

Peace Culture Practices Based on Islamic Values Among Secondary School Students in Malaysia

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Abstract

Peace Culture has been discussed widely especially in the education field to improve the well-being of students and society. However, the level of Peace Culture practices based on Islamic values among school students are still not widely researched. This study investigates the level of Peace Culture practices based on Islamic values among school students in Malaysia, and also the levels of Peace Culture dimensions which comprising (a) Refrainment (b) Forgiveness (c) Humility (d) Collaboration (e) Communication and (f) Peace. This article also examines teachers' perspectives on the level of Peace Culture among school students. A total of 298 students from 9 secondary schools participated in the study. The instrument used in this study is the Peace Culture instrument which was used in Uman's et al (2019) research. The findings of the study show the practices of Peace Culture among secondary school students is at a high level (min=3.62). As for the dimensions of Peace Culture, the highest level is Communication (min=4.12), followed by Humility (min=4.10), Peace (min=4.06), Refrainment (3.97), and Forgiveness and Collaboration (3.93). It is hoped that the findings of this study can give an overview on the level of Peace Culture among secondary school students in Malaysia thus can assist prompt activities to enhance and sustain the harmony and peace among school students in Malaysia.

Keywords: *Al Quran, Peace, Secondary School Students, Values*

INTRODUCTION

This article is an outcome from a joint research conducted by Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia and Indonesia Education University. Malaysia is a Muslim country whose official religion is Islam. According to Md Noor and Zanatun (2016), a religious approach can increase mental health, social functions and the quality of life, thus leading to peace, harmony dan well-being. Correspondingly, it is found that Peace Culture has been recognized to bring well-being in life although there are various differences in cultures and traditions in the society. The importance of Peace Culture is displayed as a significant necessity that helps in creating a peaceful and harmonious society even though the society consists of individuals with different backgrounds (Uman et al, 2019). This had also been emphasized in previous studies that expressed the importance of religions to create a harmonious and peaceful culture in some countries especially in Indonesia (Ismail, 2016; Kartaninata et al., 2016), Pakistan (Basharat, Azhar & Wajeeha, 2019), and Korea (Kim & Park, 2018).

In Malaysia, studies pertaining to harmony had also been conducted that involved concepts, challenges dan obstacles. (Ahmad Zulfadhli, Afareez, Faizah & Nik Ahmad Hisham, 2019), as well as methods to promote Peace Culture (Ahmad Zulfadhli, Afareez, Faizah & Nik Ahmad Hisham, 2019). Nevertheless, studies that focuses on the level of Peace Culture among secondary school students are still lacking, even though these students are future leaders. Farid (2016) also stressed on the importance of inculcating attitudes, values, behaviours and skills in school students for them to become agents of social changes for the well-being of the country and its citizens.

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In 2019, there were 2,007,692 secondary schools students in Malaysia and there is not much difference in the number for this year (Ministry of Education, Malaysia, 2020). According to the Senior Vice Chairman of Malaysian Criminal Prevention Foundation, although there were more than 5 million students arrested for criminal offences, the number should had not involved those who were still in the educational institutions, hence this matter should be handled urgently since criminal offences involving students were at an alarming level (Muhammad Apendy, 2019). This report also revealed the rise of criminal offences under the category of violent and possession crime from 2017 to 2018. School students will be entering adulthood in just a few years after leaving schools. Therefore, Peace Culture should be given emphasis on them as it can enhance peace, stability and productivity of a country.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the study conducted by Uman et al. (2019), there were 6 significant dimensions in Peace Culture. Peace Culture is based on the Quran, perceiving individuals as *hablumminannaas* and *hablumminallah*. According to Uman, the concept of *hablumminannaas* refers to the relationship between human and another human, whereas *hablumminallah* refers to the relationship between human and Allah. These relationships lead to peace and harmony when one's beliefs motivate them to practise good deeds to oneself and to the society.

