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Independence Day Awareness, Patriotic Attitudes, and Perceptions of Campus-Based Celebrations among University Students: A Case Study at TAR UMT Johor Branch

Naranthiran Vijayakumaran
Department of Accountancy and Business, TAR UMT Johor Branch, Malaysia
Corresponding Author Email: naranthiran@tarc.edu.my

Sivakanthan Oulaganathan
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)
Email: sivakanthan@graduate.utm.my

Mohamad Aidil Bin Hasim
Department of Accountancy and Business, TAR UMT Johor Branch, Malaysia
Email: mohamadaidil@tarc.edu.my

Tharshini S Manalan
Department of Accountancy and Business, TAR UMT Johor Branch, Malaysia
Email: tharshinism@tarc.edu.my

Nor Azela Binti Md Isa
Department of Social Science and Hospitality, TAR UMT Johor Branch, Malaysia
Email: norazela@tarc.edu.my

Lingam Ramachandran
Faculty of Business, UNITAR International University (UIU), Malaysia
Email: lingam.ramachandran@unitar.my

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Abstract

Malaysia's Independence Day represents an important national commemoration associated with patriotism, national identity and social unity. Although previous studies have examined patriotism and nationhood education among university students, limited attention has been given to students' perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations. This study examines the relationships between awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitudes towards patriotism and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations among students at Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT),

Johor Branch. The study also examines the mediating role of patriotic attitudes in the relationship between Independence Day awareness and perceptions of campus-based celebrations. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted involving 100 undergraduate and diploma students who participated voluntarily through an online questionnaire. Data were analysed using SPSS version 29 through descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation, regression and mediation analysis. The findings showed significant positive relationships among Independence Day awareness, patriotic attitudes and perceptions of campus-based celebrations. Awareness significantly predicted patriotic attitudes ($\beta = .559$, $p < .001$), while both awareness ($\beta = .333$, $p = .001$) and patriotic attitudes ($\beta = .337$, $p < .001$) significantly predicted students' perceptions when included in the same regression model. The mediation analysis indicated that patriotic attitudes partially mediated the relationship between Independence Day awareness and perceptions of campus-based celebrations. The findings provide context-specific evidence on the relationships among Independence Day awareness, patriotic attitudes and students' perceptions of university-organised commemorative activities. As the study involved students from a single branch campus and used non-probability sampling, the findings should be interpreted within the context of the institution studied.
Keywords: Independence Day Awareness, Patriotism, Campus-Based Celebrations, Patriotic Attitudes, University Students

Introduction

Malaysia's Independence Day, celebrated annually on 31 August, represents more than the historical achievement of political independence; it functions as a continuing symbol of collective memory, national identity, and civic belonging within Malaysia's multicultural society (Lee, 2022). Rather than representing a singular ethnic narrative, Independence Day has increasingly been interpreted as a platform through which pluralism, solidarity, and collective aspirations for harmonious coexistence are reinforced (Lee, 2022). Historical experiences associated with Merdeka are also remembered differently across generations, where older cohorts tend to emphasise independence struggles and national survival, whereas younger generations increasingly interpret patriotism through contemporary social, political, and technological contexts (Mustafa et al., 2022). These shifts suggest that sustaining patriotic awareness among younger generations requires continuous reinforcement through educational, commemorative, and institutional mechanisms. Within this context, higher education institutions play an increasingly important role in shaping civic consciousness, strengthening national identity, and cultivating patriotic values among university students (Ismail et al., 2022; Othman et al., 2023).

Existing literature demonstrates that patriotism among Malaysian youths is influenced by educational exposure, historical appreciation, and engagement with national values. Formal educational approaches, including Malaysian Studies and Nationhood Studies courses, have been associated with stronger patriotic awareness, deeper appreciation of citizenship, and reinforcement of national identity among university students (Othman et al., 2021; Samsu et al., 2022). Similarly, understanding Malaysia's independence history and political development contributes positively towards patriotic consciousness and nation-building among younger generations (Othman et al., 2022; Muis et al., 2024). Beyond formal curricula, patriotic values may also be cultivated through commemorative experiences involving Independence Day ceremonies, patriotic songs, symbolic rituals, and participation in national

celebrations (Johari, 2021; Nurlitasari et al., 2023). Such activities encourage emotional attachment towards the nation and strengthen appreciation of historical struggles and national symbols (Jaafar et al., 2016; Nurlitasari et al., 2023). Furthermore, innovative approaches, including digital learning platforms and media-based nationhood education, have been shown to enhance students' engagement with patriotism and national identity (Jamaluddin & Abdullah, 2024). Collectively, these findings indicate that patriotic orientation is shaped through interaction between historical awareness, educational experiences, and commemorative engagement.

