



**RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS ACCEPTANCE AMONG STUDENTS OF
HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS IN SABAH: A CASE STUDY
AT UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH AND MASTERSKILL
COLLEGE**

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Declaration

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

According to the history of Malaysia, Malaysia was formed on 16 September 1963 when Singapore, Sabah (North Borneo) and Sarawak agreed to join Federation of Malaya to become one country. However, on 1965 Singapore left the Federation and became an independent state. Malaysia's population comprises of many ethnic groups such as Malays, Chinese, Indians and Bumiputra and therefore it makes Malaysia become a multi-racial country living together in the same place. In Malaysia, Malays is the major ethnic group followed by Bumiputra Sabah and Sarawak, Chinese and Indians. Even though, there are many ethnic groups live in Malaysia, they are still live in harmony without any ethnic disputes since the tragedy of May 13, 1969. Basically, in Peninsular Malaysia Malays, Chinese and Indians are the largest ethnic groups while in Sabah and Sarawak there are many ethnic groups known as indigenous peoples such as Dusun, Kadazan, Bajau, Murut, Rungus, Sungai, Brunei, Iban, Kayan, Kenyah and others.

In term of religion, Islam is the largest and official religion in Peninsular Malaysia and for the country as a whole. All Malays are considered as Muslim as defined in Article 160 of the constitution of Malaysia. However, in Sabah and Sarawak is different where peoples have the right and freedom to choose whatever religion that they want to follow such as Buddhist, Christian and Hindus.

The issue of racial polarization among races and religions is not a new issue in Malaysia but it was happen since before the independent of Malaya and Malaysia. The most common problem among multi-racial society in Malaysia is the