

Challenges Faced by School Professionals to Promote Social Cohesion in Malaysia

Mohd Mahzan Awang* & Abdul Razaq Ahmad
Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia
e-mail: *mohdmahzan@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper explores school professionals' experience in promoting social cohesion. School professionals are principals, teachers and counsellors. The study utilised Ecological System theory to explore types of challenges faced by school professionals to promote social cohesion. This study defines social cohesion as a stage for developing unity among multi-ethnic nation. The case study research design was used to gather data. Results indicate that challenges faced by school professionals exist in the *micro-system* and *macro-system* layers with special characteristics and elements. This study employed a case study research designed to explore in-depth understanding of ethnic relation at the school levels. The data was gathered from interviews with 13 school professionals from two national secondary schools. The participants consisted of principals (n=2), vice-principal (n=1), counsellors (n=2), class teachers (n=3), discipline teachers (n=2), and physical education teachers (n=3). Data gathered was analysed using thematic analysis (NVivo software). Results from the current study revealed that challenges faced by teachers are revolving around issues of prejudice, polarisation and negative perception towards others. Whereas, the following issues were found to be core challenges for promoting social cohesion in the *macro-system* layer: transition and adaptation process. The current study also found that there are many programmes to integrate multi-ethnic pupils at a school level. However, there is no specific evidence to measure the effectiveness of the programme held at the school level. In addition, many one-off programmes were organised for promoting social cohesion. Results also demonstrated that vernacular school system seems to be a hindrance for promoting social cohesion. The existence of national and national-type (vernacular) from thirteen school professionals from two national secondary schools. The schools has been found to be barriers for promoting social cohesion among multi-ethnic pupils. The study has an impact on the current practice of promoting social cohesion in schools. It also has an impact on the teachers' training where the elements of social integration strategies should be included in the teacher's training modules.

Keywords social cohesion, integration, ethnic relation, ecological system, unity, diversity

INTRODUCTION

Multi-ethnic society is asserted as a time-bomb society where ethnic clashing can occur any time (Leahy, 1998). Without proper planning to integrate these groups will lead to chaotic situation. In a Malaysian context, several ethnic clashing and riots occurred in the past (Shamsul, 2012; Mansor, 2012). The most tragic one happened on 13th May 1969 between Chinese and Malay in Kuala Lumpur. In order to promote unity among them, the Malaysia government introduced the national philosophy *Rukunegara*. Then follows by a long term development plan namely New Economic Policy. At the same time, many slogans were used to promote unity. These informs that in a country with a diverse ethnic background like Malaysia, promoting social cohesion is imperative (Shamsul, 2012; Mansor, 2012). Many empirical evidence shows that the Malaysian government has placed a great emphasis on social integration as it determines the stability of the country (Mansor, 2012). The desires of the government to ensure that education plays an important role of unifying and integrating the multi-ethnic population remains important in educational policy. Various agendas either long or short terms are prepared to integrate people from different ethnicity (Milner, 2011). Among the agendas is the formation of national schools to encourage pupils from different ethnicity to attend national school systems. In order to promote social integration at a school level, school professionals (teachers, counsellors, principals) are expected to carry out various programmes. These include Pupils' Integration Plan for Unity programme (Ministry of

Education Malaysia, 2005), national day celebration and the introduction of nationhood subjects. Extensive evidence suggests that managing diverse ethnicity requires holistic approaches, culturally responsive methods (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke & Curran, 2004) and it must be based on actual facts from scientific and empirical social sciences research (Awang, 2012). Despite various integration programmes held in school, there is limited studies done in the past that investigate teachers experience in promoting social integration.

BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Literature search revealed that the slogan of unity in diversity is not a new term. It has been used in the past worldwide. For instance, the slogan of *unity in diversity* and *unity is uniformity* are used in Malaysia; *e pluribus unum* (Latin words refer to unity in diversity) in the Seal of the United States, *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* in the Seal of Indonesia between 1947 and 2005; *In Varietate Concordia* as a slogan for the European Union. Unity is an ultimate goal for ethnic relation. It requires specific strategies, high level of toleration and commitment from various parties. Shamsul (2012) asserted that Malaysia now at a stage of social cohesion. Therefore, he proposed the concept of *cohesion in diversity* instead of *unity in diversity*. This is because ethnic integration is still at the stage of *work-in-progress*. Social cohesion, according to Shamsul (2012) refers to "... social phenomenon that has been leading by deep dreams towards unity which later will influence society members to string various prerequisites to achieve the unity (p. 16)". Social cohesion also refers to "... a process more than a condition or end state ... it is seen as involving a sense of commitment, a desire or capacity to live together in harmony Jensen (1998, p.1). Others perceived cohesion as "... an individual's sense of belonging to a particular group and his or her feelings of morale associated with membership in the group" (Bollen & Hoyle, 1990:482). In this paper, the concept of social cohesion refers to the stage of integration process in forming unity.