The dimensions of Peace Culture as presented by Uman and others (2019) were Refrainment, Forgiveness, Humility, Collaboration, Communication and Peace. Refrainment refers to perseverance and patience in refraining oneself from doing something/committing misdeeds and not to surrender easily. Forgiveness is a value which is emphasized in Peace Culture that recommends Muslims to forgive themselves and others. Having this value, one becomes calmer and this will create harmony and peace in oneself which can then be projected to others. This is emphasized in the Quran, "And hasten (in doing good deeds so as) to earn the forgiveness of your Lord and a Garden as wide as heaven and earth, prepared for those who are God-conscious; That is those who spend in the way of Allah alike in prosperity and in adversity, and for those who control their anger and who forgive their fellowmen. And (remember) Allah loves those who do good" (Ali Imran 3:133-134). Apart from that, a content analysis qualitative study conducted by Mastura and Farahwahida (2020) found that verses in Surah Yusuf in the Quran stressed that learning to forgive mistakes should start from the educators mainly parents. Teachers are also parents to their students when educating them in schools. A study conducted by Schull (2015) found that forgiveness had a negative correlation to depression. In other words, when forgiveness increases, the feeling of vengeance decreases which also decreases depression and thus increases the psychological well-being of oneself.

Besides, Humility is another value which is taught in Islam. It can deter the feelings of envy and arrogance in the society and thus, leading to Peace Culture in the society. It is emphasized in the Quran and Hadith: "(These are) those who believe and whose hearts find restfulness in the remembrance of Allah. Surely, in the remembrance of Allah all hearts find restfulness" (Al Ra'd 13:28). In addition, it is also emphasized by Al Ghazali (Mohd Rosmizi, Mohamed Mihlar, Muhammad Khairi et al., 2017) when describing the spiritual model of good deeds. Emphasis on inner actions (*al-a'mal al-batinah*) which need one to be humble and be amazed of one's creator.

Collaboration is seen as an aspect of understanding oneself and others, helping those who are in needs, as well as to invite others towards virtue sincerely. According to Mohd Faiz, Muhamad Rozaimi and Jamal@Nordin (2016), the meaning of collaboration in Arabic language was *ta'awun*. This term is mentioned twice in the Quran (Al-Baalbaky, 2004 in Mohd Faiz and others, 2016) in the surah Al Maidah (2) translated as "Help one another in furthering virtue and God-consciousness, and not in what is wicked and sinful." Hence, this cooperation or collaboration should only be carried out on good deeds. This is also emphasized by Mohd Ridhwan Remly and others (2019) when discussing about enlivening the institutions, which is before inviting others towards virtue, one has to prepare oneself with sincere intention since without sincere intention, it will be futile. It is as explained by Allah swt in the Quran, "Say: My prayers and my devotions, my life and my death, are all for Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds. He has no partners. Thus I am commanded and I am the first Muslim (among people in my community) who surrender themselves to Allah and submit to His Commandments" (Al- An'am 6: 162 – 163).

The next dimension touches on the aspect of communication with graciousness. A study conducted by Mastura and Farahwahida (2020) found that verses in the Quran in Surah Yusuf emphasized the value of graciousness in

good communication, useful advice, absolute patience, reliance on Allah and readiness to forgive by parents when facing misdeeds of their children. Hopefully, the implications of this study will increase the efforts and create formulae in moulding teenagers with good values and virtues in their actions and when socializing, thus decreasing the risks of them getting involved in various social problems and wrongdoings.

Lastly, Peace is a dimension with harmonious value which shows one's ability to avoid using violence, respect others, appreciate life and actively move towards goodness or virtue. In this dimension, Farid (2016) stressed that Islamic education with its multicultural awareness could explain the relationship between human and God theoretically, unity relationship or relationship between human and other human from the anthropological-sociological aspect, and relationship between human and the environment from cosmological perspective.

