

## Racial Integration of Multi-Ethnic Students in Malaysia Higher Institutions

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### Abstract

This is a conceptual paper to study the relationship between racial integration and democracy outcomes of multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions. Malaysia is created of several ethnic groups, every of that has its own culture and heritage such as language, beliefs, customs and more. As such, Malaysians are aware of this and therefore national unity must be nurtured so that the progress of the nation can be built without any hindrance and one of them is through education. However, Malaysian citizens having a distinctly different native language and a distinctive system of early childhood education or better known at the primary school level has left students isolated and out of touch with each other, leading to very limited interactions between different ethnic students and also another issue of concerned is regarding democracy outcomes of these students. Therefore, the general aim of the current study is to identify the racial integration with democracy outcomes among multi-ethnic students in the Institutions of Higher Learning and to examine the mediating effect of social interaction factor between those students. The research will be conducted using quantitative method and going to be supported by open-ended questions as to help the researcher to generate the best research findings. A total of 400 structured questionnaires were distributed through a convenience sampling technique. All the data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS latest version) program through descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson Product Coefficient (r) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) were applied to answer research questions of this study

**Keywords:** Racial Integration, Democracy Outcomes, Social Interactions, Multi-Ethnic, Higher Institutions

### Introduction

Malaysia is recognized as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural democratic country. The main ethnic groups in Malaysia are Malays, Chinese and Indians and diverse groups of indigenous people such as Iban, Bidayuh, Kadazan, Bajau, Melanau and others where language, religion,

history, way of life and so on are different from one another (Kanamaru, 2014). To date, the population of Malaysia is 32.6 million (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019), with the Malays are the largest ethnic group (69.3%). Based on law, all ethnic Malays are Muslim, and they along with the natives of Sabah, Sarawak and aboriginal groups from peninsular Malaysia, officially categorized as Bumiputera or landowners and indirectly granted various rights and specialty or privileges (Mustapha, Azman, Karim, Ahmad, & Lubis, 2009). The Chinese are the second largest ethnic group (22.8%) is Buddhists who came through the British to Malaya voluntarily or coercion in the 20th century, played an important role in business since before even going on up until today. The Indians are Hindu and came from South India also brought by the British to Malaya to work as estate workers have formed the third largest ethnic group (6.9%). then, other ethnic groups are also common in Malaysia categorized as "other" (1%).

The situation of Malaysians from different ethnicities who have different languages, religions and cultures but who can live together in harmony and peace is acknowledged as something that is not easy to achieve. As such, Malaysians are well aware of the fact that unity among the people is very important, so it must be maintained and nurtured for the sake of mutual success and one of them is through education or specifically multicultural education. Even efforts to promote unity through education has stepped up to the tertiary level, and not confined to the school alone is a clear sign that the process of multiculturalism in the education system in Malaysia has evolved into a new phase (Ibrahim, Muslim & Buang, 2011; Khatatneh & Teh, 2018; Ugwu & Udeh, 2018)

In conjunction with that, The Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia (MOHE) has introduced and obligated Ethnic Relations as core subject at all Malaysian universities. These subjects are taught with the help of modules built on ethnic relations in Malaysia to meet the needs of various ethnic in this country.

### **Problem Statement**

Malaysia is made up of people of various races in which the three largest ethnic groups are the Malays, Chinese and Indians. Then, the three ethnic groups mentioned, had different native languages and school systems. For example, majority Malay students attending national schools that use the Malay language as a spoken language, likewise Chinese and Indian students who prefer to learn in national (type) schools that use their mother tongue in daily speech. Indirectly, this has led to the isolation of students based on their native language and the worst is yet to have an impact on a very limited interaction with each other since the early stages of schooling or known as primary school. Formerly, the arrival of the Chinese to Malaya in the 19th century, apart from seeking for fortunes also not forget the responsibility to provide education to their children in order to ensure that the Chinese language and culture continue to blossom. Due to that fact, the establishment of the Chinese vernacular school is a necessity for them. However, such an educational system will create a sense of prejudice among students towards other ethnicities as expressed by (Zainal & Salleh, 2010), with this feeling of prejudice students will face difficulties in interacting with other ethnic groups especially when they speak their native language.

