

The Role of Ethics and Civilization Course in Nurturing a Madani Generation

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ABSTRACT

The development of a Madani generation involves more than just material advancement; it necessitates meticulous thought and the cultivation of ethical values. The 10th Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, conceived the slogan "Malaysia MADANI," paving the way for Malaysia and its diverse population of races, religions, and cultures to progress. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role of ethics and civilization appreciation courses in fostering a Madani generation. The six main pillars contained in the idea of a civilized Malaysia, including sustainability, well-being, creativity, respect, confidence, and courtesy, were also debated to foster a generation that is advanced in terms of thought, spirituality, and materiality. The entire study employs qualitative methods to analyze primary and secondary sources. A document analysis study was also carried out to ensure the validity of each piece of information presented and evaluate the available facts. The study's results revealed that the ethics and civilization appreciation course significantly contributed to the understanding of the six core pillars that shape a Malaysian generation MADANI, thereby enhancing critical and analytical thinking skills to navigate a more challenging life. The study's implications demonstrate that ethics and civilization appreciation courses significantly contribute to the development of the most Madani generation, thereby contributing to the progress of the nation.

Keywords: ethics, civilization, role, Madani generation, national development

INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education introduced the Ethics and Civilization Appreciation Course (PEP) as one of the General Subjects (MPU) in the 2019 session. The PEP course has a comprehensive curriculum and aims to prepare students to appreciate the ethics and civilization that exist in Malaysia's ethnically diverse society. Furthermore, this course enhances the students' critical and analytical thinking skills, equipping them to navigate a more challenging life. In fact, this course emphasizes the affective domain through aspects of spirituality, attitudes, feelings, emotions, and values, thereby improving soft skills and strengthening the students' identity. In this context, the PEP course does not only convey theoretical knowledge but also plays a role in forming students who are able to interact harmoniously and productively in a complex society.

In addition, the PEP course can encourage students to appreciate the diversity of cultures and traditions that exist in Malaysia. Therefore, people view a deep understanding of the PEP course as crucial for preventing conflict and fostering constructive dialogue. Indirectly, the PEP course can strengthen the country's social fabric by producing individuals who are knowledgeable, sensitive to humanitarian issues, and committed to the principles of justice and equality. Therefore, Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) is no exception in offering PEP courses to bachelor's degree (CTU554) and Diploma (CTU152) students regardless of race and religion. If scrutinized, the PEP course implementation method is based on continuous and summative assessment involving high-impact education practices (HIEPs).

The primary goal of the PEP course is to foster a deep understanding of ethical values in a cultural and religious context, as well as to emphasize good personality based on local norms. This is seen as different from ethics and civilization courses abroad, which place more emphasis on understanding and applying ethical principles in a global context to deal with ethical issues such as climate change, social injustice, and human rights (Singer, 2020). The introduction of the slogan "Malaysia MADANI" was the brainchild of Malaysia's 10th Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who made this idea the way forward to develop Malaysia as a civilized country. Therefore, the PEP course plays an important role in nurturing a more humane Madani generation based on knowledge, tradition, treasures, and local wisdom.

Therefore, this study will debate the PEP course in the Malaysian context based on the six core pillars of MADANI Malaysia, namely sustainability, well-being, creativity, respect, confidence, and courtesy. Indirectly, the PEP course can foster a more humane Madani generation based on knowledge, tradition, treasures, and local wisdom.

METHODOLOGY

In completing the production of this study, the researcher used a qualitative approach based on document and content analysis. By analyzing text or documents, the discussion method becomes descriptive, narrative, and analytical (Sugiyono, 2009). This approach is commonly recognized as a popular design in the field of social science, particularly in the disciplines of history, ethnography, and sociology. Document analysis divides research data collection methods from content analysis, which describes printed or broadcast communication messages (Sabitha, 2005). Research in books, theses, dissertations, journals, and related scientific studies is used to collect data.

While content analysis refers to an objective and systematic explanation of written information (Ahmad Munawar Ismail & Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali, 2020), Deductive and inductive approaches are used in content analysis based on the six core pillars of Malaysia MADANI. The inductive method is the process of describing, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data to determine the validity of facts, data, and information that are specific to the public. The deductive method is applied to draw conclusions by analyzing the data to think patterns from general to specific statements that discuss the role of the PEP course in fostering the Madani generation.

The Role of Ethics and Civilization Appreciation Course

The PEP course aligns with the objectives of both the National Education Philosophy and the UiTM Philosophy, focusing on the development of balanced and harmonious human capital and the application of noble values. It indirectly generates professional graduates capable of advancing knowledge, advancing society, and advancing the nation. As a result, the PEP course implementation plays an important role in fostering a Madani generation. This is because the teaching and learning process (PDP) of this course focuses on building critical skills in solving problems, fostering the formation of professional character and morals in students, and training them to master and hone communication skills to prepare them for an increasingly global world. The course is challenging (Sakinatul Raadiyah Abdullah, Farahdina Fazial, Surita Hartini Mat Hassan, Salimah Yahaya & Che Khadijah Hamid, 2022).

