

Malaysia is a multicultural society media essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

\n \t

1. [Introduction](#) \n \t

2. [Discussion](#) \n \t

3. [Conclusion](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Introduction

Malaysia is a multicultural society of which the population is made up by different types of ethnic groups includes Malays, Chinese, Indian and the Native. In fact, different ethnic groups have their own history, culture, belief system, value and language, there is thus unity among different ethnics is important in Malaysia (Economic Planning Unit, 2011). However, Malaysia has faced racial and ethnic tension due to the socio-economic and cultural differences after the independence of Malaysia in 1957. This racial conflict has lead to the development of several government policies such as the New Economic Policy and National Development Policy.

Having realised the importance to maintain and enhance the unity among people of different ethnics, the 1 Malaysian concept was introduced in 2009. Under the notion of 1 Malaysia concept of People First, Performance Now, the government is trying to promote unity in the society by considering fair distribution and access in economic in the country (1Malaysia, 2012). It is therefore very important to promote the 1 Malaysia Concept and encourage the acceptance of the citizens of Malaysia.

One way promoting the concept to the public is by means of the mass media. In the past, mainstream media like television, newspaper and radio has played an important role in promoting government's ideology and policies (Hashim, 2011). This thus suggested that media is able to play an important role in promoting the 1 Malaysia concept. It has the capabilities to educate the public on the importance of unity by promoting the understanding and the acceptance of other ethnic culture.

. Regardless, the mainstream media in Malaysia always been known as a great contribution on nation-building and social cohesion, rather than on freedom of information (Kenyon & Marjoribanks, 2007). It focuses primarily on positive stories reporting that is biased to the political elite (Anuar, 2000). This because most of the mainstream media outlets are basically owned by the government of Malaysia or privately owned by the parties that have close relationship to the Prime Minister or the members of component parties of the Barisan Nasional coalition government (Hassan, 2012).

Therefore, the aim of this study is to discuss about the ways of the mainstream media are used to encourage the acceptance of the 1 Malaysia Concept the citizens of Malaysia and whether this approaches will generate the desired outcome.

Discussion

The mainstream media in Malaysia plays a critical important role in realising 1 Malaysia Concept. The first approach of the mainstream media is used by government as the channel to educate the ideas of 1 Malaysia to the large public. The traditional media such as the television, radio and newspaper

have always been the core media of information dissemination (Hashim, 2011). For instances, the largest conglomerate Media Prima as well as a number of television & radio channels and Malay, Chinese, English-language newspapers such as Utusan Melayu, The Stars and Sinchew are owned and controlled by the government (Weiss, 2012). As such, the government policies are easily to get any publicity and free space in these mainstream media. The messages of 1 Malaysia Concept from these mainstream media often portrayed the desired images of 1 Malaysia, of which the people of different races live together in harmony (Hassan, 2008). Other than that, mainstream media always has been the supportive backbone to the 1 Malaysia Concept as the effort with the government to strengthen peace and harmony in the country.

As a supportive argument to the previous discussion, the agenda setting theory explains the powerful influence in the media that able to create public awareness on important issues (Mccombs, 2002). The media cannot tell what the people to think but has the ability to inform the people what to think about (Cohen, 1963). In other words, mainstream media raise the importance of an issue such as 1 Malaysia through the repetition of news (Hashim, 2011). The racial riot that happened in the past has caused Malaysians sensitivity to the issue that is related to ethnicity and races. Thus, national unity has become the top agenda to the public and thus it has become a political discourse in Malaysia. By taking this opportunity, the Malaysia Government has utilised the mainstream media in disseminates the messages and information regarding the 1 Malaysia Concept. Likewise, the government are telling the public the ideas that they wish the public to

accept and support. Eventually, 1 Malaysia Concept is aims to strengthen the unity and harmony of people from different ethnics. Therefore, the mainstream media has successfully created the perception of the public that unity among differences ethnics as the important agenda in Malaysia which then attract their attention toward the 1 Malaysia Concept.

