The Challenges of 1Malaysia and The Reality of Youth's Involvement with the Unity Campaign on Television

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Abstract: Today's youth are the ones who are exposed to the development of ICT. Therefore, the print and electronic media are the main communicators as sources of information for youths. The question is, how do these sources of information use these channels for the benefit of youth's education? This article is the discussion about the challenges to realize the succession of 1Malaysia based on the research founding by Nobaya *et al*., (2008) related to youth's involvement with the unity campaign being shown through television channels. The discussion about the succession of 1Malaysia in relation to the youth generation is an issue that should be given serious attention by all in tandem with the realization that this generation is the back up for the current nation's leaders who will determine the stability and the continuation of a harmonious ethnic relationship in a multi racial society for the nation's future. The question whether they understand or not the real meaning in developing 1Malaysia has to be critically analyzed and discussed. Even though the basic research data by Nobaya *et al*. (2008) did not directly measure youth's understanding about the succession of 1Malaysia but this research will measure the level of youth's involvement with the unity campaign shown through Malaysian television channels, which will reflect the 1Malaysia practice level nowadays within the youth's generation in the aspect of unity. The findings show Malaysia's youth understand and embrace the unity campaign being aired but lack in performing the behavior that could spurt unity's growth. The discussion in this article is hoped to shape the thinking of all parties in enriching the succession of 1Malaysia which is fundamentally based on unity's practice in a multi cultural society especially in the youth's generation.

Key words: 1Malaysia, Youth's Involvement, Unity Campaign

INTRODUCTION

Unity is the main social stability which will drive a nation's progress. The plan to develop a country like Malaysia will face difficulties if the issue of unifying a multi cultural society is left behind by some quarters. Even though many think that this issue is trivial, but when a racial conflict is faced the impact will be felt by every single citizen and will become challenging to alleviate. The mere mention of 13 May 1969 tragedy, Kampung Rawa Incident in 1977 and Kampung Medan Incident in 2001, the writer believes that the horrific experience is still a nightmare to the society including the younger generation although the devastation had left us ages ago. Therefore, racial unity in Malaysia has to be importantly defended by everyone.

In reference to the decision made in the Meeting of Advisory Panel on the Country's Unity in 1992, unity in the Malaysian context refers to a situation where people from different ethnic group, religion and territory, live peacefully as a unified nation fully committed to the national identity centered on the Federal Constituency and National Principles *(Perlembagaan Persekutuan and Rukun Negara)*. As a multi cultural nation, Malaysia is determined to create a harmonious environment based on the society's unity spirit. As all of us are aware, our Prime Minister Dato' Seri Mohd. Najib Tun Razak has introduced the concept of 1Malaysia, a platform to nurture further unity among Malaysia's multi cultural society pillared by certain important values that should become the principal and practice of every citizen. To drive government's administration towards the succession of 1Malaysia, the slogan "People first, Performance now" *(Rakyat didahulukan, Pencapaian diutamakan)* has become the main and foremost criteria.

The unity pictured in 1Malaysia succession is very different from any other assimilation concept practiced by other countries where the identities of the ethnic races are erased and substituted with a same unified national identity. On the contrary, 1Malaysia appreciates and respects the identities of each ethnic race in Malaysia and considers them as a set or advantage that Malaysians should be proud of. Even though 1Malaysia is a newly introduced concept but it is the government's continuous effort in building the nation's agenda with new personalized approach in fostering unity amongst the multi racial ethnic in Malaysia. Hence, the ethnic stability and harmony should not only be the burden of the government only but has to be upheld by the multi racial society as a whole.

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Youth as the Pillar of 1Malaysia Succession: A Flicker of Issues and Challenges:

Although 1Malaysia is a newly introduced succession but the writer critically sees it as the government's effort to continue the on-going agenda of building the nation with a new personalized approach among the different ethnicity in Malaysia. We realize that all the leaders since our independence until now were and are so determined in creating a harmonious country, with a very strong spirit of unity and sturdy integrative bond between the races and territory by fashioning variety of acts that aim towards fostering unity and national integration such as the National Education Act, National Cultural Act, New Economics Act, National Development Act, National Vision Act and National Social Act.

