

The Perception and Understanding of Malaysia Madani's Core Values



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Abstract This study aims to identify the youth's perception and understanding of the main concepts and values outlined by Malaysia Madani through focus group discussions. The study sample was 10 informants consisting of youth leaders, students of higher education, public and private officials, activists and political leaders. The results showed that most informants gave a positive perception of the concept of Malaysia Madani, but many did not understand some concepts related to this basic value. They also accept this policy because the main basis is to strengthen racial unity and socio-economic stability. Non-Malay informants also stated that the name Madani seemed "Islamic" making it difficult for some Chinese and Indians to accept such policies. They also hope that the promotion and description of this concept be improved so that it absorbs the grassroots, especially outside the city. The study also suggests that this policy should be tangible rather than just selling concepts.

Keywords Malaysia Madani · Perception · Understanding

1 Introduction

Malaysia Madani was introduced by YAB Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim on 19th January 2023 [1], with a primary focus on solving problems, meeting the needs of the country, building a harmonious and prosperous future and fulfilling the potential of the people and the country. The word Madani is synonymous with Anwar Ibrahim since he became the previous Deputy Prime Minister who gave priority to matters of faith and humanity [10].

The Madani concept targets to strengthen 8 sectors, namely economy and finance, legislation, institutions, education, community, culture, urban and rural. The phrase Malaysia Madani was developed with the aim of transforming Malaysia into a

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country that upholds human rights and moral principles such as a just and efficient government. Therefore, Malaysia Madani is an integrated and comprehensive initiative aimed at making all policies and implementation in Malaysia more humane. It continues to be improved through public input and feedback [1].

The idea of the Prime Minister through civil society is to give birth to a developed and highly civilized Malaysia. This progress is not judged only by material or economic achievements, but more importantly progress in terms of thought and civilization. This policy introduced the framework as an effort to restore and boost Malaysia's glory and dignity on a global level. When we explore the word Madani, it encompasses his vision, namely a skilled, civilized and inclusive society [9].

1.1 Problem Statement

According to [1], there are many weaknesses in terms of governance, especially rampant corruption, poverty issues, social symptoms and environmental destruction. Therefore, this concept emphasizes aspects of governance in the implementation of existing policies, especially when dealing with political and economic crises faced by the country today. The idea of Madani that the Prime Minister desires is not just external development but it carries a broad purpose, encompassing the welfare of human life itself as a value that must be lived and practiced by every citizen.

Values in a cultural context refer to the beliefs, norms, and principles held and respected by a community. These values form the basis of individual and collective behaviour in that culture. Cultural values play an important role in shaping cultural identity, providing guidance for social action and interaction, and influencing the way individuals in that culture think about themselves, others, and the world around them. The idea of Madani is comprehensive based on its six main values, namely [1].

- **M** (Sustainability)—A balanced quality of life based on Malaysia's unique image based on knowledge and local wisdom.
- **A** (Prosperity)—Economic, social and natural well-being through cultural knowledge and diversity of views.
- **D** (Creativity)—The ability of human capital to increase creativity.
- **A** (hormAt)—Respect towards the richness of tradition, celebrating diversity and celebrating differences in worldviews.
- **N** (keyakiNan)—Turning to faith as the attitude of trustworthiness which makes changes towards good and
- **I** (Ihsan)—Compassion for the wellbeing of all citizens through humanitarian actions.

Cultural values are the main principles or morals that form the basis of a cultural group. They may be based on religion, tradition, philosophy, collective memory, and custom. Examples of cultural values include respect for parents, family values, individualism, and egalitarianism [6, 7]. Therefore, the concept of Madani must be

understood and practiced by everyone including the leader and every citizen must turn it into a culture so that good values can be formed and maintained. Although the Malaysia Madani spearheaded by the Prime Minister is still new, it needs to be welcomed by the whole community to be translated into viable actions. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the perception and understanding of youths towards the values outlined in the concept of Malaysia Madani.

According to [6, 7], the concept and philosophy of the civil state narratively is to uplift humans, uphold justice and give responsible freedom. However, the success of Malaysia Madani depends a lot on communication strategies so that comprehensive information dissemination can be made and accepted by the public. While the country is driven to progress and sometimes polluted due to misconduct, corruption and collapsed values, Malaysia Madani injects common awareness among all parties to revive the strength of the nation's ancestors with pure values that must be redeveloped. When the Unity Government was formed, which was the merger of several political parties as the government, Malaysia Madani was raised as the agenda and policy for political and socio-economic stability. This concept focuses on aspects of governance that emphasize the implementation of existing policies, especially in the political and economic crisis facing the country today.

