

INFLUENCING FACTORS FOR ETHNIC TOLERANCE AMONG MULTI-ETHNIC YOUTHS

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ABSTRACT: This study aims at investigating factors that are contributing to ethnic tolerance among multi-ethnic youths. Four factors identified in this study were socio-environment, socio-participation, knowledge and practices of patriotism. Ethnic tolerance in this study can be defined as ethnic relations and the unity among myriad ethnic groups who practice a variety of cultures, religions and lifestyles which are different from each other and they can live together without feeling prejudiced at each other. Ethnic tolerance is also referring to the concept of integration in the context of ethnic diversity in multi-ethnic society in Malaysia (Syamsul Amri, 2012). This survey involved 2600 multi-ethnic youth aged between 19 and 29 years in Malaysia which comprises of Peninsular area ($n = 1600$), Sabah and Sarawak ($n = 1000$). Peninsular Zone was divided into four zones namely north, south, east and west. A set of questionnaires was used for data collection. A pilot study was carried out prior to data collection and the Cronbach alpha results indicating that the items for all constructs are valid and able to be used (0.806 and 0.953). Results from this study revealed that all factors had a significant relationship towards racial tolerance. Detailed findings show that socio-participation is the largest contributor towards tolerance (34.4%), followed by knowledge, practices and socio-environment. Hence, all parties have to work together to organize activities which can enhance the friendship relations between different races. Integrity, moral, and empathy should be employed by every individual in learning and practicing tolerance. The importance of tolerance as a social value can not be understated in the life of harmonious society.

Keywords: socio-environment, socio-participation, knowledge, tolerance, patriotism, multi-ethnic youth

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1 INTRODUCTION

Social harmony and unity could be achieved via many ways but the most prominent factors are through education and social interactions. In a Malaysian context, national education system plays important roles for promoting unity and harmony. History is one of the academic subjects aims at promoting unity and social harmony. The 13th May 1969 tragedy was a tragic moment in Malaysia due to ethnic conflicts. The importance of unity became a lesson for the country leaders which leads to the introduction many programmes to unite them. Fostering unity and appreciation of patriotism values began ever since in elementary school. The Malaysian government then realised the importance of patriotism among nations. Ministry of Education Malaysia (2000) urged that all schools in Malaysia irrespective of school types to promote patriotism and ethnic tolerance via academic subjects as well as co-curricular activities. Academic subjects introduced were History subject, Moral Education, Geography, Islamic Studies and others. In addition, the government emphasizes the importance of intergration activities among school students via various academic and non-academic activities. However, despite being in education process for 13 years, the patriotism spirit among school leavers are loose and still at moderate level (Mohamed et. Al, 2011). This informs the importance of current study. On the other

hand, we also must aware that 'unity' is the key variable in determining the stability of the politic, social, as well as economic.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Social Support, Socio-environment and Patriotism

Social support is a vital factor for behavioural changes. The importance of the relationship between social support with patriotic behaviour was rarely investigated in sociological studies. Much past sociological studies in Malaysia focussed on describing inter-ethnic interaction using philosophical paradigm. Studies on social support and socio-environment are more likely to focus on educational outcomes rather than understanding the link with patriotism.

Zhang et al. (2015) conducted a study of reviewing the relationship between the quality of relationships in school, social support and loneliness in adolescence. Using a sample of 1674 adolescents who were randomly selected from secondary schools, the study found boys' loneliness is influenced by the characteristics of the opposite gender, student, teachers as well as sexual relations, while girls' loneliness is only affected by sexual relationship. In addition, social support mediated the relationship between sexual support and the relationship between students and teachers as

well as loneliness. In addition, the quality of sexual relation showed a strong association with the loneliness among both girls and boys. Finally, the quality of sexual relations also showed the strongest association with boys' loneliness as compared with the relationship with opposite sex as well as relationship between students and teachers. These findings are discussed to explain the possible mechanisms by which interpersonal relationships can influence loneliness. In future studies, the causal relationship and other factors which influence loneliness should be further reviewed.

