# A Study of the 1Malaysia Campaign Promotion by Information Department and an Exploratory Survey on the Public Perception

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*Abstract*—**Since Dato Seri Mohd Najib became the Prime Minister of Malaysia, he has based his administration on the slogan of 1Malaysia. 1Malaysia is an important agenda aimed at driving the country towards a developed nation status. Since it is a new approach, we are still not sure whether this concept are accepted or not by the people as a tool of change, development and integration. It is the intention of this study to identify the strategies adopted by the Information Department (a department under the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture) to promote the campaign, the obstacles they faced, and the people's perception. To analyze the strategies and challenges, this study obtained information through interview with representative from the particular department. Meanwhile, a survey has been conducted covering respondents of the three major ethnicities, namely Malay, Chinese and Indian (n=90). From the empirical research done, a majority of the respondents indicated positive perception on this campaign and hope it will continue. Information Department is also actively conducting various activities in promoting the 1Malaysia campaign. Since the campaign seems to have garnered the people's support, this campaign should be continued with a variety of programs and approaches, so that all Malaysians can benefit from it.**

*Index Terms*—**Campaign, public perception, public opinion.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is currently governed by Dato Seri Najib bin Tun Abdul Razak; Malaysia sixth Prime Minister. He leads lots of new changes; due to the way Malaysia experienced globalization. With the slogan of 1Malaysia, he tries hard to improve the life of Malaysians. His mission in leading this country was visualized in what he called National Key Result Area (NKRA), Government Transformation Program (GTP) and Economy Transformation Program (ETP) and many more.

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

In a study conducted by the Merdeka Centre (an opinion research firm) in [1], said that, only 39% out of 100% of the

non Bumiputra do accept the 1Malaysia. What is the most upset about the figures is that, another 16% of the non Bumiputra did not even know what the 1Malaysia is about.

Apart from this hard transformation effort, Malaysia also experienced a few illegal demonstrations from the Non Government Organizations. As example, the Malay, Chinese and Indians did get involved in Bersih 1, Bersih 2, and Bersih 3 demonstration which done in order to against the government administration. In Selangor, the 1Malaysia banner or advertisement is prohibited.

Besides, Chinese loves to socialize within the Chinese only, and the same goes to the other races. Thus, the probability of exercising ethnocentrism may occur and this can lead to stereotyping or discrimination towards other races as well.

We always experience that most campaigns done by the government were less attractive. Although governmental campaign brings just a simple public service announcement message, but it should applies commercial strategies in order to promote and market the campaign. Especially in the 1Malaysia Campaign, it needs more human communication in order to make the campaign closer to the people.

Therefore this paper tries to identify two things. First it would like to recognize how the Information Department (a department under Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture of Malaysia who responsible in increasing the understanding, support, confidence and community involvement towards the Government policies and programs) promote the 1Malaysia Campaign to the people. Second, this study also distinguishes the public perception on the 1Malaysia Campaign. The research questions driving this study are as follow:

- What are the strategies used by Information Department to promote the 1Malaysia Campaign?
- What are the obstacles that the Information Department faces in promoting 1Malaysia Campaign?
- How does the 1Malaysian public perceive the 1Malaysia Campaign?

## III. 1MALAYSIA CONCEPT

"1Malaysia is a concept to foster unity among Malaysians of all races, based on several important values which should be the practice of every Malaysian [2]."

That is what Dato Seri Mohd Najib emphasis on his concept of 1Malaysia. Since he takes over the government in 2009, he had introduced a concept called 1Malaysia in order to create oneness. Dato Seri Mohd Najib also explains that, to participate in this concept, every single individual, regardless of races and religion, should stand, think and act

as Malaysians and take actions based on the needs of all ethnic groups in our country

In [3] (an official booklet published by Information Department), it also indicates the importance of having an attitude of acceptance, where people should accept the uniqueness of the others by not questioning and arguing them too much. We have our own rights and privileges, and let's not live against it, so that we can live together in peace and mutual respect as citizens of one nation.

This notion is based on the argument that, to achieve a developed nation status, as outlined in Vision 2020, we must have a strong and stable country, where it could only be accomplished when unity is achieved, among the people.

The foundation of 1Malaysia concept will be the Malaysian's main instrument to thwart the various threats and challenges that aim to threaten and disrupt the sanctity of our lives. 1Malaysia also seeks to generate the relationship and collaboration among the multi ethnic people in this country.