Education for Social Cohesion

Communities and schools in Malaysia are rapidly changing and becoming increasingly diverse (Shamsul, 2012; Mansor, 2012). Due to this situation, all school professionals (including teachers, head teachers or principals, and school counsellors) are supposed to be equipped with knowledge, awareness, and skills, disposition to become highly capable of responding to the variety of racial, cultural, ethnic, class and ability differences. However, it is unclear the extent to which pre-service teachers are recruited and educated with these elements. Without sufficient knowledge on this matter, teachers may face challenges in communication with pupils.

Past empirical evidence suggest that the lack of prior knowledge on other cultural values and norms, segregation among multi-ethnic population due to parental socio-economic status, gender, and attitudes toward school (Landis & Albert, 2012; Tong, 2011; Rohaty, 2009) are contributing factors to ethnic conflicts. This informs the importance of comprehensive curriculum for promoting social integration. However, many past studies show that the professionals are facing difficulties to integrate pupils with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Self-segregation among young people for instance (Ramlee et. al., 2009), socio-educational and sociological factors (Hixson, 1991; Shamsul, 2012; Mansor, 2012) pose a challenge to integrate multi-ethnic population. The increasingly diverse school population requires that teachers have a broader range of skills and knowledge to meet these diverse needs body (Bynoe, 1998). Thus, the role of school teachers in promoting social cohesion is vital in building a fair, integrated and tolerant society by giving pupils the skills, knowledge and opportunities to learn with, from and about those from different cultures, beliefs and backgrounds and to develop shared values.

Teachers need to know and understand their roles in promoting social cohesion for children in their classroom. According to Saravia-Shore (2008), teachers will be able create understanding among pupils from different background (diverse learner) by using critical thinking when they make the rules of the classroom culture explicit and enable pupils to compare and contrast them with other cultures. Pupils can develop cross-cultural skills in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. For such learning to take place, however, teachers must have the attitudes, knowledge, and skills to make their classrooms effective learning environments for all school members. In addition, in order to produce effective teaching for diverse population, Zeichner (1992) has summarized elements that teachers need such as the teacher

must have a clear sense of their own ethnic and cultural identities, different ethnic cultural groups that compose society and explicitly teach pupils the culture and seek to maintain pupils' sense of ethnic cultural pride and identity.

At the school level, social cohesion can be defined as the degree of convergence or homogeneity between the social feelings, perceptions, beliefs, and behaviours of the various social actors in a specific school (Peschar, 2005). In a school, each individual; manager, teacher or staff members, or pupil perceives specific qualities of this social cohesion through specific feelings, beliefs, or behaviour of him or herself in relation to the other social actors, and vice versa (Gillison, Standage, & Skevington, 2008). The lack or low degree of social cohesion may, for instance, imply social exclusion or segregation and stimulate social stereotyping including antisocial or to some extent shows unsafe behaviour to other pupil (Houlston & Smith, 2009). For teachers or other school professional, impact of the lack of social cohesion in schools may affect the productivity and effectiveness of their job. As for the pupils, negative social discrimination and consequence antisocial behaviour may lead them to experience more social problem behaviour such as bullying or other forms of violence, and may lead to them to leave school early by dropping out (Tapola & Niemivirta, 2008 and Parker & Martin, 2009). Hence, teachers must recognize the impact that cultural differences can have on children and children's education. Teachers who are aware of the impacts of cultural differences are more likely to bring children's different cultures into the classroom (Gay, 1994).

