaction altogether, remaining silent, or changing the topic. Based on that, it is thus probable to witness a phenomenon of different communication styles being
applied by organizational peers. Such differences are likely since each organizational peer looks for precision and clarity in men and women communication.

This research further studies the different communication styles between different genders and the implications that presence based from the phrase "Mars and Venus at work place" that may have between men and women. This research will also examine Gray’s theories against the work of recognized scholars who have done extensive research in the area of gender differences and similarities. And that is the goal of this empirical study which is to validate Gray’s claims and statements and to verify the extent to which the propositions reported by Tannen (1990) and Gay (1992, 2002) have similarities or differences within the employees in a chosen organization in Malaysia to able to conduct the study in the context of Malaysia in general.
3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Methodology and Design

This study utilized a survey design. The survey designed based from the phrases and statements from Men from Mars and Women from Venus (Gray, 1992), Mars and Venus in Workplace (Gray, 2002) and also from the statements made by Tannen (1990). Respondents are asked to rate each statement or phrases related to communication styles based on the rating scale between ‘1’ to ‘10’ which is strongly disagree to strongly agree.

3.2 Selection of Measures

The survey consists of four parts. They are Part A, Part B, Part C and Demographic Profile.

3.2.1 Part A

Part A of the survey comprises of 23 statements taken from Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus (Gray, 1992). The statements need the respondents to rate each of the statements (statement A1 till statement A23). Each statement in Part A is concerning the respondents’ communication styles and behavior at workplace. The statements are ‘I like to do things by myself’; ‘I prefer independent activity rather than team work.’ These statements relate to the communication style that men and women respondents prefer at workplace. The statements that validate Gray’s statements will be verified through this research. Besides that, the survey will identify
whether men or women would prefer to work independently and do things on their own. Some of the statements that are tested in Part A are ‘I prefer to talk about work related matters rather than personal matters’; ‘I get annoyed with people who let their emotions interfere with their competence’; ‘I am very concern on achieving the bottom line’; ‘I often have trouble interpreting messages from co-worker of the opposite gender’.

### 3.2.2 Part B

Part B in the survey consists of 20 statements which consist of paired type of statements. Each of the paired statements is taken from the book Mars and Venus at Workplace (Gray, 2002). Example of the statements are such as statement B1 : ‘Men often ask directly for what they want’. This statement is taken from Gray’s book. But for the research purpose, another statement is derived as statement B2 : ‘Women often ask directly for what they want’. The statement B2 is a paired statement for statement B1. Respondents need to rate all paired statements as in Part B. Through this data interpretation, we will be able to identify whether the statements that are taken from the book written by Gray is valid in the context of Malaysia. Besides that for each of the statements also the means of difference can be compared to identify the perception of inter gender communications and intra gender communications.

The statements in Part B that are taken from the book by Gray are such as ‘Men talk less about problem and more about the solution’. This statement is to identify how men perceive other men’s problem solving ways and also how women perceive men to solve problems at workplace. Other statements in Part B that are taken from the book Mars and Venus at workplace are ‘Men speak more confident than women in
the work place'; ‘Women feel that solving a problem is an opportunity to demonstrate sharing, cooperation, and collaboration’; ‘Women will take it personally when I forget to do little things’; ‘Men accept complements for their achievements in a positive way’ And also through the results in this research, all statements made by Gray can be validated if is being supported in the context of Malaysia.

3.2.3 Part C

Part C is on general statements pertaining men and women communication styles that have been reported by Tannen but coincidently also found in Gray’s books. Part C has eighteen statements to be rated by the respondents. The survey will be able to validate the statements that are made by Tannen (1990). Based on the validated statements, the result of each statement whether the results support what Tannen (1990) had said in the Malaysian context could also be verified.

3.2.4 Demographic Profile

Finally the last part of the survey is on the demographic information of the respondents. The demographic information includes the gender, age, marital status, education level, ethnicity and working level.