Additionally, the completion of this PEP course emphasizes understanding the formation of ethics and civilization in a diverse society, with the aim of enhancing appreciation for these concepts and strengthening national unity through the spirit of patriotism and nationalism, modeled after Malaysia. Academic activities examine and debate civilization and ethics based on the Malaysian model, grounded in the Federal Constitution and Rukun Negara. Therefore, the appreciation of ethics and civilization embodies social responsibility, mobilizing at the individual, family, community, country, and global levels. Indirectly, completing the PEP course can improve students' soft skills at higher learning institutions (Mohd Sohaimi Esa, Irma Wani Othman, Saifulazry Mokhtar, Romzi Ationg, & Mohd Azri Ibrahim, 2023).

In addition, the PEP course plays an important role in supporting the students' social responsibility through volunteering activities. The implemented social responsibility program indirectly accomplishes the objectives of promoting welfare, protecting the environment, and aiding vulnerable populations like the homeless, the elderly,

the disabled, and orphans (Nur Angriani Nurja, Mohd Zulhasnan Mat, & Raja Ahmad Raja Husin, 2023). Furthermore, volunteering is a demand within the framework of national unity that has great potential and provides high national awareness to students towards the well-being of the community as well as connecting to human civilization (Siti Nurul Izza Hashim & Norizah Mohamed@Haji Daud, 2022).

The Relevance of Civilized Ethics Appreciation Course as a Tool for Nurturing A Madani Generation

The current debate and discussion surrounding the term madani is not a recent development. Traditional Islamic philosophers introduced this term, and contemporary Muslim scholars have further developed it. Al-Farabi (1931), in his debate on the concept of civilization, tended to concentrate on the science of civilization. Ibn Miskawayh posits that the Madani framework and conceptual society exemplify the pinnacle of civilization (Shuhairimi Abdullah, et.al 2023). Accordingly, the Madani concept in Malaysia is now an effort to inject family values and curriculum into a Madani generation that strengthens critical and analytical thinking. Furthermore, we should not overlook the importance of soft skills in Madani's concept. This is because human kindness is an indicator of humanity, distinguishing it from all other creatures.

Mizan, Mustafa, & Baharudin (2024) argue that soft skills refer to self-development and interpersonal skills including courage, perseverance, patience, skills, leadership, cooperation, and creativity. Therefore, the PEP course aligns with the notion of a civilized Malaysia, emphasizing mutual respect and showcasing the diversity of races in Malaysia through six primary pillars: (Shuhairimi Abdullah, et. al, 2023)

i. Sustainability

Sustainability is the process of enhancing a nation's quality of life by maintaining a balance between humans and nature, drawing from Malaysia's unique blend of knowledge and local wisdom. The PEP course, covering chapters 1, 2, and 9, discusses the core of sustainability. Generally, the PEP course will introduce students to the definition and concept of ethics and civilization. This is because ethics and civilization are important elements in discussing the development and historical progress of past human civilizations. Indirectly, the students are able to understand and appreciate the dynamics of a society that has a complex history and interaction process.

Furthermore, Chapter 9 of the PEP course emphasizes the importance of Malaysian ethics and civilization's sustainability. This is because ethics and civilization, throughout the history of human civilization, have been dynamic, changeable, and impermanent. Therefore, a critical, analytical, and scientific framework presents a deep understanding and appreciation of various forms of ethics and civilization, including their initiatives. Moreover, constructing civilization is a challenging endeavor that promises longevity. Therefore, the students will take lessons from past history and use it as a life guide to plan the future. Indirectly, the PEP course's discussion of chapters 1, 2, and 9 helps students understand the fundamentals of Madani Malaysia's sustainability, preparing them to tackle global issues.

ii. Well-being

According to Umami Munirah et.al (2016), well-being measures the quality of life psychologically or internally and encompasses several dimensions such as happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem, self-efficacy, family life, work, education, and finance. The pillars of Madani Malaysia define well-being as a progressive and comprehensive state of well-being for all Malaysians, encapsulated in the concept of balance.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of the PEP course showcase discussions on the core of well-being. Chapter 3 covers the processes of time that shape modern civilization, including migration, the formation of a diverse society, and cultural sharing between races and religions. We also introduced the students to various elements of ethics and civilization, encompassing the environment, society, economy, and thought processes. Students gain an understanding of the concept of unity among communities of diverse ethnicities and races, which they can apply in their daily lives in a manner that is both ethical and civilizational.