Various school systems especially vernacular school system have been argued as a hindrance for promoting social cohesion and nation building (Jayasooria, 2012). In Malaysia, there are more than two million pupils attend national primary schools (n=2,184,918) compared to Chinese primary schools (n=603,192) and Tamil primary schools (n=104,654) (The Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011). There are limited past studies investigating how pupils from Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools adapt with the national secondary schools. Indeed, it is unclear how teachers in national secondary schools interact with pupils from Chinese and Tamil vernacular schools. Pupils from these schools may encounter difficulties to adapt with the national school environment which is dominated by Malay pupils. On top of that, the use of Malay language as a medium of instruction and communication may become one of the challenges for Chinese and Tamil pupils from vernacular primary school because they often use Mandarin and Tamil in their daily life. In 2010, from a total of 2248 secondary schools throughout the country, 43% (n=965) are national schools, 41% (n=922) are government-aided schools, including national-type school (Chinese) and religious school, and 16 % (n=361) are other school types.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a case study research designed to explore in-depth understanding of ethnic relation at the school level. Data was gathered from interviews with 13 school professionals from two national secondary schools. The participants consisted of principals (n=2), vice-principal (n=1), counsellors (n=2), class teachers (n=3), discipline teachers (n=2), and physical education teachers (n=3). The two Malaysian national urban secondary schools were selected as both have multi-ethnic pupils. School A was located in 10 kilometres from the city centre and was surrounded by the Royal Malaysian Army camp, Royal Malaysian Police precinct, and two primary schools. School B was located in an inner-city, beside a cluster school and a Chinese primary school. The school permission was obtained prior to the interviews. They were asked to respond to the question: "*Tell me about the behaviour of pupils from different ethnicity in this school*". Interviews were conducted in Malay language during the school days. The interviews were audio digitally recorded, transcribed, analysed and later translated into English. Data was then independently analysed by two coders. Inter-rater reliability was calculated using the formula: of number of agreements divided by number agreements plus disagreements, multiplied by one hundred (Jindal-Snape & Topping, 2010). The reliability scores obtained in both case study schools exceeded 80% which is regarded as satisfactory (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2010). Notes of general observation were also taken into account in reporting data in this paper. It should be noted that the current paper is part of a larger study of positive behaviour enhancement strategies carried out in selected Malaysian urban national secondary schools.

This study utilised Ecological System theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1992) as a theoretical framework to explore the radius of challenges faced by school professionals for promoting social cohesion. The theory advocates interconnections between ecological layers and how it affects human's life. Ecological layers based this theory are the *Micro-system* (direct interaction with social agents), the *Mesosystem* (connection between contexts), the *Exosystem* (indirect interaction with social agents), the *Macro-system* (socio-cultural context) and the *Chronosystem* (time dimension). Due to the limitation of resources, this paper focuses on the challenges faced by school professionals at the *Microsystem* and *Macro-system* layers only. However, we realised that the nature problems may exist beyond this layer as social-integration is a complex phenomenon.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most respondents in this study are identified as Malay. Low numbers of Chinese and Indian respondents participated in this study. This ethnicity composition reflects the actual population in Malaysia where Malay (N=14,749,378) is dominant, followed by Chinese (N=6,520, 559) and Indian (N=1,969,343) (Economic Planning Unit, 2010). Findings revealed that challenges faced by teachers exist at *micro-system* and *mesosystem* layers. As challenges exist in various situation, situation and context, promoting social cohesion requires holistic approach past studies recommended that cultural inclusion should be taken into account for encouraging social cohesion in a school context (Muijs et. al., 2007; Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke& Curran, 2004). This includes the understanding of various people needs and abilities, culturally-responsive teaching strategies (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke& Curran, 2004), respecting and valuing diversity in school, and the use of appropriate language which is understood by the majority (Muijs et. al., 2007).

Conclusion

Micro-system layer

Emerging theme 1: Polarisation, prejudice and school initiatives

Findings from the current study revealed that polarization, negative perception toward others (prejudice) and initiatives for promoting social interaction are the common themes emerged in the *micro-system* layer. For instance, most pupils from both School A and B were more likely to gather with their same ethnic groups during transition period, break and snack time. This supports past studies on ethnic-relation studies where results showed that most young people possess moderate levels of social integration (Ramlee et al., 2009). In a Malaysian context, it is easy to recognise the polarization among ethnicity as most Chinese speaks Mandarin whereas Indian speaks Tamil. English was rarely used in communication. They seemed to be more comfortable to interact with peers from same ethnicity. Without specific strategies to integrate these groups of pupils will lead to polarization at a larger scales. One school principal expresses her frustration when talking about social integration in school.