Undeniably, prejudice and stereotyping is a consequence resulting from the vernacular education system since the early stages of schooling where since primary school students were separated and denied the right to socialize with each other. That totally means for 6 years of

schooling they have not been given the opportunity to mix and get acquainted with peers of different ethnic groups. Thereafter, upon entering high school they are required to mix or come under the same education system. Unfortunately, at this point some of these students experience culture shock and lead to violent behavior such as fighting gangs, rude attitude towards teachers and students who come from different ethnic background (Zainal & Mohamad Salleh, 2009). From there, it clearly shows the vernacular schools have created gaps and boundaries between students since the beginning of their schooling. This is obviously a negative effect of the vernacular school where we expect the gap between students of different ethnicities to be bridged through the education system itself (Zainal, Abu & Mohamad, 2010).

Furthermore, previous studies had mentioned about the ethnic relations in Malaysia at this point only at a satisfactory level (Mutang, Seok, Madlan, Lastar, Baharuddin & Joseph, 2014). Studies on youth students are at a cautious level regarding inter-ethnic relations. Youth according to this study are still students, so they should be more aware of the importance of ethnic relations in Malaysia (Mutang et al., 2014). The education system in Malaysia emphasizes on the issue of unity among ethnic diversity. After examining previous studies, students who represent youth showed a little prejudice toward other ethnic groups. When an ethnic group has a negative view of another ethnic group, it is called ethnic prejudice. In a survey conducted, at least 80% of respondents agreed that they still had feelings of prejudice against other ethnic groups. Although on the outside the relationship between different ethnic students is good, they are actually difficult to do social activities like eating together, studying as a group and most importantly they are not ready to share a room or house with peers from different ethnic groups (Mutang, 2014). Reports from studies conducted by Helen (2012) showed serious ethnic polarization among Malaysian students. For example, a study from Fatimah showed that respondents refused to share hostel rooms with students of different ethnicities. Meanwhile, from Helen's observation it is clear that ethnic polarization has occurred in the country since the establishment of Malaysia's oldest university, the University of Malaya.

According to the theory underlying the study, students who have a lot of experienced with the various ethnic students while at the university will be highly motivated and competitive among large groups in the outside world (Hamdan, Ghafar, & Ghani, 2010). In order to be competitive, students need to understand and refine the different perspectives as individuals of different ethnicities communicate, appreciate unity and see diversity as an opportunity for positive change and also embrace the cultural differences that exist in multicultural societies. Even though there was a study conducted in portraying the advantages of being knowledgeable in diverse fields, it is admittedly that multicultural education is a new area of educational research, thus it should be strengthened in many ways (Denson, Pedersen, Friese, Hahm, & Roberts, 2011).

Indeed, the future of a country depends on leaders having a broad exposure to dynamic ideas and that ideas do come from friendship of diverse background and cultures (Gurin et al., 2002). The success of the country to be independent and competitive in terms of the economy is dependent on the social harmony and political stability where it can only be achieved through consolidation and integration among the people (Aziz, Salleh & Ribu, 2010). Thus, this is the time to change. After 13<sup>th</sup> general election which took place on May 9, 2018 Malaysia has been led by the new government, better known as the new Malaysia. Therefore, also have to change citizen's

thinking by always united and love one another regardless of race and religion. Prejudice must be erased and disposed within themselves. After all it's a goal of Malaysian education and schooling practice to enhance racial integration among these various ethnic groups beyond mere physical integration, and intends to eliminate social prejudices and discrimination (Yusof, 2006). The most important things are racial diversity creates, through social ties, richer and more complex social and learning environments. Furthermore, cross-race ties enable students to use group identities as resources for intercultural understanding and collaboration (Gurin & Nagda, 2006).

