

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE AWARENESS OF 1MALAYSIA CAMPAIGN AND
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' THINKING AND BEHAVIOUR**

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian government introduced the 1Malaysia concept in 2009, which aimed to achieve a multicultural nation in which all races could accept one another and be united as a nation. Consequently, when unity is achieved, the country's development can achieve greater heights of success. Over the years, the concept has received nationwide publicity through electronic and print media. Although there have been a few researches on the 1Malaysia concept, there has been very little research done to investigate the awareness of the 1Malaysia concept from the perspectives of secondary school students and relationship between the awareness of 1Malaysia campaign and secondary school students' thinking and behaviour. 1700 questionnaires were distributed to secondary school students in the Federal Territories Malaysia using stratified random sampling method. 50 students were interviewed to find out about the views on the changes in their way of thinking and behaviour towards people of different races. The finding showed that more than 70 per cent of respondents were aware of the 1Malaysia concept. There was a significant relationship between awareness of 1Malaysia concept and change in thinking. There was also a significant relationship between 1Malaysia concept and change in behaviour. From the interviews, many of the students reported that their way of thinking and behaviour have changed after learning about the 1Malaysia concept, where they become more tolerant, more accepting of differences, and more understanding of people of other cultures and races. However, it was an interesting finding that the number of respondents who did not undergo any changes in thinking and behaviour was quite high. They reported that they had been practising multicultural tolerance even before the 1Malaysia concept was introduced. Thus, the findings from this study will serve as a platform for the 1Malaysia campaign planning unit to reassess their current promotional activities and embark on effective future activities to ensure positive cognitive and behavioural outcomes among the youngsters.

Keywords:

1-Malaysia Concept & Thinking and Behavioural Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

The Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak introduced the 1Malaysia concept in 2009. The concept aims to achieve a multicultural nation in which all races could accept one another and be united as a nation. When it was launched the, it was part of the

government's holistic effort in transforming and branding the country in the hope of building a united and progressive nation.

Since the launching, research on 1Malaysia concept has gained momentum. According to Borneo Post (2012), a series of survey on 1Malaysia were conducted in 2009, 2010 and 2011 to determine public support toward 1Malaysia concept championed by Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak. Most of the researches focus on the level of awareness, concept and values, general acceptance and appreciation about 1Malaysia concept among the public. However, these researches have used the general public as the respondents for the studies. There has been very little research to gauge the awareness of the 1Malaysia concept from the perspectives of secondary school students and investigate the relationship between the awareness of 1Malaysia campaign and secondary school students' thinking and behaviour.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the independence of Malaya and the formation of Malaysia on September 16, 1963, national unity has been one of the fundamental focuses for nation building (Denison Jayasuria, 2010). Tunku Abdul Rahman's administration began building a more pluralistic and multi-cultural Malaya to enable him to fulfil his immediate priority which was national unity (Cheah Book Kheng, 2002). The second Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak continued with the agenda to unite the multi-races in this country. Subsequently, Tun Hussein Onn concentrated all his efforts to instil unity among the multi-races in Malaysia. Tun Dr. Mahathir and Tun Addullah Hj Ahmad Badawi continued the legacy by introducing Vision 2020 and the concept of excellence, glory and distinction, respectively, in efforts to instil unity among the many races and provide social justice for each of the races in this country.

The need to transcend racial boundaries is crucial if the country wants to avoid the possibility of racial harmony being lost or destroyed. This could be considered as a principle passed on amongst the country's line of previous leaders who believed that without the strength of unity amongst the people, Malaysia would not be successful in increasing and developing the population of the country (Sivamurugan Pandian, 2010). Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the fourth Prime Minister, who introduced Vision 2020 in February 1991. He stressed that Malaysia's major challenge in nation building is to create a Malaysian nation that is united and has similar aspirations, integrate at the territorial level and between ethnics based on equal rights and justice.

