

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Kawasan Rukun Tetangga (KRT) activities as social cohesion tools for neighborhood watch in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

The Neighborhood Watch Scheme (Kawasan Rukun Tetangga, KRT), established in Malaysia in 1975, has been a pivotal initiative in enhancing community safety and fostering social cohesion among the Malaysia nation's multi-ethnic population. This study examines the extent to which KRT activities contribute to strengthening inter-ethnic harmony and promoting the principles and objectives of the Rukun Negara, the Malaysia's national philosophy aimed at creating a united, just, and progressive society. Adopting a quantitative research design, the study surveyed 245 residents from various KRTs across the Klang Valley (Kuala Lumpur and Selangor). Data analysis revealed a high level of integration of Rukun Negara principles within KRT activities, with an overall mean score of 4.584 and a standard deviation of 0.468. Furthermore, respondents demonstrated a very high level of understanding of the objectives of the Rukun Negara, reflected in a mean score of 4.336 and a standard deviation of 0.588. These findings indicate that KRT activities are not only enhance the community engagement but also serve as an effective medium for internalizing national values. Consequently, KRT can be regarded as an essential platform for promoting social harmony, reinforcing national identity, and building a cohesive multi-ethnic society in Malaysia. This underscores the significance of community-based initiatives in advancing nation-building efforts.

Keywords: activities; KRT; neighborhood watch; Rukun Negara; social cohesion

1. Introduction

Malaysia stands out as a beacon of unity, where diverse ethnicities, religions, and races have coexisted in peaceful harmony since the Federation of Malaya gained independence in 1957 and the formation of Malaysia in 1963. The amalgamation of three regions, namely states in Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah Province and Sarawak is the main foundation in the formation of Malaysia. The harmonious atmosphere enjoyed by

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the community is due to the unity and understanding between ethnic groups that is fostered in the community. Strong unity can be created through good neighbourly relations regardless of differences in religion, belief and culture. In this regard, the Department of National Unity and National Integration (JPNIN) is responsible for driving the national unity agenda to ensure the well-being and harmony of the Malaysian community. This goal is realized through a consolidation initiative to maintain, strengthen and build an integration site to bridge the relationship of goodwill among the Malaysian community through the Neighbourly Principles^[1].

In the context of a pluralistic society, unity and understanding between ethnic groups should be fostered so that the differences of each ethnic group such as beliefs, culture and language can be understood together. The plurality that is possessed is considered a blessing because it displays the diversity possessed by Malaysian society. However, according to Baharuddin^[2], this diversity is considered a great burden because it is not an easy task to create harmony in a community landscape that is characterized by diversity. Pluralism is also likely to lead the existence of racial issues. Therefore, if this issue is not addressed carefully, it will be an obstacle in the process of building harmony and unity among the community^[3]. In connection with that, this study wants to see how the machinery of unity, which is 'Kawasan Rukun Tetangga' (KRT) plays its role in fostering the spirit of unity among communities of various ethnicities based on the 'Rukun Negara Principle'. If KRT does not perform its role well, disharmony is disturbed, and conflicts between residents may occur.

Therefore, in order to realize the goal of Klang as a Prosperous, Liveable, Sustainable, Competitive and Sustainable City, the study of KRT's role in fostering inter-ethnic unity in the Klang Valley is relevant. KRT is an organization that plays an important role in building positive relationships between communities and improving community peace and security. Through the strong relationship between these ethnic groups, unity can be achieved indirectly and the stability of the country can be maintained.

2. Literature reviews

Social cohesion can be seen through the condition of diverse society groups being able to enjoy life together in harmony. They respect each other regardless of their differences such as ethnicity, faith, religion, culture, gender, or other factors. Social Cohesion is a peaceful, stable and prosperous atmosphere that is achieved and still believes that there are differences in the form of social deficits that exist in society. While integration is an effort to solve the social deficit through a series of integration sites that cover the process of bargaining, negotiation and mediation that continues at all levels of society^[4].

Social cohesion refers to a social phenomenon driven by a deep desire for unity that can influence the community to implement various efforts to achieve unity. The social cohesion that the nation having now is been a long and continuous process since the existence of relations between the various ethnic societies in Malaysia^[5]. In a nutshell, social cohesion is an important prerequisite to a balanced situation in ensuring that society is spared from any conflict. Therefore, with the existence of a KRT, the organization that can apply common values, the harmonious atmosphere that all communities desire will be achieved. Activities and programs organized by KRT provide opportunities for the community towards social cohesion. Thus, social cohesion can be created in the KRT community indirectly^[6]. Therefore, social cohesion can have a positive impact on all aspects of community life such as social harmony, a stable economy and overall community well-being. A stable and harmonious society has more potential to further expand the environment for the growth and development of society as well as manage conflicts that arise constructively.