In general, there were many studies that explored the religious aspect or spiritual approach (Mohd Rosmizi and others, 2017; Fatimah, 2014; Dzuhailmi et al., 2019). However, very few of them looked at the level of the dimensions of the Peace Culture practised among secondary school students in Malaysia. Studies conducted on secondary school students were more focused on the psychological aspect and focusing more on spiritual intervention. They were less focused on the level of Peace Culture practices which were based on the dimensional values in the Quran, even though these dimensions were also important in educating school going teenagers. Therefore, this study examined the level of Peace Culture among secondary school students and also the level of Peace Culture based on its dimensions of Refrainment, Forgiveness, Humility, Collaboration, Communication and Peace.

METHOD

This survey study aim to investigate the level of Peace Culture among secondary school students in Malaysia. The level of Peace Culture is based on its dimensions of Refrainment, Forgiveness, Humility, Collaboration, Communication and Peace. A total of 298 secondary school students participated in this study. It was conducted in 9 secondary schools; 1 school in Johor, and 8 schools in Perak.

The instrument used was the instrument built by Uman et al (2019) that was Dimensions of Peace Culture based on the Quran. The value of realibility is high and can be accepted to be used in the survey. The instrument used scale 1 (very low) until 5 (very high) for 100 items to investigate all 6 dimensions of Peace Culture.

Before the questionnaires were distributed, permission from the Ministry of Education, Malaysia was applied. After getting the permission to go to schools, informed consent were seek from the participants and parents. The students who participated in the study were chosen randomly. Data for this study was analysed using frequency and percentage.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings of the study were elaborated based on the level of Peace Culture as a whole, and also the levels of the 6 dimensions of Peace Culture which were Refrainment, Forgiveness, Humility, Collaboration, Communication and Peace. Most of the respondents were school students, aged 16 years old (155 students or 24.4%), followed by 17 years old (82 students or 27.7%), 18 years old (40 students or 13.5%) and 15 years old (19 students or 6.4%)

Majority of the students who participated in the study were female with the total of 171 students (57.8%), whereas male students comprised of 125 students (42.2%). Most of the respondents were students from daily schools (184 students or 62.2%) while 112 students (37.8%) were from vocational college. Referring to the field of study of the students who participated in the study, majority of them were taking Human Science and Human Literature Elective (146 students or 49.3%) followed by Vocational subjects and STEM Elective (89 students or 30.1%), Pure Science and Mathematics and STEM Elective (59 students or 19.9%) and Applied Science and Technology Elective (2 students or 0.7%)

Levels of Peace Culture

Table 1 shows that the mean scores of all dimensions of the Peace Culture and Peace Culture as a whole are at a high level. Findings of the study were elaborated based on the level of the Peace Culture as a whole and also

the levels of the 6 dimensions of Peace Culture which were Refrainment, Forgiveness, Humility, Collaboration, Communication and Peace. Table 1 shows that the mean score for the Peace Culture as a whole is 669.03 or at mean level of 3.62 which is a moderate level nearing a high level. As for the dimensions of Peace Culture, the highest mean score is at a high level that is Communication (M=4.12), followed by Humility (M=4.10) and Peace (M=4.06). Other dimensions that almost reach a high level are Refrainment (M=3.97), followed by Forgiveness and Collaboration (M=3.93)

Table 1: Mean score for peace culture and its dimensions

	Mean Score	S.D	Level (min)	S.D
Peace Culture	669.03	103.2	3.62	0.59
Refrainment	130.28	20.73	3.97	0.72
Forgiveness	169.02	28.29	3.93	0.75
Humility	67.46	12.72	4.10	0.83
Collaboration	38.96	8.16	3.93	0.83
Communication	122.28	20.79	4.12	0.78
Peace	141.03	25.10	4.06	0.79

Table 2 shows the level of Peace Culture as a whole. The study found that none of the secondary school students were at the very low level of Peace Culture. Only 0.7% or 2 students obtained a score at the low level of Peace Culture. 41.9% (124 students) were at a moderate level, 52.4% or 155 students were at a high level and 5.1% or 15 students were at a very high level of Peace Culture.