Chapters 4 and 5 concentrate on enhancing social cohesion and building a diverse society in Malaysia. The excerpt from these two chapters explores three concurrent societal processes, each driven by three distinct

motivations: the aspiration for unity, the attainment of unity, and the pursuit of unification through three primary principles - bargaining, negotiation, and mediation - Additionally, the discussion included an understanding of the national culture's ethos, which encompasses the early development of the Malay world as a civilization before the birth of modern Malaysia today. This is because national unity is an important mission for the country and requires a comprehensive framework capable of translating the face of Malaysia's solidarity (Makiah Tussaripah, 2022). Therefore, the values of justice, acceptance, and tolerance should be fundamental to the framework of national unity, with Islam serving as the main yardstick to support the agenda of national unity within the context of Malaysia. Indirectly, the understanding and appreciation of the students related to the discussion of chapters 3, 4, and 5 in the PEP course can provide a clear picture of the core of the well-being of Civil Malaysia to create the harmony of the diverse society in Malaysia encapsulated in balance.

iii. Creativity

Creative Malaysian Madani refers to innovation, invention, and new design. This core will create constant change and empower creativity. Malaysia's implementation of this core makes it a creative country that will provide a conducive environment and infrastructure, stimulate creativity, and encourage the production of systems, products, processes, and ideas. Upon close examination, Chapter 7 delves into this core, emphasizing its role in bolstering national unity, ethics, and civilization in Malaysia. This core must keep pace with the most recent technological advancements, particularly in the realm of information and communication technology (ICT). Furthermore, ICT is a digital site that provides space for the community to interact and build social networks through the applications WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Telegram, and Zoom, which have become the background of the current generation's life.

However, the rapid advancement of ICT has led to social inequalities, a topic of frequent discussion across diverse platforms, including the digital realm. When examined, ICT can be a communication tool and system that has a positive and negative impact on users. Furthermore, revolutionary technological changes such as artificial intelligence (AI) will bring new challenges to users. However, AI also opens up new opportunities and perspectives in work ethics, culture, and organizations. As a result, through Chapter 7, the PEP course will emphasize ethics and civilization in the use of ICT. Indirectly, the students recognize the importance of creativity within the Madani Malaysia framework, ensuring that technology contributes positively to the PnP process, rather than serving as a destructive idol.

iv. Respect

The Arabic word "respect" connotes human dignity, manners, and politeness. If examined, the concept of MADANI focuses specifically on human rights and dignity. In addition, respect also refers to polite behavior that embraces the richness of tradition, celebrates diversity, and celebrates differences in world views. Furthermore, we can broaden its definition to encompass the effectiveness of respect in interpersonal interactions. Respecting people will help them understand one another and strengthen brotherhood among them.

Chapter 6 of the PEP course discusses the fundamental principles of respect in civil Malaysia. This chapter highlights the function and role of the Federal Constitution as a site of integration in shaping the spirit of unity and integration between the diverse communities in Malaysia. Consequently, the chapter will introduce students to topics associated with the integration concept, such as comprehending the roles of Malays and Malay kings, religious concerns, and linguistic differences. The debate on the function of the Federal Constitution is highly significant and is discussed with civil generation students to provide a deep understanding, preventing the misinterpretation of its contents that could lead to various crises and misunderstandings within the community. This clearly demonstrates that the PEP course, specifically Chapter 6, cultivates students who value and respect the Federal Constitution as the primary law in Malaysia.

v. Confidence

Trust, as a pledge of worldly and spiritual moral responsibility, closely relates to belief. In general, the core of confidence can bring hope for change, as the attitude of trust makes changes for the better. In fact, restoring trust and responsibility can revitalize the core of confidence. Examining the PEP course in chapters 1 to 9 reveals

confidence. Each chapter demonstrates the fundamental confidence in appreciating religious ethics, thereby empowering the unity and civilization of the Malaysian nation.

Furthermore, all chapters in the PEP course have values and reflections on national and religious life. Malaysia emphasizes the maturity of national life and the efforts to build civilization, fostering a superior national and patriotic identity in students (Makiah Tussaripah, 2022). Now, the country's geopolitical changes and the convergence of life in the social, economic, and cultural life space of the pluralistic society from the colonial era have changed to the universal norm of life in a diverse society, which has become a challenge to Madani generations. Therefore, this PEP course aims to enhance students' core confidence, fostering a value of trust and an attitude of responsibility.

vi. Courtesy

Through acts of human empowerment, Ihsan refers to compassion for the fate of all parties. In principle, kindness includes three aspects, namely feelings, values, and vision. Compassion from the perspective of feeling is to immerse oneself in the suffering and misery of others with the goal of finding a solution. From the value perspective, Ihsan signifies valuing individuals honestly and resolutely to elevate their economic status, demeanor, and conduct. Courtesy plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of empathy among Malaysians, particularly towards minority groups.