Tian and Huebner (2015) conducted a longitudinal study for 6 weeks in order to study the model of intermediation medium that can explain the relationship between school support which are related to social (ie, teachers support and classmates support) and subjective optimum of well-being at school among adolescents (N = 1316). The analysis confirms the hypothesis model that the efficiency of academic competence partially mediated the relationship between social support related to school and subjective well-being in school. The results suggest that both social context factors (eg, school-related social support) and the factors within the system (eg, academic competence and social acceptance) is crucial for optimal subjective well-being of teenagers in school.

Socio-participation and Patriotism

There is a limitation of past studies focusing on the link between socio-participation and patriotic behaviour among multi-ethnic youth as many previous studies tended to focus on philosophical aspects of ethnic tolerance. Socio-participation has been found to be a great platform to promote patriotism and ethnic tolerance. Indeed, the focus on socio-participation and patriotism is essential as it would provide empirical evidence on the association of these two variables. Volunteerism teach individuals to put away their ego-centric nature aside (Mohd Mahzan, 2017). Patriotism in this study refers to a set of social behaviour that portray the feeling of loving to a country. This includes the use of national language in formal communication as well as proud to be a national citizen among multi-ethnic societies. Boekel et al. (2016) conducted a study on the effects of participation in school sports in academic and social functions. For many students, the organized sports by school plays an important role in students' academic and social experience. This study focuses on the effects of participation in school-organized sports towards academic achievement and students' perceptions towards support from family, teachers and community as well as school safety. Although the results of this correlation study can not be interpreted as causal, the involvement in sports among high school seniors can help improve the visible support from family, teachers and community as well as

school safety, which eventually will lead to better academic achieving in school.

Socio-support and Socio-participation

Although the concepts of socio-support and socio-participation are interchangeable used in previous studies, both concepts have some clear distinctions. Socio-support refers to how socio-environment members including peers, family members and virtual friends provide support and encouragement towards multi-ethnic to be involved in social activities. Socio-supports provided by them could be in various forms either directly or indirectly. On the other hand, socio-participation refers to the involvement of youth in social activities either community-based activities, hobby-based activities or educational based-activities. In this study, the focus of socio-participation is the youth involvement in various activities that may have a direct impact on patriotism. This includes the youth involvement in civic and political activities.

Knowledge and Patriotic Behaviour

Ong Puay Liu (2009) observations on the comments towards the Article 153 regarding the privileging of Malays and native people in Malaysia revealed that there is no threatening action which can harm the integrity among racial tolerances when discussing this issue which revealed the level of maturity among Malaysian in expressing their thoughts. According to Wong (2005), the lack of awareness among the youth on the challenges to be faced by them to conduct their responsibilities as citizens is the issue of fading nationalism values among the younger generation today. This is because they are the generation of post-independence and enjoy all the opportunities that have been available without the bitter toil nightmare that had to be experienced by previous generations in the struggle to achieve independence for the prosperity of today's generation. Saraswathy (2003) found that national media such as radios and television played important roles for knowledge distribution via drama and advertisement. Brown (2005) stated that the knowledge and introduction towards patriotism knowledge should be applied starting from the children so that they are sensitive to their origins. Patriotism is a manifestation of feelings, attitudes, values and world-view of the country or the state itself, the feelings such as love, respect or care aimed for object which in particular is countries. Country's idealism and patriotism can be interpreted in various ways. For example, sing the national anthem is one way to express the spirit of nationalism and patriotism. Another example is eager to protect and stand in order to protect the country from various types of threats, both internal and external. This is because, the threats can

diminish the patriotic spirit among the community itself (Mohamed et al., 2011).

