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**YOUTH EMPOWERMENT IN NATIONAL SPORTS INDUSTRY  
AS A COMPONENT OF APPRECIATING PLURALISM AND  
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**Abstract:**

This paper focuses on a balanced, integrated and blended effort at every level of government administration and community structure to empower and strengthen the nation's sports industry. In accordance with the endemic era, it was then used as an element of appreciation for the unity of Malaysia's plural society. This paper attempts to address the following topics: (i) the potential income of youth through the sports industry; (ii) The status and future prospects of the country's sports industry; (iii) The Ministry of Youth and National Sports Key Performance Index target and unemployment among the youth; (iv) Challenges and empowerment on the implementation of the term youth age limit; and (v) The spirit of Malaysian Family Sports. The primary objective of the discussion is to identify the debate regarding the government's role and efforts to align national sports with national development. In reality, the method utilised by the Ministry of Youth and National Sports is competitive with foreign sports industries. This paper uses secondary sources, such as research results published in journals, scholarly writing, online news sources, and public forums, to employ a qualitative methodology. According to the findings of the study, the progressive development of the country's sports industry can generate numerous benefits for individuals, communities, and the country, thereby boosting the country's total income and economy. Therefore, drastic measures must be taken so that the development of the sports industry is in line with the development of the nation and is not solely dependent on the Ministry of Youth and National Sports.

**Keywords:**

Youth, Sports Industry, Unity, Pluralistic Society, Ministry of Youth and National Sports

**Introduction**

Sports is one of the physical activities performed for various purposes such as competition, fun, development, skills, excellence and others. The difference in purpose differentiates whether an activity is classified as a sport or vice versa. For example, swimming is a sport that is attended by spectators who love swimming, but swimming alone in the sea or pool is not a sport and is seen as a recreational activity. There are two types of sports which are "indoor" sports and "outdoor" sports. Indoor sports include futsal, basketball, volleyball, badminton, etc., while outdoor sports include soccer, rugby, and others. Indoor and outdoor sports are included in the country's sports industry which is able to benefit especially in the development and progress of the country. It is evident that this sport involves a lot of money, time and strategic planning, but it plays an important role in the development of a country.

Ministry of Youth and National Sports needs to think of ways or methods to ensure the future of the sports industry in our country is growing and thriving (Arumugam, Anuar, Selvanayagam & Sathiyasenana, 2021). It is common knowledge that Covid-19 has 'conquered' the whole world starting in 2019 resulting in a sudden increase in deaths. Hence Malaysia implemented a 'lockdown' as an effort to stop the spread of Covid-19. As this matter continues, it has led to the closure of industries such as tourism, agriculture, food supply industry etc. (Mohd Shah, 2021). The closure including the sports industry where it has become a habit of Malaysians to cheer every time a sports event or competition is held regardless of whether it is domestic or international (Wong, Ling, Louie, Law, So, Lee, Yau & Yung, 2020). Malaysians stopped watching sports events physically by visiting the stadium for almost 2 years. However, the sports industry around the world is recovering and coming back to life.

Youth empowerment is not a new topic that has been discussed and is often given attention by the national government. The youth group is a group that needs to be empowered because this group is the link for future generations (Othman, Esa, Abu Bakar & Mokhtar, 2021a). According to Mohd Yunus & Yusoff (2020), based on statistics from the Malaysian Department of Statistics, the number of youngsters in 2018 was 15.1 million which is 46.6 percent of the entire Malaysia's population. Thus the figure is estimated to increase by the year 2030 and youth will be the majority group in the country. In addition, the Youth Organization and Youth Development (Amendment) Bill 2019 aims to lower the age limit in the definition of youth from 40 years to 30 years, which has been approved by the National Assembly and will come into effect in 2021 (Mohd Yunus & Yusoff, 2020).

