Unity among Multi-Ethnic Youths in Selangor, Malaysia: The Mediating Role of Sportsmanship

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Abstract

Unity should be nurtured and preserved for generations through exemplary living practices which uphold the rules of living and working together to contribute to a safe, prosperous which would not attract unobtrusive element that can disrupt the peace and harmony of a society. PLS-SEM and mediating analysis were conducted to examine the factors influencing unity, and to investigates whether sportsmanship mediates the relationship between tolerance, integration, and loyalty towards unity among multi-ethnic's youths in Selangor, Malaysia. The survey questionnaires were distributed to 200 universities students who are also the participants of "The Amazing Race Kita Selangor", a sports programme conducted for students to cultivate the spirit of unity. The finding shows that level of unity among multi-ethnic youths in Selangor are at satisfactory level. The result reveals that sportsmanship has the most significant positive influence towards the unity, followed by tolerance. Unfortunately, integration and loyalty does not significantly influence unity of youths. Furthermore, this study shows that the relationship between tolerance and integration towards unity are mediated in a complimentary way by the sportsmanship. This discovery highlights the need of engaging in social events and sports activities to cultivate a sense of unity among young people. Efforts to promote young engagement from diverse ethnic backgrounds must be continually sought and enforced, particularly via social media targeting the Alpha generation. To address human insecurity issues and enhance national peace via sports, it was suggested that values like as honesty, fairness, fair play, tolerance, and respect for others should be upheld in every sport.

Keywords: Tolerance, Integration, Loyalty, Sportsmanship, Unity.

Introduction

Given Malaysia's multi-ethnic population, maintaining national unity continues to be the primary goal of the country's social, economic, and national development. The government has significant challenges in integrating individuals from multi ethnic backgrounds. In order to promote social cohesiveness, national consciousness, and national integration, the

Malaysian government often places a strong emphasis on national identity. The difficulty therefore lies in integrating several ethnic identities into the national identity. This is especially crucial in a nation with several ethnic groups like Malaysia (Kee & Nie, 2017). The late Professor Dr. Emeritus Tan Sri Khoo Kay Kim expressed concern that ethnics unity in Malaysia was still in a fragile state (Baharuddin, 2008). However, according to Faruqi (2014), "Malaysia is a nation in a stable tension". Conflict cannot be avoided in Malaysia's pluralistic society, but it can be minimised by managing it in the direction of positive conflict management, which is conflict that results in decisions and cooperative actions towards achieving a better life, rather than conflict that can lead to fights, violence, and wars that could destroy inter-racial and inter-religious harmony. In Malaysia, where there is a diversified culture, sensitive issues might lead to a pattern of social connections between race and religion that is not harmonious (Baharuddin, 2020).

Ratnam (2019), argued that the tension between ethnic and state or national identity is a common phenomenon in many parts of world. This statement seems consistent with a claim by Malaysian ex-Prime Minister. Through a book titled "*Nation of Intent in Malaysia*" written by Baharudin (2007), Tun Mahathir Mohamed clearly saying that:

> "Having a strong and active Malaysian state and a thriving economy cannot really guarantee the state's continued survival but it could easily be dismantled by centrifugal forces, particularly ethnic disunity".
> Tun Mahathir Mohamed

Regardless of ethnic origin, national unity unites all facets of society for the same goal of advancing a nation state; as such, it is very important and directly affects national security. According to previous study, the country's national security may be seriously jeopardised if different ethnic groups are not integrated (Ishaque & Fatima, 2019). This is particularly true for human security, which is primarily dependent on social group equality, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect (Folarin et al., 2016). Moreover, resistance, disputes, and civil conflicts might result from governments' repression of ethnic identity or from unequal recognition (Cederman et al., 2013). Therefore, it is crucial to determine the underlying factors influencing national unity and take the appropriate steps to reduce or eliminate such problems in order to create a peaceful human security. Unquestionably, lots of ethnic issues have been viral and debated in social media. Information technology's drawback is that it may be used to incite ethnic anxiety and hatred among different ethnic groups (Shamsuddin et al., 2015). According to Kee and Nie (2017), it is evident that Malaysia's ethnically focused media often highlights current events or policies that are solely important to their target viewers, widening the knowledge gap between various ethnic groups on these topics. Therefore, the ethnic gap not only grows as a result of such unhealthy cooperation, but it is also made worse by media distortions and biased stories. The difficulties of merging many ethnic groups to reach a shared understanding of national policy was subsequently made worse by the media.

