

Multicultural Awareness via Residential College

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Abstract: Research has revealed that living on campus via residential college grants significant impact not only on students' immediate achievement and adjustment to university life but also their long-term academic career, personal success and functional member of a multiethnic society. It is believed that by attending and living on campus in a residential college, students learn and experience new things. In line with that this study which is part of a larger scale study on Language and Social Cohesion in the Formation of National Identity funded by University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) would try to examine the role of residential college in enhancing multicultural awareness which is very important in a multiethnic society. A total of 382 students from various ethnic backgrounds staying in residential colleges in UKM participated in this study through responding to a set of self-administered questionnaire. Findings of the study illustrate that students benefit significantly from education that takes place within a diverse setting. Moreover, they encounter and learn from others who have backgrounds and characteristics very different from their own. Further analyses and the implications of the study will also be discussed.

Key words: Residential college, social skill, culture, ethnic, multicultural awareness, implications

INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is home to many ethnic groups, each co-existing in harmony and helping to enrich the country's cultural lifestyle. Indeed, it is rich with cultural diversity. While celebrating diversity is logical and expected in a pluralistic Malaysian society, a more important issue in managing a pluralistic society is ensuring unity in diversity. In the milieu of a multi-ethnic society like Malaysia, the absence or lack of understanding, awareness and tolerance among ethnic groups could create conflicts. Without doubt, multicultural awareness among youths in the society is important since they contribute significantly to the total population. Hence, their potentials need to be unleashed for the country's stability and prosperity. According to Green (1995), cultural awareness refers to a kind of sensibility, a frame of mind about cross-cultural human services. It has to do with qualities of openness, alertness and in particular flexibility in relations with others. It focuses on attitudes and values and is in part a matter of the inner state of the learner. This study seeks to define several issues as: How can multicultural understanding and awareness be transmitted to the population of youth? Do youth who are studying at higher institution have to take

specific courses on Ethnic Relations? Is the surrounding of the university specifically the residential colleges conducive enough to provide non-formal education on multicultural awareness? Hence, this study attempts to highlight the role of residential colleges in University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) in instilling cultural awareness among the youth.

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE: A BRIEF LOOK

Residential college provides accommodation to students who are studying in institutes of higher learning in Malaysia. The role of residential colleges is not only to provide accommodation and support service but also any other support services in ensuring that students experience the best process of learning as well as achieve good academic progress. Research and experience in the past decade has highlighted that the support provided by residential colleges in the 1st year of university study is likely to be significant. For students, residential life is often seen as a formative part of the overall university experience (Coates and Edwards, 2009). Indeed, residential college can be regarded as an important service after faculties that students will use during their stay at the university (Amin, 2003). More importantly,

residential colleges also play a role in the process of self-development in terms of personality and leadership skills as well as inculcation of cultural awareness through the activities conducted by the college. Hence, it is undeniable that residential colleges have been known to boost several of the educationally productive characteristics of undergraduate education as well as making direct contributions of its own (Blimling, 1989, 1993; Pascarella *et al.*, 1994; LaNasa *et al.*, 2007). On this note, it is important to deliberate the reasons for establishing residential colleges at universities. Jamaludin has mentioned that the goals of having residential colleges in Malaysia are as follows:

- Provide exciting and useful experience as catalyst for academic success
- Give students the right to privacy, personal safety and property while studying in the university
- Provide conducive environment for students' personal needs in order to achieve best performance in academic as well as extracurricular activities
- Develop students who are responsible, knowledgeable, intelligent community, functional members of society, internationally competitive, well-mannered youth and possess national identity

Given that most students will spend a large amount of time in residential colleges other than faculty many self-development, cultural and leadership activities have been arranged and conducted for students. These activities could impart input on generic skills (soft skills), leadership skills, teamwork and other skills (Anuar *et al.*, 2006).

UNIVERSITY KEBANGSAAN MALYSIA (UKM) RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE ORGANIZATION

Residential colleges play a crucial function in many of the best universities in the world. Naturally, it seems apparent that living in a university-affiliated residence would enhance students' educational involvement and outcomes. Hence, institutions of higher learning in Malaysia have made serious effort to transform the residential college from just a mere residing place to a living community. In line with that, there are the explanations of the establishment of residential colleges at the universities in Malaysia.