3.2.5 Double Translation of the survey

The statements were formulated carefully, and the wordings of the statements were chosen vigilantly to make sure that everyone would understand them. The survey was translated to Bahasa Melayu as the lower working level respondents in the
organization are more well verse in the target language as compared to English. The survey was translated using the double translation. In this form of translation, which is also called back-translation, there are at least two bilingual individuals who participate independently in the translation process. This process is effective because the instrument goes through a number of filters produced independently by researcher.

The steps to this translation process include the version in the original language which is translated by a first translator into the Bahasa Melayu language which is the target language. A second independent translator takes the results from the previous step and independently translates the instrument back to the original language. Then any inconsistencies, mistranslations, meaning, lost words or phrases between the two versions of the instrument in the original language and the translated version is to be compared and the instrument is revised. This process has been described as one of the most adequate translation processes (Marin and Marin, 1991). A pilot test was done with a sample size of 10 and it was used to reveal the strengths and any weaknesses of the survey.

The survey was very useful in the research because it reflected the communication styles within inter and intra gender communication of the employees within the organization and also to validate whether the assumptions made by Gray (2002) and Tannen (1990) are being supported or not within the organization specifically and in Malaysia generally.
3.3 Selection of Participants

The population of the study was from Malaysian Postal Services Company or also known as Pos Malaysia Berhad. The organization is located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The company has more than 14,000 employees throughout Malaysia. But the targeted population was the executives and non executives working in the Head Quarters (HQ) located in Kuala Lumpur. The reason for selecting a single institution was for the purpose of reducing the variable of differing values and beliefs of the organizational culture.

Discussion was held with the Human Resource personnel on the selection procedure of participants. For this research purposes, after analyzing the factors a sample size of 300 employees was chosen. Sample of 150 employees are from the working level of Executive and the other 150 are from the working level of Non Executive employees. Another criterion for selection of participant is 75 male and 75 female respondents from each of the working level.

The Human Resource personnel provided a list of names that met the criteria. Respondents from the executive group were chosen from the list of names given through census as all the names in the list accommodated to 150 names. Where else the non-executive employees were selected using a stratified random sampling. The participants from the non executive working level were chosen randomly from the subgroup of clerical and assistant executives by choosing their names randomly.
3.4 Demographics variables

Besides the above mentioned scales and measures, the respondents were also required to indicate their demographic details, focusing mainly onto their age, qualifications, ethnicity, religion and the working level. The demographic values are needed to determine the characteristic of the samples obtained.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures and Sampling Technique

The data collection was done through self-administered questionnaire consisting of four segments. The first three segments comprise of statements related to communication styles adapted from the books Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus (Gray, 1992) and Mars and Venus at work place (Gray, 2002) and also findings by Tannen (1990). The final segment is to tap on the respondents’ demographic profile. The questionnaires were distributed to participants as in the name list for the executives and as the names selected randomly for the non executives.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The Statistical Package for Social Science software version 14.0 was used to analyze the data and to test the relevant statements and concepts in this study. A descriptive statistic was also performed to observe the characteristic of the sample.
4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Summary Statistics

A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among the employees of the organization. The number of reply was 182, a response rate of 60.7%. All the questionnaires were considered for further analysis. Descriptive statistical analyses and t-test was used to identify the significance difference between the genders on the communication styles and also validate propositions adapted from the two authors, Gray and Tannen.

4.1.1 Demographic Profile

Descriptive analysis indicated female respondents making up 59.9% of the overall responses and male respondents at 40.1%. On the respondents’ ethnicity, the Malay formed the largest group by taking up 94.0% of the sample while the Indians made up 4.4%, followed by the Chinese at 1.1%. The remaining 0.5% was made up by 1 Sikh employee whom in practice and also for the purpose of this research are referred as the ‘Other’ ethnic group.