Sport has been a mean of bringing different peoples from all cultures and creeds together. Sports events provide a space for individuals of all ages, genders, political affiliations, and religious backgrounds to meet together without harbouring animosity. It is a social agent whereby people from diverse age groups and political backgrounds come together as players and viewers (Svensson & Mahoney, 2020). Evans et al (2020), claimed that sports have

evolved into a world language, a unifying factor that dissolves all boundaries. It is a global industry with practices that may have a significant influence on a large scale, making it a potent instrument for a nation's progress and development. According to the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sports for Development and Peace (2013), sports may be a powerful deterrent to insecurity and a component of establishing long-lasting international peace. Sports activities may encourage tolerance and social integration when they are well implemented. The ideals of athletics and those required for enduring peace are the same.

Several nations have debated the role and impact of sports in society. Many people see sport as a physical activity that is inherently linked to competition for pride and glory between teams or countries. Games, sports, and physical exercise in general are general in almost every community across the globe. The popularity of sports transcends political, national, or ideological boundaries, and both participants and athletes find enjoyment in the activity. For today's young generation, there are many who still play sports according to their respective races. Therefore, activities that have an element of racial unity through sports in Malaysia should be created to fuel racial unity while also being able to strengthen the identity of each individual. The aims of this study are as follow:

(a) To examine the factors influencing unity among youths in Selangor, Malaysia; and
(b) To investigates whether sportsmanship mediates the relationship between tolerance, integration, and loyalty towards unity among multi-ethnic's youths in Selangor, Malaysia.

Literature Review

Unity is the unification exhibited by a community or group (Sevinç, 2022). Unity is the best formula to realize the country's aspirations where the involvement of the people as a whole regardless of religion and race together adheres to social responsibility and this should be the practice of every individual (Abdullah et al., 2022). In the Malaysian context, unity plays an important role to ensure the people lives in harmony and work together to develop Malaysia towards world global. Without unity, the march towards nation building is always slow, uneven, inadequate, and inefficient (Nagaraj, 2009). There are two schools of thought that argued on the unity of ethnic groups in Malaysia. The first group debates that the national unity must be based on uniformity of one language, education, and cultural practice (Crandall & Bailey, 2018). While another group believes that the current peaceful of Malaysia because of each ethnic are allowed practicing their own language, education, and culture (Christie & Noor, 2017). These two stream ideas become a basic role which our current government is practicing nowadays. The suggested framework for the factors influencing unity is shown in Figure 1. The discussion on each of the construct is presented in the following sub-sections.

Tolerance

Individuals often adhere to racial standards to protect their racial identity rather than conforming to widely recognised norms (Abdullah et al., 2022). This is motivated by a strong feeling of self-respect in protecting their ethnicity. A significant problem in developing the Malaysian nation is prioritising national identity above ethnic identification. Unity can be assessed by the level of tolerance that exists in the society. Tolerance is the acceptance of fundamental ideals that every citizen should uphold, regardless of differences in religion, creed, race, or culture (Damin, 2021). The agreed-upon principles focus on civic and national culture to cultivate patriotism among the population, thus fostering a harmonious and

peaceful country. Lee and Liang (2020) argued that tolerance increases as interactions continue until each race no longer has a feeling of prejudice but is willing to acknowledge, value, and embrace national identity above ethnic identification. Wan Husin et al. (2021) suggested that unity can be achieved by the merger of regions and races, including social change, cultural disputes, and the assimilation of racial values into the national culture.