How it began: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia or UKM was established in 1970 after a long campaign to have a national university using the national language, i.e., the Malay language as the medium of instruction. UKM started with three faculties namely; Faculty of Science,

Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Islamic Studies. Today, it has 12 faculties, 14 institutes and 13 residential colleges. Dato Onn' Residential College was the first residential college established in UKM in 1977. It was known as Complex A where it was able to house 1374 undergraduate students. The college was strategically located near to sports field, mosque, the Tun Razak Hall or DECTAR and also the administrative centre. In year 1981, Complex A has been upgraded to Kampung Siswa A or better known as Kamsis A that was able to accommodate 1480 residents. In 1986, Kamsis A was renamed as Kamsis Dato' Onn and later Dato Onn Residential College, named after the first President of UMNO. In 1989, Dato Onn Residential College was divided into two and the other half was named the Tun Hussien Onn Residential College. In UKM, there are 13 residential colleges, namely:

- Ungku Omar College
- Ibrahim Yaakub College
- Dato' Onn College
- Ibnu Zain College
- Pendeta Zaaba College
- Aminuddin Baki College
- Keris Mas College
- Burhanuddin Helmi College
- Rahim Kajai College
- Tun Hussein Onn College
- Idris Al-Marbawi College
- Tun Syed Nasir College
- Tun Dr. Ismail College

Vision: To be the premier college providing the best services, facilities and training quality, to be efficient, effective and to possess professional manner which is in accordance with current requirements to meet the needs, satisfaction and expectations of customers.

Mission: Determined to be selected residential college that is committed in providing an efficient, honest and proactive services in shaping undergraduates who are equipped with global mentality and skills in line with the philosophy and vision of the university.

Organizational structure: The college management of the residential colleges at UKM is led by the Principal (academic staff) and supported by administrators and support staff namely the residential college manager, manager, supervisor, clerk and general workers. Indeed, the organizational structure of residential colleges at UKM represents the ideal organizational structure for university residential college.

The role of the college management is to ensure that all infrastructure facilities and services provided to

students are always functional and well-maintained. Management of the residential colleges also serves to engage directly or indirectly in the implementation of development activities and student leadership. The activities that require facilities and equipment will not be implemented without the existence of these matters. Therefore, the college management must be sensitive and pro-active in understanding the needs of students parallel to the development activities and student leadership. Each college has to deal with administrative matters related to the accommodation. Further, each college has its organizational charts to facilitate the management of all matters related to student accommodation. Figure 1 shows the college organization chart.

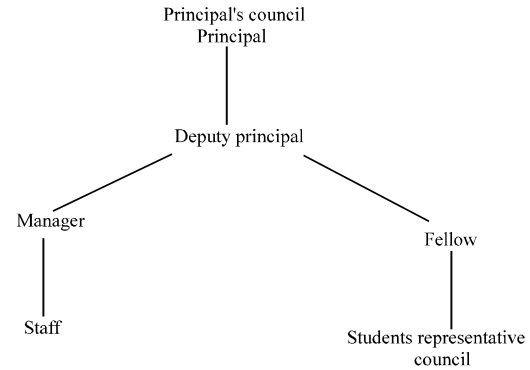


Fig. 1: The college organization chart

Activities: In ensuring that the campus environment (especially college) is conducive and harmonious, various facilities have been made available to the campus population. These activities are carried out by students of the residential colleges with the aim of producing students who are not only academically excellence but also ethically sound. In order to improve students' ability to speak English, residential colleges were declared the English speaking zones in April, 2008. This would enhance students' confidence to use English language and making it possible for them to engage internationally in various activities.

Amongst the many activities organized by the residential colleges were College Annual Dinner, College Family day or Hakera, English Speaking Zone, 1 Malaysia Camp, National Identity Camp, Maulidul Rasul and many others. In addition, students are actively involved in community work for example students of Dato Onn are presently assisting the Single Mother Association (PITRAH) in running their computer class. The children of Pitrah are given free tuition by the students twice a week (Table 1).

