

The Influence of Media in Branding the 1Malaysia Concept from the Perspective of Secondary School Students in Malaysia

¹Siti Maziha Mustapha, ²Amlil Hazlin Ahmad Mokhtar, ³Suhida Hani Suid,
⁴Farrah Alwani Hamzah, ⁵Dil Froz Jan

Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (IUKL), Malaysia

Abstract: The launch of the 1Malaysia concept in 2009 was part of the Malaysian government's holistic effort in transforming and branding the country by stressing on the multicultural features of the country with the aims of building a united and progressive nation. The 1Malaysia concept is built upon the foundation of Malaysia Federal Constitution various laws and policies, the Rukun Negara, Vision 2020 and the national mission. Regardless of the wide publicity received by the 1Malaysian concept, there has been very little research on the modes of communication used in promoting the concept. Thus, this study attempted to explore how the youngsters, specifically the secondary school students learned about the 1Malaysia concept and which modes of communication were found to be most effective for them. Questionnaires were distributed to 2200 secondary school students in Malaysia using stratified random sampling method. The findings showed that secondary school students learned about the 1Malaysia concept through television, newspapers, magazines and internet. Newspapers, magazine and radio were ranked as top three most effective modes of communication for the dissemination of the 1Malaysia concept. Majority of the students agreed that media plays an important role in disseminating information on the 1Malaysia concept. However, they felt that media only plays a neutral role in influencing their behaviour towards other ethnics in Malaysia. Thus, it is hoped that the findings from this study will serve as a platform for the 1Malaysia campaign planning unit to reassess their current stand and formulate future strategies to further enhance the acceptance of 1Malaysia among the youngsters.

Keywords: 1Malaysia, Media, Branding.

I. INTRODUCTION

1Malaysia became an extensive public relations campaign on September 16, 2008, the day it was first announced by the Prime Minister. All government agencies and civil servants were instructed to put priority on ethnic harmony, national unity and competent governance. 1Malaysia was part of the government's holistic effort in transforming and branding the country by stressing on the multicultural features of this country with the aims of building a united and progressive nation. Research on 1Malaysia concept has increased recently. According to Borneo Post (2012), a series of survey on 1Malaysia were been conducted in 2009, 2010 and 2011 to gauge the support of people toward 1Malaysia concept mooted by Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak in 2009 [1]. Most of the researches focus on the level of understanding and awareness about 1Malaysia concept among public, concept and values, acceptance and appreciation of the concept and media roles in promoting the concept. The campaign for the 1Malaysia concept has been carried out through a wide range of media for example, television, newspaper, magazine, radio, and internet.

Broadcasting media plays an important role in conveying information especially in youth's education context. Research done by Rubin and Perse (1987) showed that there are audience's involvement in the thinking aspects, feelings and behaviour parallel to television programme content [2]. The same result was also gathered from a research done by

Mariah and Zaridah in 2005 [3]. Consequently, the effect whether in the thinking level, feelings or behaviour does happen through audience's involvement with programme content by the broadcasting media especially television.

Regardless of the wide publicity received by the 1Malaysia concept, there has been limited research on the modes of communication used in promoting the concept. The effectiveness of the modes of how the 1Malaysia concept has been promoted has not been well researched. Thus, this study sought to fill that gap.

Therefore, this paper attempted to explore on how the secondary school students learn about the 1Malaysia concept and which modes of communication were found to be most effective for them. In addition, this research sought to find out the importance of media role in spreading information on 1Malaysia concept and to what extent did media influence secondary students' understanding of 1Malaysia concept and their behaviour.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In promoting the 1Malaysia concept, practitioners working on campaigns blanket the entire nation with signs, posters, buntings, billboards and many other media vehicles with repetitive use of 1Malaysia logo [4]. This human communication strategy ensures dissemination of messages via print and electronic media [5].