An extensive study had assessed the extent of racial tolerance among Malaysian young and concluded that the general level of racial tolerance is unsatisfactory (Abdul Rahman et al., 2019). Differently, Tamam and Waheed (2017) studied on national integration in Malaysia and found that the tolerance level was at the normal level. Focusing on the youth, they discovered that young people had a high degree of tolerance in their first community engagement with other ethnic groups. Mohd Nizah et al. (2017) studied the degree of ethnic tolerance in Malaysia, focusing on the Johor Bahru and Shah Alam parliamentary areas. The discovered that both states were classified as having a moderate degree of ethnic tolerance, with attitudes and perceptions being seen more significant than party politics and ethnicity. Similarly, Muda et al. (2018) found that teenagers in Malaysia exhibit moderate adherence to ethnic relations practices, with Indians being the most prominent group in performing these customs.
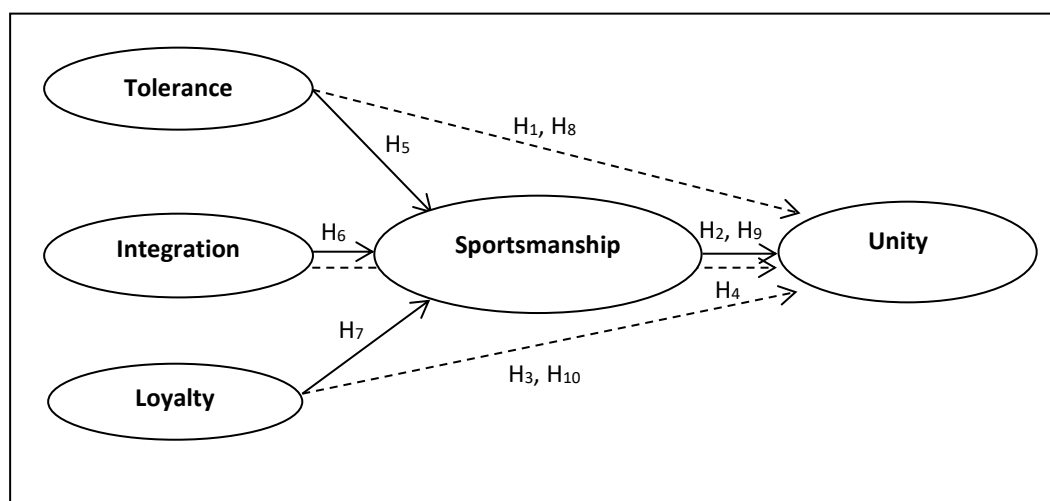

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Integration
Integration refers to all social relationships that connect people and it is considered as important element in ensuring a society is in peace and harmony (Muslim, 2015). This is a prerequisite for a conflict-free state. Social integration is needed in the unity of the country, because of the diversity that exist in society can lead to conflicts that harm everyone. Integration is a process of developing oneness in communities of various ethnicities to be able to live together in society (Voronkova, et al., 2019). In keeping with the aforementioned perspective, Calhoun (2019) stated that social integration is a society of diverse ethnic groups and faiths that live together and recognise each other's aspects in society. Therefore, social integration in a multi-ethnic community is quite vital. In actuality, in today's society, integration may develop a feeling of getting together, where individuals safeguard each other's culture from their traditions. As study done by Monica (2020) revealed that the

interaction between Chinese Muslims and non-Muslim Chinese promotes social integration within ethnic Chinese based on colleagues and work contacts.

Loyalty

Loyalty may be regarded as a cordial relationship based on the interests of its members (Rangkuty et al., 2024). This implies that society members maintained a friendly connection by upholding a feeling of shared duty and common interests, mechanical and organic social solidarity. Loyalty occurs because individuals have a basic desire to belong, and hence seek out social links and connections to meet that need (Lewis et al., 2021); people feel obliged to do all they can to sustain their social bonds. Thus, the psychological need to belong pushes individuals to be loyal to relationships and groups that they belong to, and to act on behalf of the other people in those relationships and groupings. In reality, the values of loyalty are the golden rule of sustaining the life, unity, and stability of the society and they are the element of developing a constructive and dynamic collective vision (Alaei et al., 2023; Berry et al., 2021).