Against this background, the present study examines three interrelated constructs: awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitudes towards patriotism, and perceptions towards campus-based Independence Day celebrations. Awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day refers to students' understanding, appreciation, and recognition of independence history, national struggles, patriotic symbols, and associated civic values (Othman et al., 2022; Samsu et al., 2022). Attitudes towards patriotism concern emotional attachment, loyalty, civic responsibility, commitment to national identity, and willingness to contribute towards social cohesion and national wellbeing (Ismail et al., 2022; Othman et al., 2023). Perceptions towards campus-based Independence Day celebrations refer to students' evaluations regarding the relevance, meaningfulness, and effectiveness of patriotic programmes organised within university settings to promote awareness and patriotic engagement (Johari, 2021; Nurlitasari et al., 2023). Understanding the relationships among these constructs is important because students with a stronger awareness of Independence Day may develop more positive patriotic attitudes, which subsequently influence how campus-based patriotic initiatives are perceived and valued. Investigating these pathways may provide further insight into the effectiveness of university-organised patriotic programmes in supporting nation-building and strengthening national identity among Malaysian youths.

Research Background

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated that educational exposure contributes significantly to strengthening patriotism among Malaysian university students. Nationhood education, Malaysian Studies courses, and value-based educational approaches have been found to reinforce appreciation of national identity, historical awareness, and civic responsibility (Othman et al., 2021; Samsu et al., 2022; Ismail et al., 2022). Similarly, exposure to Malaysia's independence history and political development has been associated with stronger patriotic consciousness and greater understanding of collective national identity (Othman et al., 2022). These findings indicate that educational environments remain important mechanisms through which patriotism is cultivated among younger generations.

Historical narratives and commemorative experiences have also been identified as influential factors shaping patriotic orientation. Research suggests that participation in commemorative programmes, exposure to patriotic symbols, and engagement with historical sites contribute towards strengthening emotional attachment to the nation and appreciation of independence struggles (Johari, 2021). Furthermore, patriotic campaigns, Independence Day initiatives, and symbolic activities involving national identity have been recognised as mechanisms promoting civic engagement and reinforcing national belonging among youths (Jaafar et al., 2016; Yan & Hamzah, 2024). Such evidence implies that patriotism extends

beyond formal educational settings and may also be influenced by experiential and commemorative forms of engagement.

Although existing literature provides substantial evidence that educational exposure, nationhood education, and historical appreciation contribute towards strengthening patriotic awareness and national identity among university students (Othman et al., 2021; Samsu et al., 2022; Othman et al., 2022; Muis et al., 2024), research remains concentrated on formal educational interventions and broader patriotic development frameworks (Ismail et al., 2022; Othman et al., 2023). Comparatively limited attention has been given to campus-based Independence Day celebrations as institutional mechanisms for promoting patriotic awareness and engagement among university students, despite evidence suggesting that commemorative experiences and patriotic rituals may influence emotional attachment towards the nation (Johari, 2021; Nurlitasari et al., 2023). Existing studies predominantly examine patriotism through educational exposure, historical understanding, or symbolic participation, rather than directly investigating how awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitudes towards patriotism, and perceptions towards university-organised patriotic programmes interact within higher education settings (Othman et al., 2021; Othman et al., 2023). Consequently, further empirical investigation is required to determine whether awareness of Independence Day contributes towards patriotic attitudes and whether such attitudes subsequently shape students' perceptions towards campus-based Independence Day celebrations.

Research Gap and Problem Statement

Despite extensive discussion regarding patriotism and nationhood education, previous studies have concentrated primarily on formal educational interventions, including Malaysian Studies courses, nationhood education, and historical learning experiences (Othman et al., 2021; Samsu et al., 2022). Comparatively less attention has been devoted to informal patriotic engagement through university-organised commemorative activities such as campus-based Independence Day celebrations. Consequently, understanding remains limited regarding whether such institutional initiatives effectively strengthen patriotic awareness and engagement among university students.

Existing literature further indicates associations between exposure to historical narratives and patriotic outcomes; however, awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day itself has rarely been examined as an independent construct influencing patriotism (Othman et al., 2022; Johari, 2021). Most studies focus broadly on nationhood education, patriotic values, or historical appreciation rather than investigating whether students' awareness of Independence Day contributes directly to stronger patriotic attitudes. This represents an important conceptual gap because awareness and patriotism may operate as distinct yet related constructs.