A survey was conducted by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in 2011 to determine the role of the media in disseminating the message about the 1Malaysia concept. This research revealed that more exposure is needed on the government's effort to fully convey the message to all Malaysians. The study observed that, "... the media is the most important tool to relay information to the people, including on government policies. The relaying of information to the public via television is more effective, when compared to other forms of media. Most of the respondents obtained information about 1Malaysia through news, shown on television. The influence (of television) is formidable and the ethnic communities like Malays, Chinese and Indians, have their own preferred channels." [6]

The traditional media such as the newspaper and television have always been the core media of information dissemination [7]. Based on the research conducted by Abdul Muati Ahmad & Saiful Nujaimi Abdul Rahman in 2005, electronic and print media were fully utilized by the government to disseminate information regarding their new policies to the people [8]. The study by UPM inspired this research to focus on the roles of media in disseminating information about 1Malaysia and whether it influences understanding and behaviour towards other ethnics.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the methodology employed in the study. The study was carried out using the survey approach. This section provides the description of the design of the research instrument, the sampling procedure, and the data collection method.

Research Instrument

The survey instrument was a two-page questionnaire. The questions relevant to this paper were in a section consisting of five questions. The first question was about how the respondents come to learn about the 1Malaysia concept. The second question required respondents to rank the effectiveness of media usage. The third question focused on the media roles in spreading information on 1Malaysia concept. The last two questions concentrated on media influences on the understanding the 1Malaysia concept and influencing behaviour towards other ethnics.

The completed questionnaire was pre-tested through a pilot survey using 70 respondents. The objective of the pilot survey was to test the content and clarity of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was produced in two languages, which are Malay and English.

The result of reliability test showed that the Cronbach's alpha of the overall 1Malaysia Concept Questionnaire was high at .899 as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Overall 1Malaysia Concept Questionnaire Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.899	.900	28

The final version of the questionnaires was distributed to 2200 secondary school students all over Malaysia using stratified random sampling method. Out of which, 1700 questionnaires were received and used in the analysis of the data. Table 2 presents the characteristics of respondents.

Table 2: Characteristics of the respondents

Categories	Characteristics	Percentage
Gender	Male	49.6
	Female	50.3
Ethnicity	Malay	67.6
	Chinese	20.2
	Indian	6.4
	Others	5.8
Age	13	15.4
	14	11.2
	15	8.8
	16	21.9
	17	31.9
	18	5.6
	19	5.8
State	Kuala Lumpur	22.9
	Selangor	12.8
	Negeri Sembilan	9.6
	Pahang	10.0
	Kelantan	8.4
	Johor	5.8
	Sarawak	6.0
	Sabah	6.6
	Perak	5.9
	Kedah	11.9

IV. RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the survey. It begins with a discussion on the influence of media in branding the 1Malaysia concept from the perspective of secondary school students in Malaysia. The results of media usage are examined. The last section presents the influence of media in the understanding of 1Malaysia concept and the influence of media in the respondents' behaviour towards other ethnics.

The findings of the study showed that secondary school students were first exposed to the 1Malaysia concept through television (85.6 per cent), newspapers (71.8 per cent), magazines (50.8 per cent) and internet (15 per cent) as indicated in Figure 1.

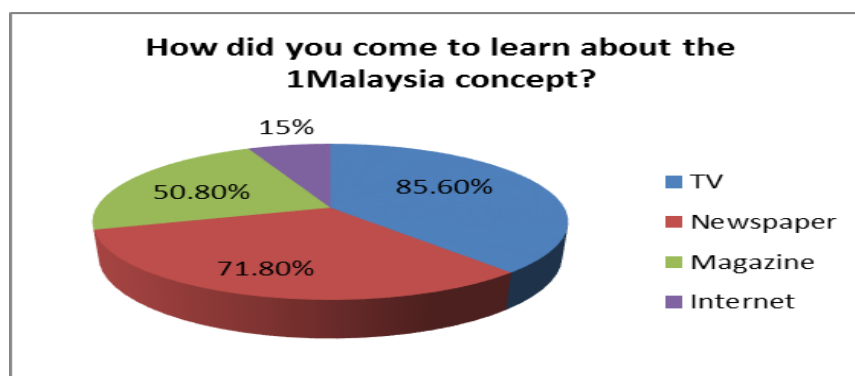


Figure 1: First exposure to 1Malaysia concept

The students were asked to rank the modes of communication used to spread the 1Malaysia concept that they thought was effective in helping them to understand the concept. Table 3 indicates that newspapers (46.8 per cent), magazine (30.9 per cent) and radio (30.1 per cent) were ranked as top three most effective modes of communication for the dissemination of the 1Malaysia concept.

