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Evaluation of effectiveness of teaching compulsory course in public institutions of higher education Malaysia

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effectiveness of teaching compulsory courses namely Malaysian Citizenship, Ethnic Relations and TITAS among students in the Public Institutions of Higher Education (IPTA) in Malaysia. This study involved 2320 respondents selected from 20 different IPTA. Data were collected through questionnaires which were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages are used to explain the background of the respondents and to assess the effectiveness of teaching these courses. Results showed that respondents choose unity and racial cultures as the topics which should be incorporated in course content. For methods of teaching, the respondents preferred the marks to be given based on 60% of class related, 20% projects and 20% of group activities. Respondents prefer tasks related to ethnic relations and unity whilst RT and off-campus activities being the preferred choice in completing assignments.

Keywords: Compulsory course; ethnic relations TITAS; generic skills; higher learning; Malaysian citizenship; public university

1. Introduction

There are three compulsory courses offered in all Public Institutions of Higher Education (IPTA) namely Malaysian Citizenship course, Islamic Civilization and Asian Civilization course (TITAS) and Ethnic Relations course (HE). The introduction of these courses is as a tool to achieve understanding and unity among students. In addition, the objectives of this course can apply a high sense of belonging to the country and promote tolerance among various races in Malaysia.

Study on evaluation of teaching effectiveness for Ethnic Relations course, TITAS and Malaysian Citizenship have been widely conducted by researchers. But these studies are not comprehensive but rather focus on their respective institutions. Thus, this study is conducted to fill the void by conducting a comprehensive study involving all IPTA in Malaysia.

2. Background of the Study

Students at the university are to be scholars, leaders and will live a cosmopolitan cultural life of the country. They are a reflection of the country’s present shape and also the future. Debate in the print media, electronic and
cyber media about ethnic relations among students in universities tend to lean towards the negative perception of ethnic relations. The debate of negative perception among the media and scholars also becomes a polemic among politicians and policy makers who feel that national unity is fragile and can produce an unstable political order to the extent which can undermine the nation’s progress.

Therefore, compulsory university courses were introduced to solve the problem. Thus, it is important for the objectives of these courses to be achieved; its achievements should be studied. Therefore, this study will only focus on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness in Ethnic Relations, TITAS and Malaysian Citizenship courses. This study is important because through the effectiveness of teaching, the course objectives can be met. For that purpose, the aim of this study is to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of teaching Ethnic Relations course, TITAS and Malaysian Citizenship in IPTA and suggesting the required modifications. Findings of this study will be used to make improvements to the teaching of these three courses at IPTA.

3. Previous Study

A study conducted by Lazerson, Wagener & Shumanis (2000) showed that only 1/3 of the 1400 higher education institutions in the USA are assessing their students on "higher-order learning skills, affective development or professional development". So it is not surprising when Oblinger & Verville (1998) wrote that many employers reported that graduates of today are weak in some skills such as writing, oral communication, teamwork and lifelong learning. This proves that employers look for graduates who have the capacity or skills in problem solving, teamwork, communication and leadership.

In Malaysia, the failure of graduates to secure employment is because they do not have the soft skills or soft skills that the employers need. A study by Haslinda, Muhammad Nubli and Zarina (2005) found that the employability of each graduates are evaluated in various aspects and the employers tend to look for potential employees who have various skills without having to give in-service training. Studies conducted by the Centre for Academic Development (CADE) UPM find issues related to soft skills ranked tenth during an interview compared with academic issues ranked eighteen (SHATAR and Azali Mohamad Mohamad, 2008). This indicates that the matters related to the formation of students soft skills need to be given serious consideration, particularly at Institutions of Higher Education in our country.

The importance of human resource development in developing countries has long been recognized. According to Rahmah (2007), several countries in this region are able to achieve high economic growth through a careful human resource development despite very little physical capital. Instead, there are some countries that are rich in physical capital but failed to achieve high economic growth because the weakness of human resource development. This statement is supported by Kamal and May (1996), who stated that human resource development serves as an asset builder which solves problems creatively to ensure the success of talented and interested employers.

Chan Yuen (2000) stressed that nowadays, organizations no longer require a large workforce, instead knowledgeable and highly skilled workforce. This is because knowledgeable and highly skilled employees could ensure the survival the organization. Mohd Faizal (2005) present the characteristics of knowledgeable and highly skilled workers namely possessing various skills, versatile, creative and able to deal with on-going technological change and pursue lifelong learning process and these workers familiarize in the use of latest technology to avoid any problems in this globalization era.