As for the age group of the respondents, 54.9% fell between 20 to 29 years old, while less than a quarter of that at just 25.8% were those between the ages of 30 to 39 years. Following closely at 13.7% were those from the age group of 40 to 49 years old. Respondents aged more than 50 years old made up the smallest representation at only 5.5%.
As for marital status, respondents who are married comprise of 57.1% and single not married is 42.9%

Education levels of the respondents in the sample are made up of secondary school with 42.3% of the respondents. While respondents with Bachelor degree are also 42.3%. Remaining are respondents with education level of Diploma with 11.5% and Postgraduate Degree are only 3.8% of the respondents.

As for the distribution of the respondents’ ethnicity, Malays made up the largest portion at 94.4%, Indians. Chinese and ‘Others’ formed the minority groups with representation at 4.4% and 1.1% and 0.5% respectively.

The research is to study overall the communication style and working styles of both the working level in the organization. So, the Executive working level consists of 46.2%, while the Non Executive made up of 53.8% of the respondents in the sample.

Designation of the respondents when are grouped into the two working levels are as the Senior Manager, Manager, Senior Assistant Manager and Assistant Manager are in the Executive working level. While the other respondents with designation of Assistant Executive, Senior Clerk, Clerk and Secretary are in the Non Executive working level. Missing Value for the designation is 30.2% A summary of the descriptive analysis of the sample is as shown in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1
Descriptive statistic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age group</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-29 years</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39 years</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49 years</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 50</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor Degree</td>
<td>42.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malay</td>
<td>94.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Working Level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>46.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Executive</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Manager</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Assistant Manager</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Manager</td>
<td>31.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Executive</td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Clerk</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing Values</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2 Analysis of Measures

4.2.1 Independent T-test (Part A)

Table 4.2

Statements from Part A where significant differences between male and female were found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Validation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>I like to do things by myself.</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Supports Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>I always evaluate the competence of others when interacting.</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Supports Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>If I have personal problems I have to watch myself carefully so that they don't interfere with my work.</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Contradicts Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A9</td>
<td>Unresolved conflict makes me very uncomfortable.</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Contradicts Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A10</td>
<td>If someone appears to be upset I'll find an opportunity to let them talk about it with me.</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Contradicts Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A11</td>
<td>If I am unsure of something at work, I will seek for advice or assistance.</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Contradicts Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A12</td>
<td>I get annoyed with people who let their emotions interfere with their competence.</td>
<td>6.36</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>5.78</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>Supports Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A17</td>
<td>I appreciate reassurance at stressful times.</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Contradicts Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A18</td>
<td>I am very concern on achieving the bottom line.</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>7.02</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Supports Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A20</td>
<td>When I am talking to co-worker of the opposite gender, I feel that I am talking to a brick wall.</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Supports Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A21</td>
<td>I have trouble communicating with co-worker of the opposite gender.</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Supports Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A22</td>
<td>I often have trouble interpreting messages from co-worker of the opposite gender.</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>4.89</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Supports Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A23</td>
<td>I feel hurt and rejected when co-worker of the opposite gender grumble upon my request on something.</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Supports Gray</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 shows the statement from Part A in the survey that is statistically significant by analyzing using the independent t-test analysis and the result seem to be significantly different (p < .05, two tailed).

There seem to be significant differences between male and female respondents from the sample size for the thirteen statements in Part A. Based on further analysis with the statements reported by Gray (1992, 2002), some of the statements support the propositions made by Gray (1992, 2002) while some seem to contradict with Gray (1992, 2002).

The statements that are found significant in the research are such as ‘I like to do things by myself’; ‘I always evaluate the competence of others when interacting’; ‘I get annoyed with people who let their emotions interfere with their competence’; ‘I am very concern on achieving the bottom line’; These statements reflect on the working styles and communication styles of men and women in work place.