The question is, to what extent is this good policy understood and accepted by society? To what extent does society, especially the youth, participate in and engage with the Malaysia Madani policy? Although the country has good policies on environmental protection, the destruction continues. There are still many cases of corruption reported by the media every day. We are also plagued by weaknesses in addressing social issues and addressing the question of poverty both outside and in the city. It turns out that this is not a basic weakness but rather governance, disagreement and abuse of power [9]. So, objectives of this study are: (i) review youth's resources for information on Malaysia Madani, (ii) Exploring youth's perceptions of communication campaigns related to Malaysia Madani and, (iii) Identify youth's understanding of Malaysia Madani's core values.

2 Methodology

This study is conducted through Focus Group Discussions involving 10 participants or informants among youth. The design of this study begins by identifying the main objectives, and defining the main objectives of the study [7]. Based on the objectives of the study, a list of questions (table or script) is generated as a guide for each focus group discussion session [2]. This is followed by getting an ethical release. Informants in this study have been selected by using purposive sampling under the maximum variation type as well as through a critical sampling process as described earlier. Maximum variation sampling means that even if the selected sample is small, it is selected from a variety of characters so that the study results are diverse [2, 4]. The technique of collecting data for this study through focus group discussions was conducted on 18th March 2023 in Shah Alam, Selangor. A total of 10 participants

were involved in the study and a theoretical sampling process was used to determine the number of participants (Table 1).

The data were analysed simultaneously with the data citation process. After completing the citation and transcription process, the data were analysed using *constant comparative method*. Themes and categories were formed based on the problems of this study. Peer examination strategies have been used to obtain the level of internal validity in this study. To obtain external validity, detailed and rich reports or rich and *thick descriptions* have been made. Detailed reports have been provided in the design section of the study up to the data analysis process. Reliability strategies were achieved through the *audit trail method* [2, 4]. The use of this method is to capture rich descriptive data about how people think and behave and smooth out complex processes.

This focus group discussion took 120 min to explore perceptions, understandings, as well as review information resources related to Malaysia Madani. Analysis of interview data as the main data involves systematic processes such as preparation of field notes and transcripts, coding, tracking and building the main theme, building sub-themes and sub-sub-themes [3, 4]. The data issued in the form of transcripts is then formed into verbatim data. Verbatim this data is entered in the Atlas ti 10 computer software to detect the main themes and sub-themes involved and the analysis used is thematic analysis.

Table 1 Study informants

Participants	Age (years)	Education Level	Occupation	Ethnicity
P1 (Male)	25	Baccalaureate Diplom	Computer vendor	Chinese
P2 (Female)	24	Master	Student	Indian
P3 (Male)	30	Baccalaureate Diploma	Teacher	Malay
P4 (Female)	25	Diploma	Salesperson	Malay
P5 (Male)	31	Baccalaureate Diploma	Accountant	Chinese
P6 (Female)	28	Diploma	Student	Chinese
P7 (Female)	29	Baccalaureate Diploma	Engineer	Indian
P8 (Male)	30	STPM	Youth leader	Malay
P9 (Male)	28	Diploma	Salesperson	Chinese
P10 (Female)	30	Bachelor	Lecturer	Malay

3 Results

3.1 Sources of Reference for Malaysia Madani

This study found that the main source of reference for information on Malaysia Madani was the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) through its portals and social media (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8). The majority of study participants chose the PMO as the primary source because they believed in the integrity of the information and were confident that the information conveyed were valid (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8). Several study participants chose television and mainstream newspapers to increase their confidence in news delivered by local media related to Malaysia Madani (P2, P4, P8) (Table 2).

In the early stages, information about Malaysia Madani was limited except through the Prime Minister's statements in television and newspaper reports. Face-to-face information by authorities such as the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Communication and Digital are quite difficult to obtain (P4, P6). Radio is viewed as less effective in providing information about Malaysia Madani, especially private radio (P8, P9). Government radio provides information that is unclear because it is shown through dramas or sketches. Participants also suggested that a comprehensive communication campaign be carried out widely in all regions in Malaysia. Information through treatises or *pamphlets* are difficult to obtain. In addition a campaign medium using multiple languages must be created to facilitate understanding (P2, P4). Many Chinese and Indians are ignorant of the concept of Malaysia Madani because they do not understand the information conveyed due to language factors

Table 2 Theme of information source selection

	Theme
1	The Prime Minister's Office social media became a major source
2	The Prime Minister is a reference on the concept of Malaysia Madani
3	Social media such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok are the media of choice
4	Participants often follow developments from time to time through mass media
5	Lectures by the authorities are lacking and rarely conducted
6	Television reporting is more valid and complete than others
7	Radio did not provide clear information about Malaysia Madani
8	The press gives little explanation and more towards news
9	Magazines explain very little about Malaysia Madani
10	Suggest that there be more campaigns on the communication strategy of Malaysia Madani campaign be more structured and comprehensive
11	The billboard related to Malaysia Madani be placed on highways and strategic places
12	Media and messages written in multiple languages to make them easier to understand
13	Those in rural areas and no internet facilities are less informed

(P1, P7, P10). In fact, participants suggested that billboards and large billboards be placed on highways and strategic places to expose the message to the people.