Table 2: Level of Peace Culture

Level	Score	Frequency	Percentage
Very low	<165	0	0
Low	165-329	2	0.7
Moderate	661-825	124	41.9
High	661-825	155	52.4
Very high	>825	15	5.1
Total		296	100

The dimensions of Peace Culture

Table 3 shows the levels of all dimensions of Peace Culture. For all dimensions of Peace Culture, only 1 student (0.3%) is at a very low level, except for Collaboration with 2 students or 0.7%. As for low level, Collaboration has the highest number with 10 students or 3.4% and Humility with 9 students or 3%. Other dimensions with low level are Refrainment (4 students or 1.4%) and 3 students or 1% for the dimensions of Forgiveness, Communication and Peace.

Referring to Table 3, the dimensions of Peace Culture that has the highest number of students at a moderate level is Forgiveness (80 students or 27%), followed by Collaboration (71 students or 24%). Peace also has a high percentage for a moderate level with a percentage of 23.3% (69 students) followed by Refrainment (63 students or 21.3%), Communication (60 students or 20.3%) and Humility (56 students or 18.9%).

Table 3: Levels of Peace Culture Dimensions

Level	Refrainment	Forgiveness	Humility	Collaboration	Communication	Peace
Very low	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)	2 (0.7%)	1 (0.3%)	1 (0.3%)
Low	4 (1.4%)	3 (1.0%)	9 (3%)	10 (3.4%)	3 (1.0%)	3 (1.0%)
Moderate	63 (21.3%)	80 (27.0%)	56 (18.9%)	71 (24%)	60 (20.3%)	69 (23.3%)
High	164 (55.4%)	145 (49%)	123 (41.6%)	138 (46.6%)	127 (42.9%)	128 (43.2%)
Very high	64 (21.6%)	67 (22.6%)	107 (36.1%)	75 (25.3%)	105 (35.5%)	95 (32.1%)

It is shown in Table 3 that the dimensions of Peace Culture that has the highest number of students at a high level is Refrainment (164 students or 55.4%), followed by Forgiveness (145 students or 49%), Collaboration also has a high percentage for a high level with a percentage of 46.6% (138 students) followed by Peace (128

students or 43.2%), Communication (127 students or 42.9%) and Humility (123 students or 41.6%).

Table 3 shows that for a very high level, Humility has the highest number with 107 students or 36.1% and Communication with 105 students or 35.5%. These are followed by Peace (95 students or 32.1 %), Collaboration (75 students or 25.3%), Forgiveness (67 students or 22.6%) and Refrainment (64 students or 21.6%).

DISCUSSION

It was found that the mean scores of all dimensions of the Peace Culture and Peace Culture as a whole are at a high level. These findings concurs with the findings of a study conducted by Dzuhailmi and others (2019) which shows that the level of spirituality of Malaysian teenagers to be high. This also explains that the students in Malaysia practise good Peace Culture.

Looking at the levels of all dimensions of Peace Culture, humility and communication have the highest percentage of high level, followed by Peace, Collaboration, Forgiveness and Refrainment. These findings concur with previous studies that discovered that the level of students' communication was good. It was revealed in the research findings of Ghazali and Samsudin (2019) that school students at the adolescent stage applied several communication considerations to ensure verbal interactions were done perfectly. However, these findings differed from the perspectives of three teachers whom were interviewed. Some said that communication between the students with their teachers was still good but it was less effective in conversations with their friends. Participant 1 stated that "As we walk by, we could hear degrading words uttered to their friends, but none to the teachers". This statement differed from participant 2 who expressed that "Students nowadays are not polite, a lot of degrading words are uttered to the teachers as well as to their friends. The words frequently uttered are those used in the social media." The third participant gave a different statement from the first and second participants that was "There are students who communicate politely, but there are also some who don't. Students in the good classes speak differently from the students in weak classes. There are also some students who imitate how their friends speak".