Based from the findings and outcome of the analysis, the means score seem to be higher for men compared to women. This shows that men in the sample from this research seem to perceive or agree more with the statements as in Table 4.2 as compared to women. Men from this sample are very concern on achieving the bottom line. This could be related to being more tasks oriented and also more focus in their work as compared to women. Men in the sample sense their self by defining their ability to achieve results.
Through this findings, we can conclude that men try to value most power, competency, efficiency and sense of accomplishment. The research also shows that men prefer to do work on their own as compared to women. Men value independent work more than group or team work. Men is best supported when they are doing things all by themselves. Findings revealed that men in this sample seek importance on competency level at work place and evident that for men, being professional at work is when someone can do their job well regardless of how they are feeling inside them.

Other statements such as ‘When I am talking to co-workers of the opposite gender, I feel that I am talking to a brick wall’; ‘I have trouble communicating with co-worker of the opposite gender, ‘I often have trouble interpreting messages from co-worker of the opposite gender’;’ I feel hurt and rejected when co-worker of the opposite gender grumble upon my request on something’ and I feel hurt and rejected when co-worker of the opposite gender grumble upon my request on something also seem to support to Gray (1992, 2002).

Means score for women seem to be higher for these statements. Hence, this shows that women perceive and agree higher as compared to men. These results conclude that women in this sample tend to agree that there is communication problem between the men and women in the organization. Where else men do not agree with this and they seem to perceive that there is no problem in their communications with women. Women in this research believe that there is only one way communication in their interaction with men in the organization. The situation in the organization can be predicted that most male managers, employees and co-workers mistakenly conclude
that when women talk, actually they are unable to figure out a solution on their own. But in real situation from the findings it could mean that women are actually looking to be fully heard. This is actually lacking within the organization as the results shows on the communication problem between the two genders.

Findings show that women seem to have problem in interpreting messages from men in their work place. Besides that, women seem to take it personally when men grumble or resent on any request in the work place. This can also be implied that women are unable to take rejection as compared to men.

Some of the statements that are found significant in this research seem to contradict propositions made by Gray (1992, 2002). Statements like ‘If I have personal problems; ‘I have to watch myself carefully so that they don't interfere with my work’; ‘Unresolved conflict makes me very uncomfortable’; ‘If someone appears to be upset’; ‘I'll find an opportunity to let them talk about it with me; ‘ If I am unsure of something at work, I will seek for advice or assistance’; ‘I appreciate reassurance at stressful times’ are statements that are significant but contradicts with claims by Gray (1992, 2002).

All these statements have means score higher for men as compared for women. Based from this research, men in this sample seem to perceive personal attachment in work place as compared to women. This result definitely contradicts Gray and also the stereotyping of women who are perceived to be relationship oriented. Men from this sample also tend to seek for assistance in work place rather than trying to solve their problems on their own. Men from the empirical study reveal that men appreciate
reassurance at stressful times as compared to women. This implies that men do not only appreciate encouragement but they also appreciate reassurance during difficult moments in the work place.

Table 4.3

 Independent T-test results on statements from Part A that is no significant difference between genders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>I dislike being questioned just for the sake of connecting.</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>I prefer independent activity rather than teamwork.</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>4.85</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6</td>
<td>I am not concerned if someone at work doesn't like me, as long as I have their respect.</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>5.53</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7</td>
<td>I prefer to talk about work related matters rather than personal matters.</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>5.52</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A8</td>
<td>If I'm confused I try to work it out myself rather than ask for help or advice.</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A13</td>
<td>I find that talking about problems in the work place is not worth the time it takes.</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A14</td>
<td>I'll go along with something I disagree with, rather than make a stand.</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A15</td>
<td>I rely on gut feelings, more than logic, when making difficult decisions.</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A16</td>
<td>I keep my negative thoughts and feelings to myself rather than share them.</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>5.05</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A19</td>
<td>I often ask clarifying questions to feel supported.</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 shows the statements from Part A in the survey that is not significant. This depicts that is there is no significant differences (p > .05, two tailed) between male and female in this sample for this research.