The join efforts of all parties, especially government bodies are necessary to achieve the national unity goals. For the aspect of unity between the organizations involved, it is Kawasan Rukun Tetangga (KRT)

needs the involvement of various ethnicities, whether in organizations or as members. So it is very important that there is no element of bias and the welfare of the community is always intertwined. Therefore, to achieve the country's aspirations, the clarification and definition of KRT should be given priority. KRT has been almost 50 years old and has undergone several transformations along with the changing times and the current needs. The neighborhood concept became the focus of KRT around the 1980s, when the neighborhood became safer, more stable and improved^[7]. In 2012, the function and role of KRT were transferred to lead harmony, safety and service to the community^[11].

Thus, now the KRT Neighborhood Pillar has been moved to the leader of harmony, safety and service to the community^[8]. It plays a role as a unity machine among the Malaysian society that is different in various aspects of life such as historical background, language, culture and religion. Therefore, there is no denying that the KRT is a much-needed agent of unity because this organization is closest to the society in terms of its leadership and the implementation of its activities. The participation of all ages, genders and ethnic groups in KRT's activities and organizations can increase cooperation and foster a spirit of cooperation. Every member of the community who is involved benefits financially, health and welfare. Community involvement through this KRT organization can also indirectly increase the value of togetherness^[9].

The Rukun Negara history can be traced started from the Malaysia pre-independence multi-ethnics society especially under the British colonial rule. The British colonialists played an impact in term of social development in pre-independence of Malaysia. Under the British policy namely Divide and Rule, the pre-independence major ethnics, namely Malay, Chinese and Indian had been separated for their residential areas and occupation. Hence, the situation has driven the ethnics to live their life differently in any ways. Most of the Malays live in villages and work in the agricultural sector. For the Chinese, they live in cities and were involved in business. While the Indians live and work on estates. Each ethnics were also separated in terms of education by having their own schools without the same syllabus or curriculum. Thus, the situation has spark the bad social relation among the ethnics where the situation reached its climax in 1969. During the General Election 1969, ethnic's relation were increasingly murky when political parties provoke each other which eventually leads to fights. The rift in ethnic relations became increasingly serious, lead to the bloody events of 13 May 1969. Following the event, the government sought a formula to overcome the problem of ethnic fighting so that it would not happen again. As a result, the parliamentary and government system was suspended in Malaysia on May 16, 1969^[5].

The National Movement Council (MAGERAN) was established with the aim of restoring peace, re-establishing the laws of the country, fostering an atmosphere of harmony and mutual trust between the multi-ethnic societies. The MAGERAN was consisted notable figures of the country in order to bring back the country peace situation. The members consisted Tun Abdul Razak Hussein as the director, three ministers such as Tun Dr. Ismail Abdul Rahman, Tun Tan Siew Sin, Tun V. T. Sambanthan and the rest of the members including the representatives of the state government, representatives of each religions figures, professional bodies, the civil servant, trade unions, journalists, teachers association and small group representatives. After couple of month's in-depth discussion and study, the MAGERAN concluded an ideology that will become the principle of the country's unity namely Rukun Negara. Based on the MAGERAN's conclusion, the Rukun Negara was born which was proclaimed by the fourth Yang di-Pertuan Agong (the King of Malaysia) on August 31, 1970 in conjunction of the 13th anniversary of the country's independence^[10].

3. Research problem

Malaysia is a unique country consisting of various societies in terms of ethnicities, religions, and races. The society has enjoyed life in peace and harmony since the independence of the Federation of Malaya in 1957 and the formation of Malaysia in 1963. The main regions in Malaysia which are the Peninsula and Borneo strengthen the main foundations in the formation of Malaysia. The harmonious atmosphere enjoyed by the people is due to the unity and understanding between ethnic groups that is fostered in the community. Strong unity can be created through good neighborly relations regardless of differences in religion, belief, and culture. In this regard, the Jabatan Perpaduan Negara dan Integrasi Nasional (JPNIN) is responsible for driving the national unity agenda to ensure the well-being and harmony of the Malaysian community. This goal is realized through a consolidation initiative to maintain, strengthen and build an integration site to bridge the relationship of goodwill among the Malaysian community through the Neighborly Principles^[4].

