

Article

## Radio Malaysia in 1978: Broadcasting Nationalist and Patriotic Ideas in Primary Schools through Songs

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**Abstract:** Patriotic songs serve as symbols and catalysts of national identity. These songs, ranging from the national anthem "*Negaraku*" to a diverse repertoire of unofficial anthems, have played a crucial role in shaping the nation's cultural landscape and fostering a sense of unity among its diverse population. The popularity of these patriotic songs can be traced back to the nation's independence in 1957, when citizens had to learn the newly composed national anthem. The newly formed nation would require symbols that function as a catalyst for the realisation of Malaysia. The introduction of radio music education in Malaysian public schools in 1946 marked a significant milestone, as it allowed for the systemic dissemination of patriotic songs through the *Radio Pendidikan* (Radio Education) program. This program broadcasted songs to primary school students, exposing the younger generation to expressions of nationalism and patriotism through song. Through a thematic content analysis of the songs featured in the *Radio Pendidikan* 1978 program, the objective of this article aims to explore how the underlying themes of nationalism and patriotism were reflected in these musical compositions. The findings contribute to the understanding of the intersection between music, education, and nation-building; implicating the powerful influence of patriotic songs in uniting a diverse population and fostering a strong sense of national pride.

Keywords: Radio Malaya; music education; songs; patriotism; nationalism

### Introduction

The article examines the role of patriotic songs in fostering national identity and unity among Malaysia's diverse population. It then delves into the objectives of the study, which include exploring the themes of nationalism and patriotism reflected in the lyrics of songs disseminated through the *Radio Pendidikan* program. The methodology and findings reveal the selection and analysis of key themes and keywords while the discussion reflects on the key findings. The article concludes by summarizing insights from the study and suggesting further research into the impact of music on national identity and social cohesion in Malaysia.

Patriotic songs have always been a part of the everyday experience in modern Malaysia. Malaysians in public schools were made to listen to and sing along to these songs during the month of *Merdeka* (independence). Many people recall their school days when they would sing along to patriotic songs (Yusinth, 2023). These are the songs they used to stand and sing in unison during school assemblies in honour of *Merdeka*. Not only is the national anthem of Malaysia (*Negaraku*) played during independence month, but numerous other patriotic songs are also played during official functions, sporting events, and other occasions of state and national celebration.

These patriotic songs function as a symbol and catalyst of the physical realisation of the Malaysian nation (Anderson, 1983) (Shazlin, 2022). The images associated with "being Malaysian" are inextricably linked to these songs when they are performed or sung. While these songs may evoke different images in the minds of Malaysians, they provide a shared sense of connectedness and belonging as a group when performed together. This was the concept of unisonance, coined by Anderson (1983). With so many patriotic songs in the nation's repertoire, Malaysians are accustomed to the concept of patriotic music today. However, when and why were these songs about patriotism written? Singing songs together as a group was not something that people knew when the Federation of Malaya gained independence in 1957. During this time, citizens had to learn how to sing *Negaraku*, the newly composed national anthem which was meant to represent the nation and its people. Since radio was at the time the most widely accessible form of public dissemination, Radio Malaya was tasked with teaching the populace how to sing it (Shazlin, 2022).

As the popularity of songs that symbolise the nation grew, musicians produced an increasing number of songs that quickly rose to prominence as unofficial national anthems (Shazlin, 2022). Music and songs have long been recognized as a powerful and influential tool in the process of nation building, shaping cultural identity, fostering unity, and promoting social cohesion. This sentiment underscores the intrinsic value that music holds in our lives and, by extension, in the construction of a strong and vibrant national identity. Music possesses the remarkable ability to transcend language barriers and connect people on a deeper emotional level. It has the power to evoke profound emotions and inspire a sense of collective pride and patriotism (Hargreaves & North, 1999). National anthems like the *Negaraku* are apolitical emblems that conjure strong emotions when it is played or sung (Siti Nurkhalilah, Azizan, & Anida, 2024). It is an emblem that unites people from all walks of life, irrespective of their politics, location, gender, religion, class, or colour (Shazlin, 2018). The government understood this importance and began attempts at using music education to promote social cohesion (Chopyak, 1987). The May 1969 general elections in Malaysia marked a pivotal moment in the nation's political landscape (Mohamad Mustafa, 1999). The ruling Alliance Party secured only 66 seats, leading to celebrations from opposition supporters, particularly among Chinese and Indian groups, who taunted Malay onlookers. This tension escalated into the infamous May 13 riots, resulting in a state of emergency and the suspension of Parliament for 21 months. The riots highlighted the urgent need for national integration among Malaysia's diverse ethnic groups, prompting the government to implement several reformist policies aimed at achieving unification.