Ten statements from Part A have been found to be statistically not significant. Although the statements as in Table 4.3 have been reported by Gray (1992, 2002) as the statements have been adapted from Gray (1992, 2002) but since they are found to
be not significant, seem to not support for the organization in this research and also in the context of Malaysia.

4.2.2 Independent Sample t-test (Part B)

Table 4.4
Statements from Part B where significant differences between male and female were found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Men often ask directly for what they want.</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>5.27</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Men talk less about the problem and more about the solution</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>Men speak more confident than women in the work place.</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>6.79</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7</td>
<td>Men feel that solving a problem is an opportunity to demonstrate sharing, cooperation, and collaboration.</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>6.84</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B12</td>
<td>Women earn trust and support by listening more.</td>
<td>5.81</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B13</td>
<td>Men want to work cooperatively on project.</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>6.93</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B15</td>
<td>Men are always being competitive with me.</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B17</td>
<td>Men accept complements for their achievement in a positive way.</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>5.98</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B18</td>
<td>Women accept complements for their achievement in a positive way.</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part B in the survey is used to determine the stereotyping of men and women in regards to the statements which have been paired in this research.

From the statistical analysis, it is found that only nine statements have significant differences between men and women from this sample size. The statements that are found significant from this empirical study are ‘Men often ask directly for what they want’; ‘Men talk less about the problem and more about the solution’; ‘Men speak more confident than women in the work place’; ‘Men are always being competitive
with me’. These statements also seem to support to claims made by the author as in Mars and Venus at work place (2002). All these statements seem to have means score higher for men as compared to women. This means that men perceive or agree more than women to these statements.

Men often appreciate directness rather than indirectness compared to women. And also men are concern on problem solving as compared to women whose are often stereotyped as prefer to talk about the problem as women tend to share problems as they are more relationship oriented. Men in the sample are also confident at work place. They perceive that the best way to stand out in work place is by expressing positive feelings as the statement on accepting complements in positive way reveals this. With that men in the organization tend to believe in confidence as they perceive that people around at work place will have more confidence in them. Men in this research also want to be competitive to men. Even though the difference of means score is not much different, women also perceive that men tend to be competitive to them but since the means score is higher for men this shows that men are more competitive between the intra genders.

On the other hand, four other statements in Part B are found to be significant but they contradict with the propositions made by Gray (1992, 2002). The statements are such as ‘Men feel that solving a problem is an opportunity to demonstrate sharing, cooperation, and collaboration’. The means score for men is higher than women for this statement. This derives that men perceive solving problem gives them and other men an opportunity to collaborate. So this contradicts with Gray and even the stereotyping of men who are said that they do not like sharing and collaboration. Men
in the sample seem to agree that women earn trust and support through listening more. This contradicts as Gray mentioned that men are ones who need to listen more to earn trust from women. So this research shows that men in the organization think that women in the organization must listen more to earn trust from men in the work place. Mutual respect and trust is essential in a relationship and especially is important to create a mutual understanding between men and women at work place. Men also want to work cooperatively in projects.