After review many previous studies emphasized the issue of student retention and their achievement, however little attention was paid to the students' experiences and their perceptions of the concept of integration (Chang, 2005). Not only that but there have also been some previous studies focusing on the advantages or disadvantages of the multi-racial curriculum, racial prejudice and the unification of ethnic diversity (Chang, 2005); students' attitudes toward campus that have a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds; critical thinking skills (Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak, & Terenzini, 2004); cognitive and affective development (Astin, 1993a) but lack attention and discussion given to area of racial integration or racial/ethnic diversity towards democracy outcomes. Despite the substantive literature suggesting that students' experiences with diversity impact positively on their learning and educational outcomes, little is known about the effect of race-related diversity or their democracy outcomes on undergraduates in Malaysian universities (Tamam, 2012). Zainal et al., (2010) suggested a study needs to be done to identify the situation of university students in Malaysia and whether they show a negative attitude towards ethnic diversity, it is important because higher education is one of the ways to strengthen ethnic relations in the country. (Ibrahim, Muslim, & Buang, 2011).

Thus in order to address this knowledge gap, a comprehensive research is needed. This study aims to identify the relationship between racial integration among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions with democracy outcomes and also to examine their viewpoints on "integration" concepts itself. Elements included in democracy outcomes such as perspective-taking, citizenship engagement, racial/cultural understanding and judgment of the compatibility among different groups in a democracy. In short, the researcher will bridge the gap between the ideal levels of racial integration among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia with the existing one and offers solutions towards bridging the gap as the relationships of these variables will give a huge impact on the country harmony, national security and further progress as well.

### **Research Objectives**

This study aims to figure out the level of racial integration among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions and its relationship with democracy outcomes. At the same time this study also intends to identify either social interaction is the crucial factor and can be regards as mediator in ensuring positive integration between them. The main objectives of this study are:

1. To identify level of racial integration among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions.
2. To examine the students' views and feedback towards racial integration process from inside and outside the classroom.

3. To determine level of democracy outcomes by multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions.
4. To identify level of social interactions between multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions.
5. To examine the relationship of racial integration with democracy outcomes among undergraduate students in Malaysia higher institutions.
6. To examine the role of social interaction as mediator on the relationship between racial integration and democracy outcomes among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions.

### **Significance of Study**

#### **Theoretical Significance**

As Malaysia is preparing to move towards a developed nation starting by year 2020, with the hope that youth regardless of race and religion at the forefront, more researches needed pertaining to racial integration among multi-ethnic students as to review the success or failure of many programs conducted in education industry. To identify the successes or failure of the programs and activities conducted, there is a need to study about relationship between multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions. Besides, the aims of all the initiatives were to develop and equip the youth to be competent, especially in term of unity or integration and also to ensure social interaction among them at excellent level. Hence, in response to such a need, this study is aiming to identify the relationship between racial integration with democracy outcomes practiced by multi-ethnic students in institution of higher learning in Malaysia. Such result would be good indication and important data for the nation on the effectiveness of all the initiatives combined.

Furthermore, the results of this study can contribute to the new dimension and hence the existing body of knowledge is further developed by providing valuable results about multi-ethnic learning styles at higher education institutions. From there, teaching providers may plan their learning style, approach, method and technique of teaching complementing multi-ethnic students in the class room. The information also will assist interested academicians and future researchers in understanding these multi-ethnic students and conducting further and extensive studies. Not only that, there are many advantages in terms of democracy outcomes. The young generations who are the pillars of the country's progress are urgently concerned about the unity of racial diversity. This is because the success and progress of a nation depends on the harmony among residents. How a country can make progress, if internal upheavals often occur. The country cannot focus on the progress of the country such as finding investors, promoting the beauty and uniqueness of the country and so on since it is busy thinking about the solution to the problems in the cause by the feud between multiracial citizens. The effect of turbulence that occurs in the foreign country such as Middle East countries should serve as a lesson by our country so that we do not receive a similar fate.