In the context of a pluralistic society, unity and understanding between ethnic groups should be fostered so that the differences of each ethnic group such as beliefs, culture and language can be understood. The country's prosperity can be achieved through tolerance among each other in any way^[11]. The plurality that the country has is considered a blessing because it displays the diversity and a true picture of the Malaysian society. However, according to Baharuddin, this diversity is considered a great burden because it is not an easy task to create harmony in a community landscape characterized by diversity^[5]. Pluralism is also likely to lead to the existence of racial issues. Therefore, if this issue is not addressed carefully, it will become an obstacle in the process of building harmony and unity in the community^[3]. In connection with that, this study wants to see how the machinery of unity, Kawasan Rukun Tetangga (KRT) which plays its role in fostering the spirit of unity among communities of various ethnicities based on the Rukun Negara Principle. If KRT does not perform its role well, disharmony is disturbed, and conflicts between residents may occur. Henceforth, apart from the KRT roles, Rukun Negara play another part to strengthen the bonding among the people. Rukun Negara as a National Principles was declared on August 31, 1970 to commemorate the 13th anniversary of the independence of Malaysia. The Rukun Negara was introduced following the May 13, 1969 incident which weaken unity among the races in Malaysia. It was formed with the main purposed of forming a strong unity. The Rukun Negara contained clearly the key to harmony and unity for the sake of the success and stability of the country^[5].

4. Methods

From the point of view of research design, the approach used is a quantitative approach by using questionnaire instruments. According to Chua^[12], defines the quantitative method associated with numerical data and accuracy which is based on research that uses experimental studies and numerical data to be analyzed with statistical tests. This quantitative method was chosen because this method can save time, cost and energy.

In While from the point of view of the study's population, the number of samples is 245 determined by referring to the Sample Size Determination Table based on Krejcie and Morgan^[13]. The respondents were chosen randomly based on the group age, ethnic, gender, religion, state and income. Plus, the respondents came from a variety of different backgrounds and they answered a questionnaire that was distributed in the form of a google form.

As for the research instrument, this study used a survey technique by distributing questionnaires to the respondents. The questionnaire is divided into four parts consisting of 80 items, Part A contained the respondent's background. **Table 2** shows the demographics of the respondents involved in this study. **Table**

3 dealt with the application of ‘Rukun Negara’ in KRT activities consisted of 25 items. **Table 4** is related to the appreciation of the objectives of ‘Rukun Negara’ contained 25 items. The last part, which is **Table 5**, had 24 items related to social cohesion. For **Table 3, 4** and **5**, 5 Likert scale rating categories are used to measure the respondent's level of agreement. Each level is given a score that is (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) not sure, (4) agree and (5) strongly agree. The use of a likert scale provided a high reliability value and the opportunity for respondents to make the right choice regarding the results obtained. The interpretation of the mean score for this questionnaire is as in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Mean score scale and interpretation.

Average score	Interpretation
1.00 to 1.80	Very low (VL)
1.81 to 2.60	Low (L)
2.61 to 3.40	Medium (M)
3.41 to 4.20	High (H)
4.21 to 5.00	Very High (VH)

Source. Tschannen-Moran, M. & Gareis, C.R.^[14].

5. Result and discussion

5.1. Result

a) Respondents’ Profile

A total of 245 respondents answered the questionnaire distributed by the researcher. **Table 2** shows the composition and profile details of the respondents involved in this study in terms of gender, ethnicity, religion, age, state and household income.

Table 2. Profile of respondents.

	Factor	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	130	53.1
	Female	115	46.9
Ethnics	Malay	182	74.3
	Chinese	34	13.9
	Indian	29	11.8
Religion	Islam	183	74.7
	Buddhist	26	10.6
	Hindu	25	10.2
	Christian	11	4.5
Age	21 to 30 years	13	5.3
	31 to 40 years	26	10.6
	41 to 50 years	71	29
	51 to 60 years	135	55.1
State	Selangor	175	71.4
	Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur	70	28.6
Household income	RM4500 below	172	70.2

RM4501 to RM11000	57	23.3
RM11001 above	16	6.5

Table 2. (Continued)

Source: Field research (2024).

The results showed little difference between the number of male and female respondents. The male respondents who answered the questionnaire were 130 people (53.1%) while the female respondents were 115 people (46.9%). Ethnic diversity in this country is not an obstacle to national harmony. For the Malay ethnicity, a total of 182 people (74.3%) respondents were involved in this study. For the Chinese ethnicity, there were 34 people (13.9%) while the Indian ethnicity was 29 people (11.8%). The composition of this ethnic diversity is a specialty in this country and the attractiveness of this country compared to other countries. There were 183 (74.7%) respondents who were Muslim. For Buddhism, there was a total of 26 (10.6%) respondents who follow that religion. A total of 25 (10.2%) respondents were Hindus. and the rest were 11 (4.5%) made up of Christian respondents involved in this study. A total of 13 (5.3%) respondents aged 21 to 30 years. For the age range of 31 to 40 years, there was a total of 26 people (10.6%) respondents. A total of 71 people (29.0%) who were aged 41 to 50 years and for the range of 51 to 60 years as many as 135 people (55.1%) were involved as respondents in this study.