Above all, the goal of 1Malaysia is to make Malaysia more vibrant, more productive and more competitive and ultimately a greater nation. To be a good citizen, each person should put their ethnocentrism aside and act as Malaysian, regardless of what races they are [4].

From years to years, the government do not failed to remind the Malaysians about the importance to respect each other. Using all kinds of media, the messages, along with the 1Malaysia slogan, were often repeated. As what defines in marketing field, a slogan is one of the most important communication tools, which can triggers the feelings. Perhaps, that is what Dato Seri Mohd Najib noticed. By using slogan, '1Malaysia' might help to enhance the sense of unity among Malaysians.

This concept, if applied by all concerned, is also able to turn Malaysia into a more peaceful, well-grounded and progressive nation, in every endeavor, that will be respected by the world over. To make this concept a success, it really takes a huge effort, not only from the government, but from the citizens as well. Each Malaysian should play his and her own role to ensure that, Malaysia will grow to be a very prosperous country in the world, and soon will be respected by others.

## IV. THE SIX NKRA UNER 1MALAYSIA

In July 2009, Dato Seri Mohd Najib comes out with a plan, what he called as National Key Results Area (NKRA). NKRA is one of the government's efforts to meet the needs of the people after the 12th general election. In NKRA, it had identified six aspects of attention the government will attend with, and each will be conducted by a lead minister and their work will be examined through a system called Key Performance Index (KPI). This KPI system needs every lead minister to attain certain targets in performing their jobs. As in [4], the six NKRA identified under this program are:

- Reducing Crime
- Fight Corruption
- Improving Student Outcomes
- Raising Living Standards of Low Income Household
- Improving Rural Basic Infrastructure

- Improving Urban Public Transport

Each NKRA is leaded by a minister. Reducing crime is led by the Minister Of Home Affairs, fighting corruption led by the Minister in the PM's Department (in charge of law), improving student outcomes led by the Minister Of Education, raising living standards of low income household led by the Minister Of Women, Family And Community Development, improving rural basic infrastructure (led by the Minister of Rural and Regional Development) and lastly improving urban public transport led by the Minister Of Transport

## V. 1MALAYSIA LOGO



Fig. 1. 1Malaysia logo.

1Malaysia logo (As Fig. 1 show) symbolizes the country's vision to create a cohesive society and patriotism based on the Constitution and the National Pillars. 1Malaysia logo reflects the people that work together, possessing self-reliant, thinking and embrace a vision to build a nationality.

## VI. METHODOLOGY

This study used two research methods. To answer the first and second research questions, researcher conducted an interview. An interview had been done with the Deputy Director, Communication Service and Community Relation division (CSCR), from the Information Department, under Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture of Malaysia (MICC), named Sharifah Mariam Binti Syed Delawi.

The second research method was held by questionnaire survey. This survey involved 90 respondents consisting of three different races (Malay, Chinese and Indian). Each race represents 30 adults (15 female and 15 male).

## VII. RESULT

### A. Strategies Used by Information Department to Promote the 1Malaysia Campaign

According to the conversation with the Deputy Director of CSCR, Syed Delawi [5], Information Department is a department which responsible to market anything that relates to the policies, philosophy and vision of the government. As 1Malaysia also includes in the government policy, it also becomes the responsibility of the Information Department to promote it.

The first thing they did to implement 1Malaysia is, to restructure back all its vision, mission and objectives; to be aligned with the concept of 1Malaysia. Previously, under Prime Minister Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the

Information Department is under the Ministry of Information, but now, under Dato Seri Mohd Najib Tun Razak administration, the Information Department had been allocated under the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture (MICC) since 2009. And since then, all objectives of the department were driven by the concept of 1Malaysia.

Up to this point, CSCR had done a lot of programs that supports 1Malaysia. According to [5] CSCR strategy in promoting the campaign always includes those three factors; Participation by all races, two way interaction and to have a touch point.

