

## Debt and its Collection in Malay Magazine Business Before World War II

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**Abstract:** Debt is the flexibility rendered by the publisher to the merchant to delay their payment in magazine trade. Dealer which normally consisting of agents or dealers, distributors and bookstores are given a certain period, usually from 1-3 months, before making the payment to the publisher. However, not all the debt can be settled by the merchants. This raises a big problem for publishers because a short in income will jeopardise the magazine. Besides overhead costs, publishers have to bear other costs such as editorial, printing and marketing. This study discusses the situation and the debt problems in the Malay magazine publishing before the World War II and the measures undertaken by the publisher to collect it from the merchants. Information obtained by using various sources such as magazine content, official reports and records by the affected individual. It is found that debt and the way it was collected was decisive for the survival of the Malay magazine before World War II.

**Key words:** Malay magazine, Malay press, media marketing system, economics of publishing, magazines history, press before the World War II

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### INTRODUCTION

Grant of debt or credit is a common trade practice in the business of publishing. Books, magazines and newspapers are offered in the market with the trade burden is borne by the publisher, who takes the responsibility of the product and to face the market risk. The other marketing chains of publishing such as distributors, wholesalers, agents, intermediaries and dealers rarely bear the business risks. They will get their portion on a book, magazine or newspaper sold but interestingly, they will not bear the loss if the reading materials couldn't be sold. This is in contrast with the publisher. They will earn revenue and profit if their publications sold out in the market, if not, they will bear the loss.

This puts the business of publishing is fraught with risk. Publishers spend their money to produce publishing materials which its fate will be determined by the market. If the product fails, the risk will be borne by producers, not by the other chains in the business such as researchers, printers, distributors or booksellers. Such business practices are no strangers as most other products also adopted a similar system of consignment system. In this system, publishers will send their product to the distributor or bookseller with mutual agreement about discounts or discount rate and the time or mode of payment. In the agreed period, say 3 months, publishers will ask for payment for the copies sold where

dealers will pay after deducted to the agreed discount. Normally, dealer will not take responsibility for the unsold copies, unless prior agreement is made to the contrary and publishers will bear alone.

These practices have been around even before the World War II and still practices until now. Transactions on firm order in which the dealers will pay regardless of the saleability of magazines in the market rarely practiced in publishing business in this country. It appears that traders become the most profitable because they do not bear the risks of the business. If that happens, they should not become obstacles in this enterprise. If they comply with payments to publishers for magazine or newspaper sold, of course these publishing businesses will growth and smoothly develop.

However, the opposite often occurs. Distributors, dealers, book stores or agents often defer payment to the publisher and some never pay for their own problems. Without payment from the merchants, publishers facing difficulty to cover the publishing cost, let alone to expect profit for their business venture. This problem will eventually affect the publication of the magazine. This problem is often encountered in Malays magazine publishing before independence.

This study will discuss the issue of debt faced by magazine publishers and their efforts to collect these debts from the trader. This issue has rarely been touch by scholars in Malay press. Roff (1972, 1975) do not focus on trade issues while he was in discussions about the history

of the publication of newspapers and magazines as well as its influence on the construction of Malay politics and nationalism. Proudfoot (1993) did an interesting exploration about publishing business practices in the 19th century carried by Malay bookstores like Haji Muhammad Siraj in Singapore. Ali Hj Ahmad in his study of *Majallah Guru* (Teachers Magazine) did another effort on this issue, especially on the magazine business problems and the steps made by the editor-cum-manager, Muhammad Dato Muda to market the magazine. My previous study (Adnan, 2013) discussed the issue of Malay publishing business for the period after the World War II until 1957 when Malaya gained Independence.

From these studies, it can be concluded that the publishing business in Malay language was not conducted in a professional and organized way. This is due to the fact that the main objective of Malay publishing in the period before the World War II was social obligation and not commercial. Thus, the publishing “business” is not practiced solely determined by supply and demand or profit and loss, rather than as a contribution to the progress and welfare of the Malay society. Therefore, the publishing “business” during that period was dominated by various problems of production, editorial, management, printing and marketing. One of the dominant problems in marketing of newspapers and magazines in the period before World War II is the trade debt to publishers.