As for the state-related analysis, a total of 175 (71.4%) respondents from Selangor while the respondents from the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur were 70 (28.6%). In terms of household income, a total of 172 (70.2%) respondents had an income of RM4500 and below. Respondents with an income between RM4501 and RM11000 who answered the questionnaire for this study were 57 (23.3%). A total of 16 (6.5%) respondents who earned an income of RM11001 and above were involved in the study.

b) Application of 'Rukun Negara' Principles in KRT Activities

Table 3 shows the mean score for the application of 'Rukun Negara' principles in KRT activities is at a very high level which is 4.584 with a standard deviation = 0.468.

Table 3. Application of 'Rukun Negara' principles in KRT activities.

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
I respect the religion and beliefs that exist in Malaysia.	SD	1	0.4	4.63	0.562	Very high
	DA	0	0			
	NS	4	1.6			
	A	79	32.2			
	SA	161	65.7			
Chants or noises as a sign to perform worship must be respected by every individual.	SD	1	0.4	4.56	0.595	Very high
	DA	0	0			
	NS	7	2.9			
	A	91	37.1			
	SA	146	59.6			
Belief and religion as a way of life is the main fortress for identity.	SD	1	0.4	4.69	0.537	Very high
	DA	0	0			
	NS	3	1.2			
	A	66	26.9			

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Rituals according to beliefs can be performed as long as they do not disturb the peace of the local community.	SA	175	71.4	4.5	0.631	Very high
	SD	0	0			
	DA	3	1.2			
All the multi-ethnic communities in my KRT have strong religious beliefs and beliefs.	NS	9	3.7	4.42	0.645	Very high
	A	96	39.2			
	SA	137	55.9			
	SD	0	0			
	DA	4	1.6			
	NS	9	3.7			
I respect the position of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong as the head of state.	A	113	46.1	4.73	0.536	Very high
	SA	119	48.6			
	SD	1	0.4			
	DA	0	0			
	NS	5	2			
	A	52	21.2			
The order from the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong must be obeyed by all ethnically divided communities.	SA	187	76.3	4.71	0.551	Very high
	SD	1	0.4			
	DA	1	0.4			
	NS	3	1.2			
	A	57	23.3			
	SA	183	74.7			
I believe in the King as an umbrella of unity is a must for the community	SD	0	0	4.68	0.532	Very high
	DA	1	0.4			
	NS	5	2			
	A	65	26.5			
	SA	174	71			
	SD	1	0.4			
Malaysian society is always loyal to the king and country.	DA	3	1.2	4.61	0.634	Very high
	NS	5	2			
	A	72	29.4			
	SA	164	66.9			
	SD	0	0			
	DA	2	0.8			
The KRT in my area is a society that firmly adheres to the Constitutional Monarch system.	NS	8	3.3	4.54	0.603	Very high
	A	90	36.7			
	SA	145	59.2			
	SD	0	0			
	DA	0	0			
	NS	0	0			
I respect the constitution as	SD	0	0	4.63	0.577	Very high

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
the supreme law of the land	DA	2	0.8			
	NS	6	2.4			
	A	73	29.8			
	SA	164	66.9			
I admit that every matter that is enshrined in the constitution must be obeyed.	SD	0	0	4.6	0.547	Very high
	DA	1	0.4			
	NS	4	1.6			
	A	88	35.9			
	SA	152	62			
I believe that the constitution is the main source for the prosperity of society.	SD	0	0	4.59	0.585	Very high
	DA	2	0.8			
	NS	6	2.4			
	A	83	33.9			
	SA	154	62.9			
Multi-ethnic communities are free to do various things as long as they are based on the constitution.	SD	0	0	4.46	0.692	Very high
	DA	6	2.4			
	NS	10	4.1			
	A	94	38.4			
	SA	135	55.1			
KRT always functions according to the national constitution.	SD	1	0.4	4.56	0.608	Very high
	DA	0	0			
	NS	9	3.7			
	A	85	34.7			
	SA	150	61.2			
I always obey every law that has been set.	SD	1	0.4	4.57	0.594	Very high
	DA	1	0.4			
	NS	4	1.6			
	A	90	36.7			
	SA	149	60.8			
Every law set is intended to call for goodness.	SD	0	0	4.61	0.567	Very high
	DA	2	0.8			
	NS	4	1.6			
	A	82	33.5			
	SA	157	64.1			
I believe the law is fair to all people.	SD	0	0	4.5	0.618	Very high
	DA	2	0.8			
	NS	10	4.1			
	A	97	39.6			