Table 4.5
T-test results shows NO significant difference between genders in relation to statements from Part B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Women often ask directly for what they want.</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>Women talk less about the problem and more about the solution.</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>5.61</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6</td>
<td>Women speak more confident than men in the work place.</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>5.91</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B8</td>
<td>Women feel that solving a problem is an opportunity to demonstrate sharing, cooperation, and collaboration.</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B9</td>
<td>Men will take it personally when I forget to do little things.</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B10</td>
<td>Women will take it personally when I forget to do little things.</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B11</td>
<td>Men earn trust and support by listening more.</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B14</td>
<td>Women want to work cooperatively on project.</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>6.15</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B16</td>
<td>Women are always being competitive with me.</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B19</td>
<td>Men complain about problems because they want their problems to be acknowledged.</td>
<td>5.65</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B20</td>
<td>Women complain about problems because they want their problems to be acknowledged.</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td>6.47</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part B in the survey is used to determine the stereotyping of men and women in regards to the statements which have been paired for this purpose.
From the statistical analysis, it is found that eleven statements have no significant differences between men and women in regards to the communication styles and working styles as in Table 4.5. The statements are ‘Women often ask directly for what they want’; ‘Women talk less about the problem and more about the solution’, ‘Women speak more confident than men in the work place’, ‘Women feel that solving a problem is an opportunity to demonstrate sharing, cooperation, and collaboration’; ‘Men will take it personally when I forget to do little things’, ‘Women will take it personally when I forget to do little things’, ‘Men earn trust and support by listening more’, ‘Women want to work cooperatively on project’, ‘Women are always being competitive with me’, ‘Men complain about problems because they want their problems to be acknowledged’, ‘Women complain about problems because they want their problems to be acknowledged’.

Based from the findings, it is found that women do not demonstrate sharing, cooperation, and collaboration as mentioned by Gray in his book. Women are also stereotyped as very sensitive and take things personally, but based from this research there is no significant difference between men and women. In fact the statement also seem to have both men and women to slightly agree with the statement ‘men will take it personally when I forget to do little things’ and men complain about problems because they want their problems to be acknowledged and ‘Women complain about problems because they want their problems to be acknowledged’. Statements as shown in Table 4.5 also with their paired statements seem to have no significant difference between men and women.
### 4.2.3 Independent Sample t-test (Part C)

#### Table 4.6

 Statements from Part C where significant differences between male and female were found

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Men emphasize status, power and independence.</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>5.89</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Women emphasize on connections, closeness and intimacy.</td>
<td>6.19</td>
<td>6.59</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Men complain that women talk on and on.</td>
<td>6.29</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Men generally know what they are going to say before they speak</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>7.12</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C8</td>
<td>Women just begin talking and gradually discover what she wants to say.</td>
<td>5.41</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C9</td>
<td>Men interrupt women with solutions.</td>
<td>5.84</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C10</td>
<td>Women make unsolicited suggestions regarding how they could do things better</td>
<td>5.75</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C13</td>
<td>When men say, “Would you like my help?” or “Can I help?” women will often say no when they really mean yes.</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>6.26</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C14</td>
<td>By using “May I” or Let me” a man makes it easier for a woman to accept his support.</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>6.73</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C17</td>
<td>As a manager, limit giving directions to the absolute minimum when dealing with men. The more independence a man gets, the more he will appreciate.</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part C is specifically validating statements made by Tannen (1990). Eighteen statements have been tested in the survey.

The statistical analysis list that the ten statements that are significantly different between men and women. All the statements as in Table 4.6 seem to have significant difference between men and women. Men in this research seem to have high means of score as compared to women for all the statements. Based from the findings is that men tend to agree that men gives importance to power, status and competency at work place to achieve results. As this reveals their task oriented and that they are focus on their objective at work. Mean while men in this research agree that women in the
organization give importance for relationship at work place. As discussed in literature, men perceive that women can talk on and on. But women do not know exactly what they are going to talk but they try to find the topic of conversation as they gradually talk. Unlike men who think of their conversational topic before initiating a conversation. Men in this sample agree that they tend to give solutions even when there is no necessary for it. Men also appreciate independence in taking up their work. That is the reason men in this sample agree that they only need minimum direction from their manager and they need some sense of freedom in accomplishing their job at work place.

