



Social Contract: Understanding among Youth in Malaysia

Rusnisuri Abdul Rashid, Kamarudin Ngah & Amirulikhshan Zolkafli*

College of Law, Government and International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0324.0617>

ABSTRACT

After the era of the new Malaysian government (after GE 14), the pattern of race relations and interactions has begun to change. This is because various sensitive issues are often debated in the fight for equality of rights without taking into account the initial agreement in the social contract when the country was established and at the same time ignoring provisions such as those found in the Federal Constitution. Accordingly, this study aims to identify the appreciation of the social contract through the knowledge and understanding of the youth in Malaysia. By using a quantitative approach, a total of 2,366 questionnaires were successfully collected. Mean analysis shows that youth in Malaysia have a moderate level of knowledge and understanding regarding social contracts. This finding is supported by correlation analysis, where there demographic characteristics that influence knowledge and six demographic characteristics that influence youth's understanding of social contracts. Therefore, the importance of this study is to be able to see more comprehensively the factors that still contribute to conflict in Malaysia, especially those involving sensitive issues such as those found in social contracts. In addition, this study can also provide guidance to stakeholders, especially the Malaysian government in defending the social contract that is the position of the Islamic religion, Malay as the official language, the position and privileged rights of Malays and Bumiputeras and the sovereignty of Malay kings.

Keywords: social contract, youth, Islamic religion, Malay language, Bumiputera position, royal institution

1. Introduction

One of the unique things in Malaysia is the distribution of its population which consists of a variety of ethnicities who live a peaceful and peaceful life without serious conflicts. If it happens, it is not to the extent that it can destroy the country. However, this conflict cannot be avoided but can be minimized and managed towards a more positive conflict, which is a conflict that can produce a decision and joint action in achieving a better life and is not a conflict that can lead to fights, violence and wars that can be destructive, mutual harmony between races (Abd. Manaf, 2019).

Accordingly, the social contract born from the agreement between the races through consensus was created to ensure that the community can live a life in a state of prosperity, peace and harmony. However, now the social contract is increasingly being forgotten by both non-Malays and a few Malays themselves. As a result, the position of the Malays in the social, economic, political, educational, cultural and other fields is slowly being eroded.

However, after the era of the new Malaysian government (after GE 14), the pattern of race relations and interactions has begun to change. This is because various sensitive issues are often debated in the fight for equality of rights without taking into account the initial agreement in the social contract when the country was established and at the same time ignoring the provisions provided in the Federal Constitution such as Malay privileges, royal institutions and the like. In addition, there are also disputes over the elements of the social contract as if challenging the sovereignty of the National Constitution (Mohd Anuar Ramli et.al, 2018).

Therefore, this study was carried out, in order to identify the factors that still contribute to issues related to social contracts that will indeed have a negative impact on Malaysia if the issues that arise are not effectively overcome. Next, this study is able to give a clearer and more comprehensive picture to policy makers and stakeholders of the important aspects that need to be prioritized in defending the social contract.

2. Literature Review

The original term social contract was presented by a Greek philosopher, Plato, in his writings entitled *The Republic*. However, he did not give a detailed explanation about it. After that, other philosophers appeared who explained the concept of social contract in more detail in the field of Western political science, the age of enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, namely Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*), John Locke (*Two Treatises of Government*), Jean Jacques Rousseau (*Du Contrat Social*) and others. Rousseau's work in *Du Contrat Social* is said to be very influential in triggering the French Revolution of 1789 at that time. These philosophers agree on the existence of a social contract between the government and the people. The idea of a social contract is based on the premise that power rests with the people (Daya, 2016). Two important issues discussed in this Social Contract theory are:

- a) A good and effective institution to look after the interests of the people is the 'State' where each individual surrenders himself and his power to the 'general will'.
- b) The country was created as a result of an 'agreement'.

According to Azimon and Sakinah (2019), the word theory comes from the German word *theoria* which means to see, speculate and look down. It is a set of propositions that describe the analysis of principles or evidence in a matter and the proposition is known as a theory. Based on theory, the formation of an agreement requires a description in the form of translation (interpretive). For example, Smith in the interpretive theory is used to increase the knowledge and understanding related to the rules of the agreement that emphasizes the meaning and importance based on the description of all its features and elements. The basic theory of the contract describes the theories that form the basis of the meaning and purpose of the agreement in the life of society, especially humans. While the theory of contract formation is a theory that is specific to the formation of an agreement that includes philosophical principles that have been founded before the formation of an agreement bond between the two parties.