Table 1: Categories and examples of student activities in the residential colleges at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

| Category/Type of activities | Examples of activities |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Cultural awareness | Cultural aspirations night, Ethnic festival celebrations (Hari Raya-Malays, Ponggal-Indians, Tanglung-Chinese) |
| Sport and recreation | Mountaineering expedition, outdoor beach or river activities, intra and inter-college sport and games competitions |
| Innovation | Competitions create products from used materials |
| Social/community | Community service program (village/farm), pre-graduation night |
| Spirituality | Religious lectures/forum/camp |
| Leadership | Leadership camp |
| Patriotic | The longest Malaysia flag building, Independence day celebration |
| Entrepreneur | Entrepreneur week |
| Academic | Residential college week, academic debating/quizzes/public speaking contest |
| Internationalization | Study visit to United Kingdom, Japan, Australia, China, etc. |

- Be calm and not panic should things goes wrong in organizing activities
- Appreciate real life outside campus

RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE AS A LIVING COMMUNITY

In the previous decade, a considerable amount of empirical research (Griffin *et al.*, 2003; Pascarella and Terenzini, 1991, 2005; Scott, 2006; Pike, 2002) have confirmed that it is the whole experience that counts for student learning and development not just what happens in formal instructional contexts such as classes. Programs and activities like cultural night, community service and pre-graduation night that have been carried out by residential colleges in UKM can actually contribute to a variety of enriching experience and understanding that enhance the formal curriculum while engaging students in college social life. Essentially, such programs and activities have the capacity to connect formal learning with community settings-supporting contexts that enhance the relevance of this study.

Benefits/impact: Through the residential college activities students are able to:

- Organize activities closed to their heart and enjoyed it
- Have confident in organizing programs
- Learn to work as a team and enhance leadership qualities
- Learn on how to solve problems hands on during activities
- Appreciate the difficulties in running a real business outside campus
- Appreciate the difficulties in handling human emotions and social activities
- Act and make decisions spontaneously

Indeed, there are two elements that contribute to the success of any activities; the students as well as the college management. The role of the college management is to ensure that all infrastructure facilities and services provided to students are always functional and well maintained. Management of the residential colleges also serves to engage directly or indirectly in the implementation of self-development, cultural awareness, student leadership activities etc. The support provided by the management in accordance with students' needs is essential in helping them to make adjustment to university life. Definitely, activities undertaken in the residential college are activities that can foster the relationship between the students with college principals and college staff.

Research has also affirmed the importance of student support particularly support which is focused on to individual student needs (Coates and Edwards, 2009). This is supported by Kuh *et al.* (1991) who regard colleges as human-sized communities. In addition, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005) who have done a review of longitudinal studies of university impact note that living on campus is perhaps the single most consistent within-college determinant of impact. These findings are significant for they verify the core rather than supplementary role accomplished by residential colleges in university education.

Hence, through the implementation of activities at the colleges especially in UKM, we are able to create leaders, to mould the national identity by involving students in programs that build relationship with other ethnic groups from different backgrounds. Cooperation in such activities proves the existence of multicultural awareness in which is manifested via qualities like openness, alertness and in particular tolerance in relationship with others.

DISCUSSION

This study discusses findings regarding students' experience living in residential colleges. Discussion is based on five scales: strongly agree, agree, not sure, strongly disagree and disagree. Table 2 shows the results of the data regarding learning about other ethnic culture through program at colleges. Based on the findings, 12.2% of the Malay students disagree with the

statement. About 25% are not sure and 62.9% agree that they require some cultural knowledge and experience by joining the activities. As for Chinese students only 9.1% disagree with the statement, 22.4% are not sure and 68.3% agreed that they learnt about other ethnic cultures through programs at colleges.

While, 4.3% of the Indian students disagree with the statement, 8.7% are not sure and 86.9% agree with the statement. Other ethnic groups in this research show that 7.7% disagree with the statement, 30.8% are not sure and 61.6% express agreement. Overall, only 10.7% of students disagree while 23.6% are not sure and a majority (65.7%) of the respondents representing from all the ethnics groups agree that they learn about other ethnics' cultures through programs at colleges.

Majority of the students who responded to this question agree with the statement because college provides a surrounding that encourage all ethnic groups to combine and work together through programs. When at college, students feel like they are at home. Therefore, the chances for students to gather are more compared to while at faculty where they talk about mostly studies and assignments. Besides that, there are various kinds of programs at the residential college to knowledge about other ethnics' cultures such as break fast with the Principle during Muslim fasting month, Tanglung celebration (Chinese), pesta ponggal (Indian), Hari Raya (Malay), Chinese new year celebration (Chinese) and many more. These programs which consist of cooking traditional dishes, knowing traditional games and understanding the origin of the celebrations help students learn more about the other.