Therefore, this study aims at identifying influencing factors for ethnic tolerance among multi-ethnic youth. Four factors identified to be examined were the factors of socio-environment, socio-participation, the knowledge on patriotism and patriotisme practice.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (regression) through the use of 7 Likert scale questionnaire as an instrument. The 7-Likert Scale was used to give respondents more choices in providing response to the questions. It also provides wide ranges of feedback by respondents. This kind of scale was commonly used in high level of academic survey. According to Rahman (2017), the use of 7-Likert Scale are useful as it helps respondent to choose the best response. The sample was based on the sampling schedule (Krejcie & Morgan 1970), involving a total of 2600 youth of different ethnicities aged between 19 and 29 years, comprising Peninsula (n = 1600) consisting of a zone north of Penang (n = 400), east zone in Pahang (n = 400), the central zone in Selangor (n = 400), and the southern zone of Johor (n = 400) Sabah (n = 590) and Sarawak (n = 410). This study included multi ethnic youth from Peninsula Malaysia because the majority of them are exposed to various social environments that may have implication toward their patriotic behaviour. Indeed, there is a different situation of social cultural among multi ethnic youth in Peninsula Malaysia and Borneo. This may due to social historical of their live that might affect their attitude towards other ethnics. The sampling method used in this study was stratified random sampling. This study contains 105 items consisting of four variables, namely socio-environment influence (21 items), socio-participation (19 items), ethnic tolerance (20), patriotism knowledge (22 items) and patriotic behaviour (23 items) as well as demographic which consisting of 10 items. Social environment influence assessed in this research comprising of the following elements: the influence of family environment; peer influence; school influence; community influence and social media influence. Meanwhile, the social participation items including the involvement in community based activities, neighbourhood activities, non-governmental activities, and family activities. The ethnic tolerance measured the extent to which the youths are able to compromise many things with other ethnic groups. The patriotism knowledge includes the youths comprehension towards the basic historical background of Malaya, Malaysian administrative, the country ideology and philosophy (Rukun Negara). Patriotic behaviour focused on overt behaviour portrayed by youth in various social actions including negotiation situations as well as daily conversation with others.

This questionnaire was developed by a number of studies related to the knowledge of patriotism and ethnic tolerance which have been adapted from various empirical evidences. The results of the pilot study for the whole construct is a high level of reliability which is between 0.806 and 0.953 and can be used in the actual study. For the aspect of gender, 1276 (49.1%) were men and 1324 were women (50.9%), while for the location, 1315 of the respondents came from urban areas and 1285 of the respondents live in rural areas. Based on family income, MYR2000 (45.7%), MYR2001 to MYR3000 (24.2%), MYR3001 to MYR4000 (17.9%) and MYR4001 (12.2%). There are several ethnic groups involved in the study namely Malay, Chinese, Indian, Sabah and Sarawak Malay, Sabah and Sarawak Chinese, and Sabah and Sarawak Bumiputera. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 22.0. The mean score interpretations: 1.00 – 2.20 (Low), 2.21 – 3.40 (Moderately Low), 3.41– 4.60 (Moderate), 4.61 – 5.80 (Moderately High), and 5.81 – 7.00 (High).

4. FINDINGS

The Level of Encouragement from Socio-environment, Socio-participation, Knowledge and Patriotic Behaviour Variables towards and Racial Tolerance.

Descriptive analysis involving mean and standard deviation was conducted to analyse the overall level of influences from socio-environment, socio-participation, patriotism knowledge and practices as well as tolerance. Figure 1 below shows the overall mean of each variable in the study.

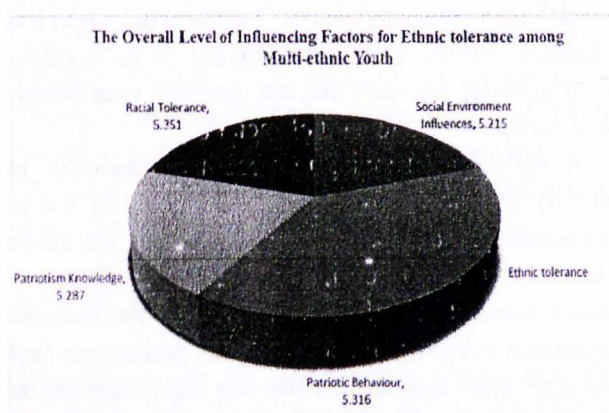


Figure 1 The Levels of Socio-environment Influence, Socio-participation, Patriotism Knowledge, Patriotism Practice and Ethnic Tolerance Variables

Figure 1 shows result of descriptive analysis of the levels of socio-environment influence, socio-participation, patriotism knowledge and patriotism practices. Overall, all the aspects are recorded to be

moderately high. In details, ethnic tolerance variables show the highest scores (mean = 5.351), while socio-participation shows the lowest (mean = 4.804). This shows that the level of socio-participation among youth is still at an unsatisfactory level. This result is in agreement with the study of Rusimah Sugianto et .al (2009) which stated that many of activities among youth whether Malays, Chinese and Indians was only involve their own ethnicity. This means that the influence of social environments toward ethnic tolerance is still unsatisfactory. Supposedly, the multi ethnic society in Malaysia should have strong spirit to encouraged ethnic tolerance as it essential for promoting harmonious society.