Social contract theory or also known as social contract theory was introduced by three political scholars namely Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. This theory makes the assumption that the existence of the country is due to the awareness of the people who live in less than perfect conditions and are prosperous in natural conditions. Therefore, people began to realize these shortcomings and agreed to make an agreement to create a country so that their lives would be more orderly and perfect. Based on this theory, before the existence of a human nation there was no organization or organization that could regulate the life of the community. Human history has been divided into two phases, namely the state of nature or state of nature, which means that humans are assumed not to have any government or law to manage community life. Therefore, there is no authority to run the government and administration, approve and enforce laws in their society. While the second phase, begins when society begins to realize the imperfection of life without the existence of a country. Thus, the community will strive to manage their lives in a more orderly and perfect manner.

According to Healey (2019), the concept of social contract theory explains that initially humans live in a state of nature, i.e. they do not have governments and laws to regulate them. Thus, in order to overcome the problem of oppression and hardship in the community, they have agreed to make two agreements, the *Pactum Unionis* (unity agreement) and the *Pactum Subjectionis* (surrender agreement). The first agreement (*Pactum Unionis*) means that people seek protection for their lives and property which ultimately forms a society that respects each other and lives in peace and harmony. The second agreement, the *Pactum Subjectionis*, explains that the community unites and swears to obey the appointed authority and surrender all or part of their freedom rights to that party.

This social contract theory is the most relevant and related theory in explaining the existence of a country. This is because, a country obtains its political position and sovereignty through a consensus agreement between the people and those who are given authority to govern the country. The term consensus is an agreement to hand over some rights owned by a group of people such as a community of a race to be managed by a party that is given authority so that the establishment of a country can be carried out in an orderly manner. Thus, a country is formed through the consent of the people in handing over their power to be administered by the authorized party so that the administration can be carried out better. Based on John Locke, a country was created to be able to preserve, protect and safeguard the property rights of every community in the country.

The social contract theory is a theory about the process of forming a country, where the community makes a contract between themselves to establish a country so that the power is on the part of the community. This social contract theory contains the liberal thinking of the Enlightenment. There are three figures who formulated this social contract theory namely Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau. These three figures have different backgrounds and the theories produced by them about the social contract are also different.

2.1 Contract Sosial Theory

Thomas Hobbes Social Contract

The thought of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) about the social contract is based on the assumption that the human "state of nature" is a conflict full of competition, power and war. Thomas Hobbes considered that humans have the same nature where they both have desires or interests and dislikes for something. The interests and dislikes of these people are often conflicting so that some parties dominate the other parties. This can cause a fight to break out and the situation becomes insecure. Therefore, in order to create a peaceful situation, people need to submit their trust to an institution that can guarantee their security, stability and well-being through agreement. This agreement refers to the social contract. The institution that holds the sovereignty guarantees the rights of the community, accountability to the community and the community trusts the institution against the social contract.

John Locke Social Contract

John Locke's thinking is different from Hobbes's where he thinks that humans have similarities but humans can distinguish between right and wrong and not interfere with other people's lives. Humans also do not have enough power to judge each other and the importance of social contracts in guaranteeing their peace. According to John Locke, there are three parties in a social contract, namely "the trustor", "the trustee" and "the beneficiary". Therefore, "the trustee" is the government or holder of power where he is responsible to "the beneficiary" with limited powers. "The beneficiary" and "the trustor" are the community. Because in Locke's social contract, a good country is one that can guarantee the basic rights of the people themselves and the formation of a contract based on the voice of the majority as well as guaranteeing the protection of the rights of citizens from the government of the country.

Locke's concept of the social contract is much more interesting than Hobbes. Not only did Locke describe the nature and causes of the social contract, but he rationalized his thinking better. Locke's concept of proper government and the relationship between the government and the people is also more

consistent with social contract theory than Hobbes. Although Hobbes's monarchy would function with the full goodness and trustworthiness of the king, Locke allows for human weakness in reality, therefore the proposal for social government is a more realistic doctrine. Locke's view of the state of nature is not as depressing as Hobbes's. It's pretty good and fun, but the property isn't safe. He considered "State of Nature" as "Golden Age".

The term social contract and discussions about it have actually been discussed since the 18th century by a Western philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in his book entitled *The Social Contract* (1762). Rousseau states that man is born free. But everywhere they are shackled by various social rules created by a society with a specific purpose, desire, benefit or interest. Jean Jacques Rousseau who gave a new interpretation to the Social Contract theory in his works "*The Social Contract*" and "*Emile*".