A further limitation concerns the relationship between patriotic attitudes and students' perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations. Existing evidence suggests that patriotic individuals may demonstrate greater appreciation towards national symbols and commemorative activities (Othman et al., 2023), yet empirical studies have not directly established whether students with stronger patriotic attitudes perceive university-organised

Independence Day programmes more positively. Consequently, uncertainty remains regarding how patriotism influences evaluations of campus-based patriotic initiatives.

A further gap concerns the possible mediating role of patriotic attitudes in the relationship between Independence Day awareness and perceptions of campus-based celebrations. Existing studies provide support for the relationships between historical awareness, patriotism and engagement with patriotic activities (Samsu et al., 2022; Othman et al., 2023); however, limited empirical attention has been given to examining these relationships within a single mediation model. Examining patriotic attitudes as a potential mediator may therefore provide a clearer understanding of how awareness of Independence Day is associated with students' perceptions of campus-based commemorative activities.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to existing discussions on patriotism among university students by considering campus-based commemorative activities alongside more commonly examined forms of nationhood and history education. Specifically, it examines the relationships among awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitudes towards patriotism and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations within the context of TAR UMT Johor Branch. The study also considers patriotic attitudes as a potential mechanism linking awareness with students' perceptions of such celebrations. From a practical perspective, the findings may assist the institution in understanding students' views of campus-based patriotic programmes and in planning future activities that are meaningful and relevant to students. Given the context-specific nature of the study, its contribution lies primarily in providing empirical evidence from one Malaysian university branch campus rather than in representing university students nationally.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships among awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitudes towards patriotism and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations among students at TAR UMT Johor Branch. Specifically, the study aims:

RO1: To examine the relationship between students' awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and their attitudes towards patriotism.
RO2: To examine the relationship between students' attitudes towards patriotism and their perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations.
RO3: To examine the relationship between students' awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and their perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations.
RO4: To examine whether attitudes towards patriotism mediate the relationship between students' awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and their perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations.

Literature Review

Awareness of Independence Day and Malaysian Student Patriotism

Previous studies indicate that awareness of Malaysia's independence history and nationhood contributes significantly to the development of patriotic attitudes among students. Although the literature has not directly examined Independence Day awareness as an independent

construct, nationhood and history-based education have consistently been associated with stronger patriotism, loyalty, and appreciation towards national identity (Samsu et al., 2021; Samsu et al., 2022; Othman et al., 2022). Educational exposure to Malaysia's independence struggle, constitutional formation, and nation-building processes enables students to develop a deeper understanding of citizenship and collective identity. Empirical findings further demonstrate that students perceive Malaysian Nationhood courses as effective mechanisms for strengthening patriotism, while interactive teaching approaches increase appreciation of historical sacrifices and patriotic values (Samsu et al., 2022; Jamaluddin & Abdullah, 2024; Wan Mohd Nor et al., 2016). These findings suggest that greater awareness and understanding of independence-related knowledge are likely to foster stronger patriotic attitudes among students.

Beyond classroom learning, patriotic awareness is also cultivated through commemorative practices and symbolic representations linked to Malaysia's independence. Activities such as patriotic songs, flag ceremonies, Independence Day campaigns, and exposure to historical narratives have been found to strengthen emotional attachment to the nation and reinforce patriotic sentiments (Furnamasari et al., 2023; Nurlitasari et al., 2023; Yan & Hamzah, 2024). Similarly, Independence Day television advertisements and social media campaigns have been recognised as influential tools in promoting unity, collective identity, and patriotism among Malaysian youth (Jaafar et al., 2016; Basir et al., 2025). Experiences involving visits to commemorative sites associated with anti-colonial struggles also contribute to higher levels of national pride, belonging, and loyalty (Johari, 2021). Collectively, these studies provide evidence that repeated exposure to independence-related symbols, commemorations, and narratives enhances awareness of national history, which in turn strengthens patriotic orientation among younger generations.

Existing literature further reports that Malaysian youth generally exhibit moderate to high levels of patriotism; however, scholars emphasise the need for sustained reinforcement through meaningful educational and social interventions (Yusop et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2019; Sabri & Abu, 2018; Ismail et al., 2022). Despite substantial evidence linking independence-related education and experiences with patriotic outcomes, limited research has explicitly explored the role of Independence Day awareness itself in shaping patriotism among students. This represents a conceptual gap within the literature. Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence demonstrating that exposure to independence history, commemorative practices, and patriotic symbols enhances patriotic values, the present study proposes that higher awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day is associated with stronger patriotic attitudes among students. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:
H1: There is a positive relationship between students' awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and their attitudes towards patriotism.