In the effort to lessen the politicking that could disintegrate the society, especially among the youths, the government has to come up with a model that is fresh, bold and popular. At the same time, the most important thing in continuing the survival of the ruling party in a democratic system is the need for the government to construct an ideal ideology so that the government will be very close to the majority's whims and fancy, without denying the minority needs but in turn can be felt as owned and idolized by everyone. For example, the National Principles declared on 31 August 1970 is unquestionably the ideology that has served the people as the nation's creed in Malaysia.

In the context of 1Malaysia's succession that became popular after 3 April 2009, the most important question needed to be focused in writing this chapter is what is the current reality of knowledge, attitude and practices of youth's generation in upholding the succession? Is the overflow of this societal campaign through television all this while has impacted the practice of 1Malaysia in the youth generation circle? Are these youths really celebrating the unity in congruent with the construction of 1Malaysia succession? According to Ismail (2009) some concepts like equality, justice, special rights, the status of the King's constitution and others must be defined in the correct context with this fact in mind; even though 1Malaysia succession can be seen to be understood as dominant and above the Constitution and law. Any new constitution and vision launched by any party must be kept in mind that everything scripted in the country's Constitution must be untouched (Ismail, 2009). Today's youth generation might not understand the high tolerance level of our freedom fighters like the late Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra with fellow comrades such as Tun Tan Siew Sin and Tun V.T. Sambanthan who understood the sensitivity of each race.

Mohd. Jamil (1994) stressed that given the fact that the youth is the majority group of the country's citizen, national unity must directly involve them. The statistic by Malaysia's Statistic Department showed that in 2008, from the total of 27.7 million Malaysians 11.26 million (40.6%) are youths. In 2010, it is expected that the total number of youths will rise to 11.65 million (40.2%). Asnarulkhadi (2009) demographically stated, youths categorized as individuals within the range of 15 to 39 years of age are most significant in numbers and if this is translated to energy source, youth are positively influential in shaping this country from the aspects of politics (voters), social (unity) and economy (human capital). Therefore, youth's in Malaysia must be advanced as *homo intelligence* youths- a post modern knowledgeable generation, with a respectable self image, wise in using knowledge for livelihood advancement as well as contributing to the society and country's development (Jalaluddin, 2009).

Youth's in Malaysia have to be aware that they have a big responsibility especially in nurturing the 1Malaysia succession challenges announced by the government. As valuable assets, youth has to be proactive in harnessing towards this noble succession. At the same time, Malaysians in general, especially the older generation, have to be involved in steering the youths to face the challenges and issues that could deteriorate the good moral values in the society's lives. The gradual deterioration of good moral values that is happening to today's contemporary youth should not be let astray by the society in general because this will lead to the entrapment of youth with negative characteristics such as being materialistic, selfish apart from putting aside the attributes of volunteerism, cooperation and toleration.

The Strategies of Broadcasting Media in Enhancing 1Malaysia Youth:

Broadcasting media plays an important role in conveying information especially in youth's education context. Research done by Rubin and Perse (1987) showed that there are audience's involvement in the thinking aspects, feelings and behavior parallel to television programme content. The same result was also gathered from a research done by Mariah and Zaridah (2005). Consequently, the effect whether in the thinking level, feelings or behavior do happen through audience's involvement with programme content by the broadcasting media especially television.

In context with youth's edification towards enhancing 1Malaysia, information conveyed through television channels should grab this chance at the earliest of stages. This is because the youths' access into the country's information channeled by television is seen as not being a problem. In a study entitled Media and the Cultural Identity carried out by a group of researchers from UKM in the year 2000 (in Samsudin, 2001) concluded that the age trend affected the audience polar of watching television. The younger one watches a lot of television compared to the older ones. This research deduced that the polar of time spent watching television in a week by

youths according to age category is as followed: 1) 13-15 years (18.3 hours); 2) 16-20 years (18.2 hours); and 21-25 years (17.7 hours).