### **DEBT OF SUBSCRIPTION**

Publisher’s marketing system typically divides into two, namely the sale directly to the public through a subscription system and most importantly, the trading relationship between the publisher and selected bookstores. Ishak (1998) detects the gross number of bookstore in 1921-1949 as follows: Singapore (54), Penang (37), Perak (20), Selangor (19), Johore (16), Kedah (10), Malacca (5), Kelantan (4), North Borneo (3), Negeri Sembilan (6), Pahang (2), Terengganu (2) and Sarawak (1) (Ishak, 1998). Subscription rate among the readers is very limited (At the end of its first year, *Panduan Guru* managed to attract 258 subscribers with the largest are from *Persekutuan Guru Melayu* (PGM) Selangor with 70 copies and PGM Melaka 80 copies. The circulation of the magazine is said only about 300 copies. For *Persahabatan* (1936-37) newspaper for example, out of 1,200 copies printed, subscribers are only 83 with 79 subscribed for 3 months, there subscribed for 6 months and only one subscribed for 12 months (Salleh, 1976)) even though the postage rate is not so high at that time. A delivery charge for magazines or newspapers in 1938 was 2 cents for 2

ounces and 2 cents more for each additional 5 ounces. The package rate is about 30 cents for the weight not >3 pounds, 50 cents is not >7 pounds, 70 cents is not >11 pounds and RM1.10 for not >22 pounds.

In this subscription system, people who are interested in becoming a customer is required to pay to the publisher prior to the magazine subscription period chosen, either 3, 6 or 12 months. The money will be the deposit for customers to publishers. *Mujallah Al-Riwayat* (History Magazine), 16 November 1938, for example states: “Money for subscription for 1 year or 6 months would be issued a receipt as a deposit and the receipts will be issued once the subscriber received all copies of their magazine. If you want to unsubscribe at any time whatsoever, surely *Al-Maarif* is ready to refund the balance of the subscription, although, a little bit of money!” (*Mujallah Al-Riwayat*, 16 November 1938, p. 6).

This subscription system, if smoothly in place would be more profitable to publishers. They do not have to give a 20-40% discount if they rely on agent or dealer for the magazine. Yet sometimes the subscription price may be reduced to a particular reader. *Ar-Raja*, for example gave special discounts to school children at a subscription price of RM2.50 per year (normal RM3.75) and RM1.50 for 6 months (normal RM1.90). However, pupils should be sent the subscription money directly to the publisher and not through dealers. (*Ar-Raja*, 3 July 1928, p. 4) payment for subscription made in several ways so sometimes confusing and this requires explanation from the publisher.

One of the magazines who often remind clients how to pay the subscription was *Al-Hedayah*. For example, in August 1923, subscribers are advised that: “The simple and quick way to send the subscription payment is to put money together with a letter in a sealed envelope then send it by register to the distributor’s magazine as send the order will delayed until up to 2 months” (*Al-Hedayah*, August 1923, p. 5). In the following month, *Al-Hedayah* (*The Guidance*) once again reminds their subscribers: “With the greatest hope, if you’re paying a subscription of *Al-Hedayah* put the money into the envelope and sends it by register and seal the envelope as posting by money order will delay and inconvenience to us. We do not receive payment by bank cheque unless you add the bank commissions; for every RM3.50 shall be added 82 cents” (*Al-Hedayah*, September 1923, p. 3).

Sales through direct subscription to the reader gave three advantages to publishers. First, the publisher will obtain subscription payments in advance from customers and the money could be used as working capital for magazine publishing. With a lot number of subscription and with long term duration such as 1 year, the amount of

working capital available will be larger and publishers could plan its magazine better. Second with the subscription, publisher does not have to give discount to dealers or distributors. While some publishers still give discount to subscribers, the number is far less than the discounts given to the dealer if the publisher uses them in magazine distribution channel. Third, the rate or amount of the subscription will be used as an indicator to the publisher for the amount of copies to be printed in an issue. Since, the subscribers will be final buyers, publishers are able to make a more realistic estimate and the risks of unsold copies are reduced.