To support the 1Malaysia Campaign, Information Department had provided several programs throughout the year as their main approach. An event marketing approach is applied in all of their campaign activities. This is to ensure that they can directly go to the intended audiences, and manage to have two way communications. By using this kind of approach, it helps engaging the people together with the programs and activities they coordinate, such as:

- The 1Malay Speech (Non Malay) Program
- 1Malaysia Nationhood Story
- Local Dialogue Program
- Brilliant Scholars Program
- Wagon Stage Program
- Focus Group Program
- Love Bonding Program
- Information Centre Service Program

Not only that, besides the regular programs they organized, they also arranged annual programs, such as, during the Independence Day; which includes Kembara Merdeka Program, Jalur Gemilang Wave Program and 1Malaysia Muhibbah Program which takes place in July until September every year. Prime Minister Dato Seri Mohd Najib as cited in [6] had said, "*By flying the Jalur Gemilang, it implies that people understand the value of independence and the sense of loyalty as well as inspiring the national spirit to the country which nobody can deny and hesitate*".

Information Department also provides visual display and printed materials of 1Malaysia Campaign. Compact disc (CD) that contains Malaysia patriotic songs, 1Malaysia posters, leaflets and booklets were also distributed throughout the country. This visual display and printed materials act as a communication tools whenever they wanted to explain about the 1Malaysia Campaign, especially when the program held at the rural areas.

Ref. [5] also stated that, not only through exhibition, the public as well can get all those pamphlets and small books directly through the website by downloading it. If we browse the Information Department's website, we can see that there are a few categories able to download, such as articles, eBook, ePaper, eBorang, ePhoto, 3D documents, pamphlets, information books, small books, bulletins and speeches from the Minister of Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture, Dato Seri Utama Rais Yatim and, as well as, from the Prime Minister itself.

In another attempt, [5] also mentioned that, they had created a portal named '1Click' where people can get information about Malaysia and its countries. Information Department also created their own Facebook and Twitter account to communicate with the public. Not only that, [5] also said that they also used video conferencing to communicate with the public if there is any geographical barrier do limits them.

Not only using new media, Information Department also sent its representative to distribute all those information pamphlets and small books they published, to all government buildings, schools, publics and to whatever events they participate as well.

Apart from all promotional campaigns, voluntary organization also had been set up to support the 1Malaysia Campaign, called 1Malaysia Community. 1Malaysia Community Organization will cooperate with the Information Department to organize small talks and dialogues at chosen village, to disseminate information to the people, to organize events that relates to culture and arts as well as to lend a hand for any voluntary activities. This organization also will go to certain village to provide community services assistance, such as, repair the leaking roof and repaint the houses. Ref. [5] added that, this is where the strategy of touch point occur. Touch point strategy is to supply their needs and wants, and so that it could tackle their heart.

Not only voluntary organization, CSCR also had set up two types of club, named 1Malaysia Club and Independence Day Child Club. 1Malaysia Club is dedicated especially to the school students. The club activities are more concentrated onto patriotic programs, such as supporting and get involved in the Independence Day Travel program.

### B. Obstacles that the Information Department Faces in Promoting 1Malaysia Campaign

However, the department also faced certain obstacles. According to [5], the obstacle CSCR faces is much more on the external influences. As [7] once mentioned that, the external influences are pressure that originates outside the organization.

This anti government movement is one of the greatest challenges for the Information Department, as they bring in the hatred movements into the community.

According to [5] it could go worst when foreign news agency received the news. Information Department through its International Relationship Division (one of the division under the Information Department) will take suitable actions, such as to issue a press release to explain the real condition.

This kind of thing really challenges the Information Department into realizing the 1Malaysia Campaign. This demonstration might describe that Malaysia is not a safe place to the people. When people have this type of feelings, then they will not accept the 1Malaysia campaign, as what they are experiencing is not as what they are expecting.

As the campaign originated from the government itself, it is natural to have negative feedback from the opposition party. As far as possible, the opposition coalition wishes to thwart the 1Malaysia Campaign, so that they can promote their own concept. Especially in states that run by opposition party, as example, in Selangor, 1Malaysia logo is not allowed to be printed in any types of banner, and bill board advertising. This creates a hard time for the department to tackle Selangor people and to promote the campaign. 1Malaysia slogan also had become a

controversial when the opposition leader from Permatang Pauh, the Member of Parliament, Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the 1Malaysia slogan was copied from the One Israel Campaign and was allegedly related to APCO Worlwide.

