Policy Fairness in National Integration: Reactions of the New Generation

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the reactions of the Malaysian youth regarding fairness of the national policy towards the inculcation of national integration. The extent to which national policy adopted for the sake of social harmony and multi-ethnic youth's points of view were measured using a survey instrument with alpha value of .831. A total of 600 respondents were involved in this study. Students from secondary schools and higher education institutions (HEIs) in the Klang Valley were selected at random. The study found a positive reaction shown among the youth in Malaysia in relation to the practice of a fair policy towards strengthening national integration. The study also found that respondents' propensity to assess positively or otherwise of fairness in terms of the practice of policy towards national integration had no direct relationship with a number of selected demographic variables studied. In sum, the reaction of the new generation in Malaysia to conduct of public policy needs to be scrutinized by the government so that the objective to strengthen national integration can be achieved.

KEYWORDS: Policy, Justice policy, National integration, Reaction of the youth, Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

Implementation of a policy is very attractive to all levels in the community. Ahmad Atory (2008) stressed that policy development is a process or series of actions or decisions by the government that is designed to solve public problems, whether real or imaginary. Scholars like David Easton, regards the policy as a result of government activities. Anderson (2000) also describes the implementation and development of public policy associated with the knowledge of political behavior and government action. Essentially, the policy is designed with a specific agenda and goal. Thomas (2007) saw public policy as whatever the government preferred to do something or does not want to do something. Thus, public policy is a series of actions enacted by political actors as the Prime Minister, Cabinet ministers, political elites and administrators (Ahmad Atory, 1998).

Goals in Policy Development

Government plays an important role in determining the national development policy. Musgrave (1973) highlighted three main functions of government, namely the function of the provision, distribution and providing stability. In enhancing national integration, the government needs a policy framework (public policy) that is ideal. Policies designed should be cognizant of the needs of majority, without alienating the minority needs, but it can be considered as belonging and highly regarded by all (Dzuhaimi, et al., 2011). Ahmad Atory and Malikie Ahmad Brahim (2004) describes the implementation of public policy is for the purpose of unity, racial integration in the economics, social, education and development.

The Government has formulated and given emphasis on some policy or policies in the field of socio-economic development leading to national unity and integration such as the New Economic Policy, National Education Policy, the National Cultural Policy, the National Development Policy, National Vision Policy and the National Social Policy (Dzuhaimi, et al., 2009). The New Economic Policy (NEP) introduced in 1971, for example, had explicit goals to achieve national unity and national integration through two strategies. First, reduce and eventually eradicate poverty by raising incomes and increasing employment opportunities for all Malaysians regardless of race. Second, is to restructure society to create economic balance between the races in Malaysia and eventually eliminate the identification of race with economic function.

The policies, national development strategies and objectives are clearly stated in the Long Term, Medium Term and Short Term Plans. For example, the NEP (1971-1990) was embodied in the First Outline Perspective Plan (OPP1), the National Development Policy (1991-2000) in the Second Outline Perspective Plan (OPP2), while the