Example in each occasion of the important festival such as Merdeka Day celebration, Hari Raya Festivals, Chinese New Year celebrations and Deepavali, the Prime Minister would deliver the speech with the association with the spirit of 1Malaysia. By that time, every mainstream television channel in Malaysia such as TV1, TV2, TV3, NTV7, 8TV and TV9 will have to broadcast his speech. In another example, we always can see the mainstream newspaper published a full page of advertisement that is related to the 1 Malaysia policies along with the tagline people first, performance now.

In addition, mainstream media is being used by government to remind or reinforce 1 Malaysia concept to the public. As we can see, everyday Malaysian citizen and also foreigner have been bombarded by with the messages of 1 Malaysian Concept by the mainstream media. The 1 Malaysia logo is ubiquitous due to mass advertising and commercials in mainstream media (Hashim, 2011). Along with the logo, the tagline people first, performance now has become the identification of 1 Malaysia Concept to the public through the repetition in mainstream media. In fact, mainstream media has help to promote 1 Malaysia by keep emphasise on the tagline since People First, Performance Now in 2009 and the only move on to Generating Transformation in 2010, Transformation Successful People

<https://assignbuster.com/malaysia-is-a-multicultural-society-media-essay/>

Prosperous in 2010 and till the recent theme Promises Fulfilled in 2012 (1Malaysia, 2012). The purpose is to reinforce perception and behaviours of the public. The repetition of showing the logo and tagline of 1 Malaysia have indirectly effect on informing the public what the government is focusing on this concept.

The same example can be seen when the public service announcements related to 1 Malaysia are often been aired and published on government and privately owned television, radio and newspaper. The PSA usually related to various ethnic festivals that celebrated in Malaysia and thus signify the meaning that freedom of festival celebration. Nevertheless, mainstream main media has portrayed these different ethnic celebrations the public by showing the Malaysian are celebrating with each other in the festival regardless of race and religion (Hashim, 2011). In addition, we often can see the ministries or any government agencies tied up 1 Malaysia tagline in every program such like 1 Belia, 1 Malaysia by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and other programs such Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia. Thus, the government programs usually connotes with the 1 Malaysia identity by mainstream media.

The role of the mainstream media is not just to disseminate the 1 Malaysia Concept but also to advocate and shape the attitudes of the public. In fact, the mainstream media has effectively created bandwagon effect in mass business advertising by using 1 Malaysia Concept. 1 Malaysia has eventually received support from various organisation including profit and non-profit organisation. These organisations usually associate their brand's product or service with 1 Malaysia Concept (Hashim, 2011). Television and radio

commercials created by businesses organisation would likely to include the message of unity with the presence and the voice of different races and ethnics. The first example of organisation association with the promotion of 1 Malaysia is Petronas Corporation. In fact, Petronas has been famous with their social corporate advertisements with the purpose of promoting national unity. Since 1 Malaysia Concept has been introduced in 2009, Petronas has created the advertisements that associate with the 1 Malaysia Concept every year in the major Malaysia's festival such as Merdeka Day celebration, Hari Raya Festivals, Chinese New Year celebrations and Deepavali. The messages in the advertisement usually consist of implied meaning and also able to arouse audience's emotion.

Furthermore, large national corporations such as Media Prima, Astro, Tenaga Nasional Berhad and Telco such as Telekom, Maxis and Celcom have also come up with the commercial that are related to 1 Malaysia Concept. The commercial often tied up with the concept of 1 Malaysia where the messages of unity has been delivered. The commercials are basically known as 'issue advocacy advertisement' which the advertisement is not intended to sell the product or services, but rather to change the public's perception and behaviour through political branding (Barron's Dictionary, n, d). In fact, the commercial by in the mainstream media usually showing Malaysia different races particular Malay, Chinese and Indian interact or either get along with each other.

Would it generate the desired outcome?

In my opinion, the usage of mainstream media may not be able to generate the desired outcome of the 1 Malaysia Concept. By highlighting the mainstream media are used by government to encourage the acceptance of 1 Malaysia Concept, several social science theories have been selected to support on my opinion.

According to limited-effect theory, the media rarely have direct influence on the individuals. The theory also explains that an individual's behaviour and attitudes are not easily changed by their reception and people usually tend to ignore political media content. Although mainstream media are used by government to promote 1 Malaysia Concept, it is still not sufficient enough to encourage the acceptance of the citizen of Malaysia. The definition gives an insight that the people in nowadays is no longer passive and vulnerable only to media content. People are able to judge the media content according to their own interpretation from what they have perceived. Individual may expose themselves to mainstream media in their daily routine, but they might not be influenced by the 1 Malaysia Concept by merely just looking at it.