Attitudes towards Patriotism and Perceptions of Independence Day Celebrations.
Existing literature provides limited direct evidence regarding the relationship between students' patriotic attitudes and their perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations. No empirical studies within the current body of research have statistically examined whether students with stronger patriotic orientations perceive campus Independence Day programmes more positively. Nevertheless, available findings suggest that educational institutions intentionally employ independence-related activities and

commemorative programmes as mechanisms to cultivate patriotic values among students (Nurlitasari et al., 2023; Othman et al., 2023). For instance, a study involving immigrant students in Malaysia reported that patriotic attachment and love for the country remained insufficient, partly due to the limited implementation of patriotic activities. It is recommended to regularly practice patriotic practices, including national anthem singing, flag ceremonies, and Independence Day celebrations, as strategies to strengthen patriotic attitudes among students (Nurlitasari et al., 2023). Such recommendations imply an underlying assumption that positive engagement with Independence Day activities contributes to the enhancement of patriotic values.

At the higher education level, patriotism development has been associated with participation in unity-oriented programmes, internalisation of national values, and active engagement in initiatives promoting national identity and social cohesion (Othman et al., 2023). These programmes are believed to shape patriotic behaviours by encouraging students' sense of belonging, civic responsibility, and commitment to multicultural harmony. International evidence similarly suggests that students with stronger patriotic orientations tend to demonstrate greater appreciation towards national symbols, historical commemorations, and civic participation activities (Teryaeva & Lomova, 2024; Potapchuk et al., 2024). Positive patriotic values, including responsibility towards the nation and respect for cultural heritage, have been linked to greater willingness to participate in socially meaningful events and commemorative activities (Teryaeva & Lomova, 2024). However, evidence also indicates that students' responses to institutional patriotic initiatives may vary according to the perceived authenticity, relevance, and emotional resonance of such programmes (Li, 2024). This suggests that favourable patriotic attitudes may not uniformly translate into positive perceptions of campus-based patriotic celebrations.

Although previous studies imply that patriotic students are more likely to value and engage with Independence Day-related activities, empirical findings remain insufficient to establish a definitive relationship between patriotic attitudes and perceptions of campus Independence Day celebrations. Existing evidence predominantly reflects theoretical assumptions rather than direct statistical examination (Salleh et al., 2024). Consequently, a significant gap remains concerning whether students who possess stronger patriotic attitudes are more likely to perceive campus-based Independence Day celebrations positively. Drawing upon literature linking patriotism with civic engagement, appreciation of national symbols, and participation in commemorative programmes, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:
H2: There is a positive relationship between students' attitudes towards patriotism and their perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations.

Awareness of Independence Day and Perceptions of Independence Day Celebrations
Current literature provides limited empirical evidence regarding the relationship between students' awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and their perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations. Existing studies have not directly measured whether students who possess greater awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day subsequently perceive university or campus Independence Day activities more positively. Available research largely focuses on patriotism development, commemorative activities, and educational strategies rather than examining awareness and celebration perceptions as distinct variables (Salleh et al., 2024; Nurlitasari et al., 2023). Nevertheless, studies suggest

that independence-related ceremonies, patriotic programmes, and symbolic activities are intentionally designed to increase students' understanding of national identity, historical struggles, and appreciation of independence (Nurlitasari et al., 2023). Such findings imply that students with a stronger awareness of independence-related values may be more receptive towards commemorative activities organised within educational institutions.

Educational and patriotic programmes have been consistently recognised as important mechanisms for enhancing national consciousness and encouraging engagement with nation-building activities among students (Othman et al., 2023; Samsu et al., 2022). Research indicates that students tend to evaluate patriotic initiatives more positively when these activities are meaningful, historically grounded, and aligned with national identity formation (Samsu et al., 2022; Druzhinina et al., 2023; Kargapolova et al., 2025). Moreover, awareness of national history, patriotic symbols, and independence struggles has been associated with stronger emotional attachment, civic participation, and appreciation of national commemorations (Othman et al., 2022; Ismail et al., 2022; Talib et al., 2022). Independence-related symbols, including the national flag, anthem, and historical narratives, are recognised as significant vehicles for fostering patriotism and strengthening students' connections to national celebrations (Jaafar et al., 2016; Othman et al., 2022). These findings suggest that students who possess greater awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day may be more likely to perceive campus-based Independence Day celebrations as relevant, meaningful, and beneficial.

Although no previous studies have directly established a statistical relationship between awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and perceptions of campus-based celebrations, theoretical and empirical evidence indicate a potential association through shared mechanisms of national identity formation and patriotic engagement (Basir et al., 2025; Yusop et al., 2024). Students with greater awareness of national history and the significance of independence may show greater appreciation for institutional activities designed to commemorate these values. However, this relationship remains underexplored within Malaysian higher education contexts, highlighting an important research gap. Therefore, based on the literature suggesting that awareness of national identity and patriotic understanding influences engagement with commemorative activities, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:
H3: There is a positive relationship between students' awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and their perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations.