Same things applied to social interaction between multi-ethnic. A positive relationship between individuals from different ethnic groups led to the reduction in prejudice, enhance the sense of common identity and closeness among individuals (Ahmad, Aziz, Sulaiman, Mutalib & Rose, 2018). All negative views on ethnics can be rectified after recognizing them personally by



means of friendship like Malay proverb says "do not know then do not love". Plenty advantages will be gained by the students when they associate themselves with peers who came totally from different backgrounds and cultures. Students who always get along, communicate being close friends of different race, they can see the world from the other side. They are not only confined within the narrow box but thought they would be more mature and always think outside the box. Absolutely, this kind of thinking is needed by our country from the younger generation in order to stand out in the eyes of the world. The responsibility of the younger generation is too big for the nation, religion, race and family, therefore they need to have critical and innovative thinking skills.

With respect to that, diversity experiences had an impact on active thinking and intellectual engagement and on the orientations and sentiments that students will need to become leaders in a diverse democracy. As one of the fundamental theories used in this study had stated active thinking will develop new ideas and ways of processing information. Evidently, when conscious modes of thought are encouraged through complex social structures, individuals interact with unfamiliar people, encounter people who hold different expectation and beliefs and begin to think and behave in new ways. As a result, the disequilibrium created through uncomfortable, new, or uncertain social environment may generate students' intellectual engagement and cognitive growth (Langer, 1978).

### **Practical Significance**

In term of practical aspect, this study aimed to contribute to multi-ethnic players, NGOs, schools and government agencies in planning and taking suitable actions for positive multi-ethnic development. We are approaching the year 2020, but did all the vision and mission especially on racial unity have been achieved? As indicated in the nine challenges of vision 2020, the first among the challenge is to establish a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony with full and fair partnership, made up of "Bangsa Malaysia" with political loyalty and dedication to the nation (Mahathir, 1991).

As Malaysia has a multi-ethnic people, two important things are emphasized by the head of state is the unity and integration of the people. Thus, former 6th Malaysian Prime Minister which is Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has introduced the concept of "1 Malaysia" as the basis for the nation's development and progress during his reign. The main mission of the concept is to unite Malaysians who are, ironically, culturally and religiously different (Ramli & Jusoh, 2011). Then, the former prime minister in full force has been promoting multiracial society living in harmony and united regardless of culture and language differences. Therefore, it is hoped that the results of this study will provide accurate data to answer the question of how universities in Malaysia can be the catalyst for unity and closeness among students of various races and how they respond to ethnic diversity in the country.

Henceforth, this study targets teenagers or youth among university students as their attitude and thinking will determine the direction of the country in the future. According to Bastedo, Batjargal, Eufrazio & Yaraslav (2009), one of the primary functions of higher education institutions is to ensure that graduates are ready to live, work and become part of a diverse and global society. The young generation in a country is a valuable asset, and the university plays a

key role in providing educated teens an effective and capable citizen abroad (Dusi, Steinbach & Messetti, 2012). The results of this study can be used to evaluate interactions among students of various races for improvement purposes as needed later.

After all, hopefully the potential findings of this study could have implications for public policy makers with regard to patriotism, tolerance, and integration because the results from previous researches showed that the level of these three aspects is still at an unsatisfactory level. A program designer or learning provider may use the information gained from this study in their work to plan on better learning programs especially for three largest ethnic groups which are Malays, Chinese and Indian students in higher learning institutions in Malaysia. The result of the study will help them to develop programs that would be able to foster and facilitate better learning outcomes among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia.