Table 4.7
T-test results shows NO significant difference between genders in relation to statements from Part C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Women complain that men do not listen.</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Men talk to boast about their accomplishment.</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Women downplay their accomplishments to avoid being braggarts and to take the other people’s feelings into account.</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>6.06</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C11</td>
<td>Men thinks that women have nothing much to say when she talks less.</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>6.01</td>
<td>5.43</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C12</td>
<td>Women think that they are being polite by talking less.</td>
<td>5.73</td>
<td>5.97</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C15</td>
<td>To a man, “Could you” sounds like a question and not a request.</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C16</td>
<td>Ask a woman what she still has to do rather than ask her what to do.</td>
<td>6.31</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C18</td>
<td>When a woman’s anger is personal, resulting from her feeling personally attacked she is often viewed as blaming others and taking no responsibility.</td>
<td>5.72</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 depicts the results of t-test analysis. It was suggested from the outcome of an independent sample t-test which produced a significant value greater than 0.05, that there was no significant difference between the genders for the statements as
shown in Table 4.7. Based from the research, reveals that the statements with the mean score of more than 6.00 shows that men and women from the sample have the same perception on the particular statements.

4.3 Summary of Research Results

The result provided empirical evidence on the communication styles and working styles of the employees within the organization. The finding also provided evidence on the perception of communication styles and working styles between the same or different genders in the organization. Furthermore, the results also validated the phrases or statements by Gray (2002) and Tannen (1990) based on the results from the statistical analysis on each of the statements in the survey.

Based on the findings of the research, some of the statements made by Gray (1992, 2002) and Tannen (1990) seem to be contrary as in the context of the organization. This could be due to the different perception in regards to the culture differences and way of thinking which could be different as compared to the westerners. Based from the empirical study, the different working styles and communication styles between inter and intra gender communications within the organization has been identified.

4.4 Discussion

Communication at work place is very crucial to create a healthy and dynamic working environment. It is very obvious that nowadays more women are getting to the workforce. With this, men and women need to have a better understanding of each
other so that they could work together for the benefit and productivity of the organization. Communication breakdown among co-workers can hinder information flow which will lead to many work-related problems at workplace. All human beings are involved in relationships since it takes major part of life especially that communication is inescapable and people interact with each other because they are part of a society where it is impossible to not communicate.

This is the reason why it is important to first be aware of the differences of communication between males and females, and then try to understand them in order to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts. This study could help us solve our personal problems with the opposite sex, and probably accept the differences, and learn how to appreciate them to improve the relationship in workplace for better understandings.

From this research, it is found that as in general there seem to be weak support on the statements as in the survey. The results do not seem to be very convincing as for most of the statements, mean score seem to be somewhere slightly agree. Based from the findings from this research it is found that some of the statements adapted from Gray (1992, 2002) and Tannen (1990) seem to be significant and thus validating the authors propositions. But still some of the statements reported by Tannen and Gray concerning communication styles between different genders seem to contradict with Gray and Tannen in the context of Malaysia.

Some of the results from the findings have supported the long-standing assumption, based on stereotypes that women have a more cooperative orientation than men and that men are more competitive than women (Rubin & Brown, 1975). When
interacting women are expected to communicate in ways that stress cooperation, collaboration and sensitivity to others’ feelings, while men in ways that exert control, establish status and maintain independence. But the research has shown that men in the sample size communicate in ways to stress cooperation, collaboration and sharing.

Men and women can learn so much from each other if only the gender communication barriers can be broken. These barriers disappear with time, understanding, and effort. An investment of time is necessary to evaluate personal communication style. Understanding is needed as different conversational styles are observed. Effort is expended when adjustments are made to improve interaction between men and women. Though life is busy and personal styles are comfortable, adaptation to gender communication promotes individual growth and corporate understanding in the organization.

The primary purpose of this intensive investigation is not to determine which communicative style is best, but to identify the differences that exist between the genders so that men and women could have a better understanding and adaptation. As men and women better recognize differences in communicative styles, they can work to improve their own communication with members of the opposite sex. The general gender communication differences affect all men and women in every context within the work environment in the organization.