The Mediating Role of Patriotism in the Relationship Between Independence Day Awareness and Perceptions of Campus-Based Celebrations
Existing literature does not provide direct empirical evidence testing whether students' attitudes towards patriotism mediate the relationship between awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations. Nevertheless, findings from previous studies support the theoretical pathways underlying such a mediation mechanism. Research consistently suggests that greater awareness and appreciation of Malaysia's independence history contribute to stronger patriotic attitudes among youth and students (Othman et al., 2022; Johari, 2021). Weak understanding of national independence struggles has been associated with lower patriotic spirit, whereas exposure to historical narratives, commemorative sites, and independence-related learning

experiences strengthens loyalty, national pride, and emotional attachment to the country (Johari, 2021; Othman et al., 2022). Similarly, educational programmes centred on nationhood and historical appreciation have been recognised as effective in fostering patriotic values among younger generations (Samsu et al., 2022). These findings support the proposition that students' awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day may influence the development of patriotic attitudes, corresponding with the relationship proposed in H1.

Previous studies also indicate that patriotic attitudes shape students' engagement with and perceptions of patriotic programmes and nation-building initiatives. Research on Malaysian Nationhood courses demonstrates that students generally hold favourable perceptions towards educational programmes designed to strengthen patriotism, suggesting that stronger patriotic orientations are associated with more positive evaluations of patriotic activities (Samsu et al., 2022). Furthermore, patriotism has been linked with a greater willingness to participate in unity-oriented programmes and initiatives promoting national identity among university students (Othman et al., 2023). Independence-related commemorations, patriotic songs, and symbolic activities have similarly been identified as mechanisms for reinforcing national pride and strengthening connections with patriotic values (Yan & Hamzah, 2024). These findings imply that students who possess stronger patriotic attitudes may perceive campus-based Independence Day celebrations more positively, reflecting the relationship proposed in H2.

Although H3 proposes a direct relationship between awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations, existing evidence suggests that this association may operate indirectly through patriotic attitudes. Students who demonstrate greater awareness of independence history and national struggles may first develop stronger patriotic orientations, which subsequently influence how they perceive and evaluate campus-based Independence Day programmes. Therefore, patriotism may function as an intervening mechanism linking awareness of Independence Day with perceptions of commemorative activities. While no previous studies have empirically tested this mediation effect, the conceptual relationships established in earlier literature provide theoretical justification for examining patriotism as a mediator. Consequently, based on evidence supporting the pathways between awareness and patriotism, as well as patriotism and perceptions of patriotic initiatives, the present study proposes the following hypothesis:
H4: Students' attitudes towards patriotism mediate the relationship between their awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and their perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to examine the relationship between awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitude towards patriotism, and perception among university students. A survey method was utilised to collect primary data from students at Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT), Johor Branch. The study focused on undergraduate and diploma students from various academic programmes to obtain diverse perspectives regarding patriotic awareness and perceptions related to Malaysia's Independence Day celebrations.

The study obtained 100 usable responses for analysis. A non-probability convenience sampling approach was employed, with participation based on students' willingness to respond to the questionnaire. As respondents were not selected from a probability-based sampling frame, the sample is not assumed to be statistically representative of the entire student population. The findings are therefore interpreted within the specific context of TAR UMT Johor Branch.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered through Google Forms. Participation was voluntary, and respondents completed the questionnaire electronically. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended items measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument measured three main constructs: awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitudes towards patriotism and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations.

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the distribution of the study variables. Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales, while Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study variables. Simple and multiple regression analyses were subsequently performed to test the proposed relationships. The mediating role of attitudes towards patriotism in the relationship between Independence Day awareness and perception was examined using the regression-based approach proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. In terms of gender, the majority of respondents were male, representing 53 respondents (53.0%), while female respondents accounted for 47 respondents (47.0%). Regarding age distribution, most respondents were between 18 and 19 years old, representing 74 respondents (74.0%). This was followed by respondents aged 20–21 years old, with 14 respondents (14.0%). The remaining respondents were aged 22–23 years old (5.0%), 24–25 years old (2.0%), and 26 years old and above (5.0%). These findings indicate that the majority of respondents were young university students in their early years of study.