This finding is supported by Konstantinova (2016) which revealed that they are more comfortable because of their similar culture, language and requirements in carrying out activities. This study is also consistent with studies by Ghazali Shafie (2001) who found that residential segregation by race led to a lack of race relations in the community. This problem also occurs in the artistic and cultural aspects are where there are lack of involvement from other ethnicities in cultural activities despite various attempts have been made by the government through various agencies.

How Socio-environment, Socio-participation, Patriotism Knowledge and Patriotism Practice Promote Ethnic Tolerance?

Before discussing details, it is needed to clarify the distinctions between the variable of "Knowledge and Patriotism Practice " and the variables of "Socio-participation and Patriotsm". The variable of "Knowledge and Patriotism Practice" has two main aspects that are (1) the understanding and comprehension of patriotism, (2) and the patriotic behaviour of multi-ethnic youth. The variables of "Socio-participation and Patriotsm" refers to the multi-ethnic youth involvement in social activities that may promote their patriotism values.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the contribution of variables namely socio-environment influence, socio-participation, patriotism knowledge and patriotic behaviour towards ethnic tolerance among Malaysian youths. Before the multiple regression analysis is carried out, the researchers first ensuring and verifying whether the score distribution of questionnaires is noMYRal and linear or otherwise. This is done by means of the residual scatter plot and normal regression plot that can be obtained from the subprogram 'Linear Regression: Plots' contained in SPSS. Based on the plot of the distribution, the distribution of scores available study questionnaire is normal and linear.

In addition, prior to that, the researchers also determine the correlation between the independent varia-

bles with independent variables to determine whether there is multicollinearity. It was found that there is no independent variable in this study that have multicollinearity. Therefore, researchers using stepwise multiple regression analysis as recommended by Hair *et al.* (1995).

Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis, involving four independent variables on the dependent variables, which is the tolerace practices revealed that there are four independent variables which had significant correlations contribution (p <0.05) towards the variance.

Table 1 Analysis of Variance

Analysis of Variances	Sum of Squares	dF	Mean Square	F Value	Sig. Value
Regression	989.93	4	247.48	430.92	0.00 ^a
Error	916.02	1595	0.57		
Total	1905.95	1599			

Analysis of variance found $F(4,159) = 247.483$ and a significant level of $p = .00$ ($p < .05$).

Source

Table 2 The Contribution of Socio-environment Influences, Socio-participation, Patriotism Knowledge and Patriotic behaviour Towards Ethnic Tolerance

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Stand arized Coefficients	T	Sig.	R2	Con-tribution
	B	Std Error	Beta				
Socio-participation	0.258	0.019	0.293	13.72	0.05	0.34	34.4%
Patriotism Knowledge	0.332	0.25	0.280	13.21	.00	0.46	11.8%
Patriotism Practice	0.264	0.26	0.215	10.05	.00	0.50	4.3%
Socio-environment Influences	0.23	0.33	0.14	7.06	.000	0.52	1.5%
Constant	-0.29	0.15		-1.95	0.05		

Multiple regression analysis (*stepwise*) shows that independent variables of patriotism knowledge, socio-participation and socio-environment influence is a predictor that have correlation and contributions (51.90%) that are significant (p <0.05) towards patriotic behaviours.

The main and highest predictor of tolerance and among Malaysian youth is socio-participation ($\beta = 0.293$, $t = 13,725$ and $p = 0.051$) which contributes towards 34.40 per cent. This shows that when socio-

participation score increased by one unit, the practice of tolerance will be increased by 0.293 units. This finding clearly shows that socio-participation is a key factor which contributed towards 34.40 percent to the practice of tolerance among Malaysian youths. The second most important predictor of which accounted for 11.8 per cent towards the practice of tolerance among youth is the patriotic knowledge ($\beta = 0.280$, $t = 13,211$ and $p = 0.000$). This shows when patriotism knowledge score increased by one unit, the practice of tolerance, increased by 0.280 units. This indicates that the knowledge of patriotism among the youth is also an important factor contributing to the practice of their patriotism.