Table 3: The ranking of modes of communication

Ranking	Media	Percentage
1.	Newspaper	46.8%
2.	Magazine	30.9%
3.	Radio	30.1%

When asked whether the students agree that media plays an important role in disseminating information on the 1Malaysia concept, majority of the students strongly agreed (38.5 per cent) that media plays an important role in disseminating information on the 1Malaysia concept. Only 2.3 per cent strongly disagreed.

Figure 2 shows the importance of media in disseminating information on the 1Malaysia concept.

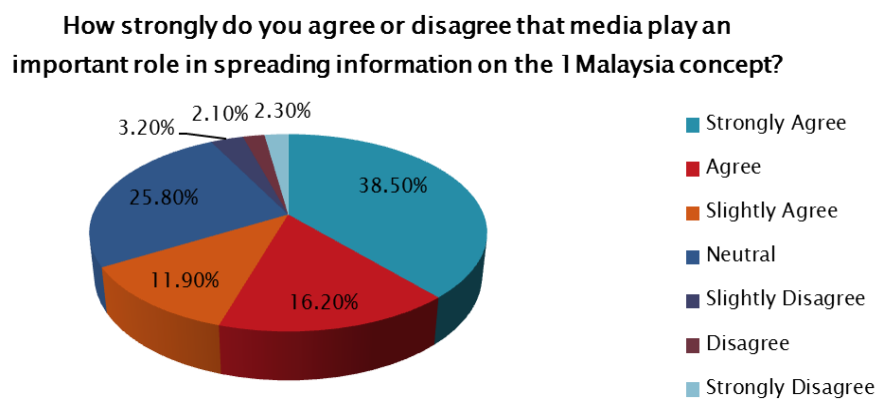


Figure 2: The importance of media

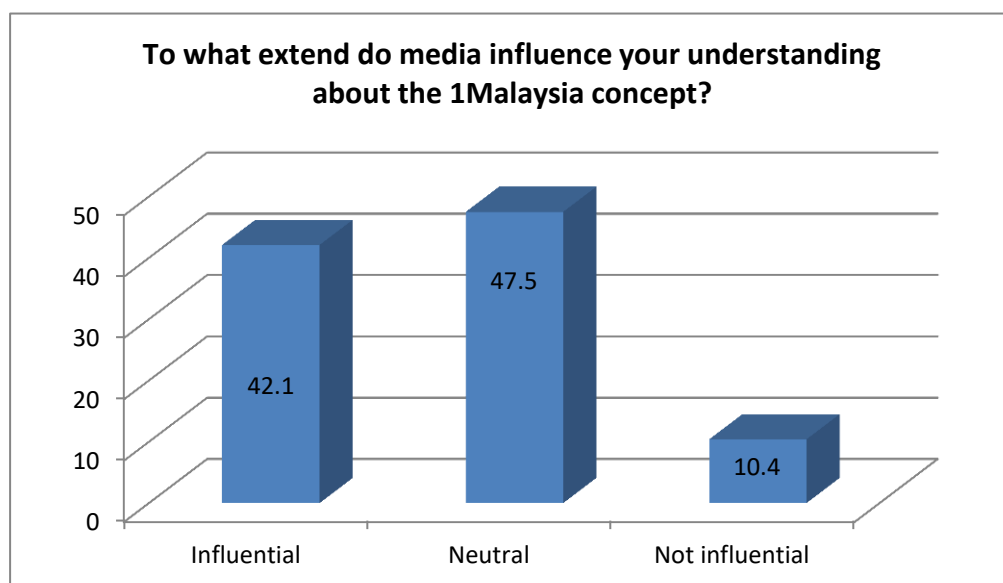


Figure 3: Media influence on students' understanding

Figure 3 summarizes the results of the extent in which media influences students' understanding of 1Malaysia concept. The results showed that respondents felt that media plays a neutral role in understanding (47.5 per cent) about 1Malaysia

concept. 42.1 per cent felt that media was influential in helping them to understand the 1Malaysia concept. Only 10.4 per cent felt that media was not influential.

