

Putting social integration theories into practice: Pupils Integration for Unity Plan (PIUP) in Malaysian schools

ABSTRACT

In view of her multiethnic, multi religious and multicultural population, school curriculum (including co-curricular activities) in Malaysia is laden with elements of social integration. However implementation of social integration agenda among pupils of various races at the primary level is hampered by racial stratification of students into different types of schools. Malay students are concentrated at national schools, Chinese at national Chinese type school and Tamil at national type Tamil schools. Hence an intervention program to promote social unity among these segregated students is introduced where children of various races participate in specially designed-for-unity activities under the program. This paper seeks to explain how social integration theories were used to formulate activities designed for social integration among school pupils. The goal, objective, design of the PIUP program activities and its evaluation are deeply rooted in social integration theories namely Social Contact Theory, Cycle of Race Relation Theory and Nation-Building and Social Integration Theory. The activities which pupils participate is divided into five categories: Academic Excellence, Sports and Games, Patriotism, Cocurricular and Community Service. The level of integration promoted by these activities is evaluated under five themes or dimensions: general integration, integration through learning, patriotism and nation building, culture and custom and caring society. Through these activities it is hoped that the goal of producing a generation of Malaysian students who are knowledgeable, possessing superior spirit and personality, with high sense of unity and capable of facing challenges collectively and comprehensively will be realised.

Keyword: Social integration; Pupil integration program in school