Chapter 8 of the PEP course exhibits the core of courtesy. This chapter will discuss the role of ethics and civilization in supporting social responsibility. This is due to the significant influence that ethics and civilization have on the social reality within Malaysian society. Social responsibility, as defined by Siti Nurul Izza Hashim and Norizah Mohamed@ Haji Daud (2022), refers to the culture or values that an individual or an organization upholds in fulfilling their voluntary responsibilities towards society and the environment. Therefore, through volunteering activities, the students will gain an understanding and appreciation of social responsibility.

Furthermore, this chapter emphasizes national awareness through a spirit of patriotism and nationalism. Students can indirectly internalize the core of courtesy through the Madani Malaysia framework, which encourages them to constantly observe, think, analyze, find solutions, and act to uphold justice and goodness in society (Siti Nurul Izza Hashim & Norizah Mohamed@ Haji Daud, 2022). In fact, the core of Ihsan, through heightened national awareness, can fortify the identity of students, particularly the civic generation.

Furthermore, the PEP course not only offers theoretical knowledge but also equips students with practical skills to navigate real-world situations. Activities such as community service, volunteer projects, and participation in intercultural dialogue can give students a direct experience of the importance of ethics and civilization in building a harmonious and civilized society.

Challenges and Solutions

PEP courses play an important role in the development of students' personalities. Not only does the PdP process apply ethical and civilized values, but it also requires emphasis outside the teaching session. Furthermore, some parties reacted negatively to the decision and implementation of the PEP course, arguing that it should not be mandatory for students. In fact, the PEP course will cause the student's learning period to be longer. In addition, the attitude of a few students who look down on the PEP course as an easy subject should be scrapped (Nor Shela Saleh, et.al, 2022). This situation will challenge the PEP course in strengthening the students' critical and analytical thinking to face a more challenging life. In addition, the failure of the students to understand, appreciate, and practice the PEP course will cause the goal of Madani Malaysia to be difficult to achieve in producing a society that is advanced in terms of thought and civilization.

Not only that, but another challenge lies in ensuring the implementation and evaluation of PEP courses remain relevant in the context of the rapid development of digital technology and social change. This is because students are easily exposed to information that comes from various sources, including social media and other digital platforms.

We should make the necessary efforts to discover a solution that aligns the PEP course's focus on ethical and

civilized dimensions with the student's personal growth. Furthermore, the PEP course provides synergy and added value in the process of building soft skills based on elements of social responsibility, humanitarian values, a positive attitude, and professionalism with integrity towards balanced human capital compensation (Noor Syahida Md Soh, Huzaimah Ismail, Nurulhuda Md Hassan, Mohd Annas Shafiq Ayob, & Faridah Mohd Sairi, 2022). Therefore, to align with the National Education Philosophy and the goal of Malaysia Madani to produce students with high ethics and civilization, we must periodically improve the PEP course. Continuous improvement of the content and implementation is essential to ensure it remains relevant to the changing times and the needs of the students. This is because the PEP course emphasizes the lifelong education process based on spiritual development as a solid foundation for giving birth to a Madani generation in a comprehensive, integrated, and balanced manner.

Additionally, the PEP course curriculum needs to incorporate technology and digital media elements. For instance, we can utilize technology like interactive e-learning platforms, simulations, and game-based learning (gamification) to enhance the interest and relevance of the teaching process for the younger generation. We also exposed the students to current issues related to digital ethics, including data privacy, social media usage ethics, and the negative effects of spreading false information. This approach enables students to comprehend the application of ethical principles and traditional civilization in the contemporary digital world.

Overall, a more inclusive, interactive, and relevant approach to current needs can overcome the challenges in the implementation of the PEP course. Thus, this course can play its role more effectively in fostering a Madani generation capable of leading Malaysia towards progress based on high civilizational and ethical values.

CONCLUSION

People view the PEP course as significant and relevant in the endeavor to cultivate a Madani generation. The implementation of PEP courses can improve students' mastery of various skills, including critical, creative, and analytical thinking. In addition, this course encourages students to evaluate the importance of unity in creating an attitude of responsibility based on pure values. In this regard, the active role of the students is crucial in bringing forth the noble wishes of the government through the six core pillars of Malaysia Madani. This is because the students are a national asset that will be the catalyst for the country's future. However, the six cores of Malaysia Madani alone hold no significance; what matters most is how the students interpret these cores, demonstrating an appreciation and practice of ethics and civilization along the way. Therefore, the Madani generation must understand, appreciate, and practice the PEP course to foster an authoritative and progressive society.

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