Generally, empowerment is a process of social action that can occur at several levels or levels such as individuals, families, organizations and communities (Mohd Yunus & Yusoff, 2020; Othman, Yusoff, Awang & Jupiter, 2016). This group of youth will be the group that will determine the future of the country, therefore it is appropriate for the government, especially Ministry of Youth and National Sports, to pay attention to youth empowerment. Youth is the largest group in today's society that has certain behavioural and cultural characteristics. In Malaysia, the role of youth is to deepen their understanding of politics as it is very important because this group often protest against government policies (Othman, Yusoff, Mohd Shah,

Esa, Ationg, Ibrahim & Raymond Majumah, 2021b). Hence, young people need special attention because they account for almost half of all registered voters in Malaysia (Dollah, Sakke, Wan Hassan, Omar & Jafar, 2018). The leadership and progress of the country in the future depends on the youth today (Ationg, Raymond Majumah, Abu Bakar, Zulhaimi, Muda, Othman & Abang Muis, 2021a).

Youth involvement is needed to choose the party that will rule one's country and this is also clearly seen to determine the fall or progress of political parties and leaders in this country (Ationg, Esa, Ibrahim, Mohd Shah, Yusoff, Othman & Mokhtar, 2021b). After the 2019 General Election (GE), the *Pakatan Harapan* government has enacted a law to lower the voting age from 21 years to 18 years and managed to get support from members of Parliament (Mohamad Noor, 2020). This gives rise to various debates in terms of the acceptance and willingness of 18-year-old voters to participate in electoral politics, their maturity in making political decisions and various other implications that will be faced as a result of the enforcement of Vote-18 (Mohamad Noor, 2020). The challenges of the implementation of Vote-18 and the government's responsibility, especially from Ministry of Youth and National Sports to ensure that young people understand the great responsibility as a voter. Sports events are not only a breeding ground for athletes, but it also plays a role in fostering the spirit of unity between multiple races.

This is because the sport itself never considers the background of race, religion and even belief to participate in various sports events. Sports has also become a medium to interact between supporters, players and also sports management. Sports are able to go beyond the boundary between racial diversity where it focuses participation, appreciation and creates a spirit in achieving a goal for the nation and the country. Unity in the country is an important indicator where sports do not become a political tool but becomes a 'connecting' tool for all its citizens. Sports as a tool for unity should be highlighted in a more organized manner in various areas including schools and residential areas (Kimpa & Salamuddin, 2022).

### Literature Review

The sports industry is an important indicator of a nation's development. This is because the sports industry can contribute to the country's economic growth. Thus, Yusoff, Othman, Mohd Suki & Razak (2015), projected the significance of the economy in the lives of individuals, noting that economics has demonstrated a person's ability to give and form motivation in decision-making so as to profit himself (Yusoff *et al.*, 2015). This economic motive has shown to give an impact in motivating an individual. Economic rewards or rewards given by employers to employees is a profit they receive as a result of the work commitment they give to the employer (Othman, Mohd Suki & Yusoff, 2012). According to Razak, Othman, Yusoff & Mohd Suki (2016), money is the dominant factor in deciding whether to work abroad or in the country. By being able to see the value of different currencies between countries shows that money is very important to strengthen the economic status of an individual, society, and even the country. This point is also supported by the findings of Yusoff, Mohd Kamal, Othman & Abdul Hamid, (2018), study in which 88 percent of respondents agreed that a high salary is the primary motivator for an individual to migrate abroad to work.

As individuals who desire a healthy body and a high IQ, we must adopt a healthy lifestyle, especially by engaging in recreational activities. According to Ibrahim, Abd Razak, Mohamad & Rosman, (2021), to ensure personal health at the best level, aspects of nutrition, physical

health, religious well-being, well-being of social relationships and mental health are elements a lifestyle that needs attention. Sports consist of physical activities performed for various purposes for competition, enjoyment, development, skill, excellence and so on. Sports are now one of the factors in improving the economy and image of Malaysia. However, many important changes are made quickly in order to meet the new conditions that exist due to the presence of Covid-19 (Wiltshire, Supriya & Baker, 2022). Cancelled competitions or shortened seasons, impact game times which may be shortened or played at different times of the year under different conditions making it more difficult to pick a winner. With the transition from the pandemic phase to the endemic phase, now the sports industry is recovering with compliance with standard operating procedures (SOP).