It is also stated in the research of Nobaya *et al*., (2008) towards 513 youths in the Klang Valley aged between 15-25 years old which scrutinized specifically about youth audience's involvement with unity campaign in television programmes showed that the frequency of youths watching television in a day was between 3-4 hours more compared to a small figure who watched television for less than an hour. This research found out that as many as 63.2% of the respondents turned to watching television as their main favorite past time. In connection to respondents' awareness about the existence of unity campaign being aired, this research discovered the majority of respondents (95.7%) are aware of the existence of commercials or advertisements which themed upon the unity of a multi racial society in Malaysia.

Despite that, the most important query linked to this matter is why is Malaysia still being looked as a *state in stabil tension* (Shamsul Amri, 2005) when discussing about races unity matters but in reality an excessive of unity campaign programmes are shown everyday repeatedly in most of the television channels. Former Prime Minister, Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad during the officiating of Tunku Abdul Rahman University in 2002 had voiced out his worries in congruence with the development of race polarization especially in the younger generation, where he concluded that the younger generation in Malaysia is still not united in its true sense (Lee, 2004). The dark incident sparked by the Hindraf group in Kuala Lumpur in 2008 was caused by the feeling of discrimination by a minority group apart from the bloody incident that happened between ethnic groups in 2001 are examples of disunity which involves Malaysia's youth.

According to Samsudin (2007), the advancement of television programmes which does not have the same aim as the nation's aspiration will only pollute the cultural environment. This is because whatever programme production and the acceptance by the youth generation will surely give influence towards their cultural identity-whether it's the national identity, race, religion, job, family and themselves (Samsudin, 2007). Therefore, the utmost challenge faced by the broadcasting media especially television in Malaysia is how it can continue to act in aiding to foster the spirit of unification between races and ethnicity especially towards the youth generation until they are able to play their role in capturing this culprit that could lead to racial disharmony in the country.

Findings and Discussion:

The discussion of 1Malaysia challenges and the reality of youth's involvement with unity campaign in television in this article is based on the research of a group of University Putra Malaysia researchers on 513 youths which consists of selected secondary school students and higher learning institution students in the Klang Valley aged between 15 to 25 years old. From the total, 48.6% of respondents were aged between 19-25 years old, 29.6% were aged between 16-18 years old and 21.8% were under the age of 15. Respondents at every level of youth's age were represented in this research.

With reference to Table 1, majority of the respondents involved were female, 54.9% whereas 45.1% were male. From the aspect of ethnicity, the majority were Malays (54.9%), followed by Chinese (31.8%), Indians (11.1%) and other ethnicities (2.1%) were Bidayuh, Dusun, Iban, Punjabi and Siamese. If analyzed from religion, 55.6% of respondents were Muslim, 28.2% were Buddhist, 4.5% Christian and other religion 1.2%. In this study, a sum of 71% of respondents lived in a multi racial residential area whereas the balance of 29% lived in respondents' same race residential area.

Table 1: Respondents' Demographical Profile (n=513).

	Demographical Characteristics	Percentile
Age		
	15 years	21.8
	16 – 18 years	29.6
	19 – 25 years	48.6
Gender		
	Male	45.1
	Female	54.9
Race		
	Malay	54.9
	Chinese	31.8
	Indian	11.1
	Others	2.1
Religion		
	Islam	55.6
	Buddha	28.2
	Hindu	10.6
	Christian	4.5
	Others	1.2
Living in multi racial residents		
	Yes	71.0
	No	29.0

If seen from the aspect of respondents' exposure to television channels, a total 99% from all respondents stated that they have a television set in their homes and 63.2% of them stated watching television as their main activity during their leisure times. In accordance with the channel mostly watched, the study found that a majority of respondents chose TV3 (38.9%), ASTRO (37.4%) and TV8 (15.0%) as their 3 main television networks. The frequency of respondents watching television per day was between 3-4 hours (41.3%), 1-2 hours (27.6%), 4- 5 hours (19.2%) and less than 1 hour per day (6.5%).

Table 2: Respondents' Exposure towards Television Broadcast (n=513).