As indicated in the previous point, the limited-effect theory also explains two-step flow of media influence. Media does not have direct influences to the population which from the mainstream media, the 1 Malaysia Concept are usually affected to the mass population through the dissemination by the opinion leaders. The opinion leaders must be someone that is credible and usually an active media user. People constantly turn to opinion leader for advice particularly when come to something that is new in the society like 1 Malaysia Concept instead of getting the source of information from the

media. Therefore, mainstream media is less influential compare to the human communication.

Moreover, human behaviour attitudes and belief is hard to predict and influences because it may change from time to time. The main factor that determines a person attitude is positive, negative or maybe neutral. A person attitude towards 1 Malaysia Concept might be changed based on the personal experiences, environment and etc. Therefore, the selective exposure explains that people tend to expose themselves to messages that are consistent with their pre-existing attitudes and belief. The mainstream media might be able to influence those who are supportive and have positive perception toward the government policies. However, for those people that tend to have negative attitudes and belief towards the government such as the citizen that support to the opposition political parties, the outcome may be different. If the opinion leader that has been encountered consists of positive or negative beliefs and value towards the government policies, the followers might been influenced by him.

Besides, 1 Malaysia Concept has faced up with various challenges including the new media technologies. The uses and gratification theory argued that different people use the media for different purposes (Sheldon, 2007). One of the assumptions of this theory explains that the audiences have the choice to select different kind of media. Thus, the audiences use the media more own their own benefits than the media can manipulate them. The audiences have the right or control to received any information from the media rather than been influenced by it. In fact, people now have much choice of media compare to the past, Mainstream media such television, radio and

newspaper has compete with the new media. The internet technologies allow freedom of expression where everyone can write, criticize and comment anything on the internet. The alternative online news organization like Malaysiakini and Malaysia Today who always stand to challenge of the government's effort, aims primarily to present news, especially from the different perspectives that not already covered by mainstream media (George, 2006). Thus, it has become one of the challenges for 1 Malaysia Concept to be full accepted by public.

This is due to the development of internet technologies allow the users closer to the reliable information compare to the other media (Hashim, 2011). Therefore, because of internet, human behaviours changed and mainstream media has been view as a medium to brainwash the audience for the government interest. When 1 Malaysia concept has been shown in the mainstream media, the audiences will tend to doubt about motives behind it. Therefore, the internet has affect the people perception and thus becoming active and sensible media users who do not simply accept and agree with government policies particular has been shown in mainstream media.

In addition, most the younger generations are seldom exposed themselves to the mainstream media. On the other hand, mainstream media has become alternative medium for information to some group of people. Internet served as a new inspirational medium of information without barriers. According to Ramasubramaniam (2011) explained people that with minimal interracial direct contact or which their source for information is only the mainstream media are more easily been manipulated by the government

policies. The audience that only exposed themselves to only one source of information which had been controlled by the government are more vulnerable to accepting the information from the mainstream media.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, mainstream media in Malaysia has perceived as an important role in the government policies like 1 Malaysia Concept. This is because most of the mainstream media ownerships are closely tied to the government and ruling political party. Therefore, 1 Malaysia Concept being one of the government policies has the advantage being spread through the mainstream media in the country. The three main approaches of the mainstream media in Malaysia are used by the government are to educate the meaning of 1 Malaysia Concept and thus to reinforce and advocate the acceptance of the concept by citizen of Malaysia.

However, these approaches would not bring the desired outcome of 1 Malaysia Concept because only the mean of mainstream media is not sufficient enough to influences the attitudes and beliefs of an individual. Besides, human communication is more effective than mainstream media when particular related to something that is new. The emerging of the new media like internet technologies has also bring a significant impact to the mainstream media, thus it has become one of the greatest challenges for the 1 Malaysia Concept. Therefore, mainstream media is important to educate about 1 Malaysia concept but not to encourage the acceptance of the citizen of Malaysia.