Youth unemployment is currently a growing concern. According to the findings of Mohd Shah, Othman, Yusoff, Ationg, Abu Bakar, Esa, & Abang Muis, (2021), the occurrence of youth unemployment is alarming if it occurs. Youth unemployment in rural areas is caused by limited employment opportunities, low levels of education, reluctance to migrate to areas with more employment opportunities, poor communication skills, and a lack of work experience (Mohd Shah, Othman, Yusoff, Ationg, Abu Bakar, Esa & Abang Muis, 2021b). Government and local authorities, private businesses, non-governmental organisations, and the general public must all play a part in addressing the issue of youth unemployment. According to Ismail (2012), research, there is a gap between the actual performance of graduates and the expected performance of employers. The largest gap between graduates' and employers' performance expectations exists in decision making and problem solving, followed by critical thinking skills and communication and interpersonal skills (Marinsah, Abang Muis, Esa, Othman, Ramlie, Mokhtar & Yusoff, 2021). A negative gap indicates that the actual work performance of graduates falls short of what is expected by employers. Therefore, the government must immediately address the issue of youth unemployment (Othman, Mokhtar, Tham & Yong, 2021c).

Several factors are said to contribute to youth unemployment, including a lack of certain skills, such as English language proficiency, the unmarketability of graduates as a result of employers' low demand for their courses, and the factor of choosing a job (Abu Bakar, Othman, Mokhtar & Esa, 2021). Therefore, the government should formulate a clearer and more specific policy to ensure that youth have access to employment opportunities. In this regard, it is suggested that the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM), Ministry of Human Resources, and Ministry of Youth and National Sports must collaborate to address the issue of youth unemployment. Chellapan and Kenayathulla (2019), discovered that national leaders encourage Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) institutions to compete by providing more competitive programmes and training that meet the needs of the industry, with employment guarantees for graduates. The government established the Wibawa Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) Fund with a 50-million-dollar budget to improve the Technical and Vocational Education (TVET) skills of youth. To ensure graduates' marketability in the labour market, the study demonstrates the significance of acquiring skills training (Othman, I. W. (2021d). The study also indicates that male graduates are given preference over female graduates in the industry due to their superior abilities.

Previous studies have presented research results which support that the voters have a high level of understanding in politics when they are able to analyse and give their views on their power as voters. This in turn succeeded in changing the mood or trend of voters because they no

longer easily believe or are influenced by certain political issues without the need for any information evaluation, thus the discussion of political literacy or youth politics is not a new topic (Esa, Ationg, Othman, Raymond Majumah, Abu Bakar, Mohd Shah & Yusoff, 2021a) According to Zainon, Hashim and Zulkifli (2017), the extent to which Malaysian public university students participate in politics through online participation shows that Universiti Teknologi MARA students have the highest level of online political participation. In addition, the 22- to 25-year-old group is the majority of respondents who are involved in politics, while the 18- to 21-year-old group only involves a small number of respondents. This gives the impression that the young generation aged 18 to 21 years is not interested in participating in politics, in contrast to the age limit of the young generation of 21 years and above who can vote.

The concept of political literacy has been studied by Hopkins and Coster (2018) in a journal article titled *The Levellers, Political Literacy and Contemporary Citizenship Education in England* which in the Crick Report 1998 is related to citizenship in the English National Curriculum. The results of the study found that the subject of political literacy was not emphasized enough in the education curriculum system even though the concept of political literacy is acknowledged to play an important role for students, especially in dealing with political and social problems in England. Meanwhile, Bincof (2018), found that young people in Somalia have a certain interest in political participation, where they believe that strong political leaders represent the will of their people, instead of promoting the interests of the country. The youth of the country are said to be inclined to adopt a multi-party system which is expected to eliminate contemporary tribal politics (Ationg, Esa, Ibrahim, Gansau, Totu & Othman, 2021b).