Following the May 13th, 1969, ethnic riots, a number of reformist policies were introduced with the goal of achieving national unification of the various ethnic groups. Among these reforms included the New Economic Policy (NEP), the National Cultural Policy (NCP), and the reconceptualization of the National Language and Education Policy (Mohamed Mustafa, 1999). The 1983 curriculum revision marked the first time music was officially taught in Malaysian public schools. Prior to this, an early form of music education began with a radio education program called Schools Radio Broadcast (Nuruddin, 1978). This was a joint effort between the Department of Broadcasting (Radio Malaya) and the Department of Education. English, Malay and Chinese schools started receiving broadcasts originating from Singapore in 1946 and Tamil schools in 1952. Regular singing lessons were introduced to English schools in 1948 (Department of Broadcasting, 1953) and music continued to be a part of the radio broadcast program until as late as 1989 (KPM, 1989). The Schools Radio Broadcast was later known as *Radio Pendidikan* (Radio Education). Songs were broadcasted and disseminated through the radio at fixed times weekly during the school term for all standards in primary school (KPM, 1973).

This article focuses on the local songs that were broadcasted via Radio RTM (*Radio Televisyen Malaysia*) to Standard Six students in *sekolah kebangsaan* (national schools) in 1978. The following are the aims of this article:

- i. To understand how expressions of nationalism and patriotism were reflected lyrically in songs broadcasted for *Radio Pendidikan* Standard Six students in 1978,
- ii. To identify these underlying nationalist themes through analysis of relevant keywords, and
- iii. To observe the salient symbols of nationalism and patriotism found in the songs.

This article employs thematic content analysis as its method to address the aforementioned goals. It intertwines themes of nationalism, music education, and radio broadcasting during a pivotal moment in

Malaysian history—the aftermath of the ethnic riots of 1969 and the ensuing policies put in place by the government. This investigation into the *Radio Pendidikan* programme is exploratory in nature. It is an attempt to comprehend the background of *Radio Pendidikan*, the objectives of its musical programme, and the undercurrents of patriotism and nationalism in its songs. Given the preliminary nature of this study, further research is needed in order to delve deeper into *Radio Pendidikan*'s music programme.

## Literature Review

### 1. Nationalism, Patriotism and Nation Building

Nationalism is defined as a political concept in which the political and national unit should be congruent (Gellner, 1983). Patriotism is understood as a love of one's nation and is usually seen as a positive attribute (Lee, 2014). Both concepts deal with the affection for one's nation and the sense of attachment to a nation (Altıkulaç & Yontar, 2023). However, it is worth noting the differences and similarities between the two concepts. Patriotism has a greater emphasis on the love for people, principles, and beliefs while nationalism emphasises on the unity of the cultural past with the inclusion of language and heritage (Altıkulaç & Yontar, 2023). As nations have different histories, cultures, and languages, nationalism and patriotism are understood differently in each nation (Nguyen, 2023). Nationalism aims to establish and uphold a cohesive national identity which becomes challenging when dealing with plural societies. The challenge faced by the Federation of Malaya following its independence was to create a strong sense of national identity among its people while fostering allegiance to the new nation-state given the extreme ethnic and cultural diversity (Shamsul, 1996) (Mustafa, 1999).

Malaysia today remains to be a 'state-without-nation' (Shamsul, 1996). While it is a coherent version of a capitalist entity in the broad economic sense, it is still searching for a parallel coherence in the political and ideological sense due to the existence of strong competing 'nations-of-intent'. The concept of 'nations-of-intent' is a way to understand ethnic relations and how a nation is envisioned. It involves examining how different, sometimes conflicting perspectives shape the idea of a nation (Shamsul, 1996). It entails analysing how various, occasionally opposing viewpoints influence the conception of a nation. In addition, he makes the case that nation-building is a continuous process that involves ongoing discourse amongst different voices within a nation rather than being directed exclusively by one authoritative source. This dialogue includes perspectives from the authority-defined and everyday-defined social realities experienced by individuals (Shamsul, 1996). This dialogue is crucial because it allows for the complexities of a multi-ethnic society to challenge the divisive boundaries that separate different ethnic communities. Without open communication and negotiation between different ethnic groups, the spaces for interaction and understanding among Malaysians become limited. As a result, there is still much room for debate on the 'Malaysian' national identity.

### 2. The Role of Radio Malaya in Bringing People Together

By providing music, stories, and information to a large audience, radio can foster a sense of shared community and bridge divides between various groups and demographics. When you listened to broadcast radio in private, you knew that you were, in a sense, surrounded by a great number of strangers who were all involved in the same activity (Harvey, 2017). Radio has been particularly significant in Malaysia during particular events such as the Olympics and football matches where people would gather around the radio to listen in (Toh, 2024). In addition to transmitting news, Radio Malaya also broadcasted locally written music to preserve and promote the national culture (Shazlin, 2022). Musicians were compelled and excited to compose new songs that could represent a piece of their new nation and identity. Between the 1950s and 1960s, many patriotic songs were composed such as *Putera Puteri* (Jimmy Boyle), *Muhibbah* (Saiful Bahri), and *Bahtera Merdeka* (Kassim Masdor) among others in addition to songs and music, Radio Malaya broadcasted news, speeches, sports and talk shows (Shazlin, 2022).