Table 3 shows the scales for students that start to wear baju kurung/baju Melayu while in UKM. Out of 382 students responding to this statement, 57.9% express disagreement, 17% was not sure and 25.2% state their disagreement with the statement. About 67.8% of Malay students disagree, 15.7% are not sure and 16.6% agree with this matter.

As for Chinese, 37.8% disagree, 23.5% are not sure and 38.7% agree that they start wearing baju kurung or baju Melayu at UKM. For Indian students, 39.1% express disagreement, 8.7% are not sure while 52.1% agree with the statement. As for other ethnic groups, 53.9% disagree, 7.7% are not sure and 38.5% agree with the statement.

Table 2: Learn about other ethnic culture through programs at colleges

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Malay | 13 (5.2%) | 17 (6.9%) | 62 (25.0%) | 97 (39.1%) | 59 (23.8%) | 248 (100%) |
| Chinese | 2 (2.0%) | 7 (7.1%) | 22 (22.4%) | 56 (57.1%) | 11 (11.2%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 1 (4.3%) | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (8.7%) | 13 (56.5%) | 7 (30.4%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (7.7%) | 4 (30.8%) | 5 (38.5%) | 3 (23.1%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 16 (4.2%) | 25 (6.5%) | 90 (23.6%) | 171 (44.8%) | 80 (20.9%) | 382 (100%) |

Table 3: Started to wear baju kurung/baju Melayu (traditional dress) while in UKM

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Malay | 119 (48.0%) | 49 (19.8%) | 39 (15.7%) | 24 (9.7%) | 17 (6.9%) | 248(100%) |
| Chinese | 23 (23.5%) | 14 (14.3%) | 23 (23.5%) | 22 (22.4%) | 16 (16.3%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 5 (21.7%) | 4 (17.4%) | 2 (8.7%) | 5 (21.7%) | 7 (30.4%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 6 (46.2%) | 1 (7.7%) | 1 (7.7%) | 5 (38.5%) | 0 (0.0%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 153 (40.1%) | 68 (17.8%) | 65 (17.0%) | 56 (14.7%) | 40 (10.5%) | 382 (100%) |

Table 4: Learn about Pesta Ponggal (Indian celebration) at UKM

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------|-----------|
| Malay | 20 (8.1%) | 20 (8.1%) | 33 (13.3%) | 107 (43.1%) | 68 (27.4%) | 248(100%) |
| Chinese | 5 (5.1%) | 12 (12.2%) | 22 (22.4%) | 33 (33.7%) | 26 (26.5%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 2 (8.7%) | 1 (4.3%) | 3 (13.0%) | 6 (26.1%) | 11 (47.8%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 1 (7.7%) | 1 (7.7%) | 2 (15.4%) | 6 (46.2%) | 3 (23.1%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 28 (7.3%) | 34 (8.9%) | 60 (15.7%) | 152 (39.8%) | 108 (28.3%) | 382(100%) |

Most respondents disagree with the statement because national clothing like baju kurung or baju melayu has been made a dress code when they studied at matriculation or schools. Therefore, students did not start to wear these clothing when they entered UKM. However, most of the Chinese and Indian ethnic students agree because they may choose not to wear baju kurung or baju Melayu when at schools. The surroundings of Chinese and Indian students daily life at home also do not provide them with the necessity to wear baju kurung or baju melayu. For example, almost all of the Indians have their own saree (traditional clothing) used for special occasion while the Chinese have cheongsam.

All respondents from all ethnic groups indicate fervent agreement that they have learnt more about the Ponggal festival while at UKM. Interestingly, the strongest agreement came from the Indian respondents with 47.8% strongly agree and 26.1% agree that they have learnt more about their own festival after they came to UKM (Table 4). It is interesting to note that even as the Ponggal event is presumably held with an objective also to expose the diverse communities on campus to Indian culture and festivals; it introspectively allows a platform for the Indian respondents to learn something about the festival even as they take part in it.