According to him, the social contract is not a historical fact but the formation of hypothetical reasons. According to Rousseau, the original freedom, happiness, equality and freedom that existed in primitive society before the social contract disappeared in modern civilization. Through the Social Contract, a new form of social organization, the state is formed to guarantee and guarantee rights, freedoms and equality. The content of Rousseau's theory of General Will is that the state and laws are the result of the general will of the people. The state and laws are made by him and if the government and laws do not obey the general will, they will be thrown out. Although the individual shares with his natural rights, in return he gets civil liberties such as freedom of speech, equality, assembly and others. Therefore, Rousseau favors the sovereignty of the people. The theory of natural law is limited to individual freedom and liberty. For him, the state, law, sovereignty, general will, etc. are interchangeable terms. Rousseau's theory inspired the French and American revolutions and gave impetus to nationalism.

Jean Jacques Rousseau believed that humans have the nature of mutual cooperation and no fighting with each other. This nature of mutual cooperation needs to exist in an organization and there will be someone who dominates and has special rights so that a single power can potentially be formed. In order to avoid the occurrence of this single power, it is necessary to form a social contract in society. According to him, society has free will and general will. This free will presents the personal wishes of the community and the general will presents the best results obtained by the community. He assessed that this general will is the duty of the legislature to determine the best decision for the community. Therefore, it can be concluded that the social contract is done to guarantee the safety and well-being of the community due to which the community is worried about the imbalance and clash of human interests if it cannot be overcome.

Comparison of Social Contract Theory of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau

- a) Hobbes asserts that without submitting to the general authority of their rights and liberties, men must necessarily go to war. Locke and Rousseau, on the other hand, expressed the view that government exists to preserve and protect the natural rights of its citizens. When the government fails in that task, the people have the right and sometimes the obligation to withdraw their support and even to rebel.
- b) Hobbes' view is that whatever the government does is just. All societies are a direct creation of the state and reflect the will of the government. According to Locke, the important role of the state is only to ensure that justice is seen. While Rousseau's view is that the state must in all circumstances ensure the freedom and liberty of the individual.
- c) Hobbes Social Contract theory supports absolute sovereignty without giving any value to the individual, while Locke and Rousseau support the individual rather than the state or government.
- d) For Hobbes, sovereignty and government are identical but Rousseau makes a distinction between the two. He rejected the representative form of government. But, Locke makes no such distinction.
- e) Rousseau's view of sovereignty is a compromise between
- f) Locke's constitutionalism and Hobbes' absolutism.

3. Methodology

Research design

Research design is a method of planning to collect and use the data obtained to enable the information to be collected. The design of the study and the type of study sample as well as the study method are dependent on the purpose of the study carried out in the process of analyzing the data. Research methods and procedures are very important in ensuring that the necessary information is obtained correctly and accurately. Based on a study by Aggarwal and Ranganathan (2019), descriptive describes the phenomenon by analyzing descriptive data obtained with questionnaires. Descriptive survey research is a study of what is happening. This situation involves collecting data, making interpretations, looking at comparisons and formulating generalizations that is making general conclusions (Blom, 2021; Loab, 2017).

Quantitative Data Analysis

Data analysis is defined as the ability to process data to become a form of information that is easy to understand and useful to answer all questions or problems related to research studies. The purpose of analysis is to make it easier for researchers and others to understand the data that has been collected and presented in a particular analysis. Quantitative analysis in a study can be seen from two angles of approach, namely descriptive quantitative analysis and inferential quantitative analysis. Descriptive statistics are used to explain phenomena related to a study population or to make an estimate of a population that has certain characteristics (Harlem, 2020; Turner & Houle, 2019).

Presentation of descriptive data is usually in the form of graphs, charts, diagrams, averages, means and modes or frequency distributions. While inferential statistics are used to make inferences or evaluations about a population based on a sample. This analysis was produced based on the principles of sampling which means that the sample can be confidently generalized to the research being studied. Statistics is a mathematical technique to process, organize, analyze and conclude quantitative data. The data obtained will be collected and compiled to create a conclusion. Statistics in research means research should be done systematically, empirically and scientifically. Every data, information and fact should be true, reliable and valid to get an accurate decision (Loab, 2017).

Population and Sample

A sample is a portion of a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of the study. The selected sample is not random and is chosen in a systematic way randomly so that chance or probability operations can be used (Meerangani et al, 2019). Therefore, the population for this study is youth from various races. According to the Youth Organization and Youth Development Act (Act 668), the youth age limit has been defined as between 15 and 40 years. In 2019 the Dewan Rakyat passed the Youth Organizations (Amendment) Act 2019 (Act 668) which, among other things, lowered the youth age limit from 40 to 30 years.