However, management for direct subscription is sometimes problematic and burdens the publishers. Tasks of campaign for subscription, subscription processing, receiving and recording payments, updating subscriptions records, delivery and others are often diverted the focus of publishers and often also the editor, from the more important work of preparing the content of the magazine. As a result full attention cannot be paid to a magazine, let alone given to the small size of publishers in pre-war period. For Malaya as an example, only one person, namely Mohd Yunus Abdul Hamid who works as the “editor, manager, clerk, office boy and others” (Malaya, March 1928, p. 3).

It similarly happened to the first author of *Mujallah Guru*, Mohammed Dato’ Muda. He manages the magazine’s publication alone and frustrated after getting criticism from readers about the style of his authorship, he stated: “... this teacher act as an author, manager, clerk who distributing magazine and others. He had to face a lot of problems with the printer, with the lack of paper, the faulty printing press, with printing workers who stop working, had to overcome all these (*Mujallah Guru*, July 1933, p. 365). With a simple organizational structure of the small publisher with limited number of employees, the researchers work is often disturbed by the affairs of subscriptions. To reduce costs, there are magazines such as the *Dunia Sekarang* which do not receive any subscription of less than a year.

### **DEBT OF DEALERS**

One distribution channel which was also important is the agent is usually a large bookstore in the city or town. As in common practice, publishers will get orders from the agent. They will first make offer to the seller who wants to distribute their magazine. Royal Publishing Company, Singapore which publishes several magazines such as *Medan Laki-Laki* (Male Field) and *Medan Al-Islam* (Islamic Field) and the newspapers such as *Shorga Dunia* (Paradise), *Melayu Muda* (Malay Youth) and *Dunia*

*Sekarang* (Today’s World) for example, advertises: “Wanted! Agents in every town and village throughout Malaya to sell our books, magazines and newspapers to Malays. With a capital of RM10.00 you can easily earn RM15.00-RM20.00 every month in your spare time” (*Shorga Dunia*, 1 June 1936, p.5). Specifically, *Dunia Sekarang*, July 28, 1934 stated: “*Dunia Sekarang* is now very salable sold everywhere, people rush to buy them until it never enough copies in every issue. As such is if you become an agent for *Dunia Sekarang* in your place you’re comfortably gain profit for every month. Hundreds of copies are sold at one place”.

The main advantage of using sales representative agent is that publisher will not too dependent on any one dealer alone (or sole agent). If a dealer cause problems such as inefficient or do not make payments due, publisher can still get the payment from representatives. As such, working capital will still be around because while one or two dealers may be problematic, others still can be expected to doing a good job. But the risk is that publisher may have to deal with too many dealers at one time and it may cause other management problems.

Most publishers use an agent as sales representative and not sole agent of the magazine unless Malaya (March 1933). The magazine in its issue on January 29, 1934 states:

Notice is hereby given that I have this day appointed S.A. Ibrahim Ghunny & Co., of No. 16, Queen Street, Singapore as my sole agent for the *Tanah Melayu* magazine. In future copies of the *Tanah Melayu* will be distributed throughout Malaya by S.A. Ibrahim Ghunny & Co. who will also dispatch the magazine every month to subscribers and sub-agents in Singapore and out stations. All payments for subscriptions, advertisements, sale of the magazines, etc., must be paid to S.A. Ibrahim Ghunny & Co. and not to any other person. Newsagents, advertisers and subscribers throughout Malaya are kindly requested to deal direct with S.A. Ibrahim Ghunny & Co. only (*Tanah Melayu*, 29 January 1934, p. 5)

Thus, the use of sole representative may looks better option. Publisher will better manage their account since the collection of payments will be the responsibility of the sole representative. Sole representative usually play its role as a distributor efficiently than the publisher and also capable of collecting debts from agents more effectively. One of the important sole representatives in the 1930’s is SA Ibrahim Ghunny & Co. operating in Queen Street,

Singapore. The company did various notices to their agents to settle their payment. For example, stated in one magazine:

With this we inform that if the money of previous issues was not sent to us immediately, we had to come to your place in the near future to collect the money due from you. At that time we had to claim from you the expenses of our travelling to your place. Because that would make you at loss, you are advised to quickly send the money to us with money order or register as usual. This is prior notice before anything happened (Tanah Melayu, August 1934, p. 5).

