

'1Malaysia' Concept for Psychological Well-being in Context of Education

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini memerihalkan konsep '1Malaysia' dalam konteks pendidikan untuk memenuhi hasrat negara agar memungkinkan kesejahteraan psikologi dalam pelaksanaan konsep '1Malaysia'. Berdasarkan kepada tema, 'Rakyat Didahulukan, Pencapaian Diutamakan', Perdana Menteri Malaysia menyarankan bahawa perpaduan rakyat amat membantu dalam menyokongkan budaya kecemerlangan di kalangan penduduk Malaysia yang berbilang kaum. Ini bermaksud kepelbagaian dikekalkan melalui penglibatan semua penduduk Malaysia dalam usaha untuk melaksanakan transformasi Negara. Pendidikan juga ditugaskan untuk meningkatkan mutu pengetahuan rakyat dan membolehkan mereka untuk menghayati nilai utama asas '1Malaysia' serta bergerak maju ke hadapan dengan semangat meninggikan kualiti kesejahteraan kehidupan rakyat. Dengan ini, kualiti kehidupan rakyat dapat mencerminkan kesejahteraan psikologi. Selain itu, cadangan penambahbaikan untuk memungkinkan kesejahteraan psikologi dalam pelaksanaan konsep '1Malaysia' dengan transformasi negara juga dibincangkan.

INTRODUCTION

The initiation of '1Malaysia' by Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Razak is a call to all Malaysians to practice the motto, 'People first, Performance now'. The concept of '1Malaysia' encompasses patriotic attributes of love and loyalty to Malaysia (Najib, 2009) as well as positive values that reflect psychological well-being. According to literature reviews, psychological well-being is indicated by people who are happy and satisfied with life (Dennis & Dennis, 2002; Vleioras & Bosma, 2005). This is in accordance with public policies enumerated in the New Economic Model for Malaysia for attending to the "need to preserve social harmony" (National Economic Advisory Council, 2010, p.9) that also emphasizes 'living and working in safe surroundings (p.96).

In other words, people are said to enjoy psychological well-being when they are able to meet their individual, family and work needs by adjusting themselves in harmony with others in social settings including their workplace and at home (Dennis & Dennis, 2002; Eckersley, 2004; Quek, 2008a; 2008b; 2009).

Viewed this way, '1Malaysia' promotes psychological well-being among Malaysians and by doing so shapes the quality of life in tandem with attaining Vision 2020 when Malaysia becomes a developed country. Rephrased, '1Malaysia' contextualises psychological well-being in educating Malaysians in anticipation of a better future.

'1MALAYSIA': EDUCATING FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

Educating people for psychological well-being as reflected in the quality of life envisaged in '1Malaysia', according to the Prime Minister entails tolerance for diversity as a basis for national development (Najib: A journey, 2009). In Malaysia, addressing diversity encompasses educating people to cooperate and interact with others for attaining personal and communal goals (Culture of peace, 2009) and building unity among the diverse communities. This also reflects psychological well-being. This is in tandem with the maxim, "One Dream, One People, One Nation" as reported in a press release in a (Najib: A journey, 2009).

According to the Prime Minister, '1Malaysia' is not a novelty (1Malaysia celebrates, 2009). After one considers the aim of '1Malaysia', that is national unity and the requirements of attaining that aim as endorsed by "the supremacy of the Constitution and the Rukun Negara" one returns to the "plurality and diversity from which the country draws its strength" (1Malaysia celebrates, 2009). The same press release also reported the role of diversity and shared values in upholding national unity.