3.2 Youth Perceptions of Communication Campaigns Related to Malaysia Madani

Overall, participants are aware that the existence of this policy is in line with the formation of the Unity Government. Campaigns through mass media and social media often mention the word Madani, but they admit to not knowing enough about the real details (P2, P4, P5). In fact, almost every speech by the Prime Minister mentions Madani, but less by other leaders in the government (P6, P7). They also realized that the campaign was aimed to create racial unity in the country. This situation causes this policy to be not much different from previous policies. Some participants considered this policy as a rebranding from other policies towards racial unity (P8, P9). Information about this concept was quite lacking and limited and over time it became more widespread. But they claimed that the focus of the campaign is concentrated in urban areas only. While rural and remote areas find it difficult to get information or to have campaigns delivered (P4, P5). However, much of Malaysia Madani's information is twisted by stakeholders such as political party leaders, and used as a propaganda tool to attack the current government. Studies have also shown that a lot of distorted information causes confusion (P4, P8).

There is also social media that deliberately spread misinformation for the purpose of political publicity. This situation is more noticeable in social media such as TikTok and viral information transmission via WhatsApp (P4, P7, P9). Participants also considered this concept rather complex and needed to be explained more briefly for ease of understanding. They prefer messages through infographics that are easier to understand (P1, P9). The word Madani is considered Islamic, which makes non-Malays feel slightly uncomfortable. However, some participants stated that the term was not important, but the content of Madani needed to be universal (P5, P6). This study found that almost all participants were not very aware of the existence of the core values in this concept. However, once the researchers named the 6 key values, they could start giving encouraging views. Although they often hear about the Malaysia Madani campaign on television and radio, they are honestly not clear about the details of this concept (P3, P7, P8).

Overall, the participants agreed that each Prime Minister would introduce a concept or policy as a symbol of leadership. For example, there were several campaigns before this such as the *IMalaysia concept*, *Malaysia Prihatin* and so on (P4, P10). This study also found that all participants were aware of the existence of Rahmah sales as a product of Malaysia Madani. But they claimed that this is not new because previous policies such as *Malaysia Prihatin* and *IMalaysia* also had similar approaches like Rahmah sales (all participants) (Table 3).

Table 3 Theme categories in perception of Malaysia Madani Campaign

	Theme
1	All are aware of the concept of Malaysia Madani but it is considered new
2	Most admit to being not clear about the details
3	They realized this concept was popular for the Prime Minister before
4	Participants realized that Malaysia Madani aims for racial unity
5	Malaysia Madani is closely linked to the Unity Government
6	A lot of confusing information, especially in social media
7	Malaysia Madani's information in the early stages were little. Over time a lot of information is obtained
8	Each leader introduces his or her own government slogan
9	They prefer brief and concise information like infographics
10	A lot of misleading and false information especially on social media
11	Confusing information cause unrest
12	Information is often twisted because of "political propaganda"
13	The word Madani seems Islamic, which makes non-Malays uncomfortable
14	The concept of Madani is rather complex but needs to be universal
15	Core values need to be translated to be easy to understand
16	Malaysia Madani needs to have a lot of products and not just selling concepts
17	Rahmah sales
18	Madani Malaysia seems to be the same as the previous unity policy and policies
19	Overall, participants have heard the Malaysia Madani theme song

3.3 Youth's Understanding of Malaysia Madani Values

Overall, the study showed that participants lacked understanding of the meaning of each value outlined in Malaysia Madani. But they understand value phrases such as stability and innovation as a recipe for success. However, some participants said that, what was more important was not the values outlined but rather the extent to which the intention became a practice and culture for each citizen (P2, P3, P7). Some participants also stated that the values advocated by Malaysia Madani have been explained in the *Rukun Negara Principles* which also aim at racial unity (P1, P5, P9). They also expect that every value can be translated into something practical and can be felt or obtained by the community (P4, P10). Some participants said that the values expressed in Malaysia Madani are not new. It seems that this value is used as a new package or rebranded because it is well understood that Malaysia's previous productivity approach and policies also touch the same thing (P4, P7, P8, P10) (Table 4).