Sportsmanship

Sports is defined as a competitive endeavor involving physical and intellectual abilities, either performed by a person or among others, with the aim of enhancing physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and financial well-being (Ibraheem et al., 2017). Sports are recognised not just for enhancing physical and psychological qualities, but it is essential for conflict prevention in promoting social contact and deterring negative behaviors among young people (Ogbonna et al., 2023). Sports foster social cohesion and partnerships via enjoyable and participatory activities. It fosters connections and improves communication among people and organisations, therefore reinforcing the social fabric. Sports activities, when well-organized, may be a powerful means to tackle social exclusion and help to integrate marginalised people into their society due to their extensive social contact (Svensson & Mahoney, 2020). Clarke et al (2021), found that engaging in sports allows young people to establish beneficial relationships with adults and peers, which may help shape them into productive members of society.

Ibraheem et al. (2017), argued that sports and national unity are closely linked. Sportsmanship is a crucial quality for coexisting in society and fostering strong interactions across populations. These principles are crucial and should be instilled from infancy through maturity. Hateem Sofian et al. (2023), believed that sportsmanship fosters a positive identity among university students, and it is a kind of motivation that encourages a student to persist in an activity. Similarly, Chear et al. (2018), reported that sports have the ability to bring people together as they serve as a catalyst for unification. Sports activities may enhance friendships and instill discipline and ethics among participants. Sports serve as more than simply a form of entertainment; they also act as a unifying force in bringing together the many ethnicities and faiths within Malaysian society.

Methodology

This study is conducted mainly in Selangor, Malaysia. According to the Malaysian Population Statistics by States issued by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (2022), Selangor is the state with the highest total population compared to other states in Malaysia with almost 7.0 million people. Malays/Bumiputera constitutes about 54%, followed by 24% of Chinese, 11%

of Indians, and 9% of non-Malaysians. Specifically, graduate students from several private universities in Selangor are regarded as the study's sample frame. There are 175 students participated in this study who are also the participants of "The Amazing Race Kita Selangor", a sports programme conducted for students to cultivate the spirit of unity. This programme has been taken place in three different venues, namely at Universiti Selangor, SportRec Venture Lakeside, and Taman Tasik Seksyen 7, Shah Alam, Selangor. During the event, students have to form small groups made up of multi-ethnic to foster a spirit of unity among races. This is clearly in line with the theme of unity in education among various races, languages, cultures, and religions in Malaysia. During the implementation of the event, several sports activities are conducted such as *sepak raga*, *wau* games, martial arts (such as *silambam* and *taichi*) which are played at every check point in the Explore Race. Quantitative technique with a cross-sectional research design is adopted for this study (Bougie & Sekaran, 2019). A self-administered questionnaire has been used to gather information on the fundamental constructs put forth in the theoretical framework. After checking the return survey, 200 questionnaires were ultimately approved and included in the data analysis.

Survey Instruments
Pre-validated scales from previous research were used to assess the constructs in this research, ensuring the efficacy of the contents. Appropriate modifications were made to align with the context of Malaysian unity concept. There are six parts in the survey questionnaire for this research. In addition to demographic data, the questionnaire measured the constructs of tolerance, integration, loyalty, sportsmanship, and unity. Using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), the respondents were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with their descriptions of the measurement items.

Data Analysis Method
To evaluate the theoretical model, a Partial Least Squares – Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) was used. The instrument is validated in the first step using the convergent validity, reliability, composite reliability, and discriminant validity. Additionally, the PLS-SEM is conducted in the second phase to assess the relationship between the five latent constructs. According to Hair et al (2021), the best technique to investigate the association between the relevant variables is the PLS-SEM approach. In order to estimate the *t*-statistics and bootstrap-*t* values as well as to determine the substantial effect of the variables, Henseler et al (2016), proposed utilising 5000 replications of samples (bootstrapping theory).

A method for analysing mediation was created by Zhao et al (2010), who distinguished between three forms of mediation (competitive, complementary, and indirect-only mediation) and two types of non-mediation (direct-only and no-effect non-mediation). According to their arguments, two requirements must be met in order to support a hypothesised mediation relationship: (a) there must be a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables via the mediator, and (b) zero cannot be included in the lower or upper levels of the 95% bootstrapped confidence interval (Hair et al., 2019; Zhao et al., 2010).