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
The laws of the country bring good to all communities.	SA	136	55.5	4.54	0.596	Very high
	SD	0	0			
	DA	2	0.8			
	NS	7	2.9			
The KRT in my place always ensures that the laws of the country are obeyed.	A	92	37.6	4.52	0.618	Very high
	SA	144	58.8			
	SD	0	0			
	DA	3	1.2			
	NS	7	2.9			
I always respect my neighbours regardless of their background.	A	95	38.8	4.62	0.572	Very high
	SA	140	57.1			
	SD	1	0.4			
	DA	0	0			
Speaking softly, especially to the elderly, is a practice that needs to be followed.	NS	5	2	4.67	0.558	Very high
	A	80	32.7			
	SA	159	64.9			
	SD	1	0.4			
	DA	0	0			
I believe good behaviour does not need to count on lineage and background.	NS	5	2	4.64	0.601	Very high
	A	66	26.9			
	SA	173	70.6			
	SD	2	0.8			
The local community always practices pure values in their daily lives.	DA	0	0	4.51	0.605	Very high
	NS	4	1.6			
	A	71	29			
	SA	168	68.6			
	SD	0	0			
KRT in my area always cooperates in creating an atmosphere of goodwill between various ethnicities.	DA	2	0.8	4.52	0.625	Very high
	NS	11	4.5			
	A	90	36.7			
	SA	142	58			
	SD	0	0			

Table 3. (Continued)

Note. SD = Strongly disagree, DA = Do not agree, NS= Not sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree.

The findings show that the majority of respondents strongly agree that the KRT activities carried out are based on the principles of Rukun Negara. The majority of respondents, 187 (76.3%) strongly agreed with the item "I respect the position of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong as the head of state". Only one respondent strongly disagreed with the item.

Respondents also strongly agreed with the item "Orders from the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong must be obeyed by all ethnically divided communities." A total of 183 (74.7%) respondents strongly agreed and 57 (23.3%) respondents agreed with the statement.

The majority of people in the Klang Valley think that KRT activities can foster unity through the application of the 'Rukun Negara' Principles. From the findings obtained through the distributed questionnaire, found that the level of agreement is at a very high level. The KRT activities organized around the Klang Valley are comprehensive and include all the principles of 'Rukun Negara'.

The main purpose of 'Rukun Negara' is to create strong unity for a country. This is because each principle in the 'Rukun Negara' functions as an integrative key to the harmony and unity of the people in ensuring the success and stability of Malaysia^[15].

c) Internalization of 'Rukun Negara' Objectives

Table 4 shows the appreciation of the objectives of 'Rukun Negara'. Findings show the mean score is 4.336 and the standard deviation = 0.588.

Table 4. Internalization of 'Rukun Negara' principles.

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
I believe that unity can be formed through KRT activities.	SD	0	0	4.47	0.65	Very high
	DA	4	1.6			
	NS	9	3.7			
	A	100	40.8			
	SA	132	53.9			
Differences in religion and belief are not an obstacle to unity in the country.	SD	0	0	4.48	0.644	Very high
	DA	2	0.8			
	NS	14	5.7			
	A	93	38			
	SA	136	55.5			
All ethnicities have the opportunity to participate in any organized KRT activity.	SD	1	0.4	4.49	0.663	Very high
	DA	2	0.8			
	NS	11	4.5			
	A	93	38			
	SA	138	56.3			
I notice various ethnicities getting involved in activities organized by KRT in my area.	SD	2	0.8	4.17	0.822	Very high
	DA	5	2			
	NS	38	15.5			
	A	104	42.4			
	SA	96	39.2			
KRT in my place organizes	SD	0	0	4.44	0.673	Very high

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
activities that can foster the spirit of unity and cooperation.	DA	4	1.6			
	NS	13	5.3			
	A	99	40.4			
	SA	129	52.7			
	SD	0	0			
I have the opportunity to participate in social activities in my community.	DA	2	0.8	4.47	0.624	Very high
	NS	11	4.5			
	A	103	42			
	SA	129	52.7			
	SD	0	0			
There are no obstacles to the religious practices that each individual adheres to.	DA	4	1.6	4.4	0.755	Very high
	NS	10	4.1			
	A	102	41.6			
	SA	126	51.4			
	SD	3	1.2			
Each ethnic group has the opportunity to voice their opinions and views on the activities organized by KRT.	DA	4	1.6	4.45	0.686	Very high
	NS	9	3.7			
	A	100	40.8			
	SA	131	53.5			
	SD	0	0			
The community where I live contributes to the value of positive values for raising children.	DA	8	3.3	4.29	0.731	Very high
	NS	16	6.5			
	A	118	48.2			
	SA	103	42			
	SD	0	0			
KRT in my place practices a democratic leadership style in ensuring that KRT's goals are achieved.	DA	6	2.4	4.4	0.686	Very high
	NS	10	4.1			
	A	109	44.5			
	SA	120	49			
	SD	9	3.7			
I benefited financially through the economic program run by the KRT of my area.	DA	15	6.1	3.92	1.021	High
	NS	39	15.9			
	A	106	43.3			
	SA	76	31			
	SD	3	1.2			
Corruption is a serious offense in this country.	DA	6	2.4	4.53	0.792	Very high
	NS	10	4.1			
	A	66	26.9			
	SA	160	65.3			
	SD	3	1.2			