We have organised many activities to integrate pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. The Malaysian government has allocated a huge budget for those activities. What else can we do? I am hoping that pupils are willing to assimilate and interact with other ethnic groups.

(Principal School B, Malay, female, 52 years old)

Therefore, continuous integration programmes is vital. The emergence of ethnic polarization at a school level is alarming as it may contribute to prejudice, negative perceptions towards others and a formation of radicalism. Past study revealed that ethnic polarization is dangerous in multi-ethnic societies (Esteban & Ray, 2011). Thus, concerns might be true as data from this shows that several ethnic-conflict incidents occurred in the schools studied. For instance, the data from School A revealed that negative perception and prejudice towards other ethnic groups has led to physical fighting between pupils from different ethnic group. One teacher described a case where a pupil was bullied by a pupil from different ethnicity.

Last year, a boy was slapped by a pupil from different ethnicity. I am not sure why it has happened but as I am pretty sure that it has a link with prejudice between them.

(Class Teacher School A-1, Malay, female, 43 years old)

In another occasion, a boy was assaulted by a group of boys from different ethnicity.

A group of pupils just went and opened up the boy's (different ethnicity) bag and threw away a bottle and everything from the bag. They accused the boy has stolen something. Investigation showed that they didn't know who really did it. This is dangerous as it may lead to racial issues.

(Discipline Teacher School A, Indian, male, 50 years old)

The comments above show that social integration in schools requires specific plans and strategies as pupils seemed to have negative perception towards other ethnicity. Communication with pupils who have limited Malay and English and the lack of knowledge on pupils' cultural background pose a challenge to school professionals to interact with pupils. As most professionals were unable to converse in Mandarin and Tamil, a Chinese and Indian professional were appointed in both schools. A counsellor from School B (Malay, male, 38 years old) stated that the appointment of professionals from different ethnicity is useful as pupils who have limited Malay and English can share their problems with those professionals. This informs that the importance of culturally-responsive strategies (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke & Curran, 2004) for promoting better inter-ethnic interactions, not only in a classroom context but also in a whole-school context. Roger (2007) suggested the whole-school approach as a suitable model for promoting positive learning environment. In multi-ethnic schools, ethnic toleration in socio-interaction is the core element for enhancing positive learning environment. Past studies suggested that promoting positive learning requires collaborative effort from school communities, parent-teacher partnership and collaboration with out-of-school agencies such as government agencies, non-school agencies and non-governmental organisations (Awang, 2012). It is difficult to create conducive schools environment in a problematic community.

Macro-system layer

Emerging theme 2: transition and communication

In the *macro-system layer*, data shows that the transition and communication are two main challenges faced by professionals. This is due to the various school types in Malaysia. The existence of Chinese and Tamil primary vernacular schools in Malaysian educational system poses a big challenge to most professionals in national secondary schools. Data from this study shows that pupils from primary vernacular schools have limitation to converse in Malay language. It should be noted that national secondary schools use Malay language as official medium of instructions which may have posed a challenge to Chinese pupils who often use Mandarin. Without sufficient Malay communication skills, transition from primary to secondary schools becomes a big issue. Findings showed that most Chinese pupils from School A and B were attended vernacular Chinese primary schools. They have lack opportunities to interact with Malay and Indian. As a result, they have difficulties to adapt with the national secondary environment. They have a lack of confidence to interact with other ethnicity. Some professionals from both schools (n=4) reported that pupils from vernacular primary schools unable to converse in Malay language and English fluently. It poses a problem to the school management to communicate with pupils. This informs the importance of transition planning and management involving primary and secondary school management team, parents and local agencies. Past study identifies important elements that make a successful primary-secondary transition (Evangelou, et al., 2008, p.53-54) that are:

“... developing new friendships and improving self-esteem and confidence, settling so well in school life that parents have no concerns, showing an increasing interest in school and school work, getting used to their new routines and school organisation with great ease, and experiencing curriculum continuity”.