Table 1
Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	53	53.0
	Female	47	47.0
Age	18–19 years old	74	74.0
	20–21 years old	14	14.0
	22–23 years old	5	5.0
	24–25 years old	2	2.0
	26 years old and above	5	5.0

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the three study variables. Attitude recorded the highest mean score (M = 4.17, SD = 0.82), followed by Awareness (M = 3.80, SD = 0.74) and Perception (M = 3.76, SD = 0.92). Overall, the mean scores indicate that respondents tended to report favourable attitudes towards patriotism, together with relatively favourable levels of Independence Day awareness and perceptions of campus-based celebrations.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Awareness	100	2.00	5.00	3.8000	0.73855
Attitude	100	1.00	5.00	4.1700	0.81718
Perception	100	1.00	5.00	3.7600	0.92245

Reliability Analysis

Before hypothesis testing, reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. According to Taber (2018), Cronbach's alpha values above 0.70 indicate acceptable reliability, while values exceeding 0.90 demonstrate excellent reliability. As shown in Table 3, all constructs achieved excellent reliability values, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.900 to 0.957. Awareness recorded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.900, Attitude recorded 0.957, and Perception recorded 0.931. These findings confirm that the measurement items were reliable and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 3
Reliability Analysis

No.	Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Awareness	5	0.900
2	Attitude	5	0.957
3	Perception	6	0.931

Correlation Analysis

Table 4 presents the Pearson correlation analysis among Awareness, Attitude, and Perception. The results revealed significant positive relationships among all variables at the 0.01 significance level. Awareness was positively correlated with Attitude ($r = 0.559$, $p < 0.001$) and Perception ($r = 0.522$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, Attitude was positively correlated with Perception ($r = 0.524$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that higher awareness is associated with more positive attitudes and perceptions towards patriotism and Independence Day celebrations.

Table 4
Correlation Analysis

Variables	Awareness	Attitude	Perception
Awareness	1	.559**	.522**
Attitude	.559**	1	.524**
Perception	.522**	.524**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regression Analysis

Simple linear regression was conducted to examine the relationship between Independence Day awareness and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations. Awareness significantly predicted Perception ($\beta = .522$, $p < .001$), with the model explaining 27.2% of the variance in Perception ($R^2 = .272$). The positive coefficient indicates that higher levels of Independence Day awareness were associated with more favourable perceptions of campus-based celebrations.

Table 5

Regression Analysis of Awareness Predicting Perception

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	1.283	.417	—	3.080	.003
Awareness	.652	.108	.522	6.057	< .001

Regression Analysis of Awareness Predicting Attitude

The regression analysis showed that Independence Day awareness significantly predicted attitudes towards patriotism ($\beta = .559$, $p < .001$). The model explained 31.2% of the variance in Attitude ($R^2 = .312$). The positive coefficient indicates that respondents with higher levels of Independence Day awareness also tended to report stronger patriotic attitudes.

Table 6

Regression Analysis of Awareness Predicting Attitude

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	1.820	.359	—	5.073	< .001
Awareness	.619	.093	.559	6.674	< .001

Multiple Regression and Mediation Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the mediating role of attitudes towards patriotism in the relationship between Independence Day awareness and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations. When Awareness and Attitude were entered simultaneously, both variables significantly predicted Perception. Awareness remained statistically significant ($\beta = .333$, $p = .001$), while Attitude was also a significant predictor ($\beta = .337$, $p < .001$). The model explained 35.1% of the variance in Perception ($R^2 = .351$), compared with 27.2% when Awareness was entered as the sole predictor. Based on the regression-based mediation approach, the reduction in the coefficient for Awareness after Attitude was included in the model was interpreted as evidence of partial mediation.

Table 7

Multiple Regression Analysis of Awareness and Attitude Predicting Perception

Variable	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	.590	.444	—	1.328	.187
Awareness	.416	.123	.333	3.378	.001
Attitude	.381	.111	.337	3.419	< .001

Hypothesis Summary

Table 8 summarises the hypothesis testing results. The findings indicate that all proposed hypotheses were supported. Awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day was significantly and positively associated with students' attitudes towards patriotism (H1: $\beta = .559$, $t = 6.674$, $p < .001$). In addition, attitudes towards patriotism were significantly associated with students' perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations (H2: $\beta = .337$, $t = 3.419$, $p < .001$). Awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day was also significantly associated with students' perceptions of campus-based celebrations (H3: $\beta = .333$, $t = 3.378$, $p = .001$).

The mediation analysis indicated partial mediation by attitudes towards patriotism in the relationship between awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations (H4). Overall, the findings indicate significant relationships among Independence Day awareness, patriotic attitudes and students' perceptions of campus-based celebrations.