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
The KRT program in the economy that involves all ethnicities is going well in my community.	SD	1	0.4	4.27	0.79	Very high
	DA	7	2.9			
	NS	25	10.2			
Guidance and guidance on economic issues are given to all levels of the local community.	A	104	42.4	4.24	0.745	Very high
	SA	108	44.1			
	SD	1	0.4			
	DA	5	2			
	NS	24	9.8			
	A	118	48.2			
KRT in my place organizes activities that can generate and increase income.	SA	97	39.6	3.96	0.955	High
	SD	7	2.9			
	DA	10	4.1			
	NS	44	18			
	A	108	44.1			
	SA	76	31			
I acknowledge the existence of different laws related to religion in Malaysia.	SD	2	0.8	4.27	0.8	Very high
	DA	6	2.4			
	NS	24	9.8			
	A	105	42.9			
	SA	108	44.1			
	SD	1	0.4	4.32	0.734	Very high
Religious practices and beliefs are free to be practiced by the local community.	DA	5	2			
	NS	18	7.3			
	A	111	45.3			
	SA	110	44.9			
	SD	0	0	4.41	0.663	Very high
All ethnicities have the opportunity to participate in social activities in my community.	DA	3	1.2			
	NS	15	6.1			
	A	106	43.3			
	SA	121	49.4			
	SD	0	0	4.32	0.706	Very high
I am happy and excited when other ethnic festivals are held in my neighbourhood.	DA	5	2			
	NS	19	7.8			
	A	113	46.1			
	SA	108	44.1			
	SD	0	0	4.42	0.695	Very high
KRT in my place is free to organize any activity that can improve the well-being of the people.	DA	6	2.4			
	NS	11	4.5			
	A	102	41.6			

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
I always try to venture into various fields of knowledge in line with current trends.	SA	126	51.4	4.34	0.687	Very high
	SD	0	0			
	DA	5	2			
In ensuring that the country moves in line with modernity, the community is still principled to religious beliefs.	NS	15	6.1	4.4	0.674	Very high
	A	116	47.3			
	SA	109	44.5			
	SD	0	0			
	DA	5	2			
	NS	11	4.5			
	A	109	44.5			
The involvement of all ethnicities in creating a competitive country is given priority.	SA	120	49	4.36	0.69	Very high
	SD	0	0			
	DA	5	2			
	NS	15	6.1			
	A	113	46.1			
Exposure related to skills in various fields is given to all levels of the local community.	SA	112	45.7	4.33	0.689	Very high
	SD	0	0			
	DA	4	1.6			
	NS	19	7.8			
	A	115	46.9			
	SA	107	43.7			
KRT in my place organizes activities involving various fields of science.	SD	1	0.4	4.24	0.761	Very high
	DA	5	2			
	NS	27	11			
	A	112	45.7			
	SA	100	40.8			

Table 4. (Continued)

Note. SD = Strongly disagree, DA = Do not agree, NS= Not sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree.

Through the results obtained, the majority of respondents in the Klang Valley agree with the item "The practice of corruption is a very serious offense in this country." A total of 160 (65.3%) strongly agree and 66 respondents (26.9%) agree with the items.

For the item "All ethnicities have the opportunity to participate in any organized KRT activity", a total of 138 (56.3%) respondents strongly agreed and 93 (38%) agreed. Only a small number disagreed.

One of the objectives of 'Rukun Negara' is to create a just society where the prosperity of the country can be shared fairly and equitably. In giving birth to a just society, leaders should have integrity which is the most important element in good governance practices. Therefore, it is important to appreciate the 'Rukun Negara' in the awakening of patriotic spirit and promoting unity among diverse communities to ensure that the institutions of this country are not destroyed and dominated by corruption.

Therefore, the level of internalization of the objectives of ‘Rukun Negara’ among the people in the Klang Valley is at a very high level. The ‘Rukun Negara’ principle is the basis for unity among multi-ethnic communities. Therefore, understanding the objectives of ‘Rukun Negara’ is important because it is the key to community life. Pure values that are cultivated through the appreciation of the objectives of ‘Rukun Negara’ can produce a society that is tolerant and respects each other.

d) Social unity

Table 5 shows the mean score for social cohesion in the Klang Valley. Findings show that the mean score is at a high level which is 3.793 with a standard deviation = 0.587.

Table 5. Social unity.