### 3. Public School Music Education in Colonial and Post-Colonial Malaysia

Before the Razak Report was introduced, education in Malaya was the responsibility of the various ethnic communities (Mohamed Mustafa, 1999). As a result, five different kinds of schools were established: English schools, Malay religious schools, Chinese and Indian vernacular schools, and Malay schools. Young people in Malaya began to be influenced by Western music as the English educational system spread (Dobbs, 1972).

Radio Malaya and subsequently RTM played a role in early music education by broadcasting supplementary lessons in schools. As early as 1946, radio programs had already begun broadcasting to the English, Malay and Chinese schools both in Malaya and Singapore (Nuruddin Jamin, 1978). Radio Malaya's school broadcasting program was touted to be the most developed in the region and even broadcasted more school programs than the BBC at the time. It was reported in 1949 that over 500 schools in the Federation of Malaya received the radio broadcasts (Department of Broadcasting, 1953) (Lee, 2020). This was increased to over 2,082 schools by 1955. Between 1946 and 1952, Radio Malaya commissioned hundreds of songs specifically for use in Malay and Chinese schools. One of the music programs for radio was "Music and Movement", which taught music through rhythmic movements. The series' goals were to help kids appreciate music and provide them with basic music education through movements. Every child was encouraged to explore instrumental and orchestral music in their own special way (Nuruddin Jamin, 1978). Another music program was 'Merry-go-Round' which incorporated a variety of listening experiences and these included rhymes, sound games, action songs and musical stories.

Following Malaya's independence in 1957, the Schools Radio Broadcasts continued to be produced by Radio Singapore as a joint service. However, due to the increasingly different educational needs between West Malaysia and Singapore, the program was terminated in 1964. This Schools Radio Broadcast was established in December 1965 and officially inaugurated on 2nd May, 1966, as *Perkhidmatan Siaran Radio ke Sekolah-Sekolah* (Schools Radio Broadcast) (Nuruddin Jamin, 1978). It later became known as *Radio Pendidikan*. Programmed in collaboration between the Ministry of Education (MOE) and RTM, this service was broadcasted to four types of primary schools: the English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil national-type schools. On 18 May 1970, the service was placed under the full responsibility of the MOE with the continued support of RTM. The objective of this broadcast was to:

- i. Enable students to express themselves through individual or group activities,
- ii. Nurture students so that they can contribute to society through cultural and social efforts,
- iii. Fulfil spiritual needs,
- iv. Foster good health and provide mental and emotional rejuvenation,
- v. Form awareness and nationalist characteristics: loyalty and love for the nation. To enjoy the beauty of nature and foster a noble moral personality, and
- vi. To train students to use free time in a beneficial way. (KPM, 1973)

Songbooks outlined these objectives, and each had a few English songs interspersed between the majority of Malay songs. The Malay songs included a folk song (*Rasa Sayang Eh*), patriotic songs, and songs from well-known contemporary Malaysian composers such as Tony Fonseca, Ahmad Merican, Johari Salleh, Dol Ramli and Saiful Bahri.

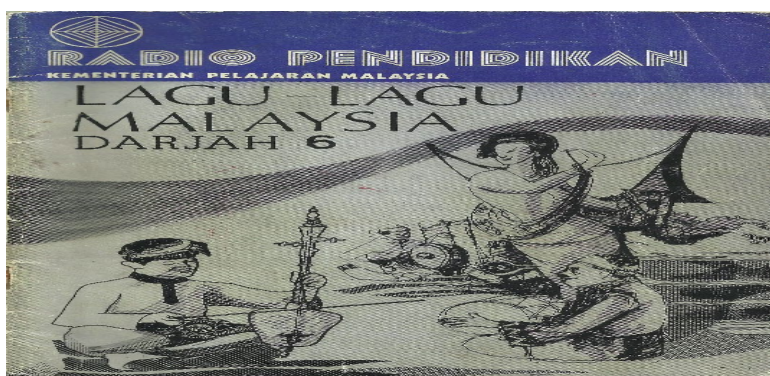


Figure 1. Cover of the *Radio Pendidikan* Standard Six Songbook (1978)

Source: Penang House of Music (2022)



The radio program was planned in conjunction with the national school term. Sessions for Standard Six students were scheduled for Wednesdays, twice a day at 10:00am and repeated at 2:30pm. The radio transmission for the year 1978 began on 18th January and ended on 25th October. Teachers were asked to cooperate and gather the students around the radio during these times (Mohammad Hashim, 2023).



Figure 2. Pupils listening to *Radio Pendidikan*  
Source: Radio Pendidikan (n.d.)



Figure 3. Pupils following the Educational Radio Programme.  
Source: Educational Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education (1985)

### Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method to discover the relevant keywords from which themes are interpreted. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse the song lyrics. A collection of song books published by the Ministry of Education were archived at the Penang House of Music (PHoM), with the earliest one dating from 1973 and the latest 1989. These song books were reference materials for teachers who were

asked for their cooperation to help the students during the program's broadcasts (Mohammad Hashim, 2023). This article focuses on the Standard Six songbook from 1978 and they were selected to be studied because of the song selections by the editor, its physical availability at the PHoM and considerations for the students' age (12 years old). More challenging themes and lyrics could be taught because they were designed for the most advanced primary school pupils (Mohammad Hashim, 2023).