Items	Percentile
Choice of TV Channels	
TV1	2.5
TV2	1.9
TV3	38.9
NTV7	3.9
TV8	15.0
TV9	0.4
ASTRO	37.4
Watching TV During Leisure Time	
Yes	63.2
No	36.8
Frequency of Watching TV	
<1 hour	6.5
1 – 2 hours	27.6
3 – 4 hours	41.3
4 – 5 hours	19.2

In relation to awareness towards unity messages, majority of respondents (95.7%) were aware that there were advertisements themed on multi racial unity in the television channels. This study found that 75% of respondents stated that they have watched Independence Day commercials. Whereas 25% of respondents stated that they have seen other community advertisements such as joined festivities celebration and patriotic songs *(Jalur Gemilang and Malaysiaku Gemilang)*.

Table 3: Respondents' Awareness Towards Unity Messages (n=513).

Items	Percentile
Aware of Unity Advertisements	
Yes	95.7
No	4.3
Advertisements Watched	
Independence Day Advertisements	75
Other Community Advertisements	25

To further demonstrate how far the effectiveness of these unity campaigns broadcasted through television has given impact towards respondents, this research has measured the implication of respondents' involvement at the thinking level, feelings and behavior. A total of 21 statements which explained the implication of respondents' involvement with unity campaign by using five options answer scaled from 1 (strongly disagree) until 5 (strongly agree).

The findings were more than half (55.5%) respondents agree with the statement 'I understand the intention of the unity messages conveyed through societal campaigns on television'. Meanwhile, more than 45% respondents has given positive answers towards these five statements as follow: 1) I understand how the government is really serious in giving weight towards race unity in a multi race citizen; 2) I Really felt touched with the unity messages that are conveyed; 3) Unity advertisements make me feel more sincere in helping anybody from any race if they are in trouble; 4) After watching societal advertisements that lead to unity, I felt called to be good friends with my colleagues from other races; 5) The unity messages shown in television help me to be motivated in greeting my friends from other races.

Table 4: Implication Statements Involving Respondents' Involvement at Thinking Level.

No.	Statement	Min
1.	I understand the intention of the unity messages conveyed through societal campaigns on television.	4.13
2.	I feel that the unity messages conveyed through societal advertisement in TV is difficult to be understood by youths like me.	2.47
3.	I feel that unity issue is a big problem faced by this country right now.	3.43
4.	I understand how the government is really serious in giving weight towards race unity in a multi racial citizen.	4.00
5.	Now, I realized the importance of racial unity in ensuring the country's well being.	3.97
6.	I totally accept the democratic system used in this country's governance.	3.79
7.	I think that the sharing of power between races is the core towards racial unity in this country.	3.73

Table 5: Implication Statements Involving Respondents' Involvement at Feeling Level

No.	Statement	Min
1.	I feel bored with the unity messages delivered through societal campaigns in TV.	2.14
2.	I feel that the relationship between the different races is not correctly portrayed in the content/storyline of unity advertisements broadcasted through TV.	3.47
3.	I am proud that this country consists of multi races, cultures and religions.	4.21
4.	I feel really touched with the unity messages trying to be conveyed.	3.61

Table 6: Implication Statements Involving Respondents' Involvement at Behavior Level

No.	Statement	Min
1.	Unity advertisements make me feel more sincere in helping anybody from any race if they are in trouble.	3.73
2.	After watching societal advertisements that lead to unity, I felt called to be good friends with my colleagues from other races.	3.68
3.	I had shared with my parents and siblings about the racial unity suggestions being shown in television.	3.25
4.	I had shared with my friends from the same race about the racial unity suggestions being shown in television.	3.36
5.	I had shared with my friends from different races about the racial unity suggestions being shown in television.	3.12
6.	The unity messages shown in television help me to be motivated in greeting my friends from other races	3.75
7.	Racial unity advertisements made me more frequent in greeting my friends from other races.	3.54
8.	Racial unity advertisements made me feel it is important to telephone or send short texts to friend from different races more frequently.	3.11
9.	Racial unity advertisements made me more prepared to be present at open houses hosted by friends from other races.	3.50
10.	My friends from other races and I often re-enact the unity advertisements that I have watched.	2.73

The overall analytical description found that the respondents' involvement implication with unity campaigns in television is high at the thinking and feeling levels, that is 52.3% for the former and 48.3% for the latter. Whereas, implication at the behavior level is only high at average level, that is 58.2%. This shows early descriptions that youth's involvement towards unity campaign broadcasted through television leaves a lot of impact at the thinking and feeling levels only but they are still lacking in practicing the behavior that could further encourage unification. Table 7 summarizes the overall respondents' involvement implication towards unity campaign.