A national response towards advancing '1Malaysia' is for schools to build among young people the understanding and appreciation of diversity as a foundation for psychological well-being of all Malaysians and to practise resilience together with competitiveness for sustainable national development. This goes to say that schools at all levels educate individuals to build "a resilient and competitive nation" (Malaysia, 2001, p.3). This call of '1Malaysia' places a premium upon contextualising psychological well-being in educating Malaysians in anticipation of national unity (1Malaysia celebrates, 2009) entails:

- **Building Quality Citizenship with Innovation and Creativity**
 Developing innovative and creative Malaysians in tandem with good citizenship is most relevant to the targets of New Economic Model for Malaysia (National Economic Advisory Council, 2010). With this view, '1Malaysia', according to the Prime Minister, "...Ultimately...is a celebration of Malaysia's plurality and diversity from which the country draws its strength" (1Malaysia celebrates country's diversity, 2009). This is also emphasised in the Tenth Plan, which envisages the "transformation towards productivity-led growth" (Malaysia, 2010, p.52) that is made possible by innovation and creativity through unified efforts of all Malaysians. For Malaysia as a multi-racial country, it is crucial that all schools and institutions of formal education teach Malaysians to practise quality citizenship for national unity. This is in tandem with public recognition expressing that all Malaysians are the "most valuable assets" that can help the country to create "domestic, regional and global champions that can grasp the

opportunities in the Asian region and compete on world standards” (National Economic Advisory Council, 2010, p.72).

- **Strengthening Relationship and Cooperation for National Unity**

According to the Prime Minister, ‘1Malaysia seeks to strengthen relationship and cooperation among the multi-ethnic people in this country as the main instrument to thwart the various threats and challenges ... that ... disrupt the sanctity of their lives (1 Year in Office, New Straits Times, April 3, 2010, p.2). The concept of 1Malaysia endorses the pursuit of unity in optimising “collective resources” to enable Malaysia to succeed in “a holistic sense” (Malaysia, 2010, p.9). There is urgency for all schools and institutions of formal education to teach Malaysians for practicing better relationship and cooperation and be enabled to enjoy the ‘sanctity of their lives’ (1 Year in Office, New Straits Times, April 3, 2010, p.2) through national unity. In this way, Malaysians are enabled not only to earn better incomes but are also capable of having a better quality of life as well as preserving cultural values (Malaysia, 2010).

CONTEXTUALISING PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN 1MALAYSIA

In a way, educating for better relationship and cooperation among Malaysians is contextualising psychological well-being in education for upholding national unity among multi-ethnic Malaysians. Contextualising psychological well-being in educating multi-ethnic Malaysians promotes diversity with unity in the country (Quek, 2007a; Vaillant, 2000). Consequently, more is expected of education today for the transformation of Malaysia.

Education for the transformation of Malaysia is driven by the motto, “People First, Performance Now”. Educators including teachers have to seek ways of communicating the “priority on performance because people must come first... in pursuing our national agenda, we must never leave anyone behind” (1 Year in Office, New Straits Times, April 3, 2010, p.2). In addition, schools and institutions of higher education are entrusted to transmit “the eight values of 1Malaysia” namely, “perseverance, culture of excellence, acceptance, loyalty, humility, integrity and meritocracy” (1 Year in Office, New Straits Times, April 3, 2010, p.2).

These “the eight values of 1Malaysia” can be described as a structure for Malaysians to learn tolerance with goodwill, social justice with resilience, responsibility and respect for others. This means that Malaysians have to work and live in harmony with others in attaining their individual goals with possibilities of enjoying personal psychological well-being. In this light, education for the transformation of Malaysians has the context for

learning to be united as a nation whilst contributing to the psychological well-being of others as well keeping world peace, observing rights and traditions of others (Culture of peace, 2009).

Capacitating education for the transformation of Malaysia in the context of psychological well-being would require meeting the following challenges:

- **Building “the Eight Values of 1Malaysia” into Instructional Materials**

Building perseverance, culture of excellence, acceptance, loyalty, humility, integrity and meritocracy into instructional materials in schools and institutions of higher education has to be considered. One way of meeting this challenge entails that learning outcomes be geared toward promoting among learners good citizenship as well as strengthening relationship and cooperation among the multi-ethnic people in this country.

- **Educating for Transformation of Malaysians**

Schools and institutions of higher education are expected to find means of educating all Malaysians in their diversity towards transforming Malaysia. One measure to face this challenge is to find innovative ways to help all Malaysians optimise their potentials. In this way, educating to build human capital capacity is enhanced for continuing participation in self-development of Malaysians in harmony with sustainable national growth in terms of higher labour productivity (Quek, 2007b).