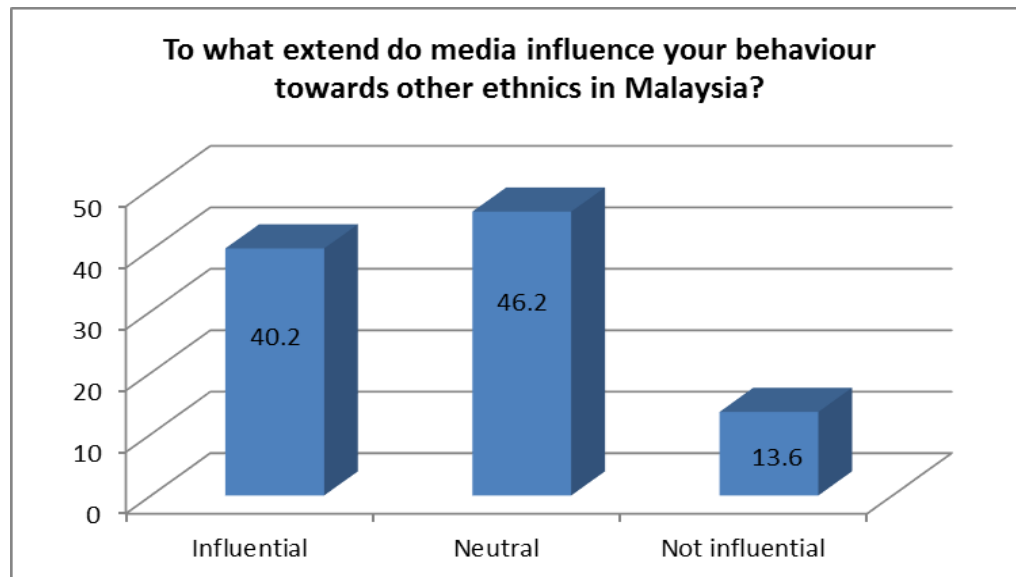
Table 4: Media influence on students' understanding based on states

States	Influential (%)	Neutral (%)	Not Influential (%)
Kuala Lumpur	54.1	33.8	12.1
Selangor	64.1	31.3	4.7
Negeri Sembilan	47.3	41.1	11.7
Pahang	52.1	33.1	14.8
Kelantan	59.1	29.6	11.2
Johor	57.2	34.7	8.1
Sarawak	78.4	15.7	5.9
Sabah	53.6	39.3	7.2
Perak	43	43	14
Kedah	57.2	30.8	12

Table 4 presents the media influence on students' understanding based on the states the secondary students are from. The understanding of the students from Sarawak (78.4 per cent) and Selangor (64.1 per cent) are most influenced by the media. The media has neutral influence on respondents from Perak (43 per cent). However, 14.8 per cent of respondents from Pahang specified that media has no influence in their understanding about the 1Malaysia concept.

Students were asked whether the media influences their behaviours towards other ethnics. Figure 4 summarizes how the respondents felt about the role of media. The results showed that media play a neutral role in influencing their behaviour (46.2 per cent) towards other ethnics in Malaysia.

Figure 4: Role of media in influencing students' behaviour



V. DISCUSSION

The findings confirmed that majority of the students learned about the 1Malaysia concept through television (85.6 per cent), followed by newspaper (71.8 per cent). This research finding is similar to Mohd Yusof Haji Abdullah and Ali Salman (2012), which stated that television was the main channel of exposure with 97 per cent of the respondents being exposed to the message by television, followed by the newspapers 84 per cent [9].

In disseminating information to the young generation, the use of new media is very crucial as they use the new media extensively [10]. In contrast, this research found that only 15 per cent of the respondents learned about the 1Malaysia concept through internet or new media. This could be due to various reasons including access to the internet.

In terms of the effectiveness of modes of communication used to spread the 1Malaysia concept, the respondents ranked printed media (newspapers and magazines) as the most effective modes of communication for the dissemination of the 1Malaysia concept. This might be due to the fact that audiences are in appropriate mental frame to process messages while reading the newspapers or magazines compared to while they are watching television or listening to the radio. The fact that newspapers are tangible, allows customers and prospects to be exposed to brand message when and where they prefer and to read and reread messages at their own pace for better comprehension [11]. Magazine is ranked second most effective mode because of its ability to include detailed information and attractive images. According to Simmon's Multimedia Engagement Study in Belch & Belch (2012), magazine scored significantly higher than television or the internet in advertising receptivity and other engagement dimension [12].