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
I feel sad if a neighbour from another ethnic group dies.	SD	0	0	4.27	0.677	Very high
	DA	6	2.4			
	NS	14	5.7			
	A	134	54.7			
	SA	91	37.1			
I will help neighbours from other ethnicities who are in trouble.	SD	0	0	4.38	0.632	Very high
	DA	3	1.2			
	NS	11	4.5			
	A	122	49.8			
	SA	109	44.5			
I feel uncomfortable living in a multiethnic community.	SD	41	16.7	3.07	1.374	Medium
	DA	48	19.6			
	NS	59	24.1			
	A	46	18.8			
	SA	51	20.8			
I will only invite my ethnic friends if there is a party.	SD	57	23.3	2.82	1.361	Medium
	DA	45	18.4			
	NS	64	26.1			
	A	43	17.6			
	SA	36	14.7			
Employment opportunities in government departments are open to all ethnic groups in the country.	SD	1	0.4	4.16	0.842	High
	DA	13	5.3			
	NS	25	10.2			
	A	113	46.1			
	SA	93	38			
The openness of the service sector benefits only one ethnic group.	SD	55	22.4	2.84	1.344	Medium
	DA	45	18.4			
	NS	62	25.3			
	A	50	20.4			

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
The openness of the education sector benefits every ethnic group in this country.	SA	33	13.5	4.01	1.03	High
	SD	9	3.7			
	DA	17	6.9			
	NS	23	9.4			
The meritocracy system in education benefits all races.	A	109	44.5	4.11	0.941	High
	SA	87	35.5			
	SD	7	2.9			
	DA	11	4.5			
	NS	21	8.6	2.96	1.319	Medium
	A	115	46.9			
	SA	91	37.1			
	SD	43	17.6			
I don't feel free when voting for leaders and political parties that I like.	DA	51	20.8	3.64	1.175	High
	NS	60	24.5			
	A	54	22			
	SA	37	15.1			
I feel free to discuss politics with colleagues.	SD	17	6.9	4.26	0.791	Very high
	DA	26	10.6			
	NS	49	20			
	A	90	36.7			
I am free to participate in the activities of associations and charities that I like.	SA	63	25.7	3.24	1.27	Medium
	SD	0	0			
	DA	9	3.7			
	NS	26	10.6			
Parties based on ethnicity care less about the welfare of other ethnic groups.	A	103	42	3.98	0.964	High
	SA	107	43.7			
	SD	27	11			
	DA	45	18.4			
	NS	62	25.3	4.37	0.733	Very high
	A	63	25.7			
	SA	48	19.6			
	SD	4	1.6			
I acknowledge the existence of different laws related to religion in Malaysia.	DA	20	8.2	4.37	0.733	Very high
	NS	32	13.1			
	A	110	44.9			
	SA	79	32.2			
I am proud that Malaysians are made up of various religions, languages, cultures and ethnicities.	SD	0	0	4.37	0.733	Very high
	DA	6	2.4			
	NS	19	7.8			

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
I am very proud to be in other ethnic celebrations (Hari Raya/Deepavali/Chinese New Year/ Gawai Day etc.)	A	98	40	4.19	0.896	High
	SA	122	49.8			
	SD	3	1.2			
	DA	12	4.9			
	NS	25	10.2			
The act of questioning the rights of the majority religious followers is not appropriate.	A	100	40.8	4.14	0.982	High
	SA	105	42.9			
	SD	8	3.3			
	DA	11	4.5			
	NS	22	9			
SUHAKAM is free to criticize the government if the people's fundamental rights are violated.	A	102	41.6	4	0.962	High
	SA	102	41.6			
	SD	4	1.6			
	DA	21	8.6			
	NS	26	10.6			
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Malaysia are not given the same treatment by the government.	A	114	46.5	3.33	1.16	Medium
	SA	80	32.7			
	SD	19	7.8			
	DA	43	17.6			
	NS	58	23.7			
I get a lot of news about the government's poor governance from the mainstream media (RTM1, TV3, TV9, NTV7 etc).	A	88	35.9	3.73	1.155	High
	SA	37	15.1			
	SD	19	7.8			
	DA	17	6.9			
	NS	39	15.9			
The increase in the cost of living is due to the failure of the ruling party.	A	105	42.9	3.86	1.111	High
	SA	65	26.5			
	SD	11	4.5			
	DA	23	9.4			
	NS	35	14.3			
The poverty gap between ethnic groups is still significant.	A	96	39.2	4.1	0.883	High
	SA	80	32.7			
	SD	3	1.2			
	DA	11	4.5			
	NS	33	13.5			
Government subsidies are enjoyed by Malaysians regardless of ethnicity.	A	109	44.5	4.1	0.879	High
	SA	89	36.3			
	SD	4	1.6			
	DA	13	5.3			
	NS	33	13.5			

Item	Views	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation	Interpretation
	NS	20	8.2			
	A	125	51			
	SA	83	33.9			
Government development policies only benefit one ethnic group.	SD	43	17.6	2.96	1.347	Medium
	DA	54	22			
	NS	60	24.5			
	A	45	18.4			
	SA	43	17.6			
To achieve a developed country requires the cooperation of all races.	SD	0	0	4.5	0.716	Very high
	DA	5	2			
	NS	17	6.9			
	A	74	30.2			
	SA	149	60.8			

Table 5. (Continued)

Note. SD = Strongly disagree, DA = Do not agree, NS= Not sure, A = Agree, SA = Strongly agree.