A total of 26 songs were found in this songbook, with twenty songs in Malay and six in English. This article will focus only on the Malay songs which contain patriotic and nationalist keywords. The English songs were not selected as they were European nursery rhymes that did not allude to anything related to Malaysia. The lyrics of each song were typed out on a separate document. In the next column, keywords that were related to expressions of patriotism or nationalism were noted. Then, relevant codes, e.g., "love for nation", "state symbol" was typed next to each keyword. A total of 22 keywords were found and then five relevant themes were created from the codes.

## Findings

Using pertinent keywords from the song lyrics, five prominent themes were found. The keywords identified are shown together in a table with the songs and lyrics with the English translations. Five themes were identified.

### 1. Loyalty and Love for The Nation

Patriotic songs often convey a sense of heroic pathos, typically expressed in a lofty style (Kobzhitskaya et al., 2022). At the heart of this emotional appeal is the theme of heroism found in the lyrics of such songs, inspiring a commitment to freedom and the defence of a nation's independence.

Table 1. Loyalty and love for the nation

No.	Keywords	Song Title	Lyrics
A1	<i>Setia</i> Loyalty	<i>Bendera Malaysia</i> Malaysian Flag	<i>Harap rakyat taat setia</i> Hoping the people are <b>loyal</b>
		<i>Malaysia Berdaulat</i> Sovereign Malaysia	<i>Tumpuan setia rakyat</i> The loyalty of the <b>people</b>
A2	<i>Cinta</i> Love	<i>Darah Sama Merah</i> Red is Our Blood	<i>Tanahair ku yang tercinta</i> My <b>beloved</b> homeland
		<i>Malaysia Berdaulat</i>	<i>Malaysia yang kita cinta</i> <b>Beloved</b> Malaysia
A3	<i>Hati</i> Heart	<i>Tanjung Puteri</i> Princess Cape	<i>Pemandangan menawan hati</i> A <b>captivating</b> view
		<i>Tanjung Bunga</i> Flower Cape	<i>Semoga hati yang sepi</i> May the quiet <b>heart</b>
		<i>Bersatu</i> United	<i>Bersatu dengan hati lurus dan ikhlas</i> United with a sincere and unwavering <b>heart</b>
		<i>Gelombang Jasa</i> Waves of Gratitude	<i>Tapi dihati mungkin merasa</i> May be felt at <b>heart</b>
		<i>Buah Melaka</i> Malaccan Kuih*	<i>Semua orang tertarik hati</i> Everyone is <b>attracted</b>

\*Malaysian snack/dessert

Source: KPM (1978)

*Setia* (Loyalty) signifies unwavering dedication and commitment. Lyrics that emphasise loyalty to one's nation can instil a sense of duty and responsibility among citizens. It reinforces the idea that citizens are bound together by a common purpose and commitment to the well-being and prosperity of their nation. The word *cinta* (love) is a powerful emotion which reinforces the idea of affection and devotion towards the nation.

Lyrics that express love for one's homeland can make citizens feel a deep emotional connection to their nation, fostering a sense of pride. Love for the nation was addressed by Malay publications and poets during the Japanese occupation period (Ahmad Azran Awang et. Al, 2016). They also asserted that Malaysian patriotic songs continue to instil love for the nation amongst other elements of patriotism.

In the Malay language, *hati* is a very significant word, with many metaphors built utilising this word. For example, *hati budi* (literal translation: good heart; meaning: kindness), *kecil hati* (literal translation: a heart that's reduced in size; meaning: disappointed), *besar hati* (literal translation: an inflated heart, meaning: grateful. In the Malay language, *hati* serves as a powerful metaphor that is able to encapsulates a range of emotions and sentiments (Hermandra, 2022). The metaphor of *hati* which is found in many Malay literature is a reflection of the emotional nuance and etiquette in and amongst the Malay society. The nuance could be in the form of love, doubt, anger etc. A person's *hati* (heart) is where all feelings and emotions originate. People are moved by this authenticity, which gives them the impression that their sentiments of love and loyalty have deep emotional roots. The keywords of loyalty, love, and the metaphor of *hati* in Malaysian patriotic songs not only fosters a profound connection among citizens but also reinforces their shared commitment to the nation's values and aspirations.

## 2. Sacrifices for The Nation

The keywords in Theme B evoke nationalistic sentiments through themes of valor, sacrifice, and pride. Each generation should honour the sacrifices of their predecessors and continue the national cause, enhancing the legacy they inherit (Thompson, 2009).