Results and Discussion

The demographic profile shows that 73.7% of research participants were male as compared to 26.3% of female. Furthermore, majority of the respondents are in the age group of 18 to 25 years old. According to the respondents' educational background, the majority of them (93.7%) are doing Bachelor Degree, followed by Diploma (4%). The race status of the respondents shows that 33.7% of respondents are Malays, while Chinese make up the largest respondents in this study with 39.4% of participation. Indian respondents constitute about 13.1% of participation. Bumiputera students are the least participate in this study (23%).

The Extent of Unity

This section presents the findings pertaining to the respondents' perceptions about their extent of unity. To find out whether the overall mean of the extent of unity is significantly different from or equal to a given constant, one sample t-test was used. The mean score of 4.1333 for unity in Table 1 is statistically significant at the 1% level and suggests that the level of unity among 200 multi-ethnic youths in Selangor are at satisfactory level. Perhaps, the respondents perceived themselves as the one who able to unite with other races. This result is contradicted with previous study such as Awang et al. (2017) that found the level of patriotism, tolerance, and unity among 1,600 multi-ethnic youths in Malaysia are still at an unsatisfactory level.

Table 1
Perception of the Extent of Unity

	n	Mean	One Sample T-Test	
			t-statistic	p value
Unity	200	4.1333	68.323	.000***

Note: Result is significantly different at *** 1% level and ** 5% level, respectively, using two-tailed tests.

In general, the majority of respondents said that they always respect regardless of race, religion and culture (mean = 4.2359). This indicates that nowadays, multi-ethnic groups are respecting each other and accepting the diversity as an opportunity to cooperate with each other. Further, the respondents also revealed that they feel proud of the success of all races in Malaysia (mean = 4.2316). In addition, they are also cooperating with each other to achieve objectives (mean = 4.1832). Perhaps, sports event conducted in this may reflect the country's multi-ethnics character indirectly/directly which can serve as a mechanism to foster a spirit of cooperation among different races of youths. This signifies that each multi-races event able to provides an opportunity for different ethnic groups to strengthen their unity and relationships.

PLS-SEM Results

The study model was examined using PLS-SEM software through SmartPLS 4.0 (Figure 2). According to Henseler et al (2016), PLS-SEM consists of two-step processes, which are the calculation of the parameters of the PLS model separately by solving the measurement model and then calculating the path coefficients of the structural model.
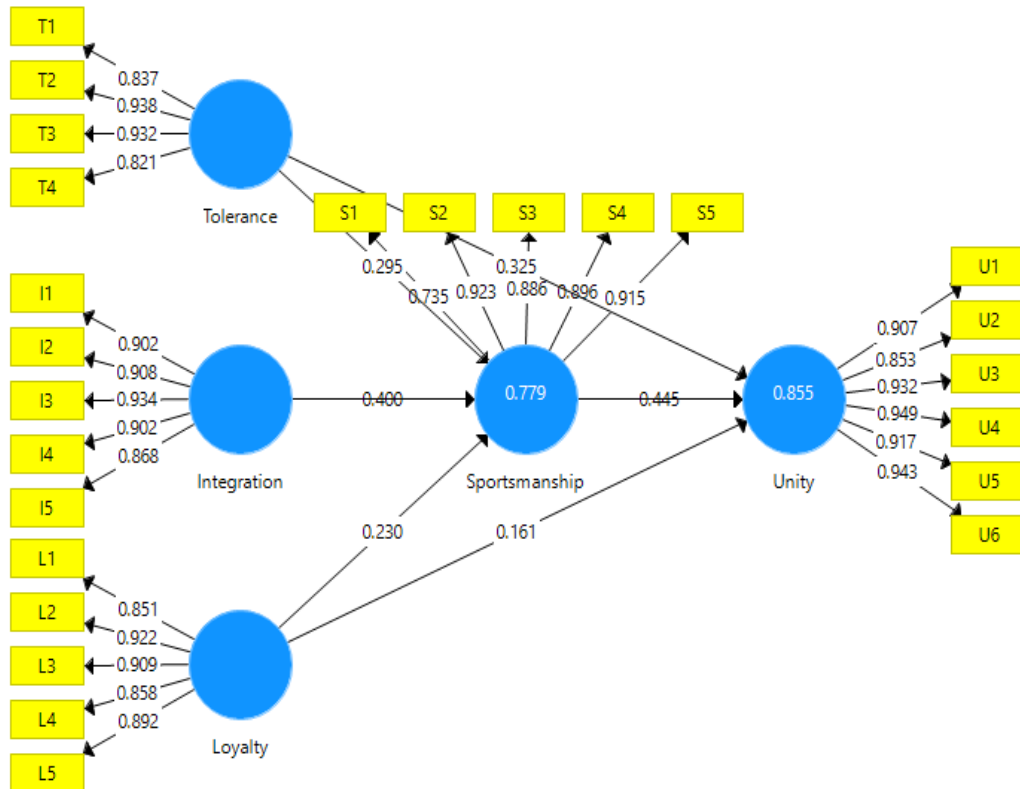
Figure 2. Reflective Measurement Model