It can be summarized that the interest in the mastery of soft skills among workers to accomplish a task more efficiently and effectively has been realized by most organizations. Higher education institutions should take the initiative to prepare students who meet the needs of employees and employers. In addition, according to The Conference Board of Canada (2004), employers need workers who can communicate effectively, think critically, showing commitment to continuous learning process, showing proper character and behavior, responsible, intelligently adaptable and can work in a group.

According to Lukman (2005), a quality IPTA is able to produce quality graduates not only in academics, but also in terms of other skills including leadership, communication skills, noble values and so forth. According to Sharifah Hapsah (2005), quality assurance in IPT is to ensure that graduates produced have the technical and practical skills, professional, technical thinking management skills, communication and information management skills and lifelong learning. Department of Higher Education (MOE, 2006) has set the standard for all curricula in higher education in Malaysia should have a design that incorporated the generic skills which include, (i) the skills to think, act, adapt, solve problems and make decisions, (ii) interpersonal and communication skills, (iii) information technology skills, multimedia and information management skills, (iv) leadership skills, and (v) of entrepreneurial skills.

Thus, generic skills are necessary in every student. These skills do not just focus on the things they learned in their field (Lizzio & Wilson, 2004). These skills include communication skills, teamwork and problem solving.
skills. In order to produce students with generic such skills, IPTs need to adopt elements that encourage the development of these skills in each student through the process of teaching and learning.

Generic skills make a person not only adaptable to changes and developments in the employment sector but also changes they face in their everyday life. Generic skills also provide an individual who will act as a citizen and worker in facing rapid and continuous technological change (Sharifah Noor Anita, 2002). Thus, today's graduates must have the skills demanded by employers in addition to the increasingly challenging job market. Thus, it is the responsibility of Institutions of Higher Education to generate graduates with a balanced and comprehensive skills either from the aspects of attitude, character, and so forth. Mohd Safarin and Mohd Zolkifli (2005) in their study concluded that to better position themselves and compete in today's global job market, local graduates should have the elements of generic skills in addition to academic education. According to them, the elements of soft skills will enable an employee to use all the knowledge and skills in any job.

In addition, Reigeluth (1999) states that generic skills are skills that can be applied across different subject domains. This means that, with the generic skills of an individual will be able to adapt themselves to any changes. Workers who possess generic skills are flexible, dynamic and competent in their work. Generic skills are also known as employable skills in the ability to perform skills such as working with more practical and realistic manner.

Hassan Said in Soft Skills Development Module (soft skills) for Institutions of Higher Learning (2006), states that the Higher Education Institutions need to emphasize the importance of soft skills or soft skills viewed as a critical contributor in generating a comprehensive human capital as well as be able to bring competition at the global level. In a study conducted by Green F (2001), these generic skills (soft skills) is so important since they are able to produce multi-skilled workers (overall employability), able to move from other sectors, ready to face the changes to improve the autonomy of workers, optimistic employees, employees who have always wanted to learn throughout their life, and workers who deal with the changing culture in the workplace.

4. Methodology

This study will use quantitative and qualitative research. Qualitative data obtained through focus group discussions and quantitative data through questionnaires distributed to 20 IPTA. A total of 116 questionnaires for each IPTA were distributed with 2320 number of respondents. These respondents were divided based on purposive sampling and was evenly distributed; only 20 respondents in each ethnic groups in each of selected universities. (20 percent Malay, 20 percent of Sarawak Bumiputera, 20 percent of Sabah Bumiputera, 20 percent Chinese and 20 percent Indian). This study has developed research instrument that is their assessment of the Ethnic Relations course, TITAS and Malaysian Citizenship course in IPTA. Instruments built in the form of the questionnaire will be tested (pilot research) in UKM and then purified.