Table 7: Respondents' Involvement Implication towards Unity Campaign.

	Low (%)	Average (%)	High (%)
Thinking Implication (n=495)	0.6	47.1	52.3
Feeling Implication (n=507)	3.6	48.1	48.3
Behavior Implication (n=502)	6.0	58.2	35.9

The analysis of respondents' involvement implication towards unity campaign was also being detailed by researcher according to categories: Malay and non-Malay (Table 8). Research findings deduced that implication at the level of thinking, feeling and behavior of Malay youth are higher (thinking = 60.1%; feeling = 61.2%; behavior = 36.3%) compared to non Malay that only showed at the level of thinking (39.4%), feeling (31.6%) and behavior (34.2%). On average, the implication of youths' involvement between Malay and non-Malay at the levels of thinking, feeling and behavior towards unity campaign in television channels is at an average level. Involvement implication towards unity campaign in television channels shows that non-Malay youths is lower than average at thinking level (59.3%) and feeling (62.3%) compared to Malay youths (thinking = 39.5% and feeling = 37.0%), whereas implication towards behavior shows that Malay youths are at a bit over average (59.8%) compared to non-Malay youths (58.4%).

The research found that involvement implication of Malay youths towards the unity campaign in television is higher at thinking and feeling level compared to non-Malay youths. Moreover, youths' involvement implication towards unity campaign at behavior level shows that Malay and non-Malay youths majored at average level. This again implied that the unity campaign in television channels gives a lot of effect on youths' involvement at thinking and feeling levels only where it is seen that they still lack in celebrating the multi racial ethnicity in Malaysia.

Table 8: Implication of Involvement for Malay and non-Malay Youths towards Unity Campaign.

	Thinking		Feeling		Behavior	
Level of Implication Involvement	Malay	Non-Malay	Malay	Non-Malay	Malay	Non-Malay
	(n=281) %	(n=231) %	(n=281) %	(n=231) %	(n=281) %	(n=231) %
Low	0.36	1.3	1.8	6.7	4.6	7.4
Average	39.5	59.3	37.0	62.3	59.8	58.4
High	60.1	39.4	61.2	31.6	36.3	34.2
	$\lambda=22.457$	$\rho=0.000$	$\lambda=46.277$	$\rho=0.000$	$\lambda=1.783$	$\rho=0.341$

Table 9 sums up the findings of free t-test to explain the comparison level of involvement implication with unity campaign in television channels between Malay and non-Malay youths. Research findings discovered there is a significant difference between ethnic category and involvement implication level towards unity campaign aired on television at thinking level, where the Malay youth group ($\underline{M}$ = 2.5979, $\underline{SD}$ = .49842) is slightly higher when compared to the non-Malay youth group [$\underline{M}$ = 2.3810, $\underline{SD}$ = .51278; $t(512)$ = 4.837 p = .000]. The research findings also found that there is a significant difference between ethnic category and involvement implication level towards unity campaign aired on television at feeling level. For the Malay youth ($\underline{M}$ = 2.5943, $\underline{SD}$ = .52696) is higher compared to the non-Malay youth [$\underline{M}$ =2.2554, $\underline{SD}$ = .55923; $t(512)$ =.953 p = .341].

Table 9: Comparison of Involvement Implication Level towards Unity Campaign between Malay and non-Malay.