However, in this study the researchers still use the definition of youth age between 15 to 40 years. Based on the youth population statistics in Malaysia for the year 2015 to 2021, the total number of youth aged 15 to 40 throughout the state is 14,875,600 people (Malaysian Youth Development Research Institute). In order to ensure an equal opportunity for the respondents, this study used the determination of the sample size as suggested by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) which is by using a simple random sampling method. Thus, the number suggested by Krejcie and Morgan in this study is 387.

Instrument

In this study, a questionnaire was used as a research instrument. The summary of the questionnaire is as in Table 1. Where the questionnaire for this study consists of seven parts, namely demographic information, the Federal Constitution, the position of Islam, the position of the Malay language, the privileges of Malays and Bumiputeras, Royal Institutions and appreciation of the social contract.

Table 1

Brief Structure of the Questionnaire

Part	Construct
Part A	Demographic information
Part B	Federal Constitution
Part C	Islamic
Part D	Bahasa Melayu
Part E	Orang Melayu and Bumiputera
Part F	Royal Institution

Data Analysis Methods

In order to achieve each objective that has been set, this study focuses on three methods of data analysis, namely mean analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis.

Mean Analysis

The first objective of this study is to analyze the level of knowledge and understanding of the youth in Malaysia towards social contracts. Therefore, to achieve the objective, mean analysis is used.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis shows the relationship between two variables. There are two types of correlation that exist between two variables, namely positive correlation and negative correlation. For this study, the correlation analysis is to see the relationship that exists between the relationship between the knowledge and understanding of the youth about the social contract with demographic characteristics.

The formula for obtaining the r-Pearson Correlation Coefficient is as follows:

$$r_{xy} = \frac{\sum(x-X)(Y-\bar{Y})}{(N-1)s_x s_y} \quad (1)$$

or

$$r_{xy} = \frac{\sum XY}{\sqrt{(\sum X^2)(\sum Y^2)}} \quad (2)$$

where:

r_{xy} = correlation coefficient between variable X and Y

N = sample size

X = the score value for the X variable

Y = the score value for the Y variable

s_x, s_y = standard deviation for X and Y

The correlation coefficient (r) is to show the degree of relationship between two variables. Briefly, r values are categorized as in Table 2.

Table 2

Category Correlation Coefficient (r)

R Value	Correlation
1.0	Perfect
0.80 – 0.90	Very Strong
0.60 – 0.79	Strong
0.40 – 0.59	Moderate
0.20 – 0.39	Weak
0.01 – 0.19	Very Weak
0.0	No Correlation

4. Result and Discussion

Demographics

According to Fulk (2023), descriptive analysis is the search for facts with accurate interpretation. Descriptive research can identify problems in society as well as procedures that occur in society as well as certain circumstances, including relationships, activities, attitudes, views, as well as processes that are ongoing due to the influence of a phenomenon. According to Kaliyadan and Kulkarni (2019) it is a form of research to describe the existing phenomena that are characteristics, changes, relationships, similarities and differences between phenomena.

This section can explain the descriptive information about the variables used from the fund survey form starting with the profile information of the fund respondents followed by information for each variable used (Hoeks, 2018). This preliminary analysis discussion is focused on the frequency distribution of percentage funds for each variable (Seltman, 2012). Demographic analysis was done to identify the background and profile of the respondents involved in this study. This analysis provides an overview of the background and the form of answers submitted by youth throughout Malaysia who were involved in this study. Descriptive analysis consists of gender, age, race, other race, religion, other religion, state, occupation, level of education, stream of primary school education, stream of secondary school education and place of residence of respondents.

Table 3 shows the results of the descriptive analysis for gender. The distribution of respondents is almost the same, namely 42.4 percent or 979 male respondents and 58.6 percent or 1,387 female respondents.

Table 3

Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	979	41.4
Female	1,387	58.6
Total	2,366	100.0

Table 4 shows the distribution of the age of the respondents. The majority of respondents are in the age category of 21 to 25 years which is 68.7 percent or 1,626 respondents. Followed by respondents who are in the age category of 15 to 20 years which is 16.8 percent or 398 people. For the age categories

of 26 to 30 years, 31 to 35 years and 36 to 40 years, the frequency distribution is almost the same which is 8.4 percent (198 respondents), 2.9 percent (69 respondents) and 3.2 percent (75 respondents) respectively.