The information gap feeds a second impediment to virtual democracy. Information gap is those without the requisite technology will have diminished access to the information it makes available [8]. The lack of technological access among people who are staying in rural areas opens the barriers. When rural people does not received the actual information, so it takes a very hard effort for the State Information Department and it's District Information Office to re-explain back and convince them with the actual right information. For rural areas, using mass media sometimes is not efficient, but a face to face communication is more than effective enough.

Message sometimes were interpreted wrongly by the receiver. It is because not all people have the same view on a same issue. Information Department cannot totally ensure that the message they bring about the 1Malaysia Campaign is correctly understood by the people. It is because; individual experience and group processes are influenced with many demographic attributes, besides race and gender. As Malaysia consists of huge demographic diversity, it create social categories in which in turn lead to social physiological process that can create the feelings of isolation, discomfort and confusion [9].

In another aspect, the new emerging media which give an added value to our lives also do contributes to the hardship of CSCR. What a threat to them is, there are some bloggers who wrote bad writings about the 1Malaysia Campaign. Sometimes they move from a small scale of group and during the time, they keeping up promoting their ideology and collect members, especially through Facebook; where anyone can click "like" or volunteer to be in their group members. They used negative group name such as 'We hate Najib' and '1Malaysia hate Najib'. It may bring negative influences and soon may affect the reader's opinions.

### C. Public Perception on the 1Malaysia Campaign

When comes on perceptions, the findings figured out that majority of the respondents perceived the campaign positively. 38.9% the respondent of all races perceived the campaign as a way in promoting unity among Malaysians. The youth and the senior citizens perceived the same way of thinking, except the middle age group. They tend to believe that the campaign is just merely a political agenda.

68% of the respondent believed that the concept of 1Malaysia is benefiting to all Malaysians, disregard what race they are. This explain that whatever the government is doing, it is not favor to only one race, but it covers all Malaysians

With 36.7%, the respondents perceive the campaign to promote the feel of inclusiveness among Malaysians.

Since the Prime Minister launch this approach there are a lot of transformation he did. All of these efforts, the respondents (46.7%) still expect on the stabilization of a country as the based to all transformation plans.

However, the respondents still frustrated about the achievement of the government to reduce crime and to fight corruption. When ask about the campaign continuity, the Malays really put high support and still expect Dato Sri Najib to lead the country compared to other races.

## VIII. DISCUSSION

1Malaysia Campaign is the government's noble effort to inculcate a sense of togetherness among all ethnics in Malaysia. The diversity in Malaysia is not just a purely unique; it is also a challenge.

The Information Department has adopted many medium of mass communication to promote this campaign to the community; some go directly to inform the community while others use other means of electronic and print media to relay the information. The variety of media is used because according to Limited Effect Theory, mass media have limited power in influencing the users. Therefore, the use of a single mass media communication is unable to ensure that the information is delivered to all users. People living in rural areas might have limited access to the internet thus distribution of printed materials such as pamphlets or small books might be more effective to transmit the information on 1Malaysia.

This is also supported by the Agenda Setting Theory. This theory stated that the media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda are interrelated. It proved that the Prime Minister's action in basing his administration on 1Malaysia has affected the media organization such as the broadcasting department (RTM). Besides, the principles of 1Malaysia are also formed from the voices of the general public.

Perception is the most difficult part to manage. Each individual have their own views and opinions. In addition, Malaysia is ethnically diverse. Each of their races has their respective interests which might lead to their accepting or rejecting the 1Malaysia Campaign. This is supported by Standpoint Theory which stated that individuals view the social institution from particular vantage of points, according to his or her social groups and social location.

This study found that that the Information Department is the backbone in promoting the 1Malaysia Campaign. Since the department has the most important function in transmitting information and all the government policies, indirectly 1Malaysia becomes very important in their task objectives.

In ensuring a continuous support for this campaign, it is compulsory, that 1Malaysia would benefits all parties. Bias in approaches must be avoided and it must be acceptable by all ethnic groups.

Last but not least, this campaign has to be effectively promoted to the community so that the concept and the meaning can be internalized.

## IX. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is not easy to achieve the objectives in the 1Malaysia Campaign. Therefore, cooperation from all parties is required. 1Malaysia Campaign is not just political rhetoric; it is a vision that should be supported by all citizens of Malaysia so that Malaysia can achieve the developed country status by the year 2020. "People First, Performance Now" must be maintained and improved so

that the country will be successful in all that it pursues and all our efforts today can help to drive the country in the future.

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