

THE EMERGING YOUTH CULTURE: IMPLICATIONS TOWARD THE ATTAINMENT OF VISION 2020

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Keywords: youth, culture, identity, value, aspiration.

Introduction

Statistics on Malaysian population show that the average age in Malaysia is getting younger. The percentage of youth aged between 15-39 increased from 36.8% in 1970 to 41.5% (that is, 7.6 million) in 1990. The number is expected to increase up to 9.3 million by year 2000 (Seventh Malaysia Plan, 1996-2000). This phenomenon has created a concern among planners to develop strategies and actions to mould the youth to be future leaders. Youth groups are experiencing new waves as the result of development efforts. They have no choice but to keep up with the challenges associated with the drastic changes and thus the emergence of various cultures and subcultures among youth. These cultures may be detrimental to the nation's future. It is crucial that a long-term study be conducted in order to come up with guidelines and strategies in guiding the youth as partner in development for the years ahead. The study aims at identifying the various subcultures/identities of Malaysian youth and their implications on the attainment of the goals stipulated in Vision 2020.

Materials and Methods

This is a descriptive study, utilising both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The main variables are youth culture, demographic characteristics, participation, vision, perception and aspiration. Under the qualitative measure, the major tools used were semi-structured interview, observation and document analysis. Data were analysed by Textual Data Categorisation software. Under the quantitative measure, a validated questionnaire was used to enable the researcher to generalise

the findings to the larger youth population. Data were analysed by using SPSS-PC+. The respondents were youth leaders, youth workers, and members and non-members of youth organisations including students and factory workers.

Results and Discussion

The respondents of the study were 2177 youth: based on race - 78% Malays, 15% Chinese and 7% Indians; based on gender - 53% males and 47% females; based on location - 40% from urban areas, 33% sub-urban areas and 27% from rural areas; based on youth categories - 34% were aged between 15-19 years; 47% between 20-25, and 19% between 26-30. Youth culture identities were identified either positive or negative. The negative cultures were identified as destructive (2.3%); deviant (3.8%); and trendy (10.7%). The positive cultures were identified as sports and recreation (1.4%); patriotic (1.9%); profession (7.2%); religion (16.4%); normal (16.9%); visionary (19.2%) and constructive (20.2%). Comparing between race, gender, location and age groups, the study found that there were differences in terms of culture identities. The negative youth culture identities maybe closely related to the lifestyles and thinking pattern of youth. Thus, although the percentage of youth categorised under the negative identities is low, there is an indication that they are increasing in number. Institutions related to youth socialisation should strive hard to ensure that the number of youth with negative identities is contained. The positive identities, on the other hand, should be further nurtured towards the attainment of the national goals.

Conclusions

The study revealed 10 youth culture/identities where three identities were considered as negative (16.8%) and seven identities were considered as positive (83.2%). It can be concluded that youth are more inclined toward positive culture. Thus indicating that the youth are capable of playing the role of partner in realising the national goals. It is recommended that all agencies with youth as their clients to join hand in curtailing the development of the negative subcultures/identities.