Involvement Implication Level	Youth Group	n	Mean	S.D	*t*	*p*
Thinking	Malay	281	2.5979	.49842		
	Non-Malay	231	2.3810	.51278	4.837	.000
Feeling	Malay	281	2.5943	.52696		
	Non-Malay	231	2.2554	.55923	7.044	.000
Behavior	Malay	281	2.3167	.55681		
	Non-Malay	231	2.2684	.58740	.953	.341

Summary and Suggestions:

Unity is an important element dreamt by the government and its people in general. Even though it is not critical to say that the reality of racial unity in Malaysia is nearly non-existent at its best, but the overall society knows that Malaysians have to continue living and grow without any major conflict that could lead to unrest like what happened in Thailand, our closest neighbor.

Meanwhile, the 1Malaysia succession announced by the government is seen to be as the continuation model to develop a country fundamentally based on unity and must get the multi racial youth generation to be involved. This is because that only the educated youth from the aspects of intellectual and physical will able to steer the future of the nation's unity and prosperity. But if we observed form the aspect of experience, this group is the ones who are the majority and most extreme in the involvement with previous street rioting that spread out until it created tremors towards many parties in the nation. With that said, is this the benchmark of the future of Malaysia's unity that could be determined by today's youth generation? With the overflow of unity campaigns being worked out over the time especially through television channels in Malaysia failed to give the desired impact towards youth until it created, if viewed until today, voices of racial dissatisfaction and filled with emotion being voiced out.

Referring again to research by Nobaya *et al*., (2008), youths' involvement implication in Malaysia is found to be more towards the higher rank in the thinking and feeling level but on the average in the behavior level. This means that they understand and embrace the unity campaign being aired but lack in performing the behavior that could spurt unity's growth. The background of the research respondents clearly shows that the majority of the respondents are aware about the existence of advertisements themed on multi racial unity shown in Malaysian television broadcasts concluded that they have seen independence advertisements but the findings of the research also concluded that the involvement implication does not affect their behavior. Maybe not at a critical level, but if the trend continues, this country might face passive groups of single race youth in developing the unity effort which is the core of 1Malaysia succession on the government's side. This matter also could have a connection with the youth's selection in watching television programmes. For example, a research done by Samsudin (1994) found that when watching television, youths prefer more to watch entertainment programmes (55%), sports (46%) and religion (32%).

The research also finds a wide prominent gap of difference in the Malay youths and non-Malay youths' implication involvement percentage with unity campaigns, where the thinking and feeling levels of Malay youths are far higher than the non-Malay youths. On the other hand, the non-Malay youths are only on the average level in thinking and feeling aspects. Why does this clear gap of difference exist? Although at the behavior level the research found that a similar percentage between Malay and non-Malay youths, but there is an early indication that shows Malay youths are better ready to celebrate multi racialness compared to the non-Malays.

This situation should put worry on all sides because it is clear that it could invite negative perceptions towards socialy unity between the multi racial youths in Malaysia. The real source why this happens has to be studied in detailed. Is there a lack of strategy needed to be constructed by the government in ensuring these unity campaigns? Writer feels that it is important that a qualitative research should be done using a detailed research technique findings being backed up by a quantitative method to get the real perception to why there is a wide gap of difference in celebrating multi ethnicity between Malay and non-Malay youths. This is because an honest perception from the non-Malay youths could only explain why this is happening. Outsiders' view cannot be the full benchmark on the perception of 'ourselves' about 'ourselves' are far better then anyone's else. So,

writer suggests immediate steps have to be taken or this country will be facing a youth group that has problems in living in a multi racial society.

In general, research done by Nobaya *et al*., (2008) still feels that the television broadcasting media is an influential ICT medium in educating youths to become agents of harmonious growth towards the multi races of Malaysia but with the exception that the broadcasting media has to think of more creative strategies to shape the essence of multi racial unity in Malaysia. The design of the unity campaigns in television could less focus on only giving information to being more on *infotainment* and *edutainment* where unity campaigns are merged with aspects of entertainment and education. In a time where Malaysia's youth devote a longer time watching television, therefore the opportunity should be used to its maximum by the broadcasting media players in Malaysia. At the same time, the youths of Malaysia should see this phenomenon that is happening to their generation as a benchmark of what they can contribute and their roles in ensuring the success of 1Malaysia succession.

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