The second highest percentage of agreement for the statement is the Malay respondents with 176 of 248 or 70.5% of them agree with it. The Chinese respondents also show a high percentage of agreement with 60.2% of them agree and 22.4% not sure to it. As for the other group, 9 out of 13 of the respondents agree with the statement. Negative indications are low with only 16.2% of the Malay respondents, 17.3% of the Chinese respondents, 13% of the Indian respondents and only 2 out of 13 of the others indicating disagreement.

It is interesting to note that many students know about Ponggal festival when studying at UKM. Indeed, this festival is rarely heard or experienced by students. Ponggal festival shows the ending for farming season and

its origin is for Hindu from India. In Malaysia, this festival is still celebrated by Indians but it's not the main celebration like Deepavali. Besides, the government does not state Ponggal festival as a public holiday therefore not everyone knows about it. At UKM, this festival is acknowledged because the Indian students are given the chances to show their culture or celebration regarding their religion to others. So, when the festival is approved by UKM as a program organized by Persatuan Agama Hindu, it will have publicity all over UKM with banners and flyers. This encourages others ethnic groups to learn more about Ponggal festival. Even in college, students will celebrate it together as it is organized by the Indian students.

A significantly high percentage of respondents in all ethnic groups indicate knowing about the Tanglung festival in UKM. About 39.1% of the Indian respondents strongly agree while 34.8% of them agree with the statement while only 2 out of 23 of them do not align with it. The Malay respondents too indicate a high level of agreement with 108 of them agree and 57 of them strongly agree with the statement indicating that 66.5% of them agree that they have learnt about Pesta Tanglung in UKM. About 9 out of the 13 respondents in the others group also agree with the statement. Interestingly, as it was with the earlier question about Ponggal festival, the majority of the Chinese also indicate strongly agree that introspectively they themselves have learnt more about Tanglung festival in UKM. A staggering 87 out of 98 of them or 88.8%, resonate with this statement. Table 5 shows the data for students who know about Tanglung festival held in UKM. The Malay's that disagree with the statement shows 19.4 and 14.1% for not sure and 66.5% who agree.

The data in Table 6 shows students' learning about the Assyura celebration when they are at UKM. Malay and Indian respondents agree that they discover about the celebration while on campus whereas the Chinese and others group indicate disagreement with the statement.

Table 5: Learn about Tanglung festival (Chinese celebration) while in UKM

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Malay | 27 (10.9%) | 21 (8.5%) | 35 (14.1%) | 108 (43.5%) | 57 (23.0%) | 248 (100%) |
| Chinese | 1 (1.0%) | 5 (5.1%) | 5 (5.1%) | 34 (34.7%) | 53 (54.1%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 2 (8.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 4 (17.4%) | 8 (34.8%) | 9 (39.1%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 1 (7.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 3 (23.1%) | 6 (46.2%) | 3 (23.1%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 31 (8.1%) | 26 (6.8%) | 47 (12.3%) | 156 (40.8%) | 122 (31.9%) | 382 (100%) |

Table 6: Know about the Assyura celebration while in UKM

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Malay | 38 (15.3%) | 15 (6.0%) | 28 (11.3%) | 84 (33.9%) | 83 (33.5%) | 248 (100%) |
| Chinese | 21 (21.4%) | 26 (26.5%) | 27 (27.6%) | 16 (16.3%) | 8 (8.2%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 2 (8.7%) | 4 (17.4%) | 2 (8.7%) | 8 (34.8%) | 7 (30.4%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 4 (30.8%) | 6 (46.2%) | 2 (15.4%) | 1 (7.7%) | 0 (0.0%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 65 (17.0%) | 51 (13.4%) | 59 (15.4%) | 109 (28.5%) | 98 (25.7%) | 382 (100%) |

Table 7: Know the process of fasting during Ramadhan at UKM

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------------|------------|
| Malay | 72 (29.0%) | 20 (8.1%) | 17 (6.9%) | 39 (15.7%) | 100 (40.3%) | 248 (100%) |
| Chinese | 8 (8.2%) | 14 (14.3%) | 19 (19.4%) | 38 (38.8%) | 19 (19.4%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 3 (13.0%) | 3 (13.0%) | 3 (13.0%) | 7 (30.4%) | 7 (30.4%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 2 (15.4%) | 2 (15.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | 4 (30.8%) | 5 (38.5%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 85 (22.3%) | 39 (10.2%) | 39 (10.2%) | 88 (23.0%) | 131 (34.3%) | 382 (100%) |