Table 8
Hypothesis Summary

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta	t	p	Result
H1	Awareness → Attitude	.559	6.674	< .001	Supported
H2	Attitude → Perception	.337	3.419	< .001	Supported
H3	Awareness → Perception	.333	3.378	.001	Supported
H4	Awareness → Attitude → Perception	Partial Mediation	—	—	Supported

Discussion

The present study examined the relationships among awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitudes towards patriotism, and perceptions towards campus-based Independence Day celebrations among students at TAR UMT Johor. The findings provide empirical support for all proposed hypotheses and demonstrate that awareness, patriotism, and perceptions towards commemorative programmes are significantly interconnected within the higher education context.

Awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and attitudes towards patriotism.

The findings of this study revealed that awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day significantly and positively influenced students' attitudes towards patriotism ($\beta = .559$, $p < .001$). This finding indicates that students who possess greater awareness regarding Malaysia's independence history, national struggles, patriotic symbols, and nation-building processes tend to develop stronger patriotic attitudes, emotional attachment towards the country, and appreciation of national identity. The result supports previous literature suggesting that exposure to nationhood education, independence-related history, and patriotic learning experiences contributes positively towards patriotism among university students (Samsu et al., 2021; Samsu et al., 2022; Othman et al., 2022). The findings are also consistent with Jamaluddin and Abdullah (2024), who reported that interactive and engaging educational approaches enhance students' appreciation of patriotic values and historical sacrifices.

Furthermore, the findings correspond with studies highlighting the importance of commemorative and symbolic exposure in strengthening patriotic orientation among younger generations. Previous researchers have demonstrated that patriotic songs, flag ceremonies, Independence Day campaigns, and historical narratives contribute towards emotional attachment to the nation and reinforce patriotic sentiments (Furnamasari et al., 2023; Nurlitasari et al., 2023; Yan & Hamzah, 2024). Similarly, Jaafar et al. (2016) and Basir et al. (2025) emphasised that Independence Day advertisements, patriotic campaigns, and symbolic national messages play important roles in promoting unity and patriotism among Malaysian youths. Therefore, the present findings reinforce the argument that awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day serves as an important mechanism in cultivating patriotic attitudes among university students.

Attitudes towards patriotism and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations

The findings further demonstrated that attitudes towards patriotism significantly influenced students' perceptions towards campus-based Independence Day celebrations ($\beta = .337$, $p < .001$). Students who exhibited stronger patriotic attitudes tended to evaluate university-organised patriotic programmes more positively. This suggests that students who possess higher levels of patriotism are more likely to perceive Independence Day celebrations as meaningful, relevant, and beneficial for promoting unity, civic responsibility, and national identity. The findings support earlier literature suggesting that patriotic individuals demonstrate greater appreciation towards patriotic programmes, commemorative activities, and nation-building initiatives (Othman et al., 2023).

Previous studies indicated that patriotic values are strengthened through participation in unity-oriented programmes, patriotic campaigns, and national identity initiatives organised within educational institutions (Nurlitasari et al., 2023; Othman et al., 2023). Similarly, international studies by Teryaeva and Lomova (2024) and Potapchuk et al. (2024) reported that individuals with stronger patriotic orientations tend to value national symbols, historical commemorations, and civic participation activities more positively. The present findings also support the argument by Li (2024), who suggested that students' responses towards patriotic initiatives are influenced by the perceived relevance and emotional resonance of such programmes. In the current study, students with stronger patriotic attitudes appeared more receptive towards campus-based Independence Day celebrations, indicating that patriotic orientation influences how students evaluate and appreciate commemorative activities organised within higher education institutions.

Awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations

The findings also revealed that awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day significantly influenced students' perceptions towards campus-based Independence Day celebrations ($\beta = .333$, $p = .001$). Students with greater awareness regarding Malaysia's independence history and patriotic values perceived campus-based patriotic programmes more positively. This indicates that awareness of national identity, independence struggles, and commemorative significance contributes towards students' appreciation of university-organised patriotic initiatives.

This finding supports previous literature suggesting that independence-related ceremonies, patriotic programmes, and symbolic activities are important mechanisms for increasing national consciousness and patriotic engagement among students (Nurlitasari et al., 2023; Othman et al., 2023). Existing studies further demonstrated that students tend to respond more positively towards patriotic initiatives when such programmes are historically meaningful and aligned with national identity formation (Samsu et al., 2022; Druzhinina et al., 2023; Kargapolova et al., 2025). Therefore, the current findings reinforce the argument that awareness of Independence Day enhances students' appreciation of campus-based commemorative activities.