Table 2. Sacrifices for the nation

No.	Keywords	Song Title	Lyrics
B1	Korban Sacrifice	<i>Darah Sama Merah</i> Red Is Our Blood	<i>Rela berkorban rela pertahan</i> Willing to <b>sacrifice</b> and defend
		<i>Parajurit Tanahair</i> Soldiers of the Motherland	<i>Siap sedia berkorban</i> Ready to <b>sacrifice</b>
		<i>Malaysia Berdaulat</i> Sovereign Malaysia	<i>Rela berkorban sentiasa</i> Always willing to <b>sacrifice</b>
		<i>Tanahair Yang Ku Cinta</i> My Beloved Motherland	<i>Bersama berkorban saling-membantu,</i> Helping each other <b>sacrifice</b> together
B2	Medan bakti Battlefield	<i>Parajurit Tanahair</i>	<i>Menuju medan bakti</i> Towards the <b>battlefield</b>
B3	Darah Blood	<i>Harapan Bangsa</i> Hope of the Nation	<i>Tanahair tumpah darah mu</i> These shores with <b>blood</b> I shall defend
B4	Pahlawan Warrior	<i>Selamat Pergi</i> <i>Pahlawan Ku</i> Farewell My Warrior	1. <i>Pahlawan ku pembela nusa ku</i> The <b>warrior</b> defending my motherland  2. <i>Memanggil dikau pahlawan muda</i> Calling young <b>warriors</b>
		<i>Makam Pahlawan</i> Grave of the Warrior	1. <i>Dipusara pahlawan</i> At the grave of a <b>warrior</b>  2. <i>Hilang pahlawan negara</i> Losing the nation's <b>warrior</b>
B5	Perwira Hero	<i>Gelombang Jasa</i> Waves of Gratitude	<i>Itulah tanda tugas perwira</i> The mark of a <b>hero's</b> duty
		<i>Taman Bunga</i> Flower Garden	<i>Tugu Pahlawan memperingati perwira</i> Remembering <b>heroes</b> at The National Monument

Source: KPM (1978)

The terms ‘sacrifice’ and ‘battlefield’ emphasize the willingness to give up personal value for the nation's greater good, urging citizens to defend their nation. For instance, during the 2013 Lahad Datu standoff, Saiful Bahri's song "*Parajurit Tanahair*" was frequently aired, highlighting selflessness and dedication in the face of threats to national sovereignty (Shazlin, 2022). References to the battlefield in lyrics evoke historical struggles, reminding citizens of the sacrifices made for their nation and fostering a commitment to preserving that history. The word ‘blood’ appears in several national anthems, such as "*La Marseillaise*" (France) and "March of the Volunteers" (China), reflecting pivotal historical events where citizens shed blood for independence (Kuntz, 1997) (Mellgren, 2006). In contrast, the song "*Harapan Bangsa*" includes the lyric ‘*Tanah Tumpah Darahku*’ (these shores with blood I shall defend), echoing sentiments found in Malaysia’s national anthem, representing both a place one would die for and the Malaysian people's birthplace (Shazlin, 2018).

References to warriors and heroes also evoke powerful symbols of bravery, sacrifice, and dedication to the nation. The lyrics often celebrated the noble qualities of these warriors, portraying them as willing to risk their lives to defend their homeland (Milyartini, 2019). This admiration for those serving their nation was intended to foster a sense of patriotism and appreciation among the citizens. By recognizing the sacrifices made by these warriors, the songs aimed to inspire listeners to emulate their innate nobleness and compassion, and to strive for greatness in service of their community and nation. The use of heroic imagery and the glorification of their deeds suggests a deliberate attempt by the government to construct a narrative of national identity centered around the idea of a protector class willing to fight for the greater good. These keywords sought to cultivate a reverence for the nation and its defenders.

### 3. National Identity

The frequent use of the words nation and motherland in 57% of the analyzed patriotic songs underscores the celebratory expression of Malaysia's newfound sovereignty and independence (Silaghi-Dumitrescu, 2023).

Table 3. National identity

No.	Keywords	Song Title	Lyrics
C1	Negara Nation	<i>Bendera Malaysia</i> Malaysian Flag	1. Tanah Malaysia <b>negara</b> kita Malaysia is our <b>nation</b>
			2. Tiga belas <b>negara</b> bersatu sudah Thirteen <b>states</b> united
		<i>Perpaduan Negara</i> Unity of the Nation	<i>Agungkan perpaduan <b>negara</b></i> Exalt <b>national</b> unity
		<i>Darah Sama Merah</i> Red Is Our Blood	1. Kedaulatan <b>negara</b> kita The sovereignty of our <b>nation</b>
			2. <i>Hapuskan petualang <b>negara</b></i> Eliminate disloyal people from the <b>nation</b>
		<i>Bersatu</i> United	1. <i>Bersatu untuk <b>negara</b></i> Together for the <b>nation</b>
			2. <i>Negarakan terus berjaya.</i> Continuous success of the <b>nation</b>
		<i>Gelombang Jasa</i> Waves of Gratitude	<i>Membela tenaga warga dan <b>negara</b></i> Defending citizens and the <b>nation</b>
		<i>Selamat Pergi Pahlawan Ku</i> Farewell My Warrior	<i>Membela untuk <b>negara</b> mu</i> Defending your <b>nation</b>
		<i>Buah Melaka</i> Malaccan Kuih	<i>Masyhur diseluruh <b>negara</b></i> Famous throughout the <b>nation</b>
<i>Gumung Kinabalu</i> Mount Kinabalu	<i>Keagungan <b>dinegara</b> jaya</i> Greatness in the <b>nation</b>		