However, the weakness is that if dealers pose problems, such as late payment, the publisher cannot expect others to acquire more working capital. For this reason, the use of agent or dealer among publishers is customary. Most magazines will display the name of the dealership in their magazine pages and due to the limited number of booksellers at that time; definitely redundancy is often the case with a book store act as a dealer to many magazines. Among the major bookstore dealer lots before the war was a magazine (Table 1).

There are also among dealers who are individual or a government official. For example, Muhammad Nuruddin, Tapah Malay headmaster who became dealer for Ar-Raja, Haji Abbas Ali, Malay schoolteacher Temiang, Seremban (Al-Ikhwan) Mohd Hashim, the education Taiping

(Mujallah Guru); Abdul Samad Tahir Malay school teacher Kampung Tengah, Kuala Pilah (Tetauan Muda) Pilus Muhammad Ismail, land office, Tampin (Tetauan Muda); Ahmad Mohd Taib, Malay schools Pontian (Al-Ikhwan); Abdul Manaf, siak mosque Batu Gajah (Bulan Melayu); Ahmad Lazim Bokhir and Tuan Hj Ali, both teachers at the Batu Pahat School (Masa) and Tuan Hj Mohammad Said, Yan (Tetauan Muda) (Ibid., p. 86).

In addition, the smooth transactions are often affected, especially if publishers are dealing with an agent who just opened his own bookstore or publisher who are nor familiar with magazine sales. The question of who should bear the shipping cost of the magazine had often arises. The publisher of Masa (Time) has consistently reminded the agents to send subscription money through register or money order and not by stamps in lieu of payment (Jasa (Service), September 1929, p. 3 stated, "If you send subscription or money for books or any payment, please sent by register or money order. Never sent it by stamps (as substitute for payments) as it will make us harder. Please don't do anymore. Send us by register or money order. It is cheaper, safe and quick").

To protect the magazine sales from any risk, some publishers require their agents to pay a deposit even though most of them are more willing to bear the risk. This deposit secures the publishers of any business risks, particularly fraud from agents or sole representatives. The publisher will take the deposit if the dealer or the agents failed to make payment at the time agreed. Usually, publishers require agents to pay the deposit prior to taking any copies of the magazine. For example, Panduan states, "Whoever wants to be representatives please send upfront money of RM5.00; so we can send 25 copies of Panduan (Guidance). The deposit will be increased if the number of copies s more" (Panduan, December 1934, p. 3).

The sum of deposit specified by publishers varies for each magazine with values ranging from RM5.00 to RM10.00. Some magazines such as Tanah Melayu (Malay Land) asked the agent to provide a substantial security deposit which is RM200 (Tanah Melayu, September 1934, p. 3). But generally the deposit is quite low. Only once the deposit is sent to the publisher then copies of the magazine will be delivered to the dealers. Dunia Sekarang which is sold at RM0.15 requires agents to pay RM3.00 in advance. The deposit will be taken by the publisher if the agent does not make the payments but returned when they ceased to be an agent. According to Dunia Sekarang, "... The deposit is a guarantee or assurance in our possession only as a sign of sincerity and will be returned to you adequately when you cease to be our agent in future" (Dunia Sekarang, 14 July 1934, p. 5).