The Malaysian family initiated by Prime Minister Datuk Ismail Sabri Yaakob aims to recover the nation from the effects of Covid-19 (Sinar Harian, 2021a). The vision of the 'Malaysian Family' is to restore the country from the Covid-19 problem, achieving the status of a developed and high-income country, with the long-term aspiration of withstanding future challenges in achieving that vision based on 'Happiness Success' According to Ramli (2021), who conducted a study entitled Local and Global Challenges Against Malaysian Families Post-Covid-19 Pandemic, there are several local and global challenges that test the integrity and harmony of the Malaysian family. These obstacles must be overcome for the Malaysian Family concept to be successful. To make the Malaysian Family Concept a success, the sports aspect, for instance, must be enhanced. According to Datuk Ahmad Faizal (2021), Ministry of Youth and National Sports has been key in shaping the concept of the Malaysian family (Ramli, 2021). The Malaysian Family concept aims to foster community unity regardless of political ideology and race (Ibrahim, Ationg, Esa, Abang Muis, Othman, Yusoff & Mokhtar, 2021a).

Unity refers to the unification of racial diversity in a country in accordance with the slogan "unity in diversity" (unity in diversity), as well as the recognition of the existence of diversity (Lukin, Esa, Abang Muis, Ationg, Mohd Tamring, Othman & Mokhtar, 2021). Regarding the Reality of Racial Diversity Towards Post-Independence National Unity, A'zmi, Mustafar, Abdul Karim and Nurliana Suhaini (2017), state that community unity is a pillar of harmony and well-being for the people in addition to contributing to the peace and stability of the nation (30). Revitalizing national unity within a community where the concept of a nation state is not yet fully realised presents numerous obstacles. The statement of this scholar explains that the formation of this country is merely the formation of a geographical region and does not bring

the aspiration for national unity to the region. In fact, racial polarisation among the people of Malaya drives the aggressive development of national unity towards the establishment of a nation state (Aziz *et al.*, 2017). Ministry of Youth and National Sports introduced Malaysian Family Aspiration as a commitment to professional and high-performance work that must be implemented immediately so that the results can be demonstrated to the public in a short period of time (Ramli, 2021).

### **Methodology**

The research methodology in this writing uses a qualitative approach based on social science disciplines that require careful observation of aspects that focus more on processes and events. Information from various sources such as primary and secondary sources by using secondary data content analysis methods related to history, law, historiography, sociology and ethnography and partnered with descriptive analytical discussion (Creswell, 2014; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The main perspective of this discussion is to identify the issues that play an important role in the government's efforts to make national sports in line with national development as well as the methods used by Ministry of Youth and National Sports to be able to compete with the sports industry of foreign countries. The use of a qualitative approach in this writing utilizes secondary sources such as research results in journals, scholarly writing, online news sources and public forums. The results of the study are related to the progressive development of the country's sports industry in creating various benefits for individuals, communities, and the country, thereby increasing the total income and the national economy. Therefore, this academic writing specifically uses a literature review by gathering primary and secondary sources to clarify facts based on issues related to real events.

### **Discussion**

There are five current issues that need to be discussed in empowering the youth and strengthening the National Sports industry in Malaysia. This writing covers issues including (i) the potential income of youth and sports, (ii) the status and prospects of the country's sports industry, (iii) Ministry of Youth and National Sports Key Performance Index (KPI) and unemployment among the youth, (iv) Challenges and Empowerment on the implementation of the term youth age limit, and (v) steps to revive the spirit of Malaysian family sports.

#### ***Potential Income of Youth Through the Sports Industry***

Ministry of Youth and National Sports encourages people to venture into the sports industry which is believed to be able to give them a bright future. More Malaysians are getting involved in the sports industry which will definitely improve the quality of sports in our country. This will be able to help the sports industry in our country grow more rapidly and indirectly generate the economy through sports. For example, Ministry of Youth and National Sports believes that football is one of the sports that can be improved by the cooperation of various parties. It can be seen that football is a sport that is the focus in Malaysia. This is because there are several clubs that have successfully competed at a higher level, one of which is the Johor Darul Takzim (JDT) football team that successfully competed at the Asian level. Ministry of Youth and National Sports suggests that good efforts can indirectly help generate personal income as well as boost the country's economic development. It is advised that famous athletes use the right time to 'monetize' with a brand that can bring profit to themselves and the sports they represent.