		<i>Malaysia Berdaulat</i> Sovereign Malaysia	<p>1. <i>Negara</i> ku yang merdeka My independent <b>nation</b></p> <p>2. <i>Negara</i> yang kita puja Our <b>nation</b> that we worship</p> <p>3. <i>Negara</i> pusaka bangsa, The <b>nation</b> we inherit</p> <p>4. <i>Negara</i> berbagai bangsa Various ethnicities in the <b>nation</b></p>
		<i>Makam Pahlawan</i> Grave of the Warrior	<i>Hilang pahlawan negara</i> Losing the <b>nation</b> 's warriors
		<i>Harapan Bangsa</i> The Nation's Hope	<i>Negara</i> kepunyaan mu. My <b>nation</b>
		<i>Tanah Pusaka</i> Inherited Land	<i>Negara</i> ku yang berdaulat dan merdeka My sovereign and independent <b>nation</b>
C2	<i>Ibu pertiwi</i> Motherland	<i>Perajurit Tanahair</i> Soldiers of the Motherland	<p><i>Untuk ibu pertiwi</i> For the <b>motherland</b></p> <p>1. <i>Pahlawan</i> ku pembela nusa ku The <b>warrior</b> defending my motherland</p> <p>2. <i>Jasa</i> mu mengharum <i>pertiwi</i> Your service enhances the <b>motherland</b></p>
		<i>Selamat Pergi</i> <i>Pahlawan Ku</i> Farewell My Warrior	
		<i>Malaysia Berdaulat</i> Sovereign Malaysia	<i>Malaysia ibu pertiwi</i> <b>Motherland</b> Malaysia
C3	<i>Merdeka</i> Independence	<i>Bendera Malaysia</i>	<i>Tanda Malaysia</i> telah merdeka A sign of Malaysia's <b>independence</b>
		<i>Malaysia Berdaulat</i>	<i>Negara</i> ku yang merdeka My nation that has achieved <b>independence</b>
		<i>Tanah Pusaka</i>	<i>Negara</i> ku yang berdaulat dan merdeka My sovereign and <b>independent</b> nation
C4	<i>Daulat</i> Sovereign	<i>Darah Sama Merah</i>	<i>Kedaulatan</i> negara kita Our <b>sovereign</b> nation
		<i>Malaysia Berdaulat</i>	<p>1. <i>Malaysia</i> ku yang berdaulat My <b>sovereign</b> Malaysia</p> <p>2. <i>Kedaulatan</i> yang abadi Eternal <b>sovereignty</b></p>
		<i>Harapan Bangsa</i>	<i>Jagalah kedaulatannya</i> Guard its <b>sovereignty</b>
		<i>Tanah Pusaka</i>	<i>Negara</i> ku yang berdaulat dan merdeka My <b>sovereign</b> and independent nation
C5	<i>Bendera</i> Flag	<i>Bendera Malaysia</i>	<p>1. <i>Bendera</i> Malaysia dikasihi ramai The beloved Malaysian <b>flag</b></p> <p>2. <i>Bendera</i> Malaysia empat warna The four colours of Malaysian <b>flag</b></p> <p>3. <i>Bendera</i> Malaysia amat gagah The mighty Malaysian <b>flag</b></p>
		<i>Darah Sama Merah</i>	<i>Satu lambang</i> satu <i>bendera</i> One symbol one <b>flag</b>

As a newly independent nation, the repeated references to the nation and motherland serve as a reminder of the monumental achievement and the struggles endured to attain freedom from colonial rule. This emphasis on independence is further exemplified by the first Malaysian prime minister's repetition of the word 'Merdeka!' (independence) during the declaration of independence, witnessed by thousands of people from diverse backgrounds. The concept of sovereignty, which is closely tied to independence, is central to the themes expressed in these patriotic songs. Sovereignty refers to the supreme authority of a state over its territory and people, free from external control or interference. The repeated use of the term 'negara' in the lyrics highlights the pride and joy of the nation's newfound sovereignty, a hard-won victory after decades of colonial rule.

The Malaysian flag, as one of the key national symbols, holds a special ability to elicit group identification and distinguish ingroups from outgroups (Schatz & Lavine, 2007). Mentions of the flag in patriotic songs help acquaint students with these important symbols, providing a social environment for critical reflection on the concept of nationhood (Abril, 2012). The frequent use of these keywords serves as a powerful reminder of the nation's hard-fought sovereignty and independence. These lyrics celebrate the pride and joy of being a sovereign nation, free from colonial rule, and inspire a sense of belonging and unity among citizens. The references to the Malaysian flag further reinforce the importance of national symbols in fostering a shared identity and promoting critical reflection on the concept of nationhood.

#### 4. Unity

The use of the term 'darah' (blood) in the context of the song *Darah Sama Merah* (Red Is Our Blood) represents a significant shift from its traditional sacrificial connotations.