Table 1: List of pre-war main magazine's agents

Name of dealers/Agents	Town/State
Hj. Muhamad Siraj	Bussorah Street, Singapura
B. Sulaiman; Hasyim Abdullah	Arab Street, Singapura
K.A. Fakir Mohammad	Keppel Road, Singapura
R.K. Samy & Co.	Changi Road, Singapura
S. Mohammad Kassim	Kallang Road, Singapura
Dulfakir & Co.	North Bridge Road Singapura
M.M. Dulfakir & Co.; Federal Rubber Stamp; Zainuddin & Co.	Kuala Lumpur
Muhd Hj. Abdul Salam & Co.;	Melaka
Hj. Abdullah Fakeh	
Matbaah Al-Mansuriah;	Alor Setar
Wan Mohd Taib Lembong; A.S. Kechik	
Muhammad Din; Matbaah Az-Ziniah	Taiping
Alwi & Co.; Shah Hamid & Co.	Tanjung Malim
D.Y. Brothers	Kota Bharu
Central Store; Sahil & Co. di	Johor Bahru
Yahya & Co.; Abu Bakar & Co.	Ipoh
Bahnan & Co.; Rahman & Co.;	Muar
A.M. Talib	
Hj. Muhammad Said	Yan, Kedah
Sipi Bombay Store	Batu Pahat
Syed Salim & Co.; Unipor & Co.	Kajang
S.O. Abd Wahab & Co.; Federal Rubber Stamp; Abbas Hj. Ali	Seremban
Matbaah Az-Ziniah; Hj. Abdullah Nuruddin; Federal Rubber Stamp	Pulau Pinang

Number of copies to be printed for each issue is determined from the number of copies ordered. Publishers send the ordered copies of the magazine to agents by mail and incur the expenses. There are also publishers who do not wait for orders from the bookstore. They directly send copies of the magazine to the dealer with the hope that they will make additional orders. *Langkahan Baru* (The New Step) for example sends copies of the magazine in advance although no approval received from the dealer to act as an agent for the magazine. Cited for example:

We sent copies of this first issue to ask for an agreement: Are you happy to be our agent in your place? If you agree, give us a statement of how many copies it could sell in your place. However if you do not agree, please return the copies to us. In 2 months, the unsold copies should be sent back to us. If not, it is considered sold and the money should be sent (*Langkahan Baru*, January 1942, p. 3)

For each copy of magazines sold, publishers will give discounts of 20-30% of the sales price. Discount rate depends on the number of copies that can be sold and the transaction between publisher and the agent are done on-orders and consignment. For transactions in order, if copies of the magazine cannot sell, the agent or the seller is not allowed to return to the publisher. For consignment, agents can return it back to the publisher but they had to bear the cost of shipping. This is because to the number of copies for consignment is determined by sales agents, not by publishers. Nett payment will be made by the agent of the publisher once or twice a month.

Along with the fee, there are publishers who ask the sellers to provide a sales report. *Langkahan Baru* stated that one of the agreements with the seller is in "every 5th day of the month they must submit a report together with the money for the magazine sold". *Dunia Sekarang*, states: "The other terms are as usual; we pay 20% commission to reward you as you sell the newspaper/magazine. The unsold copies must be returned to us at the end of every month. While we will bear the postage costs to you, you will do the same for your postage to us" (*Dunia Sekarang*, 21 July 1934, p. 5).

## DEBT AND ITS COLLECTION

The greatest problem facing publishers certainly is delayed or in some cases the refusal of dealer to make payments. The unpaid amount is sometimes high enough to the detriment of magazine publishing. *Malaya* for instance had ceased publication because the publisher does not acquire working capital due to the unpaid fee from agents or subscriptions. It stated that: "If we take the

count, more than a thousand dollars is estimated stuck in the hands of our agents or subscribers... Almost reckon our hopes on *Malaya* magazine because some obstacle that restricts its life" (*Malaya*, Mac 1928: 3).