Following on from that, the ministry also wants to encourage ex-athletes and youth who are still unemployed to get involved in business in the sports industry which actually has the

potential to grow and further ensure their survival. In fact, the welfare of athletes including former athletes can be defended if the sports industry can generate a large income for the country in the future. This has led to the efforts of the Ministry of Youth and National Sports to enact the National Sports Industry Action Plan, which is comprehensive, competitive and aims to make sport arena as the new resource in generating national economic growth in line with developments at the global level (Hamdan & Yusof, 2014). The plan was formulated for the purpose of improving our country's sports industry. This is done in a more comprehensive and competitive manner so as to be able to further develop the sports industry in Malaysia and be able to compete with other countries.

Therefore, the country's Ministry of Youth and National Sports action plan should ensure that the development of the sports industry develops in line with the development of sports at the global level. In accordance to that the Ministry of Finance is in an effort to find a way to help 1,968 sports operators restart their businesses after being reported to have been affected since Jan 1 last year due to Covid-19 (Sinar Harian, 2021b). Accordingly, the aid package has been included in the 2022 Budget to serve as a capital aid as there is no doubt that infrastructure or initiatives in the sports industry in our country are capable of carrying out improvements for the use of the country's athletes. As a result, it can definitely provide comfort to the athletes in training or during the competition. The continuation of the *'Talent Identification and Development'* program saw that the technology used by the involvement from school teachers could help Ministry of Youth and National Sports explore new talents in the country's sports in the future (Sinar Harian, 2021b).

It is also known as the Malaysian Ministry of Education - Ministry of Youth and National Sports MyTID Program through the collaboration between Ministry of Youth and National Sports and the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) where it is expected to help expand the participation of new talent as early as the age of seven who have potential at the grassroots level to be identified earlier and reduce the risk of talent dropping out (Sinar Harian, 2021b). Besides that, Ministry of Youth and National Sports also focuses on the development of the sports industry in providing good returns to athletes and the public who wants to venture into sports. Among the advantages that future athletes enjoy in the sports industry is that they can plan their income while being a national athlete or after retiring from the world of sports (Sinar Harian, 2021b).

In addition, the application of e-sports is one of the sports industries that can contribute to the economic growth of our nation. In its budget for 2022, the government has prioritised the development of electronic sports, which is becoming increasingly popular in our society (Yusoff, Lyndon, Mohd Yunus, Tahir & Abu Hasan, 2020). Therefore, Ministry of Youth and National Sports should also focus on and support the government's efforts to further improve electronic sport (e-sport), as this is one of the sports that contributes to our society's ability to generate more profitable income. One of the recent example on the achievement made by Muhd Fariz Zakaria, also known as Maharaja Soloz, as one of the electronic sports (e-sports) players or athletes who won a bronze medal at the 2019 Sea Games in the Philippines (Yusoff *et al.*, 2020).

In order to make the sports industry one of the country's sources of economic growth, the ecosystem for this sport must undergo enhancements to increase the quality of electronic sports (e-sports) in our nation. Therefore, local entrepreneurs should enter the sports industry, as it

will significantly increase their earnings. These business owners must have knowledge of how to market sports goods. For instance, "Gaming Chair" is one of the electronic sports equipment (e-sports) that players of this sport require (Mohd Yunus & Yusoff, 2021). These electronic sports goods are capable of generating and even enhancing economic growth in our nation. For this reason, participation in the sports industry, such as electronic sports (e-sports), is strongly encouraged to boost our nation's economic growth.

### ***Status and Prospects of the Country's Sports Industry***

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic in Malaysia, all international and domestic competitions and activities have been postponed or cancelled in the interest of public safety and health and to ensure the health of Malaysian athletes is assured (Arumugam *et al.*, 2021). However, the Malaysian sports industry is reviving after a long period of stagnation. Malaysia is currently entering a new phase, transitioning from a pandemic phase to an endemic phase. The operators of facilities such as gymnasiums and other operators urged Ministry of Youth and National Sports to be permitted to operate. The Malaysian Ministry of Health (KKM) and the Minister of National Security (MKN) finally permitted these facilities to operate with indoor and outdoor sports games, but all activities were conducted in accordance with stringent standard operating procedures (SOP) (Berita Harian, 2020a).