Assessment of Measurement Model

The measurement model's findings are displayed in Table 2. There are five acceptable standards of statistics that must adhere in order for the data to be considered reliable and valid. First, according to Ramayah et al (2018), every factor loading should be more than 0.7. Second, the average variance extracted (AVE) of each latent variable should be greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2020); third, composite reliability (CR) should be considerably more than 0.7 (Ramayah et al., 2018). Table 2 shows that the CR and factor loadings for every item were more than 0.7. However, the factor loading of item T5 is 0.594, which is less that 0.7. Hence, this item has to be dropped from the tolerance construct. Tolerance has the lowest AVE value of 0.781, while Cronbach's alpha values are higher than 0.7. The findings of this measurement model show that the items are valid, reliable, and have a sufficient level of internal consistency. Fourth, the variance inflation factors (VIF) statistics should be examined in order to verify the multicollinearity between each independent variable. Hair et al. (2019) stated that the model's VIF values ought to be less than 5. Table 2 shows that none of the VIF values exceeded 5.

Table 2
The Measurement Model Statistics

Indicators & Items	Loading	AVE	γ	α	VIF
Tolerance					
T1. I am willing to accept opinions from other races.	0.837				
T2. I am ready to accept culture from other races.	0.938				
T3. I respect friends from different races.	0.932	0.781	0.934	0.905	2.087
T4. I often discuss learning matters with friends of various races.	0.821				
T5. I'm not awkward getting along with students of different races.	Deleted				
Integration					
I1. I do every activity in a multiracial group until it's done.	0.902				
I2. I get involved in cooperative activities with various races.	0.908				
I3. I easily get along with students of different races.	0.934	0.816	0.957	0.943	3.204
I4. I like to share knowledge with students of different races.	0.902				
I5. I accept the limitations of socializing with other races.	0.868				
Loyalty					
L1. I am patient with friends from various races.	0.851				
L2. I defend every mutually agreed upon decision.	0.922				
L3. I help regardless of a person's background.	0.909	0.787	0.949	0.932	2.506
L4. I prioritize the interests of various ethnic groups over personal interests.	0.858				
L5. I prioritize the interests of the country above the interests of my own race.	0.892				
Sportsmanship					
S1. I get to know my friend's culture through sports.	0.735				
S2. I am happy to learn sports with the theme of unity.	0.923				
S3. My sports team is made up of different races.	0.886	0.764	0.941	0.922	2.020
S4. I follow sports that cover all races in Malaysia.	0.896				
S5. I believe sports activities foster unity.	0.915				
Unity		0.842	0.970	0.962	2.904
U1. I know each other with other races.	0.907				

U2. I trust each other.	0.853
U3. I interact without racial differences.	0.932
U4. I cooperate with each other to achieve objectives.	0.949
U5. I always respect regardless of race, religion and culture.	0.917
U6. I feel proud of the success of all races in Malaysia.	0.943

Note: AVE = Average Variance Explained; γ = Composite Reliability; α = Cronbach's Alpha; *p <.05.