On how publishers appealed to the agent to immediately settle their debts are often expressed in the magazine and published in various forms. *Malaya* magazine in August 1927 using a poem that reads:

- My noble generous subscribers
- Do not forget to *Malaya*
- Our body is weaker and powerless
- To you we really hope

*Dunia Melayu* (Malay World) on March 20, 1930 using drama techniques to collect debt from its sales representatives:

*Dunia Melayu* (DM): dear our agent, now is already the month of Shawwal 1348

Agent: you are right

DM: don't you afraid of this world so soon end whereas you still hold our trust

Agent: of course I'm afraid, I work for my living and fear of a religious prohibition

DM: well, that's it. But until now you have not pay for your debt of *Dunia Melayu* and how many times I send a bill, you remained silent. Is this the one you do trust?

Agent: be patience sir, because money is not much. When it accumulates a lot then I post it to you. Your money is safe with me but now I have used for...

DM: how dare you hold our money? Although, it small to you, for us it is a lot. So please pay our part"

The other way is with the threat: "Would you tell me right away, if you not paid up in the next issue, I'll mention your name in *Ar-Raja*" (*Ar-Raja*, July 3, 1928: 3). And furthermore, there are publishers who brave enough to publish the names of agents who do not make the payment within the stipulated time. *Langkahan Baru* for example, states: "To you agent who intentionally or unintentionally not pay us, *Langkahan Baharu* number 4 will not be posted to you and we will be charged the price for this number 3. If no payment received, then the agent names will be appeared in the next number of *Langkahan Baru*" (*Langkahan Baru*, January 1942: 3).

Sometimes the notice was followed by a stern warning. A newspaper, *Bahtera* (Ark) states: "For our subscribers who has received a letter of demand owed by them, we no longer tolerated, we feel bored and fed up. We give you time to pay until 15 August. If we not receive it then your name and your debts will be published in our newspapers". On other occasions, the motive of the publisher is served with deeply touching. Owner of *Ahmad Press*, *Ahmad Abdul Rahman*, who publishes the *Dunia Akhirat* (Last World) for example states:

To our representatives (agents) as you already know, our little money you owned is actually highly value to us and it is the life wire for Dunia Akhirat to survive in this world. As such, we hope your understanding to settle your old debts to us. We intend to help our fellow race by appointing you as our representative to sell Dunia Akhirat. But, if we are not interested to help us mutually, then maybe we will use other option by sending our magazines to be distributed by other races (Dunia Akhirat, 10 November 1936, p. 3)

Another magazine, *Lembaran Guru* (Teacher Sheet) in April 1927 states: "Our gentlemen who got the bill please send the money immediately and those who have not got the bill yet, please do pity about performing your duty. We sincerely submit our life into your hands". However, publishers usually do not act firmly to their subscribers or agents who owe money. They just hope that their agents will be aware of their responsibilities and thus reminded them with soft language. *Jasa* (Services) for example give a reminder in a long dialogue to cover the objective for the subscribers or agents to make payments. Among other things, the dialogue state:

Readers: Hi dear *Jasa*! You really contain of knowledge of world and the hereafter with simple explanation but it's a pity that your publications are always late. What's the reason? Are there not enough writings? Or what? Please tell us.

*Jasa*: Please forgive us first. Regarding of writings, God willing it is enough. Should we need to published weekly, was always ready.

Readers: If that so, what way for it to be published weekly?

*Jasa*: You want to know that? Now I am in headache.

Readers: Not healthy! Let's get cured, don't let it spread to stomach ache. It will get you more difficult.

*Jasa*: You're right. Yesterday I was searching for a cure to the whole Peninsula. All respective doctors tell me to send it themselves but until now, they are silent.

Readers: Who was your doctor?

*Jasa*: If you want to know, they are agents or representatives who have not fulfilled their obligations.

Readers: Ooo, that. If that so, they should not only remain silent (*Jasa*, September 1931, p. 1).

