

Ethnic Relation Across Religion and Culture in Schools: A Narrative Research

ABSTRACT

Malaysia is a nation of multi-racial society in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah dan Sarawak. Multiracialism in Malaysia requires a harmonious form of ethnic relations to ensure the nation's solidarity. Therefore, ethnic relations across religion and culture among students is imperative as it is the core that shapes the concept of cultural unity at the preliminary schooling phase. However, previous studies have shown ethnic relations among school students from different religions and cultures to be distant dan unfriendly. This was due to suspicion, ethnocentrism and polarization among others. The objective of this study focuses on the ethnic relations across religion and culture among students in a few secondary schools in the district of Kudat, Sabah. Qualitative method with narrative research data collection was adopted by interviewing 12 experienced teachers as the research informants. Narrative research describes the process of collecting and analyzing stories people are telling about their experiences. The findings indicated excellent ethnic relations across religion and culture among the students. These findings explain the needs to sustain this form of harmonious relationship because it represents the situation for the future Malaysian generations in their efforts to consistently maintain the existing ethnic relations. This study is also imperative because harmonious ethnic relations across religion and culture among students in Sabah can be used as a platform to formulate an effective ethnic relations model that crosses religion and culture within the Malaysian contexts.