Lastly, according to Hair et al. (2019), the goal of the discriminant validity evaluation is to attest that a reflective concept has the strongest correlations with its indicators in the PLS path model. The Fornell-Larcker criteria has long been a widely used study to evaluate discriminant validity. Comparing the square root of the AVE of each construct with its connection with other constructs is equivalent to comparing the AVE with the squared correlations of the constructs when evaluating discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). The reflecting constructs' square roots of the AVE are all greater than their correlations with the other latent variables in the route model, as seen in Table 3. The results of this study demonstrate that the constructs are attaining discriminant validity.

Table 3
Fornell-Larcker Criterion Discriminant Analysis for Measurement Model

	Integration	Loyalty	Sportsmanship	Tolerance	Unity
Integration	0.903				
Loyalty	0.802	0.887			
Sportsmanship	0.857	0.839	0.874		
Tolerance	0.846	0.840	0.827	0.884	
Unity	0.849	0.850	0.819	0.868	0.917

Note: The diagonal (bold) value is a square root of the AVE of each latent variable, and the element off-diagonal value is the inter-correlation value between latent variables.

Assessment of Structural Model
The results of the structural model evaluation are displayed in Figure 3. According to the predictive power finding, almost 85.5% of the variation explained in the unity could be explained by the four model variables. R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25, respectively, are typically used to signify considerable, moderate, or weak concerns in business (Hair et al., 2019). As a result, the finding is regarded as having a considerable predictive power for the structural model. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for sportsmanship is 0.779, indicating a substantial variation in this construct was explained by the variations in tolerance, integration, and loyalty, respectively.
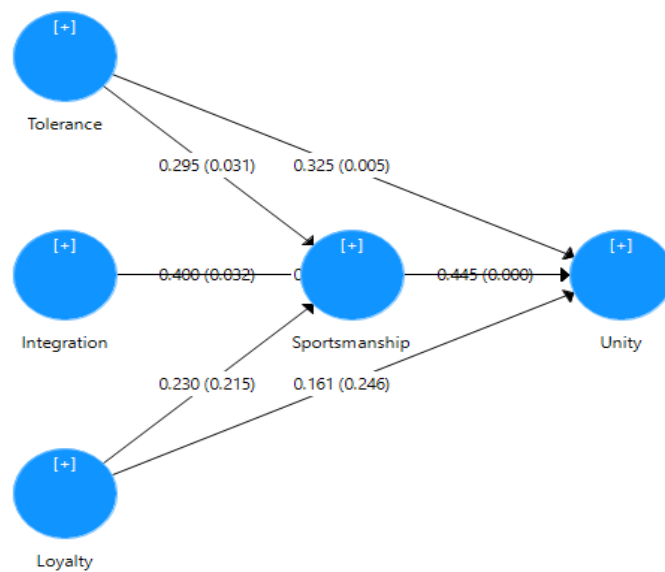
Figure 3. Research Model Specification

Table 4 displays the effect size (f^2), which quantifies the influence of a certain predictor construct on an endogenous construct. According to Hair et al. (2020), the f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 correspond to small, medium, and large impacts on an endogenous construct, respectively. The values found for the sportsmanship construct was shown to have a significant medium impact on unity ($f^2 = 0.301$), followed by tolerance ($f^2 = 0.167$). On the other hand, the impact of integration and loyalty on the unity is small.

The causal link in the structural model is revealed in Table 4. The results show that tolerance ($\beta = 0.325$, t-stat = 2.823, p-value <.05***), and sportsmanship ($\beta = 0.445$, t-stat = 4.485, p-value <.05***) are positively and significantly influence the unity among youths in Selangor, Malaysia. Further, there is also a significant relationship between tolerance ($\beta = 0.295$, t-stat = 2.158, p-value <.05**) and integration ($\beta = 0.400$, t-stat = 2.147, p-value <.05**) towards sportsmanship. Based on these findings, the hypotheses H_1, H_4, H_5, and H_6 are supported.