5. Analysis and Research Findings

5.1. Respondents Background

Table 1 shows that the distribution of respondents is mainly Malays (51 percent), followed by Chinese (21 percent), Indian (12 percent), Sarawak Bumiputera and Sabah Bumiputera with 8 percent respectively. The majority of respondents were women. Indian ethnic recorded the highest percentage (64 percent), followed by Sarawak Bumiputera (61 percent), Chinese (58 percent), and Malays (58 percent). Most of the respondents of each ethnic consist of young people aged 24 years and below. Majority of them are below the age of 22 years old which came from the Chinese (62 percent), Sarawak Bumiputera (57 percent), Sabah Bumiputera (55 percent), Indian (55 percent) and Malays (49 percent). The majority of respondents have STPM, Chinese (87 percent), Indian (83 percent), Sarawak Bumiputera (60 percent) and Sabah Bumiputera (53 percent) except the Malays which mostly have matriculation qualification. The majority of respondents of each ethnic group reside in residential colleges rather lodging outside of the campus. In descending order according to ethnicity percentage, most students who reside in residential colleges consist of Sarawak Bumiputera (92 percent), followed by Indian (89 percent), Sabah Bumiputera (89 percent), Malay (87 percent) and Chinese (84 percent).
Female

| Age                | 58 | 61 | 48 | 58 | 64 |
|--------------------|----|----|----|----|----|
| Less than 22 years old | 49 | 57 | 55 | 62 | 55 |
| Between 22 – 24 years old | 47 | 40 | 41 | 36 | 44 |
| More than 24 years old | 4  | 3  | 4  | 2  | 1  |

Religion

| Religion  | 100 | 36  | 40  | 1  | 2  |
|-----------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| Islam     | -   | 61  | 59  | 20 | 8  |
| Christian | -   | 1   | 1   | 76 | 1  |
| Buddhist  | -   | 1   | 1   | 87 | 1  |
| Hindu     | -   | 1   | -   | 87 | 1  |
| Others    | -   | 1   | -   | 2  | 2  |

University Entrance Qualification

| Qualification  | 37  | 34  | 39  | 9  | 7  |
|----------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| Matriculation  | 37  | 34  | 39  | 9  | 7  |
| STPM           | 27  | 60  | 53  | 87 | 83 |
| Others         | 36  | 6   | 8   | 4  | 10 |

Residence during study period

| Residence          | 87  | 92  | 89  | 84 | 89 |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|----|
| Residential Colleges | 87  | 92  | 89  | 84 | 89 |
| Lodgings           | 8   | 6   | 7   | 11 | 8  |
| Own Place          | 4   | 2   | 2   | 1  | 1  |
| Parents            | 1   | -   | 2   | 4  | 2  |

5.2 Malaysian Citizenship Course

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents, regardless of ethnic acknowledge that Malaysian Citizenship course which is introduced to students in IPTA and IPTS are intended to nourish patriotism. This is so because the content of the course module adopted elements of patriotism among students. Highest agree level is recorded from Sarawak Bumiputera (47 percent) and lowest is the Chinese (36 percent). Most respondents agreed with this statement and can accept the arguments found in Malaysia Citizenship course because it emphasizes the concepts of unity and nation building. This can be seen, that the percentage of the highest agree level from Sarawak Bumiputera (54 percent) and lowest from Chinese (37 percent). The majority of respondents also agreed that the course should be continued and Malaysian Citizenship is taught to all students at the university. Agree level that recorded the highest percentages is Indian and Malay (54 percent). This shows that students began to realize the importance of this course in fostering patriotism and self-esteem of Malaysian. The majority of respondents agreed with the opinion that the Malaysian Citizenship course has further strengthened the Citizenship bonding among the students at the university. Table 19 shows the percentage of Malay students recorded the highest level of agree level (54 percent) than Chinese (37 percent). This course will help students of various races to develop attitudes and values in addition to increasing patriotism to the country and the government.

Table 2. Students View on Citizenship Course

| Citizenship Course Reignites the Spirit of Loving The Country | Malay Bumiputera | Sarawak Bumiputera | Sabah Bumiputera | Chinese | Indian |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|--------|-------|
| Strongly disagree                                             | 7               | 4                  | 6                | 8      | 5     |
| Disagree                                                      | 11              | 12                 | 9                | 18     | 13    |
| Moderately agree                                             | 11              | 16                 | 21               | 28     | 17    |
| Agree                                                         | 44              | 47                 | 42               | 36     | 43    |
| Strongly agree                                               | 27              | 21                 | 22               | 10     | 22    |
Acceptance of The Arguments in Malaysia Citizenship Course

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Moderately agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|------------------|-------|---------------|
| 3                 | 3        | 2                | 3     | 3             |
| 7                 | 6        | 9                | 11    | 9             |
| 26                | 24       | 28               | 44    | 24            |
| 52                | 54       | 48               | 37    | 52            |
| 12                | 13       | 13               | 5     | 12            |