Although the schools management has organised many programmes to integrate multi-ethnic pupils, most of the programmes were more likely to be one-off programme instead holistic and long-term programmes. For instance, one school counsellor reported that the school invited external speakers for Chinese pupils who were found to have difficulty in speaking Malay language.

We often invited Chinese external speakers to explain the school rules, policies and our expectations towards their behaviour in schools.

(Counsellor School B, Malay, male, 38 years old)

However, it is still unknown to extent the pupils have benefited from the programme as there are no follow-up studies to seriously look at the effectiveness of such programmes. Therefore, action research on this subject is needed.

As mention earlier, pupils from vernacular primary schools have problems to interact with other ethnic groups due to the lack experience in interacting with diverse ethnic pupils. This situation was found to be an influencing factor to the failure in the Malay language subject. It was reported that:

“... more than 30% of the pupils from vernacular schools fail to obtain minimum level of proficiency in Malay language after six years of primary education. This is a very serious problem. When these pupils go over to secondary schools, the medium of instruction is in Malay language”.

(Jayasooria, 2012, p. 11)

This situation informs the importance of having strategic planning to overcome issues pertaining to primary-secondary school transition as well supportive mechanism to help those pupils (adaptation process). To support the adaptation process, pupils with language difficulties from vernacular schools have to follow a one year curriculum known as *transition class* before entering the national secondary system. In other words, they have to attend secondary education for six years instead of five. This means that they will be of a different age group and at this age, even a year can make a huge difference to child's developmental stage and expected behaviour. Past study on this subject revealed that pupils from transition classes would only be gathering with Malay pupils if they gained confidence in speaking Malay language (Jayasooria, 2012). The national statistics showed that as of January 2010, 6% (N=29,978) of 515,457 pupils aged 13 years have to follow the transition class curriculum. Worryingly, teachers in charge of this group have not been properly trained in transition. This suggests need for teacher retraining, special modules for transition in teacher training, and rethinking of the implications of dualism towards nation building. Although the current study did not investigate the impact of dualism in the Malaysian schooling system, it might be fair to say that the system seems unhelpful for both pupils and professionals. Further, it seems to create barriers to the establishment of a united Malaysia, known in Malay as *Bangsa Malaysia* (Mahathir, 1991). This suggests that the issue of transition from vernacular primary school to national secondary school should be discussed at a higher level. Whilst Dunlop (2007) emphasized the importance of transition capital for early childhood transitions, findings from the current study highlights the significance of primary-secondary transitions among multi-ethnic pupils. Further study on transition in Malaysia is needed.

IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTIONS

The current study suggests that challenges faced by school professionals for promoting social cohesion exist in the *micro-system* layer and also at a larger layer i.e. *macro-system*. This informs that promoting social cohesion in a school context might be not effective without strategic partnership and community involvement. Primary-secondary school transition for instance will not be successful without mutual co-operation between primary and secondary schools. Pupils with limitation of national language (mostly from vernacular schools) are found to be naturally segregated from the majority of pupils in secondary schools. They also have limitation of experience to interact with pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Although a *transition class* helps those pupils to adapt with the new environment, it has contributed to a unique school environment. Firstly, it will be a class from different age groups. Secondly, it creates labelling phenomenon among pupils. Those who are in transition class are labelled as a weak group of

pupils or poor achievers. These are directly affecting pupils' psychological well-being. Therefore, it is clear from this study that a vernacular school system has a negative impact on social cohesion process. How to encourage social cohesion if the educational system still exists?

The current study also highlights issues of polarization in school. Many pupils in this study are found to be more likely to gather with peers from the same ethnicity. Therefore, this is to suggest the policy maker to relook at the current school curriculum as it seems that is unable to promote social cohesiveness among multi-ethnic pupils. Introduction of various native languages in school is helpful but the extent to which it contributes to pupils' social well-being is still unclear. It is also still unclear to what extent learning other ethnicity language is taking account for academic grades. This study suggests that the concept of *cohesion in diversity* seems to be more suitable concept instead of *unity in diversity* in describing ethnic relation in Malaysia. This is due data from this study shows that participants gained social cohesion experience rather than unity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the actual unity is still remaining as a deep dreams among Malaysian.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the current study reveals that socio-interaction among pupils pose a challenge to teachers in promoting social cohesion. Transition and adaptation we found to be major factors in promoting social cohesion. As the current study found that are many programmes to integrate multi-ethnic pupils at a school level, specific programme at various levels are supposed to be designed and implemented. In addition, social cohesion required a full commitment from various agencies, financial allocation budget for promoting social cohesion is supposed to be well planned and managed.