Table 4

Age

Kategori	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15 – 20 years old	398	16.8
21 – 25 years old	1,626	68.7
26 – 30 years old	198	8.4
31 – 35 years old	69	2.9
36 – 40 years old	75	3.2
Total	2,366	100.0

Regarding the race of the respondents, Table 5 shows that the majority of respondents are from Malay youth, which is 48.4 percent (1,145 respondents). Followed by Chinese respondents which is 24.6 percent (583 respondents). Indian respondents were 12.0 percent or 284 respondents. Bumiputera Sabah / Sarawak and non-Muslim Bumiputera Sabah / Sarawak are 6.1 percent (284 respondents) and 5.7 percent (284 respondents). While other races are as much as 3.2 percent or 75 respondents.

Table 5

Race

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Melayu	1,145	48.4
Cina	583	24.6
India	284	12.0
Bumiputera Sabah/Sarawak	144	6.1
Bumiputera non Islam Sabah/ Sarawak	135	5.7
Others	75	3.2
Total	2,366	100.0

For this study, other races as found in Table 6 consist of Bajau (0.1%; 2 respondents), Banjar (0.1%; 2 respondents), Bugis (0.1%; 2 respondents), Melanau (0.6%; 14 respondents), Orang Asli (1.1%; 25 respondents), Peninsular Orang Asli (0.3%; 8 respondents), Punjabi (0.6%; 15 respondents), Siamese (0.2%; 5 respondents) and Sino-native (0.1%; 2 respondents).

Table 6

Other Race

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bajau	2	0.1
Banjar	2	0.1
Bugis	2	0.1
Melanau	14	0.6
Orang Asli	25	1.1
Orang Asli Semenanjung	8	0.3
Punjabi	15	0.6
Siam	5	0.2
Sino-native	2	0.1
Total	75	100.0

Next, Table 7 shows the distribution of respondents' religion. The majority of respondents are Muslim, which is 55.4 percent or 1,311 respondents. Followed by Buddhist respondents which is 21.2 percent or 501 respondents. For Hindu and Christian respondents, the distribution is almost the same, ie 11.9 percent (281 respondents) and 10.1 percent (240 respondents) respectively. The distribution for religion also shows that there are respondents who do not follow any religion which is 0.8 percent or 18 respondents. The remaining 0.6 percent or 15 respondents are from other religions.

Table 7

Religion

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Islam	1,311	55.4
Buddha	501	21.2
Hindu	281	11.9
Kristian	240	10.1
No Religion	18	0.8
Sikh	15	0.6
Total	2,366	100.0

For respondent states, Table 8 shows the highest distribution is from Sarawak which is 13.7 percent or 323 respondents. Followed by Penang with 11.2 percent or 265 respondents. Other states recorded almost the same percentage, namely Perlis (4.9%; 116 respondents), Kedah (7.4%; 174 respondents), Perak (8.0%; 190 respondents), Selangor (7.6%; 179 respondents), Kuala Lumpur / Federal Territories (6.6%; 155 respondents), Kelantan (5.2%; 122 respondents), Terengganu (4.2%; 100 respondents), Negeri Sembilan (5.7%; 136 respondents), Melaka (4.6%; 110 respondents), Pahang, (4.9%; 116 respondents) Johor (8.2%; 193 respondents) and Sabah (7.9%; 187 respondents).

Table 8

State

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Perlis	116	4.9
Kedah	174	7.4
Pulau Pinang	265	11.2
Perak	190	8.0
Selangor	179	7.6
Kuala Lumpur/ Wilayah Persekutuan	155	6.6
Kelantan	122	5.2
Terengganu	100	4.2
Negeri Sembilan	136	5.7
Melaka	110	4.6
Pahang	116	4.9
Johor	193	8.2
Sabah	187	7.9
Sarawak	323	13.7
Total	2,366	100.0

Table 9 shows the distribution of respondents' jobs. The occupation of the respondents consisted of government employees, private employees, self-employed, students and unemployed. The majority of respondents are students, which is 81.5 percent or a total of 1,928 respondents. Followed by respondents who work in the private sector which is 9.2 percent or 218 respondents. The distribution of respondents who work in the government sector

is 4.6 percent or 108 respondents. For self-employed and unemployed respondents, the percentage distribution is almost the same, namely 1.9 percent (44 respondents) and 2.9 percent (68 respondents) respectively.

