

# Students' Perceptions about Perspectives and Attitudes in Inter-Ethnic Relations at The University of Malaysia

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## Abstract

This study refers to students' perspectives on perspectives and attitudes in relation to ethnicity in Malaysia. There are several reasons why this research was conducted, including to answer the readiness of students in multicultural life. This study aims to determine the awareness, views, and attitudes in multicultural life on campus from various ethnic backgrounds of students. This research is descriptive qualitative research with the strategy of collecting the main data through research on the object of research. The number of samples is 25 respondents which aims as a sampling procedure for the sample data used. The process of collecting data in this analysis is by collecting questionnaires. Data collection was carried out by distributing dissemination via Google Form to participants to determine public perceptions of views and attitudes in multicultural life on campus. In analyzing the data, the researcher used a descriptive qualitative approach. It is used to determine student perceptions in analyzing data comprehensively. The results showed that 60% of students were very happy to associate with other ethnicities, 32% did not agree with the equality of social and cultural rights. 48% agree that inter-ethnic encounters reduce inter-ethnic relations. 48% is neutral on the granting of political and economic rights to other ethnic groups.

## Keywords

Students' Perceptions, Malaysia Student, Riding Behaviour, attitudes in relation to ethnicity

## 1. Introduction

Malaysia is a culturally diverse country because Malaysian society is a heterogeneous society. This is manifested by the diversity of tribes, religions, and cultures. Not only in terms of cultural differences in socio-economic life there is inequality. Various factors are triggers such as ethnicity, skin color, religion, social class and efforts to equal opportunity in the fields of work, education (Sukemi, 2018). In Malaysia, income and wealth inequality between ethnic groups has been an open issue and has been re-recognized since the British colonial era. This can be seen through the embodiment of traditional elements in the social contract that gives rights and privileges to Malaysia/Bumiputra (Sukemi, 2018). The history of past ethnic tensions among Malaysians is a lesson for all Malaysians. However, in social life activities up to now, it seems that there is still discrimination against other people's ethnicity and culture. Then whether this is also felt and done by students.

The attitude of Malaysian students towards other ethnicities is quite good, they strongly support a tolerant attitude as depicted in the film *Upin Ipin* which features all ethnicities (Syam et al., 2019). It is different in politics for some students who do not agree with equal political rights. In the case of Malaysia, economic and political bargaining power is obtained through the rights that have been constitutionally granted to the Malay nation group. This right is regulated in their Constitution in Article 153, which regulates quotas in obtaining public facilities and employment opportunities, by giving more privileges to the Malay nation group (Dharma, 2017). This is of course contrary to the convention on human rights, that humans have the same human rights (Masrukhin, n.d.).

The object of this research is UiTM students. UiTM University is a university that was originally intended to fulfill social responsibilities to the Bumiputera that they can prove their potential in the field of professional education. UiTM is now able to become the university of choice for bright Bumiputera students based on the broad and robust scope of academic programs offered by various Faculties and University Academic Centers (UiTM Research Management Institute [RMI], 2013). As Malaysian citizens, we all hope for inter-ethnic unity and do not expect division. Maybe the worry felt by the Malaysian people is even more felt when hoaxes and hate speech are spread that attack each other on social media.

Given the importance of this research to reveal student activities on the use of social media among UiTM students. There have been many studies related to social media, but this research is expected to increase students' views regarding the use of social media. The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of students' multicultural

behavior on social media. This research is expected to evaluate the social media activities that are mostly done by students. The results of this study are also expected to be used as a basis for further research related to the effect of using social media activities in strengthening the unity of Malaysian society.

## 2. Methods

Untuk mendapatkan data primer, this study uses two assessment methods, namely direct interviews with sources and distributing questionnaires. The direct interview aims to find out the activities of using social media carried out by students. The questionnaire is intended to find out responses about multiculturalism on social media(Saifuddin, 1997).

### 2.1. Participant

Untuk mendapatkan data kami gunakan partisipan dan nara sumber. Nara sumber terdiri dari orang, adapun Participants in this study were students of UiTM Malaysia, one of the prides of the Indigenous universities. The number of resource persons and participants in this study were 25 respondents consisting of 19 male and female students, 1 lecturer, and 5 employees with an age range of 18-31 years.