Moreover, with the presence of more students of all races and cultures in institutions of higher learning, it is an important discovery point in shaping the nation's vision and mission. To enhance the education and experience of the students, initiatives such as introducing diversity courses and classrooms as well as opportunities for interaction with multicultural students within the university environment. Therefore, the results of this study not only support curriculum initiatives that introduce diversity within the university courses, but also suggest specific attention to the experiences gained by multiracial students in and outside the classroom. The theory and results of the study suggest that students who interact with different ethnic groups will be benefited, so students who have the opportunity to associate with peers from different ethnic groups should take advantage of this situation as such opportunities are not provided in the outside community. Helping faculty revitalize pedagogy in which students of different backgrounds in one classroom can activate thinking, intellectual engagement and democratic attitude. In addition, higher education institutions should provide a supportive environment in which disequilibrium and experimentation can occur by increasing interaction among diverse peers and help faculty and students manage conflict when individuals share different points of views. In short, it is the wish of the researcher that this study will make modest contribution in understanding racial diversity among multi-ethnic citizen in Malaysia and lastly to achieve the desired democracy outcomes among them.

### **Theoretical Framework**

As been explained in the previous paragraph, this study consists of three core variables which are racial integration, democracy outcomes and social interactions. Each of the variables has its own fundamental theory in order to deeply explain the relationship with each other. Allport's contact theory (1954) used for racial integration, Theory of Astin's Input Output Framework (I-E-O Model), (1991) used for democracy outcomes and Langer's concept of conscious mode of thought (1978) used for social interactions. Furthermore, as this study is intended to study multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions, then Schlossberg's Theory of Transition, (1984) is used to explain the transition or sequence of their relationship.

Contact theory by Allport (1954), is emphasizing to reduce multi-ethnic conflict by bringing together individuals from different background and cultures. It is undeniable that conflicts between ethnic groups occur due to the lack of knowledge of other ethnic groups and also the lack of opportunity for such info. Therefore, according to the contact hypothesis from

the previous study, one of the effective ways to reduce ethnic conflict is to encourage continuous interaction among individuals of various races as it will lead to positive and tolerant attitudes among the people itself. While, theory of Input Output Framework (I-E-O Model), by Astin's (1991) is a method used by educators to understand and underpin the learning process to ensure positive change for students. This study will measure the democracy outcomes produced by the multi-ethnic students in the campus such as perspective taking, citizenship engagement, racial/cultural understanding and also judgment of the compatibility among different groups in a democracy.

While, inputs "refers to those personal qualities the student brings initially to the education program (including the student's initial level of developed talent at the time of entry)," (Astin, 1993). Environment "refers to the student's actual experiences during the educational program" (Astin, 1993). What is meant by "environment" is anything that results from the program being run that has had a direct or indirect effect on the students, and thus the results have been used as benchmarks or measures in the study.

Then, theory known as concept of conscious mode of thought by Langer's (1978) is used to explain the mediator variable which is social interaction. Conscious modes of thought are encouraged through complex social structures, individuals interact with unfamiliar people, encounter people who hold different expectation and beliefs and begin to think and behave in new ways. Thus, the benefits of conscious modes of thought and complex social structures are enhanced when racial/ethnic diversity exists and here come the roles of higher institutions or universities as it creates opportunity for diverse students to interact and learn from each other inside and outside of the classroom. In short, in order to create positive racial integration among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia which will lead to desired democracy outcomes, the students need to have excellent social interactions among them. Last but not least, in ensuring the relationship happened smoothly, Schlossberg's Theory of Transition (1984) is needed. This theory explains in depth the individual factors, the environment and the transition phase of their new life. It also describes the support available to students during the transition phase. In short, this theory is related to the psychological processes and changes experienced by an individual named university student in order to adapt to the new environment and experience on campus.