Should Malaysia Citizenship Continue

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Moderately agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|------------------|-------|---------------|
| 3                 | 2        | 4                | 5     | 4             |
| 7                 | 6        | 4                | 14    | 8             |
| 11                | 15       | 21               | 25    | 17            |
| 54                | 51       | 47               | 47    | 54            |
| 25                | 26       | 24               | 9     | 17            |

Malaysia Citizenship Course Strengthen Citizenship Bonding

| Strongly disagree | Disagree | Moderately agree | Agree | Strongly agree |
|-------------------|----------|------------------|-------|---------------|
| 4                 | 4        | 4                | 8     | 3             |
| 7                 | 8        | 10               | 19    | 16            |
| 14                | 19       | 26               | 29    | 21            |
| 54                | 48       | 38               | 37    | 41            |
| 21                | 21       | 22               | 7     | 19            |

The above findings indicate that the Citizenship Course has successfully inculcated patriotism among students. Government’s efforts to strengthen the Citizenship bonding through the course were well received by students from various ethnic groups. The majority of respondents agreed that the Malaysia Citizenship course should be continued because it has helped to improve racial relationships at the university. In addition, this course also helps students to understand more about the background, process and historical formation of Malaysia.

5.3 TITAS course

Table 3 shows that the majority of respondents agreed that the main purpose of Islamic Civilization and Asian Civilization course is to provide an overview and understanding to students about thinking, enculturation, history and civilization of various ethnic groups in Malaysia have been reached in which about 50 percent of respondents who represent every ethnicity has agreed to this statement. Respondents admitted to accept the arguments in the Islamic Civilization and Asian Civilization course. Highest agree level is recorded at 64 percent for Malay, whilst Chinese at 36 percent. This is because the arguments contained in these courses are relevant and closely related with the issues of civilization and culture in society. The majority of 50 percent of respondents agreed that this course should be continued despite the lowest percentage of ethnic Chinese which is at 36 percent. This indicates that they are very keen to learn this course and aware of its importance in building a generation of Malaysians who are knowledgeable and sensitive to the issues of civilization and culture. The majority of students agreed that the Islamic Civilization and Asian Civilization course has enhanced their understanding of civilization and culture of other societies. Malay respondents recorded the highest agree level of 56 percent. This course has helped students to be more aware of issues of civilization in social life.

| Table 3. Students view on TITAS course |
|----------------------------------------|
| Islamic Civilization and Asian Civilization Course Provides Understanding | Malay | Sarawak Bumiputera | Sabah Bumiputera | Chinese | Indian |
|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------|------------------|--------|-------|
| Strongly disagree           | 3     | 2                  | 4                | 10     | 8     |
| Disagree                    | 5     | 16                 | 13               | 19     | 11    |
| Moderately agree            | 8     | 13                 | 15               | 21     | 16    |
| Agree                       | 56    | 50                 | 45               | 41     | 52    |
| Strongly agree              | 28    | 19                 | 23               | 9      | 13    |

Acceptance of The Arguments in Islamic Civilization
Respondents gave a positive reaction to the Islamic Civilization and Asian Civilization course offered in universities. This course is very important to the students in creating an individual who is knowledgeable and sensitive to the issues of civilization. Through this course, students will gain insight and understanding of the strength of an ancient civilization in building a new civilization. Therefore, as the younger generation, they realized that by building collaboration and strong ties with other races, they can contribute to the development of today’s civilization.

5.4 Ethnic Relations Course

Table 4 demonstrates that around 50 percent of respondents did agree that the main purpose of ethnic relations has successfully exposed, enhance the understanding and the life experience of the multi-ethnic community to the students. This is explained by the fact that students have been exposed to the concept of the community, ethnic plurality and understanding regarding social cooperation in Malaysia and the basis of the ethnic relations’ harmony. The majority of the students admits, and they are able to accept the arguments contained in the Ethnic Relations course. The Malay students have brought in the highest percentage of agreement which is 61 percent as compared to the Chinese (45 percent). This is because, this course has focused on the discussion on the basic concepts of culture and ethnic relations in Malaysia for the purpose of building the harmony of the country. Students admit that Ethnic Relations course enrollment enhances their understanding on the significance of national unity among the multi-racial citizens in this country. The highest percentage of argument would be from the Malay respondents which is 60 percent. The diversity of culture, language and religion has contributed to Malaysia being a unique and harmonious country. Around 60 percent of the students had chosen steps that involved lectures, assignments and activities to ensure the success of the ethnic relations course in Higher-learning Institutions. Malay respondents have made the highest percentage which is 72 percent, and this is followed by the Sarawak Bumiputera (68 percent), Sabah Bumiputera (67 percent), also Chinese and Indians with each 65 percent. A large number of respondents agreed that the step taken is crucial, to ensure the success of the Ethnic Relations course.