The third most important predictors which accounted for 30.4 per cent against the practice of patriotism among youth is the patriotic behaviour ($\beta = 0.215$, $t = 10,052$ and $p = 0.000$). This shows that the patriotic behaviour among youth is also an imperative factor contributing to the tolerance practice. The fourth most important predictors accounted for 1.50 percent towards the practice of patriotism among youth is socio-environment influence ($\beta = 0.144$, $t = 7,057$ and $p = 0.000$). This shows that a socio-environment influence among youth is also an important factor contributing to the practice of their tolerance.

It shows that the activities related to patriotism also identified as an important factor that contribute to racial tolerance. Thus continuous efforts must be taken as it can change the tolerance behavior especially among youths of various ethnic groups in Malaysia. This finding supports the study conducted by Fatimah Daud (2004) which have seen the extent to which young people socialize and interact in a community college and also affects the way their relationship and interaction with the outside community structure that is more complex. The results of this research program involving joint activities and exchange of cultural programs has increased the level of language proficiency, inter-religious understanding and enhance mutual understanding and solidarity between the youth of different ethnic groups. Therefore, involvement in social activities can promote tolerance between races. Jamil Wong et al. (2004) also showed the strengthening of inter-ethnic relations among the youth through sports and cultural activities that have been organized. However, there are still negative perceptions and prejudices in their minds as a result of the values instilled from home.

5. SUGGESTION AND STUDY IMPLICATIONS

The study shows that socio-participation in activities involving youth of different ethnicities have not reached a satisfactory level. The results also showed that the activity of the program which involve various

ethnic groups is a major contributor towards racial tolerance. Therefore, the Ministry of Youth and the National Unity and Integration Department should conduct a joint program regardless of short-term planning or even long term. Other than that, the programs must involve ethnic diversity held at organised either in the city or rural areas because it can foster good relations among the youths. They will learn directly about other ethnic cultures. This is because at the school, they are still being separated in race-based schools which give less opportunity to engage in activities, events or programs.

The patriotism knowledge and practices has not reached a satisfactory level and there is a significant gap among the youth from various aspects related to patriotism and ethnic tolerance in Malaysia where Malay youth was proven to have higher patriotism and tolerance as compared to the Chinese and Indian. This happens because many organizations are only attended by the Malay community. Therefore, programs related to patriotism should be extended to Chinese and Indians communities as happened to the Malay community nowadays. It may also be caused by less social interaction because the Chinese youth tend to focus solely on economic field. Therefore, a college or youth training centers related to patriotism should be held at the national level. The program should be coordinated with the requirement of today's youth by using relevant approaches and can be implemented either in the form of short-term or long-term.

Apart from that, the open house program in the community for festivals in Malaysia have to be expanded not only at the national level, but also at the district, state and local communities because it is proven in providing the opportunity for different ethnicities to interact. However, it was revealed that the youth participation in activities through non-formal education is less efficient in promoting ethnic tolerance as compared to the effect of formal schooling in shaping behavior towards ethnic relations among the youth. Therefore, schools must play a more structured role by providing a variety of activities and curriculum which capable of improving the environment, especially to encourage patriotism behavior and racial tolerance.

6. CONCLUSION

Tolerance is the key to maintain harmonious and peaceful social relationships, with respect of the differences among people, culture, lifestyle and religion. Tolerance is a good character as well as behaviour that should be studied. Tolerance practices is not a forced acceptance but the willingness to compromise in order to achieve a goal. In addition, the concept of inter-ethnic relations should be corrected so that every citizen has the awareness and a sense of responsibility for maintaining the country's security by strengthening its unity. All of this have to be the core in ensuring a

smooth development process in line with the aspiration of making Malaysia as a unique model country by uniting diversity and build a nation which is united regardless of the differences in race, religion, culture and language.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This paper was based on the empirical research funded by the Malaysian Council of Former Elected Representatives (MUBARAK) and the Ministry of Finance Malaysia.

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