### 2.2. Interviews

Researchers conducted interviews with resource persons, namely Prof. Norzaidi and Syarmilla Student of UiTM. All interview activities were recorded by the researcher by preparing questions related to the main research problem in advance. The questions contained, Students' Perceptions about Perspectives and Attitudes in Inter-Ethnic Relations at The University of Malaysia.

### 2.3. Distributing questionnaire

To analyze the research, researchers have prepared questions that include 3 elements: first, tentang persaan mereka bergaul dengan orang yang berbeda latarbelakang. Second, apakah mereka merasa budaya orang lain itu arogan. Third, Student communication model for other ethnic and non-Muslim cultures and their impact. As well as narrative questions about multicultural life and the impact of social media on inter-ethnic relations.

## 3. Results and Discussions

The results of distributing questionnaire about Happy to hang out with anyone regardless of ethnicity and religion show that 92% of respondents agree and 8% of respondents disagree. Ini menunjukkan mereka senang bergaul dengan siapa saja tanpa melihat latar belakang status sosial. Adapun yang tidak senang bergaul dengan orang yang memiliki latar belakang yang berbeda relatif kecil.

Table 1. You feel that ethnic cultures and other cultures are arrogant

Activity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	2	8
Strong disagree	7	28
Neutral	9	36
Disagree	7	28

Table 1. shows the impression that ethnic and other cultures are arrogant. The data shows that 28% of students disagree, 36% of students are neutral, 28% disagree if other people's cultures are arrogant, and 8% feel other people's cultures are arrogant. Although 48 they feel that other people's cultures are not arrogant, if they are seen as neutral and agree, the score is quite large, namely 11 respondents, almost 50%. This shows that there is a dislike factor for other ethnicities. The reason that may be in accordance with the facts is the existence of historical and discriminatory relations in socio-political relations. This may often cause tension in inter-ethnic relations. This fact is corroborated by the researcher's findings that among the barriers to harmonization of relations are political, socioeconomic, and different mindsets between urban and rural communities, you cannot speak with being provoked.

Regarding Students disagree to the equality of social and cultural rights between ethnicities, table 2 shows the responses that 32% agree, 24% respond neutrally, and 20% disagree and 24 strongly disagree with penyamaan hak sosial dan budaya dengan etnik lain. Alasan yang mungkin terjadi warga bumiputra tidak menginginkan etnik lain menjadi penguasa negeri malaysia. Yang menginginkan persamaan hanya 8 responden dan yang bersikap netral masalah tersebut sejumlah 6 responden.

Table 2. Students Disagree to the equality of social and cultural rights between ethnicities.

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
agree	8	32
Neutral	6	24
Disagree	5	20
Strong Disagree	6	24

Frequency of response to students disagree to the equality of social and cultural rights between ethnicities. Table 3. Further analysis shows response to 16% Students Disagree and 4% strongly disagree to the equality of social and cultural, 32% strongly agree on equality of political economy status and 48% of respondents neutral to the equality of social and cultural. The neutral percentage is quite large related to the equalization of economic and political rights among Malays and other ethnicities. Is this what makes the issue of tension in Malaysia. However, if you pay attention to the relationship between religions, it is quite good in Malaysia. Indeed, the fact that makes respondents nervous is that issues of tolerance and multiculturalism are brought down into the political realm or as a weapon to bring down political opponents with issues of tolerance and inter-ethnic relations. The interesting finding is that there were some respondents from Bumiputra students who wanted peace and tranquility in inter-ethnic relations, and this was supported by the Malaysian government and the kingdom. However, they have concerns about the issue of inter-ethnic tensions, even though they are relatively small.

Table 3. Granting equal status in the socio-political economy between ethnicities and religions

Response to Granting equal status in the socio-political economy		
Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	8	32
Neutral	12	48
Disagree	4	16
Strong Disagree	1	4

#### 4. Conclusion

The conclusion of the research is that UiTM students have a very positive view for a better and more developed condition of Malaysia. They want peace, even from 25 respondents, 32% want equal economic and political rights in the life of the nation. However, almost half or 48% do not want the equation. From a social perspective, they are also positive towards other groups and only a few are a priori.

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