Table 9

Job

Job	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Government	108	4.6
Private	218	9.2
Self-employed	44	1.9
Student	1,928	81.5
No job	68	2.9
Total	2,366	100.0

The level of education of the respondents as found in Table 10 shows that the majority of respondents have a Bachelor's degree, which is 68.3 percent or 1,616 respondents. Followed by respondents who have a Malaysian Higher Education Certificate (STPM) or diploma which is 24.9 percent or 588 respondents. For respondents who have an educational level of Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or MCE, it is as much as 4.5 percent or 106 respondents. The remaining 2.3 percent are respondents with Master's and PhD degrees, which are 2.0 percent (48 respondents) and 0.3 percent (8 respondents) respectively.

Table 10

Education

Tahap Pendidikan	Frequency	Percentage (%)
MCE/ SPM	106	4.5
STPM/ Diploma	588	24.9
Degree	1,616	68.3
Master	48	2.0
PhD	8	0.3
Total	2,366	100.0

The flow of respondents' primary school education (Table 11) shows that the majority of respondents were educated at National Schools (SK) which is 70.1 percent or 1,658 respondents. The remaining 29.9 percent or 708 respondents are made up of respondents who were educated at National Type Schools (SJK).

Table 11

Primary School

Primary School	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sekolah Kebangsaan	1,658	70.1
Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan	708	29.9
Total	2,366	100.0

As with the findings for the primary school education stream, the secondary school education stream (Table 12) also shows that the average respondent has a secondary education background in SK which is 97.0 percent or 2,294 people. The remaining 3.0 percent or 72 respondents are respondents who received SJK education.

Table 12

Secondary School

Secondary School	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sekolah Kebangsaan	2,294	97.0
Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan	72	3.0
Total	2,366	100.0

The strata or areas where respondents live, as shown in Table 13, found that the majority of respondents live in urban areas, which is 53.2 percent or 1,259 respondents. Respondents who live outside the city are 40.3 percent or 954 respondents. While another 6.5 percent or 153 respondents live in the suburbs.

Table 13

Strata

Strata	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Urban	1,259	53.2
Rural	954	40.3
Suburbs	153	6.5
Total	2,366	100.0

The Level of Knowledge and Understanding of Youth in Malaysia Regarding Social Contracts

Understanding refers to knowledge in a person's thinking about something (Sulaiman, 2019). Understanding something is an important basis in improving one's knowledge. Individual understanding can be built through the information obtained, the quality of the information and the way the information is presented.

During Malaysia's 66 years of independence, there is no denying that there are still citizens who have a skewed view of the country's direction in the future. In one corner, there are citizens who see Malaysia as having the potential to become a 'Taliban'-style theocracy that denies religious rights and the freedom to practice a diversity of lifestyles and cultures.

At the same time, some citizens are traumatized that Malaysia will turn into a completely liberal and secular country through the erosion of religious values, cultural customs and national identity. Actually, if the citizens know this country, the two notions above are very contradictory and impossible to happen in Malaysia.

To discuss the findings related to the mean, the mean value category has been divided into three categories as shown in Table 14. Table 15 shows that there are three categories of mean levels, namely low (0.00 to 1.67), medium (1.68 to 3.33) and high (3.34 to 5.00).

Table 14

Category Mean Value

Category	Value
Low	0.00 until 1.67
Moderate	1.68 until 3.33
High	3.34 until 5.00

Based on Table 14, the mean value for the level of social contract knowledge among youth is at a moderate level which is 3.22. While the level of understanding of the social contract among the youth was also found to be at a moderate level of 2.76.

Table 15

Mean Value of Level of Knowledge and Understanding of Social Contracts among Youth

Indicator	Mean Value
Knowledge	3.22
Understanding	2.76

The social contract is an agreement reached before the country achieved independence among the Malay leaders. Chinese and Indian and the parties represented by them namely, United Malays National Organization (UMNO), Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). The social contract should also be considered a racial agreement, not just leaders or certain elite groups. The agreement received the support of the people as evidenced by the victory of the Alliance in the 1955 election. As such, the people need to really understand the historical fact that the social contract reached was actually through a process of consensus and deliberation. Through the understanding and consensus reached through the social contract, we have succeeded in forming the nation of Malaysia. Clearly here, the social contract is an important basis of unity and consensus among the multiracial population in our country.