REFERENCES

- Awang, M.M. (2012). An exploration of strategies used by Malaysian secondary school teachers: Professionals' and pupils' perspectives. PhD thesis. University of Dundee, United Kingdom.
- Bollen, KA & Hoyle RH. (1990). Perceived cohesion: a conceptual and empirical examination. *Social Forces*, 69, 479-504.
- Economic Planning Unit. (2010). Population by sex, ethnic group and age, Malaysia 2010. Accessed date: 22 March 2013. Resource document: http://www.epu.gov.my/html/themes/epu/images/common/pdf/eco_stat/pdf/1.2.5.pdf
- Esteban, J. & Ray, D. (2011). A model of ethnic conflict. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 9(3), 496-521.
- Evangelou, M, Taggart, B., Sylva, T., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P. Siraj-Blatchford, I. (2008). What makes a successful transition from primary to secondary school? In the *Report of Effective Pre-school, Primary and Secondary Education 3-14 Project (EPPSE 3-14)*. University of Oxford, Institute of Education, University of London.
- Jayasooria, D. (2012). *Vernacular schools in Malaysia: A heritage to be celebrated or a hindrance to nation building?* Kuala Lumpur: Centre for Public Policies Studies.
- Landis, D. & Albert, R.D. (2012). *Handbook of ethnic conflict – international perspectives*. United States: Springer.
- Leahy, A. (1998). Immigrants in Germany: A welcomed threat – lessons for Ireland?
- Lentin, R. (1998). The expanding nation: Towards a multi-ethnic Ireland. Paper presented in a conference in *Trinity College Dublin, 22-24th September 1998*. pp. 26-30.
- Mansor, M.N. (2012). *Social composition and thinning of ethnic boundaries*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Milner, A. (2011). *Malaysian monarchy and the bonding of the Nation*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Muijs, D., et.al. (2007). *Leading schools to promote social inclusion: A study of practice*. Nottingham: National College for School Leadership.
- Parker, P. D., & Martin, A. J. (2009). Coping and buoyancy in the workplace: Understanding their effects on teachers' work-related well-being and engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25, 68-75.
- Peschar, J. L. (2005). Over samenhang gesproken. Kanttekeningen bij onderzoek naar ongelijkheid en sociale cohesie in de onderwijssociologie [Speaking of cohesion. Comments on research into inequality and social cohesion in educational sociology]. Groningen, The Netherlands: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, Faculteit der Gedrags- en Maatschappijwetenschappen.
- Ramlee, M., Norzaini, A., Faridah, K., Ahmad A.R., & Maimun, A. L. (2009). Social integration among multi-

- ethnic students at selected Malaysian universities in Peninsular Malaysia: a survey of campus climate. *Asean Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 1 (1), 35-44.
- Roger, B. (2007). *Behaviour management – A whole-school approach*. London: SAGE Publication.
- Rohaty Mohd Mazjub. (2009). Understanding learner diversity. In Ramlee Mustapha, Norzaini Azman & Abdul Razak Ahmad (Eds). *Education for diverse learners*. Universiti Putra Malaysia Press. Serdang. pp.3-16.
- Saravia-Shore, Marietta. (2008). Diverse teaching strategies for diverse learners. In Cole, Robert. W (Ed). *Educating Everybody's Children: Diverse Teaching Strategies for Diverse Learners*, 2nd Edition.
- Shamsul, A.B. (2012). Unity in diversity-unity in Malaysia as a work in progress. *Eminent Professor Leadership Lecture Series*. Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Tapola, A., & Niemivirta, N. (2008). The role of achievement goal orientations in students' perceptions of and preferences for classroom environment. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 78, 291-312.
- Tong, C.K. (2011). *Identity and ethnic relations in Southeast Asia - racialising Chinese*. Netherlands: Springer.
- Weinstein, C.S., Tomlinson-Clarke, C. & Curran, M. (2004). Toward a conception of responsive classroom management. *Journal of Teacher Education*. 55(25), 25-38
- Zeichner, K. M. (1992). *Educating teachers for cultural diversity*. East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning.