Cultural maintenance within the Tamil minority in Kuching: spanning three generations

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ABSTRACT
This paper intends to determine whether the minority Tamil immigrant community in Kuching, Sarawak still maintains its heritage culture or has assimilated it with the dominant cultures in Sarawak. Are the Tamils in Kuching still maintaining their cultural norms? The data comes from a set of questionnaires investigating language, social and cultural identity, and unstructured interviews spanning three generations. The results show that, while some assimilation has occurred, the community has maintained its cultural identity. The most interesting revelation is the growing number of the younger generation who are adapting their heritage and cultural norms, clearly demonstrating Gibson's accommodation and acculturation without assimilation.

Introduction
Malaysia is a multicultural country that consists of several ethnic races or communities. The three main ethnic groups are the Malays, Chinese and Indians. The Malays make up the dominant ethnic group while the Chinese and Indians are seen as the minority ethnic groups. The Indians are one of the smallest ethnic groups in Malaysia. Due to Malaysia's immigration history, the dominant cultures are more accepting, less prejudice and value the cultural diversity that both the dominant and minority groups and cultures offer the society at large. The Indians are not seen as a threat to the society, showing that immigrants entering a more liberal society are generally allowed more freedom than immigrants entering a more conservative society. Thus, the less receptive the dominant culture is towards the immigrant the less likely the immigrant group would want to adapt to the dominant culture (Kim, 1998; Croucher, 2013). Hence, Malaysia is seen as a mixing pot of different cultural influences coming together to present itself as a multicultural nation.

Malaysian Indians constitute the largest Indian community to be found in any country in the world outside the Indian subcontinent itself (Tate, 2008). The Indian community