In addition this research found that majority of the students strongly agreed (38.5 per cent) that media plays an important role in disseminating information on the 1Malaysia concept. Only 2.3 per cent strongly disagreed. This is supported by the research done by Mohd Yusof Haji Abdullah and Ali Salman (2012) where they found that media played an important role to convey information on 1Malaysia concept. Media diversity such as print media, electronic media and new media help to make the message effective [13].

This research revealed that 47.5 per cent of the respondents answered that media plays a neutral role in shaping their behaviour towards other ethnics in Malaysia. From the research finding, it is inferred that media play important role in informing but less effective in making the audience change their behaviours.

The findings from this research strongly support the Limited Effect Theory. Paul Lazarsfeld claims that media effect is limited or minimal in changing or shaping people's thoughts, attitudes and actions. According to research by Paul Lazarsfeld in Rosenberry & Vicker (2009), the media apparently did not strongly or directly influence audience members [14].

VI. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal that media has limited effect in promoting 1Malaysia concept. Media is effective in disseminating information but inadequate in instilling the understanding of the concept and influencing the behaviour of the secondary school students towards other ethnics. This study revealed that the secondary school students from different states in Malaysia differed in terms of their perception towards the influence of media on their understanding of the 1Malaysia concept.

As such, it is highly recommended for the Malaysian government to strategically plan and implement an integrated marketing communication campaign, which include various communication activities or components using different media to effectively reach the specific target audiences.

Thus, it is hoped that the findings from this study will serve as a platform for the ministry's campaign planning unit to reassess their current stand and formulate future strategies to further enhance the acceptance of 1Malaysia among the youngsters.

REFERENCES

- [1] Surveys show 1Malaysia concept rightly understood, accepted. Retrieved from <http://www.theborneopost.com/> November 27, 2012
- [2] Rubin. A.M & Perse. E.M. Audience activity and soap opera involvement: A users & gratification approach. *Human Communication Research*, 14:58-84. 1987
- [3] Mariah Muda & Zaridah Abdullah. Memahami keterlibatan audien wanita pendatang asing indonesia dengan program-program tv tempatan. Paper presented at International Conference on Media & Communication: Communication, Globalisation and Cultural Identities. J.W Marriot Hotel, Putrajaya, 26-28 September. 2005
- [4] Mohd Adnan Hashim & Melina Mahpuz. "Tackling multiculturalism via human communication: A public relations campaign of 1Malaysia". *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, Vol. 2, No. 4. 2011
- [5] Survey reveals general acceptance of 1Malaysia. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://thestar.com.my/> February 19, 2012.

- [6] Media's role in moving 1Malaysia called crucial. Bernama. (n.d). Retrieved from http://1malaysia.com.my/my/news_archive/medias-role-in-moving-1malaysia-called-crucial/ November 27, 2012
- [7] Mohd Adnan Hashim & Melina Mahpuz. "Tackling multiculturalism via human communication: A public relations campaign of 1Malaysia". International Journal of Business and Social Science, Vol. 2, No. 4. 2011
- [8] Abdul Muati Ahmad & Saiful Nujaimi Abdul Rahman. (2005) Civilizational Islam: Promulgating the new approach of Islam in Malaysia, Human Communication. A publication of the Pacific and Asian Communication Association. Vol. 12, No. 3, pp 303-324.
- [9] Mohd Yusof Haji Abdullah & Ali Salman. "The dynamics of message processing among the young generation: The case of 1Malaysia", Asia Social Science, Vol. 8, No. 5. 2012.
- [10] Mohd Yusof Haji Abdullah & Ali Salman. "The dynamics of message processing among the young generation: The case of 1Malaysia", Asia Social Science, Vol. 8, No. 5. 2012.
- [11] Duncan. T. (2002). IMC using advertising and promotion to build brands. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- [12] Belch. G. E. & Belch. M. A. (2012.) Advertising and promotion: An integrated marketing communication perspective (9th Ed). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [13] Mohd Yusof Haji Abdullah & Ali Salman. "The dynamics of message processing among the young generation: The case of 1Malaysia", Asia Social Science, Vol. 8, No. 5. 2012.
- [14] Rosenberry. J & Vicker, L.A. (2009). Applied mass communication theory: A guide for media practitioners. Boston: Pearson.