Mahathir in describing Vision 2020's aims said:

"Malaysia should not be developed only in the economic sense. It must be a nation that is fully developed along all the dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally. We must be fully developed in terms of national unity and social cohesion, in terms of our economy, in terms of social justice, political stability and the system of government, quality of life, social and spiritual values, national pride and confidence (Mahathir Mohamad, 1991)"

Therefore, the realization that national unity is integral to Malaysia being a developed nation, the government of Malaysia has embarked on various campaigns to promote unity amongst diversity over the years. The Neighbourliness Campaign was created under the Department of National Unity (DNU) in 1986 as an effort to create a national identity between the three major races in Malaysia. Taylor & Botan (1997) conducted an analysis on the Neighbourliness Campaign to investigate its role in building national unity. The study combined in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Public perception showed that the

respondents did perceive some of the goals of the Neighbourliness Campaign. They believed that integration and unity were the goals of the campaign. However, when they were asked what suggestions they had for the DNU for building national unity, one-fifth of the respondents stated that the government should be fairer to all races in their administration and national policies. Other than the Neighbourliness Campaign, there have been numerous other campaigns to promote racial harmony and unity. The latest of such campaigns is the 1Malaysia campaign, which has received nationwide publicity.

Malaysia has unique compositions that are based on multi-racial, multi religious, multi-cultural and multi-lingual population. This creates challenges in forming national unity, getting every member of the society to understand other cultures and build strong ethnic relations. 1Malaysia emphasizes on the attitude of accepting the diversity in ethnicity. Furthermore, one ethnic could openly accept the uniqueness and appreciate other ethnics as valuable assets and identity as Malaysians (Tarmizi Abdul Rahim, 2009).

There has been a growing interest on the 1Malaysia concept that has resulted in more researches being carried out. Although, there is an increased number of studies done to look into the effectiveness of the 1Malaysia campaign, a study that instigate on the awareness of the 1Malaysia campaign from the perspectives of young Malaysian i.e. secondary school students is timely due to the fact that this young generation will be the pillar of Malaysia in the near future.

The findings of this study can provide insight into young Malaysians' view of the 1Malaysia concept. This in turn serves as a platform for the 1Malaysia campaign unit to reassess their current stand and formulate future strategies to further enhance the acceptance of the 1Malaysia concept that translates into appropriate behaviour modification.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Questionnaires were distributed to secondary school students in the Federal Territories Malaysia. The participants were all Malaysian. They consented to take part in the study. The participants were briefed on the details of the study and informed that their participation was voluntary, anonymous and the study would be carried out in strict confidentiality.

The completed questionnaire was pre-tested through a pilot survey using 70 respondents. The objective of the pilot survey was to test the content and clarity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was produced in two languages, which are Malay and English. The alpha coefficient for the items tested is .809, suggesting that the items in the questionnaire have relatively high internal consistency.

The questionnaires were then distributed to 2200 secondary school students all over the Federal Territories Malaysia using stratified random sampling method. Out of which, 1700 questionnaires were received and used in the analysis of the data. Table 1 presents the characteristics of respondents.

Table 1: Characteristics of the Respondents

Categories	Characteristics	Percentage
Gender	Male	45.7
	Female	54.3
Ethnicity	Malay	60.6
	Chinese	25.2
	Indian	8.4
	Others	5.8
Age	13	15.4
	14	13.2
	15	15.8
	16	21.9
	17	22.3
	18	5.6
	19	5.8

Data Collection

The participants were asked to answer all questions in the Awareness of I Malaysia Campaign Questionnaire (A1CQ), which took approximately 10 minutes to complete. The researcher collected the surveys. The responses to A1CQ were used to determine participants' awareness level of the 1 Malaysia campaign.

50 students were interviewed to find out about the views on the changes in their way of thinking and behaviour towards people of different races.

Data Analysis

Data collected was analysed using SPSS version 20.0. To meet the objectives of the study, reliability analysis (Cronbach alpha), descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, and Chi-Square analysis were performed.

RESULTS

From the study, it was found that majority of the secondary school students were aware of the 1Malaysia concept. Table 2 exhibits the percentages.

Table 2: Students' Awareness of the 1Malaysia Concept

Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	84.8
No	15.2
Total	100.0

When chi square test was used to determine whether there is a significant relationship between students' gender and awareness of 1Malaysia concept, it was found that there is significant relationship. Since the value is less than .05, then the statistics is considered to be significant, thus there is a significant relationship between gender and awareness of 1Malaysia concept (see Table 3).