Table 4. Unity

No.	Keywords	Song Title	Lyrics
D1	<i>Darah</i> Blood	<i>Darah Sama Merah</i> Red Is Our Blood	<i>Namun <b>darah</b> sama merahnya.</i> Yet we all <b>bleed red</b>
D2	<i>Perpaduan</i> Unity	<i>Perpaduan Negara</i> National Unity	1. <i>Berjaya, berjaya, Perpaduan kita</i> Success, success, our <b>unity</b>  2. <i>Agungkan perpaduan negara</i> Exalt national <b>unity</b>
D3	<i>Bersama</i> Together	<i>Perpaduan Negara</i>  <i>Samudra Malaysia</i> Malaysian Sea  <i>Buah Melaka</i> Malaccan Kueh  <i>Tanahair Yang Ku Cinta</i> My Beloved Motherland  <i>Tanah Pusaka</i> Ancestral Land	1. <i>Hidup <b>bersama</b> sekata</i> Live <b>together</b> as one  2. <i>Walaupun ada bencana,</i> <i>Tentanglah <b>bersama-sama,</b></i> <b>Together</b> we face our challenges  <i>Banggakanlah <b>bersama,</b> Samudra di Malaysia</i> Let's be proud <b>together,</b> of the ocean in Malaysia  <i>Mari semua rasa <b>bersama,</b></i> <i>Kueh terkenal di Malaysia.</i>  Let's taste <b>together,</b> the most well-known kueh in Malaysia.  <i><b>Bersama</b> berkorban saling-membantu,</i> Sacrifice <b>together,</b> ready to help  <i>Hidup damai dan <b>bersama</b></i> Live <b>together</b> in harmony

Source: KPM (1978)

This interpretation underscores a universal truth: despite the visible differences among individuals, all humans share the same red blood. This notion serves as a powerful metaphor for unity, suggesting that our shared humanity transcends ethnic and cultural divides. In contemporary Malaysia, where issues of race and identity are increasingly scrutinized, the symbolism of blood as a unifying force takes on added significance.

The campaign *Darah Tetap Sama Merah* (Our Blood Is Still the Same Red) by a local streetwear brand exemplifies this by challenging racial stereotypes and institutionalized racism, encouraging a re-examination of what it means to be Malaysian (Gopinath, 2020).

The messages conveyed through this campaign resonate with a collective consciousness that seeks to dismantle barriers and foster a sense of belonging among all Malaysians, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. The campaign was a success amongst its young customer base. For the younger generations, the concept of unity may align more with contemporary issues of inclusivity and social justice, reflecting a broader understanding of nationalism that encompasses not only ethnic identity but also socio-political awareness. The keywords *perpaduan* (unity) and *bersama* (together) resonate deeply within the Malaysian context, particularly in a multi-ethnic society. These terms emphasize collective identity and the importance of coming together, which is crucial in a nation characterized by diverse backgrounds. Research indicates that the Malaysian public favours songs that promote themes of unity, reflecting a desire for social cohesion amidst a complex demographic landscape (Ahmad Azran Awang et al., 2016). This preference highlights the role of music in fostering national identity and patriotism, especially in a society striving for harmony. By embracing the shared symbolism of blood and inspiring unity, these narratives can inspire a more inclusive understanding of Malaysian identity, one that acknowledges diversity while celebrating common humanity.

## 5. Natural & Man-made Features

The natural and man-made monuments in Malaysia's song lyrics foster a sense of belonging and connection to the homeland.

Table 5. Natural and Man-made features

No.	Keywords	Song Title	Lyrics
E1	<i>Gunung Kinabalu</i> Mount Kinabalu	<i>Gunung Kinabalu</i> Mount Kinabalu	<p>1. Megah berdiri <b>Gunung Kinabalu</b> <b>Mount Kinabalu</b> stands majestically</p> <p>2. <b>Kinabalu</b> engkau ternama, Menjadi lambang Malaysia jaya.</p> <p><b>Kinabalu</b> you are named, Become a symbol of a successful Malaysia.</p>
E2	<i>Bangunan Parlimen</i> Parliament Building	<i>Taman Bunga</i> Flower Park	<p><i>Tapak bangunan Parlimen</i> indah The site of the <b>Parliament building</b> is beautiful</p>
E3	<i>Tugu Pahlawan</i> Heroes Monument	<i>Taman Bunga</i>	<p><b>Tugu Pahlawan</b> memperingati perwira The <b>Heroes Monument</b> remembers heroes</p>
E4	<i>Tanjung Cape</i>	<i>Tanjung Puteri</i> Princess Cape	<p>1. Tambak Johor <b>Tanjung Puteri</b> The Johor Embankment <b>Princess Cape</b></p> <p>2. Atas bukit <b>Tanjung Puteri</b> On the hill of <b>Princess Cape</b></p> <p>3. <b>Tanjung Sekijang</b> pun dikuala <b>Sekijang Cape</b> is also by the where two rivers meet</p> <p>4. Ditepi pantai <b>Tanjung Puteri</b> By the beach of <b>Princess Cape</b></p>
E5	<i>Samudra</i> Sea	<i>Tanjung Bunga</i> Flower Cape	<p><i>Alangkah indah permai, pandangan di Tanjung Bunga</i> What a beautiful view, the view at <b>Tanjung Bunga</b></p>
E6	<i>Istana</i> The Danga Palace	<i>Samudra Malaysia</i> Malaysian Sea	<p>1. Indahnya pemandangan <i>Samudra di Malaysia</i> How beautiful the view of the <b>sea</b> in Malaysia</p> <p>2. <i>Banggakanlah bersama Samudra di Malaysia</i> Be proud with the Malaysian <b>sea</b></p>
		<i>Tanjung Puteri</i>	<p><i>Istana hinggap dikuala Danga</i> Kuala Danga Royal Mansion (<b>Palace</b>)</p>