Table 4

Path Coefficients of Structural Model

H	Path Estimate	β	t-statistics	p-value	f^2
H_1	Tolerance → Unity	0.325	2.823	0.005***	0.167
H_2	Integration → Unity	0.048	0.370	0.711[NS]	0.002
H_3	Loyalty → Unity	0.161	1.161	0.246[NS]	0.028
H_4	Sportsmanship → Unity	0.445	4.485	0.000***	0.301
H_5	Tolerance → Sportsmanship	0.295	2.158	0.031**	0.099
H_6	Integration → Sportsmanship	0.400	2.147	0.032**	0.116
H_7	Loyalty → Sportsmanship	0.230	1.239	0.215[NS]	0.040
H_8	Tolerance → Sportsmanship → Unity	0.131	1.973	0.048**	
H_9	Integration → Sportsmanship → Unity	0.178	2.336	0.033**	
H_{10}	Loyalty → Sportsmanship → Unity	0.102	1.108	0.268[NS]	

Note: NS = Not Significant; β = Standardized Beta Coefficient; f^2 = Effect Size

The path coefficients findings show that sportsmanship plays a complementary partial mediation role on the relationship between tolerance (β = 0.131, t-stat = 1.973, p-value <.05[**]), integration (β = 0.178, t-stat = 2,336, p-value <.05[**]) and unity among youths. Consequently, given that both constructs have a complementary partial mediation effect, hypotheses H_8 and H_9 are supported. On the other hand, sportsmanship has a non-significant indirect influence on the link between unity and loyalty (β = 0.102, t-stat = 1.108, p-value >.05[NS]). This conclusion is characterised as "non-mediation" since the direct effect and indirect effect are not significant. As a result, hypothesis H_{10} is not supported.

Overall, the results implies that tolerance and sports activity have an influence on peace and unity among youths in Selangor, Malaysia. This was supported by Chear et al. (2018) and Ibraheem et al. (2017) who postulated that sport is an essential tool for building strong individual and vibrant societies in enhancing collective pride, identity and sense of belonging. In this study, with the highest beta coefficient value, sportsmanship has come to be recognised as one of the most active ways of building up and moulding of characters and personalities of the youth. Therefore, higher education institutions that are believed to be character moulders should be actively involved in sporting activities which have been known to be an integral part of all nations to achieve its set goals. With involvement in sports activities, youths are able to heighten their tolerance and integration. This indicates that when multi-ethnic youth joined a sport activity, they require a great understanding and high tolerance amongst difference ethnic groups. In addition, the integration as oneness in a sport involvement able to enhance youth's unity, whereby solid national integration will ensure inter-racial harmony which will be one of the important building blocks for national stability.

Conclusion

Establishing unity in higher education institution is crucial as it serves as a foundation for the younger generation to develop a nation-state system. Clarke et al. (2021) stated that unity is a crucial component of national resilience, enhancing people's dedication to their nation and fostering individuals who are committed to contributing and serving their country. It aims to cultivate a generation that is dedicated, courageous, and self-assured in confronting difficulties to protect the nation and its people. Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamed said in Baharudin's (2007) work that unity is crucial for a nation's defence and strength. Hence, it is the responsibility of the government, educational institutions, parents, the society, and individuals to promote unity among youths in Malaysia. To understand the significance of a nation state, it is essential to cultivate a sense of unity in every Malaysian citizen, particularly the youth who will be future leaders of the country.

This study contributes to the theoretical knowledge on the understanding of the role of sport and its opportunities as an agent of peace within Malaysian youths which consequently enrich the emerging field of sport for unity and peace. Given the important role of sportsmanship seems to play in sport activity contexts in youth populations including both performance and unity, a greater conceptual understanding of this construct with a youth population will likely serve to prompt the development of a useful measure, spur greater research interest in the area, and foster increased enjoyment and participation in physical activity through effective, evidence-based methods to enhance group functioning.

Acknowledging the immense contributions of sports activities in curbing human security challenges and enhance unity in Malaysia, the following recommendations were made. Sports coaches and officiating officials must ensure that sports participations make honesty, justices, fair play, tolerance, respect for others be their watch word in every sport. Explicit values that emphasize personal and social development should form the cardinal objectives of sporting programmes by sports organisers. Further, the sports environment starting with the athletes, coaches, participants, and the stakeholders should all portray peace and act in a manner that peace can prevail in our society. Next, sports promotion should be a responsibility of all so as to bring unity and harmony in Malaysia. Finally, grassroots sports development should be encouraged by government and non-governmental agencies.

Acknowledgement

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