Table 3: The Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.569	2	.005
Likelihood Ratio	10.759	2	.005
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.562	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	1700		

The respondents were asked on how well they understand the 1Malaysia concept. 67.7% of the respondents answered that they moderately understand the concept. A total of 16% of the respondents answered understand and strongly understand and a total of 16.3% answered that they do not and strongly do not understand (see Table 4 & Figure 1)

Table 4: Respondents’ Level of Understanding of 1Malaysia Concept

Statements	Percentage (%)
Strongly Understand	7.5
Understand	8.5
Moderately Understand	67.7
Do Not Understand	13.5
Strongly Do Not Understand	2.8
Total	100.0

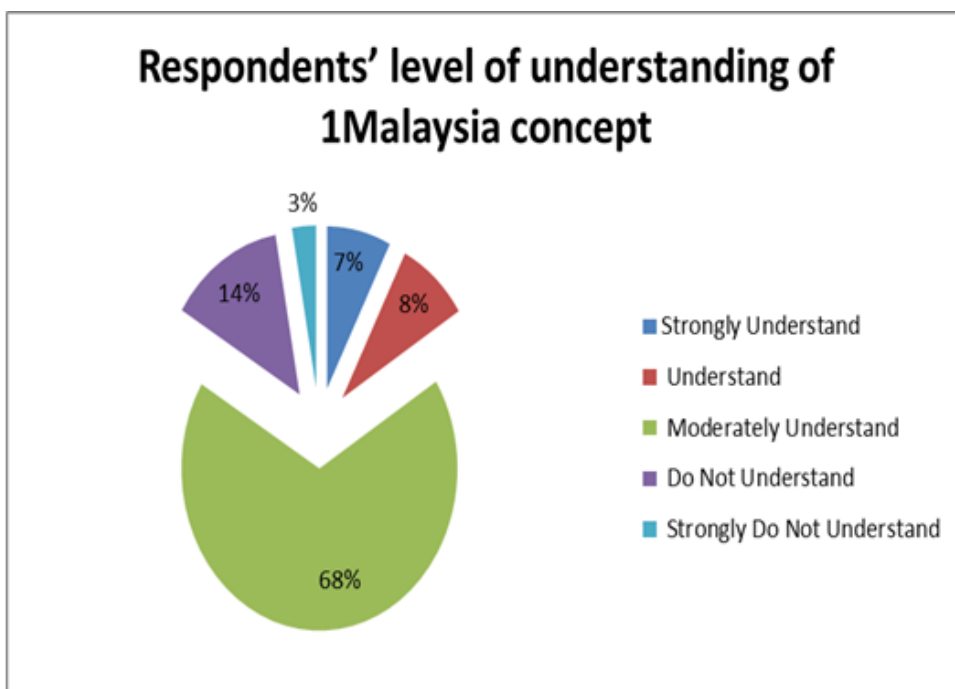


Figure 1: Respondents’ Level of Understanding of 1Malaysia Concept

The top three responses given by the respondents when asked on their interpretation of 1Malaysia concept were: promoting ethnic relations in Malaysia (45.2%), promoting sense of respect for other cultures (27.2%) and instilling ethnic solidarity (16.6%). This shows that majority of the respondents has a basic understanding the 1Malaysia concept is about racial harmony and unity (see Table 5).

Table 5: What 1Malaysia Concept is about?

Responses	Percentage (%)
Promoting ethnic relations in Malaysia	45.2
Promoting sense of respect for other cultures	27.2
Instilling ethnic solidarity	16.6
Inculcating moral values among ethnics	3.8
Spearheading ethnic progress	1.1
Instilling social justice	1.1
Inculcating innovation culture	4.6
Inspiring common goals	0.2
Inspiring one nation spirit	0.2

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the 1Malaysia concept awareness and students' change of thinking towards people of different races. There was a significant relationship where there is a positive correlation between the two variables, ($r = .146$, $n = 1700$, $p < .0005$). See Table 6.