Table 4. Students’ Opinion on The Ethnic Relations Course

| The Ethnic Relations Course Has Exposed, Enhance the Understanding and Life Experiences In the Multi-Racial Community to the Students | Malay | Sarawak Bumiputera | Sabah Bumiputera | Chinese | Indian |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 |
| Disagree | 5 | 6 | 7 | 16 | 10 |
| Slightly disagree | 7 | 15 | 16 | 25 | 19 |
| Agree | 63 | 56 | 53 | 47 | 47 |
Ethnic relations course is very important to the students in exposing them to the development of ethnic relations in Malaysia. Through this course, students are given the explanation on the social cooperation in Malaysia and the fundamental of racial relations’ harmony. It can be concluded that the majority of respondents are more interested in following this course through activities like lecture, assignments and others. This course also facilitates the students in bringing into application human values in their inter-racial lives in Malaysia.

5.5 Ethnic relations course Content and Teaching Methodology

| Table 5 : Students’ Opinion Towards The Ethnic relations course Content |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| Malay | Sarawak Bumiputera | Sabah Bumiputera | Chinese | Indian |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Compact, simple, profound, interesting and detailed | 10 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 8 |
| Government and political policies | 7 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 6 |
| Racial unity and culture | 31 | 33 | 31 | 38 | 33 |
| Current issues and outside activities | 8 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| Centralising on good moral values | 4 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Are already satisfied | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| No suggestion | 39 | 45 | 52 | 39 | 40 |

In line with the concept of racial diversity in Malaysia, unity and culture become the main selections for the respondents to be the substance for the course content. They also require the course content that is compact, simple, profound, interesting and detailed that challenge their minds as the products of the higher-learning institutions. To add to their skills, and to broaden their knowledge, most respondents have the opinion that current issues and outside activities must be carried out more actively- the opinion that stands out as the third most popular improvement.
Table 6. Students’ Opinion Towards Ethnic relations course Teaching Method

|                                | Malay Sarawak Bumiputera | Sabah Bumiputera | Chinese | Indian |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------|--------|
| Slide show, film and video shows | 8                        | 10               | 10      | 12     | 10     |
| No discrimination and biasness  | 2                        | 2                | 2       | 4      | 2      |
| Creative and open-minded       | 19                       | 12               | 9       | 15     | 17     |
| Group activities of various ethnic groups | 17                      | 17               | 15      | 18     | 17     |
| 60% class, 20% project, 20% group work | 19                      | 16               | 17      | 13     | 17     |
| Already satisfied              | 1                        | -                | -       | -      | -      |
| No suggestion                  | 34                       | 43               | 47      | 38     | 37     |
| Total                          | 100                      | 100              | 100     | 100    | 100    |

It is found that all the respondents tend to prefer mark assessment based on 60% class, 20% projects and 20% group. Next, they require creativity and openness as the second most popular mind brainstorming. The importance of communication and 1Malaysia-based surroundings, association and unity have caused group teaching and learning comprising of various ethnic groups the third most popular among the respondents.

Table 7. Students’ Opinion Towards Ethnic relations course Teaching Resources

|                        | Malay Sarawak Bumiputera | Sabah Bumiputera | Chinese | Indian |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------|--------|
| Books                  | 13                       | 7                | 4       | 5      | 12     |
| Newspaper              | 1                        | 1                | 1       | 1      | -      |
| Magazine               | 1                        | -                | -       | 1      | 1      |
| The Internet           | 3                        | 2                | 4       | 5      | 6      |
| Various resources      | 15                       | 16               | 14      | 17     | 19     |
| No suggestion          | 67                       | 74               | 77      | 71     | 62     |
| Total                  | 100                      | 100              | 100     | 100    | 100    |

In searching for the resources, various ways and methods have been used by the respondents, which have become the trend in the institutions. Focusing on books as teaching resource is the second popular resource among the respondents to precede other options like the Internet and others.