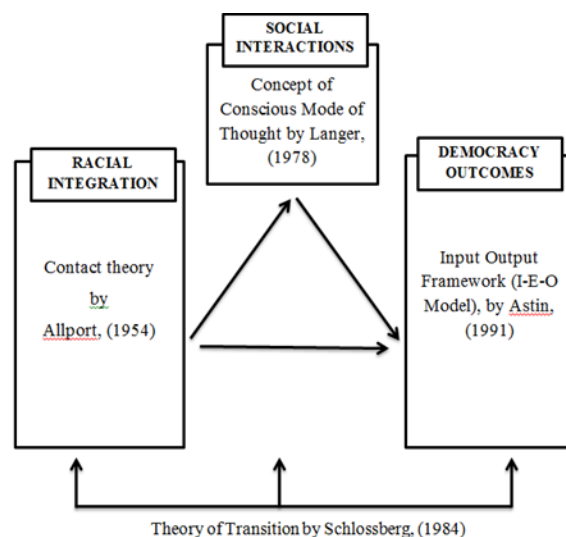


Figure 2.6.1: Theoretical Framework

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

Research design is a framework for driving a thing / project from one place to another. The framework should contain questions that will be immediately recognized by researchers and finally be able to produce the best conclusion (Babbie, 2001). A descriptive research analysis employing a quantitative approach through cross-sectional study (type of observational study that analyzes data from population or a representative's subset, at a particular point in time) is taken into consideration the most acceptable method to use. Descriptive studies that relate to functional relationships are non-experimental and have links between variables, hypothesis tests and even generalizations, principles or predictions (Best & Kahn, 1993). In addition, descriptive studies allow researchers to compile, summarize and interpret the data reviewed (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002). This form of study implies that researchers have no control over variables under any circumstances.

Descriptive study most frequently used by the researchers is using surveys. Surveys allow researchers to gauge their attitudes and opinions on issues and can also formulate conclusions about different groups' characteristics (Wiersma, 2000). In other words, the method of the survey allow researchers to collect information from a large number of samples, fast and does not result in high costs (Ary et al., 2002). Therefore, this method will be used specifically by the researchers for the process of collecting data in this study. According to Creswell (2012), quantitative method is one in which the researcher primarily uses post-positivist claims for developing knowledge and collecting data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data with the ability to attain an oversized range of respondents.

The mentioned method above also been applied to the current study because it tries to ensure a significant relationship between the variables studied. The researchers then propose to use correlational design methods. Correlation leads to a level at which two variables change in the same route or a different route (Slavin, 1992). As Cohen and Manion (1980) assert, correlational techniques are often aimed at determining the relationship between two variables.

The situation whereby two variables are connected is classified as a correlation coefficient (Cohen & Manion, 1980; Slavin, 1992). However, in the use of correlational studies it is quite difficult to identifying variables which will affect other variables. In such cases, regression analysis can help to overcome the deficiencies and shortcomings of the correlational design. Therefore, the use of correlational techniques is very appropriate because one of the objectives of this study is to determine the relationship as well as the correlation size between racial integration with democracy outcomes.

This study will take a quantitative approach. According to Antonakis, Chriesheim, Donovan, Gopalakrishna-Pillai, Pellegrini & Rossomme (2004b), many studies within the leadership domain are quantitative in nature. Data for this research will be collected using a questionnaire as it helping the researcher to get as much data they need in a short time (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009) and a questionnaire can collect data on respondents' opinion, perception and demographic information (Christensen, Johnson, Turner, 2011). In addition using questionnaires is more economical and it is easier for respondents to answer as it provides pre-coded answers (Denscombe, 2010). However, in a process to enable the researcher to seek a more panoramic view of the research landscape, viewing phenomena from different viewpoints and through diverse research lenses, an open-ended question will be added as well into the instrument. From there, the result will be more meaningful and able to answer the research questions precisely.