Ministry of Youth and National Sports has also taken the initiative by proposing a strict SOP to Minister of National Security (MKN) so that the stadium can be reopened to host sporting events, such as football, so that the public with a keen interest in sports can observe sports up close in an open stadium. This was promised by the Cabinet quartet meeting to refine the SOP, and it is not a problem for this proposal not to be accepted (Berita Harian, 2020a). Following the 2021 Malaysia Cup competition, which was held in September 2021, Minister of National Security (MKN) has permitted spectators to attend and enter the stadium to enliven the event but has established sports SOPs to ensure the public's safety.

Due to the Covid-19 virus pandemic, the Circumstances Around the 2021 Malaysia Cup Final (2021) has reduced the stadium's capacity from 80,000 to 20,000 people in order to comply with the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) established by the National Security Council (MKN)(Berita Harian, 2021a). Before entering the stadium, spectators must scan the MySejahtera QR code with their mobile devices. Those who have received two doses of the vaccine are permitted to attend, with the exception of children under the age of 18 and wearing face masks throughout the duration of the event is required. This action has materialised the desire of spectators to be allowed back into the stadium and to arouse the spirit of patriotism in Malaysians and all citizens when cheering for their respective teams.

### ***Ministry of Youth and National Sports KPI and Youth Unemployment***

Among the issues discussed by the Minister of Youth and Sports is the Ministry of Youth and National Sports target in terms of Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are related to the achievement or performance of an organization and has even become an indicator of the achievement of the implementation of each organization in a certain period of time. In that context, KPI aims to provide measurements on the main factors that will provide long-term success to the organizational and it needs to be measured continuously to see the effectiveness and opportunities for improvement to ensure the excellence of the organization. In relation to that, the short-term focus of the Ministry of Youth and National Sports target is to overcome the problem of unemployment among the youth. This is especially

related to the graduates because even though they have completed their studies up to university level they still fail to get a job to support their daily life (Othman, Mokhtar, Maidin & Moharam, 2021e).

Nowadays, the issue of youth unemployment is becoming more prevalence and this is a big problem that graduates have to face because they face difficulties in making a living on their own and therefore the role of Ministry of Youth and National Sports is needed to strengthen the youth in order to be more competitive and excel. In addition, at this moment the problem of the spread of Covid-19 which is still prevalent in the country has had a great impact on the community causing many people to lose their jobs and facing financial difficulties Yusoff, M. S., Othman, Mohd Shah, Esa, Zulhazmi, Ibrahim & Ationg, 2021). The increasing crisis of the Covid-19 epidemic and infecting Malaysians caused the government to declare a Movement Control Order (MCO) as a measure to break the chain of the Covid-19 pandemic from continuing to spread (Yusoff & Sarifin, 2021). The implementation of this MCO has had a great impact in the employment sector. This is so because the government had to give orders for certain employment sectors to be closed in order to curb the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic.

According to the Department of National Statistics, the closure of businesses during the MCO has caused many companies unable to cover the cost of expenses, including employee wages, to the point that companies are forced to lay off employees (Dorashid, 2020). Thus, facing the turmoil of global future uncertainty, youth must have a competitive attitude and improve existing skills and learn new skills to be able to compete in the job industry (Abu Bakar, Ationg, Mohd Shah, Zulhaimi, Othman, Esa & Mokhtar, 2021b). The problem of unemployment among graduates should be dealt with quickly. However, the Ministry of Youth and National Sports does not have the sources of funds among others to solve the problem. This causes the problem of youth unemployment, especially among graduates, to be difficult to solve or curb. The lack of aid or funding is the main constraint in efforts to reduce the unemployment rate of graduates in the country. Therefore, Ministry of Youth and National Sports views that cross-ministerial cooperation should be done to ensure various programs or activities to open job opportunities and give opportunities to graduates.