Table 8. Students’ Opinion Towards Ethnic relations course Assignments

|                                        | Malay Sarawak Bumiputera | Sabah Bumiputera | Chinese | Indian |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|---------|--------|
| Ethnic relations and unity assignments | 23                       | 26               | 25      | 29     | 25     |
| RT and off-campus activities           | 14                       | 13               | 9       | 6      | 12     |
| Interesting, creative, beneficial and challenging activities | 8                        | 4                | 3       | 5      | 7      |
| Group assignment (mixed-races) and funded | 13                      | 7                | 11      | 8      | 11     |
| Assignments concerning current issues and arguments | 3                        | 1                | 1       | 2      | 2      |
| Assignment involving interviews (public and prominent figures) | 3                        | 2                | 2       | 3      | 3      |
| No suggestion                          | 36                       | 47               | 49      | 47     | 40     |
| Total                                  | 100                      | 100              | 100     | 100    | 100    |

Based on high national sentiment, assignments that take the shape of ethnic relations and unity are the most favourable by the respondents. Then, Neighbourhood Watch and off-campus activities, are the second popular to enable the respondents to brush up their talent and skills in the actual environment. Funded intra-racial group work
is the second popular, seeking to inculcate understanding in the learning environment, indicating not limiting the productivity due to financial constraints. The data acquisition shows that most respondents tend to favour more assignments that test on their capability, inculcating integration and the effectiveness of the assignments through the combined ideas from these various races.

Table 9. Students’ Opinion Towards Ethnic relations course’s Other Methods

|                               | Malay Bumiputera | Sarawak Bumiputera | Sabah Bumiputera | Chinese | Indian |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------|--------|
| Racial activities and unity   | 1                | 2                  | 2                | 2       | 1      |
| Abolish written final exam and add credit hours | 1                | 1                  | -                | 1       | 1      |
| Add more Neighbourhood Watch and off-campus activities | 1                | 2                  | 2                | 1       | 4      |
| Undiscriminating leader or lecturer Current updated issues with more interesting module | 1                | 1                  | -                | 1       | 1      |
| No suggestion                 | 95               | 94                 | 95               | 95      | 91     |
| Total                         | 100              | 100                | 100              | 100     | 100    |

As a whole, respondents basically have uniform opinion but focus leans more on the Sabah Bumiputera and Sarawak Bumiputera, Chinese and Indians. These people are more into the idea of being involved in a lot of activities organized with other races. They are also open to the trend of diversifying off-campus and RT activities, other than the priority given to current issues and model updating to be made more attractive and more recent. Generally, in this part of the data acquisition, respondents are more neutral. The natives of Sabah and Sarawak were more passive in this section as compared to the Malays, Chinese and Indians who were more active and preferred the activities done with other races when carrying out their activities. There were also few of them who wished for the abolishment of written final exam and additional credit hours, other than them expressing the need to have leaders nominated from among the students and lecturers who do not discriminate people of other races.

6. Conclusion

The above study findings discuss students’ views and opinions concerning the teaching of core courses at the higher-learning institutions. Students did show positive response and agreed that the compulsory courses need to continue and be taught in all higher-learning institutions. For Malaysian Citizenship course, students are able to know and understand the background, process and the historical development of Malaysia. Automatically, this course is able to instill the element of patriotism and practise good moral values that exist within the students. Meanwhile, the understanding obtained through the course Islamic and Asian Civilisations can make the students knowledgeable and sensitive about civilization issues. Indirectly, this course helps in strengthening the sense of individuality in the nation as a multi-racial country, by practising life with tolerance and civilization.

Apart from that, Ethnic relations course also gain some positive responses among the students. Through this course, students are able to look at issues of ethnic relations and try to avoid conflicts that can tarnish national unity. As a whole, all the three courses serve as a good move to introduce culture, identity as well as solidifying the relationships among various races in Malaysia. Such a noble measure should receive strong support from all races, in order to produce a Malaysian community laden with good morale and high individuality, also adhering firmly to religious values and practices that they embrace.

For the course content, the finding has it that the respondents had selected the racial culture and unity course content to become the topic that needs to be inculcated in the course content. For the teaching method, the respondents had preferred marks evaluation based on 60% of class, 20% project and 20% group work as the main selections. In searching for the sources, various ways and methods have been used by the respondents, and obviously this has become a trend in the IPT (Higher-learning institutes). The respondents had shown favour over ethnic relations and unity and RT activities and off-campus had been chosen for them to carry out the tasks assigned to them. For other proposals, most of the respondents still suggested on activities to be done with other ethnic groups and a small number of respondents of various races had had differences of opinions.
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