Relationship between Knowledge and Understanding of Youth on Social Contract with Demographic Characteristics

Table 16 shows the relationship between youth's knowledge of social contracts and demographic characteristics. Demographic characteristics consist of gender, age, race, religion, state, occupation, education level, primary school education stream, secondary school education stream and strata. Findings show that eight demographic characteristics have a relationship with youth knowledge related to social contracts. The eight characteristics are gender, race, religion, state, occupation, level of education, stream of primary school education and strata. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 16

Analysis of the Relationship between Youth's Knowledge of Social Contracts and Demographic Characteristics

Indicator	Statistic
Gender	0.679***
Age	0.035
Race	0.054***
Religion	0.065***
State	0.064***
Job	0.540***
Education	0.609***
Primary	0.065***
Secondary	0.0380
Strata	0.059***

Note: *** significant at 1%

Table 17 shows the relationship between the youth's understanding of the social contract and demographic characteristics. Demographic characteristics consist of gender, age, race, religion, state, occupation, education level, primary school education stream, secondary school education stream and strata. The findings show that six demographic characteristics have a relationship with youth knowledge related to social contracts. The six characteristics are race, religion, state, level of education, secondary school education flow and strata. So, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 17

Analysis of the Relationship between Youth's Understanding of Social Contracts and Demographic Characteristics

Indicator	Statistic
Gender	0.010
Age	0.231
Race	0.653***

Religion	0.601***
State	0.770***
Job	-0.033
Education	0.706***
Primary	-0.029
Secondary	0.647***
Strata	0.544***

Note: *** significant at 1%

The average post-independence generation has not yet understood the social contract which is a mutual agreement made between Malays and non-Malays before independence. This agreement is to guarantee harmony and racial unity involving five main elements which were later included in the Federal Constitution of Malaya. These matters are Islam as the federal religion, the Malay language as the national language, Malay and bumiputera privileges, the position of the king's institutions and citizenship according to the principle of jus soli.

This statement is clearly proven through the findings from the mean analysis which shows that the level of knowledge and understanding of youth related to social contracts is at a moderate level. The demographic characteristics of youth that need attention are as found in Table 18.

Table 18

Demographic Characteristics That Influence Knowledge and Understanding of Social Contracts

Knowledge	Understanding
Gender	Race
Race	Religion
Religion	State
State	Education
Job	Secaondary
Education	Strata
Primary	
Strata	

5.0 CONCLUSION

Recently, issues related to social contracts continue to be raised and become a polemic among Malaysians of various races. The series of polemics, if not dealt with, can invite racial tension and threaten national security. Sources from the National Council of Professors stated that the concept of social contract refers to a mutual agreement reached among Malay, Chinese and Indian leaders in 1956.

The agreement and agreement took place when the Reid Commission was gathering the views of various parties living in the states of Malaya to enact the Federal Constitution to achieve independence in 1957. Our country's constitution is unique because it was produced through the struggle of the Malays to reject the Malayan Union and the people to demand independence.

The rejection of the Malayan Union gave birth to the 1948 Federation of Malaya Agreement and the struggle for independence resulted in the 1957 Independence Agreement. The social contract is not just a document about the rules and ways of operating a country. But more importantly, it is the basis of a social contract between various interconnected components. The social contract between the Malays as an indigenous race and other races, between the king and his people and the sovereign states and the Federation.

Through the social contract, all races are guaranteed reciprocal rights to their willingness to give up some of the other rights. The Malays get privileges, guarantees of the status of Islam, the Malay language, Malay reserve land and other rights. Other races are guaranteed the right to practice their own customs, languages and religions. In addition to their most important right, which is the right of citizenship to share life as citizens in this land of Malaya.

As has been discussed, Social Contract Theory is the theory used as a guide to this study. This theory is also used to form the objective of this study. Based on the findings, it clearly shows that in order to ensure that the youth understand the social contract and at the same time defend the social contract, all elements need to be considered by the stakeholders. The main elements that have been identified are the youth and the government. To face this

challenge, the media or media practitioners cannot do it alone. Collaboration with other agencies is necessary in delivering the best information for Malaysians.

Among the recommendations to defend the social contract are:

Renewing the social contract

Malaysia needs a new social contract that represents all of its people as inequality in the country is getting serious. The new social contract is to create equal opportunities for all citizens, provide increased mobility and incentives for investors to stay and invest in the country. For that purpose, the social contract acts bilaterally, where it is not only what the government gives to the people, but fairly the contribution of the people to make the system work well with fair participation.

In order to achieve a new social contract, significant resources need to be invested in developing quality human capital and facilitating significant economic opportunities, especially for women. Second-generation reforms to improve productivity and innovation-driven private sector growth are also needed in line with policies to promote talent and skills development. As for the public sector, the Malaysian public sector also needs to operate with considerable openness and transparency.