The results showed that the majority of the community strongly agreed, namely 149 (60.8%) and 74 (30.2%) respondents agreed with the item "To achieve a developed country requires the cooperation of all races."

For the item "I am proud that Malaysians are made up of various religions, languages, cultures and ethnicities.", a total of 122 respondents (49.8%) strongly agreed and 98 respondents (40.0%) agreed with the item.

In summary, the majority of people around the Klang Valley still have the awareness that social cohesion is very important, especially in the life of a pluralistic society. Social cohesion needs to be fostered through KRT to create a more harmonious and prosperous atmosphere.

6. Overall discussion

Kawasan Rukun Tetangga (KRT) plays a vital role in fostering social cohesion within Malaysian communities. Various activities such as mutual aid (gotong-royong), sports and recreational programs, festive celebrations, the Voluntary Patrol Scheme (SRS), and Independence Day events have proven effective in strengthening harmony and cooperation among KRT residents. These collective efforts help build closer ties across multi-ethnic groups. According to Table 3, the statement "*All the multi-ethnic communities in my KRT have strong religious beliefs*" recorded the lowest mean score of 4.42, while "*I respect the position of the Yang Di-Pertuan Agong as the head of state*" recorded the highest at 4.71. In Table 4, the item "*I benefited financially through the economic program run by the KRT in my area*" had the lowest mean (3.92), and "*Corruption is a serious offense in this country*" had the highest (4.53). For Table 5, "*I will only invite friends of my own ethnicity to a party*" scored the lowest mean (2.82), indicating a low level of ethnic exclusivity, while "*Achieving a developed nation requires cooperation from all races*" had the highest mean (4.5), reflecting a strong sense of national unity. In conclusion, the findings underscore the importance of unity as promoted through the Rukun Negara principles, which serve as the backbone of harmonious multi-ethnic relations in Malaysia. Strengthening public understanding and appreciation of these

values can be further achieved through KRT initiatives. Therefore, KRT programs should be well-coordinated and designed to enhance community participation, intercultural understanding, and national integration—addressing all areas of life and grounded in the values of *Rukun Negara*.

7. Conclusion

This study affirms a strong correlation between the initiatives of Kawasan Rukun Tetangga (KRT) and the practical application of the Rukun Negara principles in fostering national unity. Through structured programs, KRT facilitates the internalization of these values within communities, thereby positioning itself as a key driver of social cohesion in Malaysia's multi-ethnic society. The effective implementation of Rukun Negara principles further enhances the impact of KRT activities, where active community participation and competent leadership cultivate trust, inclusivity, and collaboration. This, in turn, strengthens KRT's role in uniting diverse communities through educational, economic, social, and political initiatives, with particular emphasis on youth engagement and inter-ethnic relations.

In the digital era, social media has emerged as a powerful tool in shaping public discourse. However, its misuse for disseminating racial or religious hatred, as well as false information, poses significant risks to national unity. The presence of users with varied socio-cultural backgrounds, coupled with low media literacy, can exacerbate societal divisions. Consequently, KRT must assume a more proactive role in addressing these challenges at the grassroots level. Mitigating the spread of harmful content requires close collaboration between the Royal Malaysia Police (PDRM), the Attorney General's Chambers, and other relevant agencies, with legal enforcement through provisions such as Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998. A coordinated response involving the Ministry of Communications and Multimedia (KKMM), Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM), PDRM, the Department of National Unity and Integration (JPNIN), and KRT is essential to counter misinformation and promote responsible information sharing.

While modernization and digital platforms have transformed communication and brought numerous benefits, unregulated misinformation threatens societal stability and inter-ethnic harmony. Thus, the support of JPNIN and effective KRT management remain crucial in fostering inclusive participation across all communities, thereby reinforcing national unity. This study underscores the enduring significance of unity as embodied in the guiding principles of the Rukun Negara, which serve as the moral and ideological foundation for harmonious multi-ethnic coexistence. Enhancing public awareness and appreciation of these principles can be effectively achieved through well-structured KRT-led initiatives, particularly in urban settings such as the Klang Valley. Hence, KRT programs should be strategically designed to increase community engagement, deepen understanding, and cultivate a shared commitment to unity, ensuring that all efforts remain inclusive and grounded in the values of the Rukun Negara.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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