Source: KPM (1978)

As the 12th most biodiverse nation globally (Hamidah Mamat, 2015), Malaysia boasts significant natural features like mountains, national parks, and rivers. Motifs such as plants, animals, natural elements, and geographical features frequently recur in various forms of expression, serving as crucial mediators in elucidating underlying meanings. The employment of these motifs enhances the conveyance of meaning, reflecting the layered linguistic style characteristic of the Malay people (Zabedah Mohammed & Shaiful Bahri Md Radzi, 2020). Nature nationalism, defined as the unique construction of a nation's landscapes, enhances citizens' appreciation for their physical and cultural environment (Boyle, 2016). National parks, akin to the iconic Yosemite and Yellowstone in the U.S., serve as shared spaces that promote unity among diverse populations (Ladino, 2019). These parks symbolize national pride and foster a collective identity, encouraging citizens to protect their natural heritage (EUROPARC Consulting, 2009).

Conversely, man-made monuments such as the Heroes' Monument and the Malaysian Parliament Building embody historical significance tied to the nation's struggles for independence. The Heroes' Monument honours the 11,000 lives lost during the Malayan Emergency (The Star, 2007), while the Parliament Building represents democracy. These monuments remind citizens of past sacrifices and the importance of preserving their legacy, reinforcing positive national identity through physical symbols like flags and monuments (Schatz & Lavine, 2007). Incorporating references to these natural and historical sites in songs helps cultivate a shared sense of identity among Malaysians, fostering an appreciation for their diverse landscapes and cultural heritage.

## Discussion

Based on the analysis of the keywords associated with each theme, it can be observed that the songs selected for the *Radio Pendidikan* demonstrate purposefully incorporated symbols and themes related to nationalism and patriotism. It was discovered that the great majority of the program's songs included concepts and symbols that embodied Malaysia and its values. Frequently, tangible objects like the flag, *Gunung Kinabalu*, capes, sea, palace, Parliament Building, and Heroes Monument are used as symbols. Loyalty, love, heart, sacrifice, battlefield, blood, warrior, hero, nation, motherland, independence, sovereign, unity, and togetherness are among the inventive and abstract intangible symbols discovered. Since the keywords for Theme C (National Identity) were included in more than half of the songs, it is the most prevalent theme. Citizens were unfamiliar with ideas like nationhood, independence, and sovereignty at the time. Therefore, it was essential to educate and expose schoolchildren to these ideas in order to instil a sense of national identity and belonging to their new nation. This discussion answers the objectives of the research.

## Conclusion

The *Radio Pendidikan* music program had many aims which included nurturing sociability, good morals, love for the nation and physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Through analysis of the song lyrics, it was found that expressions of patriotism and nationalism were prominently found in the vast majority of the songs. The songs touched upon a variety of shared ideas and symbols including geography, language, unity, national identity, and love and willingness to sacrifice for the nation. The prominent use of keywords such as "nation" and "motherland" in over half of the analysed songs highlight the collective pride and acknowledgment of the struggles faced in achieving independence. These expressions serve not only as a celebration of Malaysia's historical milestones but also as a reminder of the ongoing journey towards unity and national identity.

Moreover, the identification of salient symbols—ranging from tangible representations like the national flag and iconic landmarks to abstract concepts such as loyalty and sacrifice—further emphasizes the multifaceted nature of Malaysian nationalism. These themes are intricately woven into the fabric of the songs, illustrating a rich tapestry of cultural values and collective memory that continues to inspire patriotism among listeners. The overarching themes and recurring keywords reveal the intentional selection of songs by the government to use music to construct and nurture a love for the nation among its citizens. Thus, aiding in legitimising the nation-state in the eyes of its new citizens.

Whether the listeners were acquainted or not, the act of singing or listening along to the songs weekly encouraged Malaysians to experience brief moments of unity through unisonance. Whether it means locally

in the classroom or across schools in Malaysia, this togetherness in singing created an ideal platform for integration to bring together the various ethnic groups in the nation regardless of when, where, or whether they are aware of each other's identity. It is essential to prioritize further research focused on the preservation and documentation of these songs, as they represent an invaluable aspect of Malaysia's intangible heritage and cultural identity. By safeguarding these musical expressions, we can ensure these songs continue to resonate with future generations, fostering a deeper understanding of the nation's history and values.

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