According to participants, the concept of sustainability is similar to stability in politics, economics and others. But this sustainability needs to be prioritized to ensure that the country is recovered due to politicking and also due to COVID-19 that has hit

Table 4 Theme categories in understanding the value of Malaysia Madani

	Theme
1	Most participants knew the values outlined but were not clear about the full details
2	The understanding of Malaysia Madani is diverse
3	The concept of sustainability is important in the development of the country related to the ability to meet the needs of the present generation without sacrificing the needs of future generations
4	Value is what you want to apply in life that will become practice and culture
5	Many agree that this value needs to be understood and implemented
6	The Government must implement all values thoroughly and accordingly
7	Make every citizen know about Malaysia Madani and turn related values into practice
8	Countries that strive to improve the welfare of their people tend to have healthier, happier, and more productive societies. This can contribute to social and political stability
9	Well-being is a measure of happiness, health, and quality of life of the people
10	A good welfare program can help reduce inequality in society
11	Inventiveness help drive Malaysia's economic growth by creating new opportunities, products, and services
12	Respect for people or understanding between different races is a very important aspect in a multicultural and multiracial country
13	When citizens respect each other, it helps prevent conflict between different ethnic groups
14	Confidence or trust in the country is an important aspect in ensuring stability, harmony, and continuity in the development of a country
15	In the context of national unity, <i>ihسان</i> plays a role as a factor that promotes harmony, impartiality, and justice among various groups in society
16	Most participants knew the values outlined but did not understand the details
17	The concept of Malaysia Madani is a good policy but needs to be examined and re-examined in various aspects, especially the meaning of 'equality' which makes Malay privileges unaffected
18	Malaysia Madani is able to bring the country to a rise from economic and political instability
19	This policy should not be politicized
20	The 3R issue undermines the success of Malaysia Madani

the country (P1, P3, P4, P6, P8). Many have gone out of business due to the outbreak and need assistance and the Government now needs to adopt a more sustainable approach so that the country's economy continues to grow (P2, P7).

The government also needs to fulfil all the promises that have been stated in previous election manifestos. The government should focus to find a solution on the issue of increasing cost of living and current hikes in the price of goods. This matter is related to the welfare of the people which is priority for now (P6, P9, P10). Inventiveness or innovation will be a catalyst for the development of the country. Innovation should not just be focused on higher education centres or research centres, but it is necessary to create innovative culture among the community, especially

young people. They also requested that the Government provide special incentives and allocations to young people who are active in the field of creation and innovation (all participants). Respect is a human value that must be practiced in life at all times. Respect is also considered as a key to unity in this multiracial country (P7, P8). Stricter actions should be taken against anyone who breaks the law without picking feathers. Action against those who incite and sow slander that touches the 3R's of Royalty, Race and Religion should be supported (P2, P4, P10). The 3R issue is able to divide races and trigger racial riots. They hope that issues that can divide races can be avoided, and control in social media is very important (P3, P5, P8).

4 Conclusion

Developing Malaysia Madani fulfils the element of inclusiveness to build a civilized society, not only from the physical aspect, but also from producing spiritually brilliant human capital. The Prime Minister raised the discourse in a timely manner, by looking at the various lameness that is happening today. This is because the Madani concept emphasizes a well-managed society in order to build a civilized nation. The objective of giving birth to a civil society enables every human being to achieve prosperity and happiness. Thus, the purpose of development is not merely for it to be seen with the framework of a construction project, but it should strive to prospering the world.

The concept of Malaysia Madani is not just a slogan, but should translate into the government's efforts to solve problems faced by the people and create a better country. This concept will be a guide to all ministers and their respective ministries to achieve the key performance indicators (KPIs) set. KPI is not about the number of programs implemented by each ministry, rather it will be assessed based on people's satisfaction with services or the quality of programs in helping to solve their problems. People do not really care about the slogan of Malaysia Madani, but they are concerned about the cost of living, the price of goods and internet access. Therefore, it is important for every minister and ministry to carry out efforts and take care of the people's issues promptly. The Madani concept focuses on greater efforts at improving the quality of service to the people. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim introduced Malaysia Madani as an effort to drive and restore Malaysia's dignity and glory in the global arena based on six core values which are Sustainability, Prosperity, Innovation, Respect, Trust and Compassion. In a democracy, gaining popular support is key to maintaining power and achieving the goals of government. Therefore, it is important to stay in touch with the community and be able to explain, listen, and meet their needs and aspirations.

In summary, Madani brings a very large meaning for the existence of a state within the framework of Islam which consists of five main components, namely Islam as a reference and guide, government institutions, government, state sovereignty, state and people governed. Of these five components, religion is the originator and government is the driving force in defending religion, and state sovereignty and managing the governance of the people and the governance of the state. In fact, every plan carried

out by the government can only be achieved if there is close cooperation on the part of government ministries, departments and agencies in carrying out plans that have been prepared. Therefore, the involvement of ministers or people's representatives elected by the people through voting in elections is required to ensure that the agenda of developing the Madani state can be successful.

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