In addition, the findings correspond with studies indicating that awareness of national history and patriotic symbols strengthens emotional attachment, civic participation, and appreciation towards national commemorations (Othman et al., 2022; Ismail et al., 2022; Talib et al., 2022). Jaafar et al. (2016) further emphasised that national symbols such as the Jalur Gemilang, patriotic songs, and Independence Day narratives function as important tools in strengthening students' connection towards national celebrations. Consequently, the present findings suggest that awareness of Independence Day not only contributes towards patriotism but also shapes students' perceptions towards institutional patriotic programmes.

Attitudes towards patriotism mediate the relationship between awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day and perceptions towards campus-based Independence Day celebrations
The findings indicated partial mediation by attitudes towards patriotism in the relationship between Independence Day awareness and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations. Awareness remained significantly associated with Perception after Attitude was included in the regression model, while Attitude was also significantly associated with Perception. This pattern suggests that patriotic attitudes may partly account for the relationship between students' Independence Day awareness and their perceptions of campus-based celebrations.

This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that exposure to Malaysia's independence history, commemorative experiences and nationhood education is associated with stronger patriotic values among students (Johari, 2021; Othman et al., 2022; Samsu et al., 2022). Previous research has also indicated that individuals with stronger patriotic orientations tend to demonstrate greater appreciation of patriotic programmes and commemorative activities (Othman et al., 2023; Yan & Hamzah, 2024). Taken together, the findings suggest a possible pathway in which greater Independence Day awareness is associated with stronger patriotic attitudes, which are in turn associated with more favourable perceptions of campus-based celebrations.

Nevertheless, the mediation finding should be interpreted with caution. As the data were collected at a single point in time, the analysis does not establish the temporal or causal ordering of awareness, patriotic attitudes and perceptions. Longitudinal or experimental research would provide stronger evidence regarding the direction of these relationships.

Conclusion
This study examined the relationships among awareness of Malaysia's Independence Day, attitudes towards patriotism and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day

celebrations among students at TAR UMT Johor Branch. The findings showed significant positive relationships among the three constructs. Students with greater awareness of Independence Day tended to report stronger patriotic attitudes and more favourable perceptions of campus-based celebrations. Patriotic attitudes were also positively associated with students' perceptions of these commemorative activities.

The mediation analysis further indicated that patriotic attitudes partially mediated the relationship between Independence Day awareness and perceptions of campus-based celebrations. This suggests that patriotic attitudes may partly explain the relationship between students' awareness of Independence Day and their perceptions of university-organised commemorative activities. However, given the cross-sectional nature of the study, these relationships should be interpreted as statistical associations rather than evidence of causality.

The findings should also be interpreted within the context of TAR UMT Johor Branch and should not be generalised to Malaysian university students as a whole. Nevertheless, the study provides context-specific evidence on the relationships among Independence Day awareness, patriotic attitudes and perceptions of campus-based celebrations, and provides a basis for further investigation across different higher education settings.

Contribution of the Study

This study makes both theoretical and contextual contributions to the existing literature on patriotism and nationhood. Theoretically, it brings together Independence Day awareness, patriotic attitudes and perceptions of campus-based Independence Day celebrations within a single model. Previous studies have mainly examined nationhood education, historical awareness and patriotism separately. By examining patriotic attitudes as a mediator, this study provides further understanding of how awareness of Independence Day may be associated with students' perceptions of campus-based commemorative activities through their patriotic attitudes.

Contextually, the study provides evidence from students at TAR UMT Johor Branch, a setting that has received limited attention in previous research on patriotism. The findings show how students within this particular institutional context perceive Independence Day awareness, patriotism and university-organised commemorative activities. Although the findings are not intended to represent all university students in Malaysia, they provide useful evidence from a Malaysian branch-campus setting and may serve as a reference for future studies involving other higher education institutions.

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the study was conducted at a single branch campus and involved 100 respondents. The findings therefore reflect the specific institutional context examined and should not be generalised to university students throughout Malaysia. Second, the study employed non-probability convenience sampling and participation was voluntary. Students who chose to participate may differ from those who did not respond, creating the possibility of self-selection bias. Third, the cross-sectional design captured awareness, patriotic attitudes and perceptions at a single point in time. Although regression and mediation analyses can identify

statistical relationships among these variables, they do not establish causal or temporal relationships. Fourth, the study relied on self-reported responses, which may be influenced by social desirability, particularly when respondents are asked about patriotism and national identity.

Future studies could involve students from several public and private higher education institutions across different regions of Malaysia to determine whether similar relationships are observed in other institutional settings. Probability-based sampling may also be considered where an appropriate sampling frame is available. In addition, longitudinal or pre-test and post-test designs could be used to examine whether students' awareness and patriotic attitudes change following participation in Independence Day programmes. Such approaches would provide stronger evidence regarding the role of campus-based commemorative activities in students' patriotic development.

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