Table 8: Awareness of other ethnic culture increases through activities in college

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Malay | 11 (4.4%) | 15 (6.0%) | 44 (17.7%) | 130 (52.4%) | 48 (19.4%) | 248 (100%) |
| Chinese | 2 (2.0%) | 13 (13.3%) | 25 (25.5%) | 41 (41.8%) | 17 (17.3%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (4.3%) | 1 (4.3%) | 15 (65.2%) | 6 (26.1%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (7.7%) | 3 (23.1%) | 7 (53.8%) | 2 (15.4%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 13 (3.4%) | 30 (7.9%) | 73 (19.1%) | 193 (50.5%) | 73 (19.1%) | 382 (100%) |

About 67.4% of the Malay respondents agree and strongly agree that they have learnt more about the Assyura celebration while 11.3% of are not sure about it and 21.3% of them disagree with it. As for the Indian respondents, 15 out of 23 of them or 65.2% lean towards agree that they have learnt more about Assyura after being in UKM while 2 of them are not sure and 6 of them or 26.1% disagree with it. In contrast, a minority of only 24.5% of the Chinese respondents agree with the statement. Almost half of them, 47.9% do not agree that they have learnt about Assyura after joining UKM. As for those in the others group, none of them strongly agree with the idea, only 1 person agree and 2 people are not sure while the rest of them do not feel that they have learnt more about the Assyura celebration.

Malay students know more about this celebration because they will have fasting and prayers in UKM at the residential colleges. Within this Muslim culture, they will be an imam that could lead them. The Chinese and other ethnic groups are familiar with Assyura celebration while they are at UKM because this celebration is more for individual spirit. Therefore, it is not a celebration that has a publicity like Hari Raya. So, students may not be very clear about this celebration and its purpose and they may think it is just a ritual for Muslim and not a celebration. Table 7 shows the findings regarding students who know the process of fasting during Ramadhan at UKM. About 37.1% of the Malay respondents disagree with the

statement while 6.9% are not sure followed by 56% who agree with the statement. The Chinese students mostly express agreement (58.2%) while 22.5% disagree and only 19.4% are not sure about it. For the Indian students, 26% disagree, 13% are not sure and 60.8% agree about it. Others ethnic group shows that only 30.8% who stated disagree and 69.3% agree with the statement. The total of students who respond to the questionnaire disagree with the statement (32.5%), 10.2% are not sure and the majority of 57.3% state their agreement.

The findings show that many students from all ethnic groups agree that they know the process of fasting during Ramadhan while studying at UKM. Majority of the people at UKM are Muslims, therefore when fasting month arrives, other ethnic groups are influenced by the changes. The food stalls around UKM are closed during the day or just sell less food. Since the students live in college, they will know about the process or do's and do not's for the Muslim students more because they live together. The non-Muslim students will ask Muslim students about the taboos during Ramadhan. Everyone becomes more sensitive to the changes and adapt together by respecting each other. This way, students improve understanding and knowledge about Ramadhan. Table 8 shows that activities at residential colleges enhance ethnic awareness among students. Majority (69.6%) of the respondents agree with this statement are while 11.3% disagree and 19.1% are not sure about the

situation. The Malay students (71.8%) mostly agree with this statement. Besides, the Chinese students shows 15.3% of disagreement, 25.5% are not sure and 61.1% agree that college activities make them aware about different ethnic values and practices. For Indians, 4.3% disagree and not sure respectively while 91.3% agree with the statement. Others ethnic groups show 7.7% disagreement with 23.1% not sure of the situation and 69.2% stating agreement.

The findings confirm the role of college activities in creating and increasing multicultural awareness among students. The programs that are organized at residential colleges are created to foster unity and understanding among the multicultural students' population. Besides programs like ethnic celebrations, other activities that combined students from different races in a group also help to increase the awareness about other cultural beliefs and practices.

English Speaking Zone for example, puts different races into a group and run activities in English. Here, students will need to communicate and help each other in the groups. Indirectly, students develop interethnic tolerance in their discussion, deliberations and final decisions.