- **Preparing Instructors and Teachers for Helping Learners Transform**

The preparation of instructors and teachers is another powerful challenge. One way to meet this challenge is to update teacher education programmes. This needs careful consideration in adding new dimensions to curriculum and instruction. If instructors and teachers are to apply new materials and teaching approaches, they must acquire understanding of the new dimensions in the curriculum and instruction so as to teach young Malaysians for effecting the transformation of Malaysia as envisaged in the concept of ‘1Malaysia’. For instance, learners need to be facilitated in the know-how of the culture of excellence in a changing environment (Quek, 2010). This helps learners in all diversity to anticipate change and to handle changes at the workplace and in their homes.

- **Evaluating Learning for Transformation**

Evaluating teaching and learning is essential for enabling Malaysian learners in effecting the transformation of Malaysia.

This challenge can be met by training instructors and teachers to be evaluators. This helps to ensure that proper procedures are conducted to obtain evaluation data. The evaluation data guides the planning of follow-up teaching and learning activities. These evaluating activities for instance, may be remedial programmes to overcome learning difficulties of particular individuals, or may take the form of enrichment programmes. Here enrichment programmes are needed to provide challenging opportunities for the highly motivated learners. In all these instances, learners can be facilitated by instructors, teachers and experts including psychologists and counsellors for effective learning.

- **Research on Related Issues**

Research presents challenges in finding effective methodologies for building national unity in education for all Malaysians. Other issues are: What ways can enable effective continual improvement of classroom instruction for developing higher abilities among Malaysians? How to overcome prejudices of Malaysians in context with promoting psychological well-being? How to educate for effective leadership? One way to meet these challenges in research is to train a pool of Malaysian researchers that come from both the existing public and private sectors. This pool of researchers can comprise researchers, instructors, teachers and other experts including psychologists, counsellors, social workers including faculty members of public universities and private institutions of higher education.

- **Dissemination of Related Research**

Dissemination of related research findings is another challenge. This means that research findings such as, new knowledge of teaching and learning approaches, as well as innovative methods for sustaining effective instruction and teaching of learners have to be communicated to instructors and teachers. One measure is to have effective communication among researchers, instructors, teachers and other experts including psychologists and counsellors. This can be done by social networking that uses emails, facebook, blogging, websites, tweeting and attending workshops, conferences and reading from professional journals and academic books. In this way, learners are able to benefit from interacting by social networking as well as being guided by better informed instructors and teachers who are supported by researchers and other experts including psychologists and counsellors.

CONCLUSION

Built into '1Malaysia' is the motto, 'people first, performance now', that seeks to unlock the potentials of all Malaysians by transforming the entire Malaysian population to a "more peaceful, well-grounded and progressive nation in every endeavour that will be respected by the world over" (1 Year in Office, *New Straits Times*, April 3, 2010, p.2). Transformation of the country by mobilising the entire Malaysian population places a high premium on education. Here, education has to be accessible to all Malaysians as well as to strengthen relationship and cooperation among the multi-ethnic people for building quality citizenship with innovation and creativity towards national unity. Viewed this way, contextualising psychological well-being in education in all endeavours at enabling all Malaysians to attain peaceful and progressive development promotes national unity among multi-ethnic Malaysians. This educational transformation is supported by "the eight values of 1Malaysia" which frames the learning of tolerance with goodwill, social justice with resilience, responsibility and respect for others. However, capacitating education for this transformation of Malaysia in the context of psychological well-being would require meeting challenges of building "the eight values of 1Malaysia" into instructional materials; educating for transformation of Malaysians; preparing instructors and teachers for helping learners transform; evaluating learning for transformation; research on related issues and dissemination of related research. In addition to the recommended measures, success in the long-run demands concerted efforts from all Malaysians to work and live in harmony with others in attaining their personal goals with possibilities of enjoying psychological well-being individually as well contributing to national progress.

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