### **Research Population**

Ary et al., (2002) defining the population as a group of various categories / classes of people, situations and objects. In other words, the population is the sum of all the units or components involved directly or indirectly in a study (Gray, 2004). While Gay and Airasian (2000) also defined the population as a research group where the researcher is interested in studying in more detail, he/she also wanted to translate the findings from the analyzes conducted on the group. The first step in sampling is to identify the target population and the accessible population. The population targeted for this study is among the multi-ethnic undergraduate students (Malay, Chinese and Indian) who are currently pursuing studies at higher institutions nevertheless Public Institution of Higher Institution (PulHE) or Private Institutions of Higher Institution (PriHE) located in Malaysia. While the accessible population is consists of members of the target population who are willing to participate and will be available at the time of the study. It is usually smaller than the target population because the transition to it is potentially characterized by a significant number of individuals opting out of the study (Asiamah, Mensah, & Oteng-Abayie, 2017). Thus, the accessible populations for this research are undergraduate students from the three main ethnic groups and they are in the second or third year of study.

The three ethnic group students were chosen from year two (2) and three (3) to ensure that they had spent a sufficient amount of time in the university and have had the opportunity to interact with diverse racial groups during their period of study. The researcher believes students in those categories have almost completed their studies and have gone through all the necessary pieces of training and preparations for them to be fully equipped and are competent to face the challenges in the society especially concerning inter-ethnic relations. This is because these students had spent considerable time on campus and had interacted with the outside

community. They had also spent time participating in activities conducted by nation-based societies and interacted with diverse ethnic groups while conducting assignments or group study. Thus, the population for this study is all students of PuIHE and PriHE in Malaysia but the sample will be gathered at the institutions located around Klang Valley. Klang Valley is being chosen as it is known as the metropolitan city of the region. From there, driven factors such as accessibility to reach the potential respondents, economical factors and from an early determination that there are enough respondents available in the district since a lot of PuIHE and PriHE have been developed here as well.

### **Sampling Technique**

There are plenty categories of sampling design and among them are random sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling, purposive sampling and systematic sampling (Majid Konting, 2000). To optimize sampling of the targeted population, varieties of sampling techniques may be used by the researcher, however in this study stratified random sampling is the suitable one. Stratified random sampling categorizes a population concerning a characteristic a researcher considers to be crucial and then samples randomly from each category (Frey, Botans & Kreps, 2000).

There were various public and private universities in Malaysia and so many fields of studies. Hence, stratified random sampling is applied to select its samples only from public universities that rank as Research Universities and private universities with the status of College University. This because these institutions has been recognized by the ministry of higher education (MOHE) and offers a curriculum that is almost equivalent level. Therefore the sample to be obtained is comparable in terms of the quality of the students themselves. The universities chosen are Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM, Serdang), Universiti Malaya (UM, Kuala Lumpur) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM, Bangi). Same goes for PriHE, out of all top College Universities located around Klang Valley, only three of them are randomly selected. They are UCSI University (Kuala Lumpur), Taylor's University (Subang Jaya), Management and Science University (MSU, Shah Alam).

Once again, stratified random sampling will be used in selecting the subject of this study which are the final year undergraduate students and final semester of second year undergraduate students from each of these universities. Total samples for both universities are 400 with 200 samples divided respectively for each PuIHE and PriHE. A sample size accumulated using Cochran formula (1977) and calculation stated 266 students are required for the sample size for the population of 230,690 students in Lembah Klang. According to Salkind (2009), a sample size should be increased by 40%-50% to account for uncooperative subjects. Following Salkind's (2009) suggestion, the sample size for this research is increased by 50% giving a sample size of 399 which is rounded up to 400.

### **Research Instrument**

This study employs a questionnaire as the research instrument because its standardized and highly structured design is compatible with a quantitative approach (Gay et al., 2009). Among the advantages of a questionnaire are it enables the researcher to collect large amount of data in a short amount of time (Gay et al., 2009; Gall et al., 2002); economical (Denscombe, 2010) and

it collects data on respondents' opinion, perception and demographic information (Christensen et al., 2011). Therefore, a self-completed questionnaire will be designed and divided into several major sections.