Among the ministries that need to cooperate in ensuring that the unemployment problem of these graduates can be overcome immediately are Ministry of Youth and National Sports itself, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Human Resources. With the cooperation between the ministries, various policies and infrastructures have been implemented (Othman, Esa, Ationg, Ibrahim, Lukin & Abdul Hamid, 2021f). This action can immediately reduce the burden of Ministry of Youth and National Sports. Clearer and specific policies need to be formulated to ensure that more job opportunities can be created to help the youth and the government through Ministry of Youth and National Sports, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Human Resources need to find a permanent solution to deal with this issue. Meanwhile, the National Employment Council will be formed to help Malaysians get job opportunities (Berita Harian, 2021b). The National Employment Council needs to act as a coordinator of various initiatives across ministries and agencies to create job opportunities for skill improvement and employee training (Abang Muis, Esa, Ibrahim, Othman, Mokhtar, Ationg & Mohd Shah, 2021). Through that it will help in reducing the unemployment rate of graduates. Hence, the provision of programs or activities such as 'upskilling' or improving skills

and 'reskilling' is important so that these graduates or youth are able to compete in the employment industry (Berita Harian, 2021b).

It was believed that the causes of unemployment among graduates or youths themselves is due to the lack of leadership, skills and experience in the individual himself (Ationg, Esa, Ibrahim, Mohd Shah, Yusoff, Othman & Mokhtar, 2021c). This causes them to lose marketability which is an element interrelated with soft skills which is a requirement that graduates must master in order to adapt in the world of work (Abd Majid & Hussin, 2015). In order to deal with the problem, it is appropriate for the Ministry of Youth and Sports to emphasize the aspect of preparing 'upskilling' and 'reskilling' programs. The term 'upskilling' means a process to improve skills and knowledge while 'reskilling' involves a process to learn new skills and knowledge. The government is allocating a total of RM1 billion for 200 thousand trainees including skills improvement and retraining programs or 'reskilling and upskilling' which will be implemented with a focus on the marketability of workers and job matching (Berita Harian, 2021b). Through this 'upskilling' and 'reskilling' it is certain that it will be able to help graduates to gain new skills and knowledge and further improve their existing skills and knowledge.

Furthermore, the demands of the industry now do not only look at academic qualifications, but rather priority is given to candidates who have high marketability in addition to academic qualifications (Abd Majid & Hussin, 2015). According to Abd Majid and Hussin (2015), quality and skilled graduates should have soft and generic skills such as the ability to communicate, think critically, be able to work in groups, have professional ethics and morals and have leadership characteristics. Therefore, in the efforts of the Ministry of Youth and National Sports to solve the unemployment problem of these graduates, they should provide training programs that can improve the soft and generic skills of the graduates. This will help graduates to have high competitiveness and marketability in the job industry. Therefore, the short-term focus target of Ministry of Youth and National Sports to overcome problems related to youth unemployment, especially in the group of graduates, will be achieved and immediately be able to improve the standard of living of the youth in generating their daily life.

### ***Challenges and Empowerment on the Implementation of the Term Youth Age Limit***

Ministry of Youth and National Sports Malaysia and the Malaysian Youth Council (MBM) are strategic partners in the field of youth development. Both organizations are organizations that achieve their goals through collaboration. The relationship between these two organizations is like brotherhood, there are ups and downs, but the relationship is still solid and cannot be broken. Among the issues that are the latest discussion is regarding the implementation of the term youth age limit which was transferred in Act 668 in 2019 changing the term youth age from 40 years to 30 years (Fadzil, 2020). Currently, the Report of the National Conference of Teenagers in Malaysia explains that there is no interpretation that can be accepted by all parties about the term youth (Department of Education, Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya, pp. 11) (Fadzil, 2020).

There are many interpretations that can be used to define youth, including age, law, and social culture. The term youth usually understand as young people, youth and young people, and the whole process includes men and women (Baharom, 1996, p. 131). The definition of youth based on age is those between the ages of 15 and 35 (Bahari, 1995, p. 1). The United Nations (UN) defines youth as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24. In Malaysia, the National Youth Policy (NBP) 1997 defines youth as a group between the ages of 15 and 40 and the NBP

also emphasizes that youth development activities and programs need to be focused on young people aged 18 to 25 years (Fadzil, 2020). However, in 2015, the previous Minister of Youth and Sports YB Khairy Jamaluddin stated that the DBN that will be implemented in 2018 will limit the age of 15 years to 30 years as the main term of the nation's youth (Fang, Gill & Talib, 2017).