For the dimension of Humility, previous studies found that school students still showed humility and graciousness when in social groups. The culture of greetings was still practiced in Malaysia as revealed in a study by Roslan and others (2015). These researchers emphasized that relationships could be sustained by practising deeds such as greeting and doing good deeds among students, teachers and family members as well as in the society.

As for the dimension of Peace that advocates society without violence, readiness to cooperate, and respecting the differences in cultures, it is something that is not difficult to achieve by school students in Malaysia since Malaysia consists of citizens from different backgrounds.

Another dimension that almost reached a high level is Refrainment or perseverance to refrain oneself. It is at a good level. However, it can still be increased. The knowledge about refrainment among school students is at a good level. Nevertheless, it is lacking in term of practices. This statement was explained by the teachers whom were interviewed. They revealed that there were students who showed less patience and graciousness when faced with some issues, and also when working in a group. Forgiveness and Collaboration are two dimensions that needed to be inculcated in school students. This is because without the value of forgiveness, it will lead to the feelings of vengeance. Thus, it can lead to failures in collaboration and cooperation among students. This statement was affirmed by the teachers whom were interviewed. In the interview with three secondary school teachers, they expressed that students nowadays had difficulty in forgiving their peers. Participant 1: "Students nowadays find it difficult to forgive others. Consequently, it leads to fights or quarrel, even over a minor issue—it becomes difficult when they need to carry out group work". Participant 2: "It is difficult for them to forgive." Participant 3 also agreed with this statement: "At times, it is okay, at other times, they can't forgive their friends, and after that, they refuse to complete their group assignments" A research conducted by Maslida Yusof, Marlyna Maros and Muhammad Fadzeli Jaafar (2011) revealed that those who were still learning still showed forgiveness. Therefore, asking for forgiveness for any wrongdoings and to forgive are one way to sustain harmony in Malaysian society.

These findings concur with the Ecology Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1976) that examines the influence of the small systems on a bigger system. Smaller systems refer to the action patterns which include communication, actions such as forgiveness and refrainment from committing any misdeeds, collaboration and graciousness which are first observed, learnt and practised from home and then brought over to a bigger system that is school when socializing with friends and finally into the society. Al Ghazali also emphasized on the importance of education and that education starts from home and then in school. Rusmana et al. (2020) emphasized that individuals in their lives must be able to place themselves amid reality. School counsellors may help with suitable effective program that helps these students not to be involved in misbehaviour. This has been proven by Hastuti et al. (2019) showing that school students who involve in school program are found less to be involved in any misbehaviour at school.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that the Peace Culture for school students in Johor and Perak was at a high level. Increment in the levels of the dimensions in order to instill Peace Culture needs to be continuous especially for the dimensions of Forgiveness and Collaboration. The difficulty to forgive others can cause one to be less calm because of the feelings of vengeance and thus, causing aggressive behaviours such as bullying, gangsterism and vandalism. Collaboration also needs to be emphasized so that discussions can be carried out well and peacefully even though they involved those with different backgrounds and cultures. In addition, Refrainment in school students should be considered as one of the significant aspects since the ability to refrain themselves from any harmful misdeeds will contribute to harmony and peace. School students should also practise Communication and Humility in school so as to enhance the Peace Culture. Through effective and exact communication, together with graciousness, relationship can be strengthen and hence create a peaceful and harmonious environment. Hopefully, the next research will investigate the process of increasing Peace Culture effectively through education by parents, teachers and counsellors.

Acknowledgements

We wish to convey our utmost appreciation to the Research and Innovation Centre, Sultan Idris Education University for providing us with a grant for this research (2019-0237-107-01) and also to our fellow researchers from Indonesia Education University.

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