The questions contained in the questionnaire form depend on the questions in the research itself. When the research questions are formulated, they are indirectly designed and subsequently used as instruments for obtaining the required information. Closed-ended questions are a series of questions designed with limited answers to information on a particular research topic. Respondents' responses to closed-ended questions can be coded directly and then entered into a computer database for analysis purposes. One of the benefits of closed-ended question formats is to ensure that each subject or participant has the same frame of reference in answering and thus facilitating their feedback on sensitive issues (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010). The quantitative methods will be used in this study to get feedback or information on issues of racial integration among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions. Five points Likert scales ranging from 1 for totally disagree until 5 for totally agree will be used.

The questions are designed with easy-to-understand sentences and are written in simple, concise form. Sentences or words that can cause doubts such as having multiple meanings will be refined and replaced immediately. In fact, questions that explicitly determine the answers of the respondents as well as questions that are stereotypical or that may influence the emotional sensitivity of the individual are also avoided. Highly focused precision of framing the question in order to avoid confusing the respondent or ask a question that is the assumption seems to compel the respondents to provide desired answers by the researchers themselves. The questions will then be re-read and reviewed to avoid situations where the respondents are suspicious of the actual purpose of the study. It will also ensure that the questions in the survey do not overlap by asking repeated or identical questions in the segment for different issues.

Worth to mention here, this research will adopt a questionnaire developed by Azimi, Mansor, Abidin, Ezhar, Wong & Moltan, (2005) in their study of youth as foundation for unity and solidarity: A study inter-ethnic tolerance to collect data since these established instruments have been reported to have an appropriate level of reliability in many previous studies. In addition, these instruments were developed by experts in the field (Fraenkel et al., 2012) and using established instruments allows for a comparison of results with those of other researchers' (Noordin, Rashid, Ghani, Aripin, & Darus, 2010). As mentioned earlier, this study will also be supported by several open-ended questions to generate panoramic findings in terms of the study concerns. Then an instrument for the open-ended questions is adapted from the doctoral research titled integration in an international university in Malaysia by Sengupta, (2015).

### **Instruments Development**

The second phase of the study involved the development of the measurement instrument to measure the variables in this study. Thus from the instruments adopted, a self-completed questionnaire will be designed and divided into five (5) major sections. In section A, questions are asking about demography information of the respondents. Then sections B, there are 16 items/questions to measure the racial integration component with five points Likert scales ranging from 1 for "refuse to understand" to 5 "try hard to understand". In addition, there are

total of 15 items/questions to measure democracy outcomes in section C, also with five points Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”. 11 items/questions been adopted to measure social interaction in section D using five points Likert scale ranging from 1 “very uncomfortable” to 5 “very comfortable”. Lastly in section E, few open-ended questions are included to get respondents' views on the issues concerned as allowing respondents to provide more information such as their feelings, attitudes and views on a research topic matters.

## **Conclusion**

Malaysia is one country in the world today who are experienced and have an excellent track record in dealing with various ethnic cultures. Taking into account the fact that humans are the creatures of God on this earth, we should always strive to maintain harmony and mutual respect for each other, regardless of origin, background and descent. Therefore, the basic thing to do is to instill the seeds of unity among the young as they are today's youth however tomorrow's leaders. Then, they have to be taught and convinced of the advantages of peaceful co-existence (Abdullah, 2009).

After all, worth to mention here this proposed research is in the wait-list to be presented in front of the examiners before proceeds to the data collection. In essence, this concept paper is written containing the important aspects of this ongoing research project about the relationship between racial integration and democracy outcomes among multi-ethnic students in Malaysia higher institutions. This study will be using a quantitative method with the supports of several open-ended questions to generate more meaningful findings. Henceforth, it will be great when this study able to contribute towards the existing body of knowledge by helping teaching providers plans their learning style, approach, method, and technique of teaching complementing multi-ethnic students in the classroom. In addition, all the initiatives aim to develop and equip the youth to be competent, especially in term of unity or integration and also to ensure social interaction among them at an excellent level. In summary, it is the wish of the researcher this study will make a modest contribution in understanding racial diversity among multi-ethnic citizen in Malaysia and lastly to achieve the desired democracy outcomes among them.

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