Table 9 shows the response from students about their understanding of other cultures by becoming the committee member for the programs in college. About 69.7% of the respondents agrees with the statement, 19.1% are not sure and 11.2% disagree. Among the Malay students 10.4% disagree, 21.4% are not sure followed by 68.2% who agreed with the statements. Among, the Chinese respondents, 13.3% disagree, 17.3% are not sure and 69.3% agree with the statements. As for the Indians, 8.7% disagree, 13% are not sure and 78.3% indeed express their agreement. Others ethnic groups only show 15.4% disagreement while total of 84.6% from this group agree with the statement.

Students agree that they understand more about other ethnics when they participate as committee members for the programs in college. This is because when they

become organizers, they have to do some research about the culture in order to best implement in the program. Therefore, they gain better understanding about it. Besides, students as committee also will have more discussion with other ethnics groups to know more about their culture. The communication provides them with deeper knowledge about other culture.

Table 10 shows the percentage of data according to the scales for students that know many friends from different ethnic groups through college activities. Of the 382 students responding to this statement, 5% disagree while 12.3% are not sure and 82.7% express their agreement. About 5.6% of Malay students responded disagree, 11.7% are not sure and 82.7% agree with this matter.

Among the Chinese, 4.1% disagree, 14.3% are not sure and 81.6% agree with the statement. As for Indians students, 13% are not sure while a majority of 86.9% responds with agreement. Among respondents from others ethnic groups, 7.7% disagree and not sure, respectively while 84.7% express their agreement with the statement.

All of the ethnic groups from this question agree that they know many friends from different ethnic groups through college activities. This is because the module of the activities from college is based on unity-putting together students. Whenever, the organizer planned an activity, they will make sure that students will various backgrounds will be in a group (at KDO). Students may feel weird at the first moment but as time goes by the students knew each other starting from their basic profile like name, origins and courses to favorite foods, bad habits and many more.

The bond and relationship always start slowly but they will notice that they need to communicate to be able to enjoy the programs. Hence, they start a new friendship. Other than that, students also realize they need to work together so that they could perform better in the activities. When they know many friends, it is easier for them to run a program in the future.

Table 9: Understand other cultures well when become the committee member for the programs in college

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Malay | 15 (6.0%) | 11 (4.4%) | 53 (21.4%) | 116 (46.8%) | 53 (21.4%) | 248 (100%) |
| Chinese | 5 (5.1%) | 8 (8.2%) | 17 (17.3%) | 51 (52.0%) | 17 (17.3%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (8.7%) | 3 (13.0%) | 12 (52.2%) | 6 (26.1%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 0 (0.0%) | 2 (15.4%) | 0 (0.0%) | 8 (61.5%) | 3 (23.1%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 20 (5.2%) | 23 (6.0%) | 73 (19.1%) | 187 (49.0%) | 79 (20.7%) | 382 (100%) |

Table 10: Know many friends from different ethnic groups through college activities

| Ethnic | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Not sure | Agree | Strongly agree | Total |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------|
| Malay | 8 (3.2%) | 6 (2.4%) | 29 (11.7%) | 120 (48.4%) | 85 (34.3%) | 248 (100%) |
| Chinese | 1 (1.0%) | 3 (3.1%) | 14 (14.3%) | 59 (60.2%) | 21 (21.4%) | 98 (100%) |
| Indian | 0 (0.0%) | 0 (0.0%) | 3 (13.0%) | 9 (39.1%) | 11 (47.8%) | 23 (100%) |
| Others | 0 (0.0%) | 1 (7.7%) | 1 (7.7%) | 5 (38.5%) | 6 (46.2%) | 13 (100%) |
| Total | 9 (2.4%) | 10 (2.6%) | 47 (12.3%) | 193 (50.5%) | 123 (32.2%) | 382 (100%) |

CONCLUSION

The results of this study shows that a residential college serves to supports the university's academic requirements and provide a platform for developing students' personality. It also grants significant impact not only on students' immediate accomplishment and adjustment to university life but also their long-term academic profession, individual achievement and preparation to become an efficient member of a multiethnic society. In addition, students learn about cultures of other ethnic groups and experience togetherness while working on a project organized by college. Students develop multicultural awareness and qualities of sincerity, attentiveness and in particular flexibility in relations with friends from different ethnics than theirs. Indeed, students learn more from education that takes place within a diverse setting.

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