Strategic workplace communications is very important especially for an organization as Pos Malaysia Berhad which has more than 14,000 employees. Communication has become increasingly important in the workplace since communications is essential in
protecting the organization’s image and identity in the market, maintaining high staff morale, supporting the organization’s goals and objectives and making these known to staff, facilitating and encouraging teamwork and information sharing, assisting with change management and project communication, encouraging and facilitating an open and honest culture in the organization and fostering close working relationships with all divisions within the organization.
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

The primary objective of this research was to assess whether there are consistent gender differences in communication style, of the type that Tannen (1990) and Gray (1992) have reported. Although these two authors suggest a general agreement on ways in which men and women differ, not everyone agrees with them.

In order to further investigate the validity of the claims and statements of the two authors, Gray and Tannen, this research was conducted to examine various interpretations of the phrases and also whether it is seen as an accurate explanation for communication difficulties between genders.

The study specifically focuses on one workplace because research conducted within a workplace presents an opportunity to observe interaction between men and women in the context of the many constraints as described by Kendall and Tannen (1997). Based from this empirical study, the communication differences between men and women is found to be minimal and of little significance.

Besides that, based from this research the means for male respondent is higher than the means of women respondent for most of the statements. This can be interpreted as that the statements adapted from Gray could be based on man’s perspective rather than theory based from empirical study. That could be the reason that men had the tendency to agree more on the statements claimed by Gray (2002) in his book.
The research was based on the phrases and claims by Gray (2002) and Tannen (1990). And the two authors suggest a general agreement on ways in which men and women differ, but mentioned in the literature review not everyone agrees with them. In particular, it is critical to understand that even if there may be average tendencies in the directions they suggest, their generalizations certainly do not apply to all men and all women.

There are certainly some men who would fit the communication characteristics described here as common to women, and there are certainly some women who would fit the characteristics described here as common to men. It will be more useful to understand that different people may have different ways of communicating, rather than to assume that all women communicate in one way and all men communicate in another way.

5.2 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Malaysia is characterized by its unique cultural diversity, which refers to the diversity in the ethnicity of the population. The derived sample which was done in Pos Malaysia Berhad is with one dominant ethnic group which was Malays and this sample did not represent the nature of the Malaysian population in regards to the ethnic compositions. Although Malays in general are thought to observe a common set of values and practices, there will nevertheless be differences when it comes to the values and practices of individuals. So, it will be more accurate to represent all the
ethnic compositions in Malaysia to result that will comprehend the nation of Malaysia on the whole.

Based on the characteristic of Malaysian population by gender 2005 and 2007, Malaysia’s population is at 27.174 millions as at December 2007. And of which the breakdown by males and females is 13.83 million (50.97%) and 13.34 million (49.03%). The sample size of each gender for this study was that males comprise of 40.1% and females are 59.9% of the sample size.

Besides that, the sampling was done in one particular organization. So the result is more appropriate to reflect the organization, thus it is improbable to generalize the findings from the present study as reflection from the entire Malaysian work environment. A thorough random sampling covering the entire country would be able to provide a much more accurate result.

5.3 Implications

When we imply on the communication styles in work place, each one of us constructs an interpretation of communication by drawing on our past experiences, our knowledge of the people with whom we are interacting and other factors in the communication system that influence our interpretations. Thus our personal experiences, values, thoughts and feelings heavily influence the meaning we attach to communication and we, inevitably project ourselves. To add to the complexity most of the times we are not aware of these influences. So, it could be that the respondents
of this survey rate the statements on this perception basis rather than their own experience.

Since differences in interpreting messages are the source of much misunderstanding between people, communication effectiveness can be enhanced by being aware of between gender differences and within gender differences in perception and interpretation of communication. Also by seeking clarifications of what the other person means rather than assuming one’s interpretation to be correct and also checking with others how they are interpreting our verbal and non-verbal communication.

An understanding of the process of stereotyping and its consequences is critical for enhancing inter-gender communication effectiveness. With all this effective ways to minimize the misunderstanding, communication between co workers will be better and this will enhance a better relationship at work place and increase productivity.
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