

## MALAYSIA'S PRIMARY SCHOOL MUSIC TEACHERS' READINESS ON MULTICULTURAL MUSIC EDUCATION

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### ABSTRACT

This study explores the readiness of Malaysia's primary school music teachers to implement multicultural music education in their classrooms. With Malaysia's diverse cultural landscape, integrating various musical traditions into the education system is essential for fostering cultural understanding and national unity. The purpose of this study is to determine the level of readiness among primary school music teachers by analysing data from a survey conducted with 232 respondents. The survey included constructs measuring teachers' perspectives on the multicultural curriculum and their knowledge and skills related to implementing such a curriculum. The first construct, which focuses on teachers' attitudes toward the multicultural curriculum, showed a high mean score (3.93), indicating positive attitudes toward multicultural education. The second construct, which assesses teachers' knowledge and skills, also scored high (3.93), suggesting that teachers feel reasonably prepared, but there are areas for improvement. These results indicate that while there is a solid foundation for implementing multicultural music education in Malaysia, there is a need for continuous professional development and resource allocation to ensure that all teachers can effectively deliver a diverse and inclusive music curriculum. The study concludes with recommendations for enhancing teacher readiness and fostering a more inclusive educational environment that reflects Malaysia's rich cultural diversity.

**Keywords:** Multicultural music education, teacher readiness, survey, primary school education, Malaysia, cultural diversity.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Malaysia's rich cultural diversity, comprising Malay, Chinese, Indian, and indigenous communities, presents a unique opportunity and challenge for the education system. Music education, in particular, serves as a crucial medium for cultural expression and understanding. In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on incorporating multicultural elements into the primary school music curriculum. However, the success of such initiatives largely depends on the readiness of teachers to deliver a multicultural music education effectively. This study examines the readiness of primary school music teachers in Malaysia to implement a multicultural curriculum, considering their attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

#### 1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of readiness of Malaysia's primary school music teachers regarding multicultural music education. This was achieved by analysing the mean scores obtained from two constructs of a survey: teachers' perspectives on the multicultural curriculum and their knowledge and skills related to implementing such a curriculum. Understanding these factors is critical to developing strategies that can enhance the effectiveness of multicultural education in Malaysian primary schools, specifically in Music subject.

## 2.0 METHOD

This study employed a survey methodology to gather data from 232 primary school music teachers across Malaysia. The survey comprised two constructs. The first construct examined teachers' attitudes toward the integration of multicultural elements in the music curriculum, while the second construct assessed their knowledge and skills related to delivering a multicultural music education. The survey used a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

## 3.0 DATA ANALYSIS

Data from the survey were analysed using descriptive statistics, specifically mean scores, to assess the level of readiness among the music teachers. The mean scores for each item in the first and second constructs were calculated, providing insights into the teachers' perspectives and preparedness for implementing multicultural music education.

## 4.0 RESULTS

The results indicate a generally high level of readiness among the music teachers, with mean scores reflecting positive attitudes and a fair degree of knowledge and skills. Below are the tables summarizing the findings obtained from the survey:

**Table 1: Construct 1 (Teachers' Attitudes Towards Multicultural Curriculum in Music Education)**

No.	Item	Mean Score	Level
1	Multicultural elements need to be applied in primary school music teaching.	3.78	High
2	The content of the primary school Music Education curriculum includes sufficient elements of various cultures.	4.12	High
3	The content of the primary school Music Education curriculum gives equal opportunities to students from various backgrounds.	3.91	High
4	I find satisfaction in teaching music that applies cultural elements of other races.	4.05	High
5	The teaching and learning process can attract students' interest when I apply elements of various cultures in music teaching.	3.76	High
6	Teachers are responsible for equipping themselves with knowledge and skills about multicultural music.	3.84	High

7	Continuous training is required to produce a teacher who is effective in applying elements of various cultures in music teaching.	3.92	High
8	I would rather spend time applying multicultural elements in the music lessons than preparing students for exams.	4.01	High
9	I am willing to teach music of different cultures other than my own nation's culture in Music Education.	3.98	High
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.93</b>	<b>High</b>

According to Table 1, it was found that all the items related to the teacher’s perspective of the multicultural music education curriculum received a mean score between 3.50 and 4.29, which is at a high level. In addition, the overall mean score of 3.93 in construct 1 also shows that music teachers welcome the multicultural music education curriculum of primary schools.

**Table 2: Construct 2 (Teachers’ Knowledge and Skills on Multicultural Curriculum in Music Education)**

No.	Item	Mean Score	Level
10	I know the content of the primary school Music Education syllabus.	3.85	High
11	I understand the concept of multicultural music education curriculum.	4.10	High
12	I’m able to plan various strategies and methods based on the pupils’ abilities to deliver music lessons with various cultural elements.	3.92	High
13	I use a variety of strategies and methods to deliver multicultural music lessons.	4.01	High
14	I know how to assess student achievement in multicultural music teaching.	3.77	High
15	I have sufficient teaching resources to deliver multicultural-based music lessons.	3.88	High
16	I need textbooks and multimedia materials supplied to conduct the music lessons.	3.90	High
17	I can give students effective feedback to help them learn about the cultures of other societies.	4.02	High
18	I always encourage students to give opinions and make decisions in multicultural contexts.	3.95	High
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.93</b>	<b>High</b>

According to Table 2 above, all the items related to the music teachers' knowledge and skills of the multicultural music education curriculum had a mean value between 3.50 and 4.29, which is high. Furthermore, the overall mean of 3.93 demonstrates that the respondents have a high level of knowledge and skills regarding the curriculum of multicultural music education in primary schools.

**Table 3: Overall mean scores for construct 1 and construct 2**

	<b>Construct</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>	<b>Level</b>
1	Teachers' attitudes towards multicultural curriculum in music education	3.93	High
2	Teachers' knowledge and skills on multicultural curriculum in music education	3.93	High
<b>Overall Average</b>		<b>3.93</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 3 above shows that the overall high mean scores (3.93) across these items suggest that teachers generally support the integration of multicultural elements and feel prepared to implement them, although some areas could benefit from further development.

## 5.0 DISCUSSION

The high mean scores from both constructs indicate a strong readiness among teachers to embrace and implement multicultural music education. Teachers' positive attitudes towards integrating multicultural elements into the curriculum reflect a broader understanding of the importance of cultural diversity in education. However, while the knowledge and skills scores are also high, they point to areas where teachers may need additional support and resources. For instance, ongoing professional development opportunities and access to diverse teaching materials could further enhance teachers' ability to deliver an effective multicultural music curriculum.

While most teachers are prepared, the results also point to the need for more standardised and organised training programs that emphasise the practical aspects of teaching multicultural music. Education policymakers can ensure that every student receives a diverse and inclusive music education that embodies Malaysia's multiculturalism by tackling these gaps.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

This study reveals that primary school music teachers in Malaysia are largely ready to implement a multicultural music curriculum. Their positive attitudes and reasonable levels of knowledge and skills provide a strong foundation for the successful integration of diverse musical traditions into the classroom. However, to fully realize the potential of multicultural music education, it is essential to provide teachers with ongoing professional development and the necessary resources. By doing so, Malaysia can foster a more inclusive and culturally rich educational environment that benefits all students.

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