



A STUDY OF PERCEPTION OF RACIAL
TOLERANCE IN KUALA PENYU

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Concern about multiracial country as Malaysia, a lot of issues arises regarding to this matter. Inter-marriages is one of the issues that always been a problem by spouse with different races or ethnic. The background of Malaysia's multiracial was shown from the stone age where the arrival of immigrants in Borneo and Peninsular Malaysia. "[M]alayness, is being a *bumiputera* in Malaysia. The constitution specifies that Malay habitually speaks Malay, is a Muslim, and practices the Malay culture. Thus, two features of being Malay are cultural. Ethnicity is the key to any discussion of identity in Malaysia. Malays are the product of two waves of migration from Yunnan in China. Stone Age migrants left traces of their culture in Peninsular Malaya and crossed the then land bridge to Borneo. Tribal elements continue to exist in the jungles and mountains of the peninsula, and their descendants were once known collectively as the 'Wild Men of Borneo' they are known as the Kadazan, the Dusun in Borneo and are *bumiputera* also." (Ronald D. Palme, 2007)¹. Thus Malaysia being a multiracial country with different ethnic and culture living together using one rule that have been implemented by Malaysian government since its formation.

¹ The author, Ronald D. Palmer a retired career diplomat, served as U. S. ambassador successively to Togo, Malaysia, and Mauritius during his thirty-two year Foreign Service career. A member of the American Diplomacy Publishers board of directors, he is now professor emeritus at The George Washington University in Washington, D. C.

“[I]n a plural society the basic problem of political is the integration of society.” (J. S. Fumivall, 1944)

However in Sabah, the existence of multiracial citizen since the formation of Malaysia has provided a strategic opportunity for racial tolerance and understanding become higher. “[S]abahan have a great advantage in understanding others culture because of the living style and harmonious economic activities practiced by them from the early age of its existence.” (Pamoni, 2009).

Intermarriages among Sabahan multiethnic also being practiced since it was formed and that was a reason for high tolerances among the races in this state. It was supported by a research done by Juliet Edmond; “[t]he assimilation process regarding to the inter-marriages between two ethnic is the crucial things. The effect of inter-marriages occurs not because of how frequent it is occurring but it is depend on the assimilation of others races into others as well.” (Juliet Edmonds, 1968). In order to gain more knowledge to know the process of racial tolerance assimilate into this country especially in Sabah, this research will reveal the respondents perceptions towards the racial tolerance practiced in Sabah through the questionnaires.

Kuala Penyu is located on the Klias Peninsula, which was originally covered with mangrove swamp forests. It has a 22,000 population mainly of indigenous people like Dusun Tatana, Bisaya, Kadayan and Bajau and Chinese and Bruneians.