Without the money from sales, publishers do not have the working capital to publish the next issue of the magazine. As a result, the life span of magazine is short or it may publish irregularly. Except *Pengasuh* who is survive until today (Because *Pengasoh* published by government from the state government allocation, then the question of profit or loss does not arise. The publication is a tool to educate people to study Islam while repelling bad influence of entertainment magazine from reading public. If its publication is managed on a commercial basis, of course this magazine has been stopped a long time ago) other magazines can only survived in the market for 1-4 years only (Adnan, 2002). *Al-Imam* which was published in 1906 and printed 2,000 copies only lasted two

and a half years. *Majallah Al-Islam* appeared in 1914 could last only 4 years with irregular issued. *Masa* (Time) published in January 1924 ceased publication in December 1926 and although it revived in 1934, only lasted two issues before discontinued immediately. *Al-Ikhwan* first appeared in 16 Ogos 1926 with average of 2,000 copies could last until December 1931. Other magazines are difficult to determine due to lack of preserved copies. But it can be estimated that all cannot survive >3 years. The short lifespan of magazine shows that profit is difficult to achieve, even more so because of the difficulty for publishers to get advertisement.

Besides the two ways, namely subscribers and dealers, magazines also distributed by the publisher themselves. This is mainly done by the publisher which is religious schools or organizations which distribute magazine by mail or through direct sales. Teacher's Guide and Teacher *Majalah Panduan Guru* and *Mujallah Guru* for instance distributed to the branch states of *Persekutuan Guru-guru Melayu* (Malay Teachers' Federation) or PGM. The copies were then distributed by PGM to their respective members. The association's members will sell the magazine to other members or to public and they either get a commission or just contribute their energy for the benefit of society. For magazine published by religious schools, teachers will sell the magazines directly to public especially during lectures of prophet's birthday or *Isra' Mi'raj*. Students will help selling the magazine as one of the duty to get funds for *madrasah*.

Generally, magazine publishing before the war was operated on a small scale by individuals or organizations that do it as a social responsibility and not for profit. Thus, debt collection is not made in an orderly manner. Publishers only use the magazine as a platform to ask payment to be made, by publishing the names of traders or agents who do not carry out their responsibilities. Individually the total debt is quite small, although collectively it is large enough to determine the life and death of the magazine.

## CONCLUSION

In the business of Malay magazine before and after World War II, publishers relied heavily on circulation or sales volumes to earn. The income is used to cover the expenses of publishing and printing while the surpluses will be considered profit. Another source of income, the sale of a magazine to the advertiser is often difficult to explore by publishers because of the difficulty to obtain it. Magazine or newspaper in Malay language, let alone in the Jawi script is seen as too foreign to producers who

could buy spaces in printed media to promote their products or services. Most of them are generally made up of Chinese and European traders who normally choose publications in English or Chinese to advertise their commodity.

The absence of income from the sale of advertising spaces in Malay magazine causes the unstable of its publications. A stable magazines must have a balance of three pillars the editorial content, circulation and advertising revenue (Daly *et al.*, 1997; Wharton, 1992). Both books discussed the state and the scope of the magazine publishing, particularly relating to the management of editorial, circulation and advertising). This is what is called the concept of three legs of a stool which is how the three pillars help each other to allow magazine survive in the market.

The task for magazine publishers to sell spaces in their magazines to advertisers was not easy. Over the past until now, the commercial appeal of the Malay magazines is less attractive compared to English or Chinese magazines. Although, the circulation for Malay-language magazines is much higher, advertisers are more confidence to English and Chinese segment readers. They are seen as being more capable in terms of purchasing power parity (A recent study found that the lower income in advertisement revenue for Malay magazine than English is due to lack of confidence among advertisers on the ability of Malay magazine to bring their messages to segments of readers who can afford to buy as well as the inability of an publisher's own advertising staff who were unable to convince advertisers of their magazine (Adnan and Heng, 2011)). This is even more felt in the period before and after World War II when the Malay readership is low and their economic position are lag away from other races.

Our research found that the issue of debt outstanding and collectability are major problems faced by Malay magazine publishers. This problem could be among the causes for short-lived of Malay magazine, especially those carried out on a small scale. This problem

occurs due to the marketing and distribution system at the time which is actually still practiced to this day with some adjustments.

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