Table 6: Relationship between Awareness of 1Malaysia Concept and Students' Change of Thinking

	B1	F1
Pearson Correlation	1	.146 **
B1 Sig. (2- tailed)		.000
N	1700	1700
Pearson Correlation	.146**	
F1 Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	1700	1700

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

When the respondents were asked whether there are any changes in the way you think towards people of different races after they learn about the 1 Malaysia concept, 45% per cent of them answered 'yes', 28% were neutral and 27% answered 'no'.

Table 7: Changes in the Way Respondents' Think towards People of Different Races

Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	45
Neutral	28
No	27

From the interviews, 20% of the students reported that their ways of thinking have changed after learning about the 1Malaysia concept, where they value unity/harmony more, 16% become more tolerant and 13% believe that they all equal (see table 8).

Table 8: Reasons for 'Yes' Answers:

Reasons	Percentage (%)
Value Unity / harmony more	20
Respect differences	16
We are all Malaysians / Equality	13
More comfortable with others	12
Mix around / learn from different cultures	11
Other reasons	28

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the relationship between the 1Malaysia concept awareness and students' change of behaviour towards people of different races. There was also a significant relationship where there is a positive correlation between the two variables, ($r = .170$, $n = 1700$, $p < .0005$). See table 9.

Table 9: Relationship between Awareness of 1Malaysia Concept and Students' Change of Behaviour

	B1	F3
Pearson Correlation	1	.170**
B1 Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N	1700	1700
Pearson Correlation	.170**	1
F3 Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	1700	1700

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The respondents were then asked whether there are any changes in the way they behave towards people from different races after learning about the 1Malaysia concept. Table 10 presents the respondents' answers.

Table 10: Changes in the Way Respondents' Behave Towards People of Different Races

Responses	Percentage (%)
Yes	36.5
Neutral	31.5
No	32.0

36.5% of the respondents said yes, 31.5% were neutral and 32% said no. During the interviews, students who answered 'no' and 'neutral' explained that their behaviour has not changed because they had always been tolerant and respectful to people of other races. Therefore, the 1Malaysia concept serves as reinforcement on their positive behaviour.

Table 11: Reasons for 'Yes' Answers:

Reasons	Percentage (%)
Respect differences	30
More positive behaviour towards others	20
Mix around / learn from different cultures	15

Students who answered yes, explained that they become more respectful of differences (30%), showed more positive behaviour towards others (20%) and 15% of the students mix around and learn from different cultures (see Table 11).

DISCUSSION

The findings show that majority of the students are aware of the 1Malaysia concept, indicating that the 1Malaysia campaign has been successful in transmitting its messages to secondary school students. Majority of the students interpreted 1Malaysia as an effort to promote ethnic relations, promote sense of respect for other cultures and instil ethnic solidarity. The students' interpretation are in line with YAB Dato' Sri Najib Tun Razak's aspiration which is to achieve a multicultural nation in which all races could accept one another and be united as a nation.

Many of the students reported that their way of thinking and behaviour have changed after learning about the 1Malaysia concept, where they become more tolerant, more accepting of differences, and more understanding of people of other cultures and races. The findings also showed a significant relationship where there is a positive correlation between the two variables (awareness of 1Malaysia concepts and students' change of thinking towards people of different races), $p < 0.001$. There was also a significant relationship where there is a positive correlation between the two variables (awareness of 1Malaysia concepts and students' change of behaviour towards people of different races), $p < 0.001$. This signifies that the awareness of the 1Malaysia concept has changed the way students think and behave towards people of different races.

Although the number of respondents who did not undergo any changes in thinking and behaviour is quite high, the reasons they gave for the lack of change showed that they have been practising multicultural tolerance even before the 1Malaysia concept was introduced.

The results of the study showed that the government has been making the young generation aware of the 1Malaysia concept. This awareness has led to some extent to the desired outcomes which are a more positive way of thinking and behavioural change after learning about the 1Malaysia concept.

It is recommended that concentrated efforts are made by the government, schools and society to conduct more activities that involve young people of all races in activities that emphasise unity at school level or community levels.

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