Empowering the social contract through learning

For this approach, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) and the Ministry of Higher Education (KPT) need to play a major role in ensuring that the 'social contract' reaches students. The MoE and MoE need to review the syllabus found in History, General Studies and Ethnic Relations courses at universities. Although this social contract has been taught at school through History, General Studies and Ethnic Relations courses at university, most students learn it just to get good grades, after completing the course they 'forget' everything.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the youth are so critical and are increasingly daring to talk about the social contract issue openly through the mass media, not to mention when this issue was triggered by politicians who have their own agenda a few years ago. The question that arises is, is it because of their ignorance of historical facts, ignorance of the content of the Constitution or the influence of globalization that globalizes the understanding of liberalism and equality? Thus, a student-centered teaching strategy is important so that they think critically, creatively and sincerely uphold the pure will of the country in order to create a harmonious country.

In general, the social contract has its own importance. In the context of a pluralistic society in Malaysia, social contracts are important to create a solid and strong society based on awareness of the importance of the values of mutual understanding, respect and tolerance. Therefore, the social contract is an internal spirit whose importance can not only be argued through legislation and scholarly discussion, but also historically.

Accordingly, Malaysians, especially the current generation, need to care about our country's history. History is a science discipline that plays an important role because through historical knowledge it allows us to know the background of a problem, action and issue accurately and correctly. Through history we will be able to know and understand the background of this country and always take lessons from events that have happened in our country. (Wan Liz, 2020). Unfortunately, the younger generation now including students in institutions of higher education who are the subject of the average study do not see history as a discipline of knowledge let alone to understand the issue of social contract.

References

- Abd. Manaf Hj Ahmad. (2019). *Kontrak sosial*. Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn Bhd.
- Aggarwal, R. & Ranganathan, P. (2019). Descriptive studies. *Perspect Clin Res*, 10(1), 34–36. doi: 10.4103/picr.PICR_154_18.
- Daya Negri Wijaya. (2016). Kontrak sosial menurut Thomas Hobbes dan John Locke. *Jurnal Sosiologi Pendidikan Humanis*, 1(2), 183-193. doi: 10.17977/um021v1i22016p183.
- Fulk, G. P. T. (2023). Descriptive statistics: An important first step. *Journal of Neurologic Physical Therapy*, 47(2), 63. doi: 10.1097/NPT.0000000000000434.
- Harlem, G. (2020). Descriptive analysis of social determinant factors in urban communities affected by COVID-19. *Journal of Public Health*, 42(3), 466–469. doi: 10.1093/pubmed/fdaa078.
- Healey, J. F. (2019). *Race, ethnicity, gender and class: The sociology of group conflict and change*. Newport: Christopher Newport University.
- Hoeks S, Kardys I, Lenzen M, van Domburg R & Boersma E. (2018). Tools and techniques – Statistics: Descriptive statistics. *Euro Intervention*, 10(1), 3.
- Ismail Sualman. (2019). Faham dan hayati kontrak sosial. Dicapai pada Mei 12, 2022 daripada <https://www.sinarharian.com.my/article/52989/faham-dan-hayati-kontrak-sosial>.
- Kaliyadan, F. & Kulkarni, V. (2019). Types of variables, descriptive statistics, and sample size. *Indian Dermatol Journal*, 10(1), 82–86. doi: 10.4103/idoj.IDOJ_468_18.
- Loab, S. (2017). *Descriptive analysis in education: A guide for researchers*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance.

Meerangani, K. A., Marinsah, S. A. Ahmad Termimi, M. A. Rosele, M. I. & Abdul Rahim, R. A. (2019). Hak asasi bukan Muslim di Malaysia: Analisis isu terpilih. *Islamic Jurisprudence in Contemporary Society*, 552-565.

Mohd Anuar Ramli, Muhammad Izzul Syahmi Zulkepli, Rahimin Affandi Abdul Rahim, Muhd Imran Abd Razak, Mohamad Naqib Hamdan & Syamsul Azizul Marinsah. (2018). *Isu-isu sensitif dalam masyarakat majmuk di Malaysia pasca Pilihanraya Umum (PRU14): Aplikasi pendekatan kesederhanaan*. Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Pengajian Islam, UM, 1-12.

Seltman, H. J. (2012). *Experimental design and analysis*. Pittsburgh, PA: Carnegie Mellon University.

Turner, D. P. & Houle, T. T. (2019). Conducting and reporting descriptive statistics. *The Journal of Head and Face Pain*, 59(3), 300-305. doi: 10.1111/head.13489.