However, BN in GE-14 and the appointment of a new minister in matters related to youth, namely Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman, opened up space for a new policy regarding youth in this country. After the 2019 general election, the *Pakatan Harapan* government enacted legislation in Parliament to lower the voting age from 21 years to 18 years and succeeded in gaining the support of parliamentarians. In 2019, Malaysia passed an amendment to the Federal Constitution in the Dewan Rakyat, reducing the voting age to 18 and this has created new history. The Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2019 received the support of 211 out of 222 members after two split votes, which is more than two-thirds of the approved members of the House of Representatives (Fadzil, 2020). In addition to lowering the voting age of eligible citizens from 21 years to 18 years, the amendment also proposes to reduce the age of members of the Dewan Rakyat and State Legislature for eligible citizens to 18 years and automatically register as voters by the Election Commission (SPR) (Mohamad Noor, 2020).

The voting age is reduced from 21 to 18, the eligibility age of candidates is reduced from 21 to 18, and eligible citizens are automatically registered to vote. From the perspective of protecting the legal rights and promoting the political thinking of citizens and supporting efforts to improve the journey of democracy and the democratisation process in Malaysia, this decision is indeed a very accurate step, despite its perceived tardiness in comparison to other regional countries (Othman, Ibrahim, Esa, Ationg, Mokhtar, Mohd Tamring & Sharif Adam, 2021g). After considering the opinions of various parties, it will be decided whether Vote-18 will be implemented simultaneously or in phases. Periodically, the Election Commission (EC) will inform both the government and the opposition regarding its readiness to fully implement Vote 18. Nonetheless, EC anticipates that the effective date of this amendment, whether implemented simultaneously or separately, will be between 18 and 24 months after September 2019 (Mohamad Noor, 2020).

This is because they need this time to prepare a comprehensive implementation schedule and cost analysis for Vote-18. Among the preparations are enhancing the EC's ICT system and collecting data from other government departments and agencies, including the National Registration Department, the Department of Prisons, the Courts, and the Ministry of Health Malaysia. In addition, amendments to any applicable laws or election regulations, as well as amendments to the State Constitution or State Government Constitution to allow 18-year-olds to run for the State Legislative Assembly, are necessary for the successful implementation of Vote-18 (Fang, Gill & Talib, 2017). The cost of the upcoming elections, election facilities to ensure the comfort of voters, EC manpower requirements and election officers, studies on new voting centres that must be established to accommodate the sudden increase in the number of voters in the upcoming elections, and the determination of the locality of new voters are also issues that require time to prepare for the implementation of Vote-18 (Ibrahim, Ationg, Esa, Othman, Mokhtar & Abang Muis, 2021b).

Lowering the voting age limit from 21 years to 18 years will indirectly increase the number of first-time voters where the first-time voters are individuals who first fulfil their responsibility

to nominate candidates and parties who are deemed worthy to be the leaders of the country's government. Family background and influence determine this first voting pattern. However, the current changes show that the voting results of the first voters, who on average consist of young voters, are more influenced by ideological stances, tendencies towards certain candidates, views about certain parties, local issues and religious issues ((Ationg, Esa, Othman & Mokhtar, 2021d; Mohamad Noor, 2020).

Among the rationales for lowering the voting age limit from 21 to 18 is that it can give young people the opportunity to choose elected representatives who will represent their interests. Lowering the voting age will increase youth participation as responsible citizens in contributing to democracy and national development. In addition, Vote-18 can help youth improve political literacy and maturity through the exposure of the management of national governance that include the relevance knowledge of nationhood as conveyance for national unity, identity and integration (Othman, Esa, Abu Bakar & Mokhtar, 2021h). Political literacy is knowledge and understanding of the political process and political issues, an understanding and knowledge that enables every citizen in a country to carry out their role as a citizen. Thus, it clearly explains that the role as a citizen in carrying out the responsibilities of citizenship in the territory they occupy will only be formed through political literacy. It is clear that the political literacy of voters is important because this creates a harmonious political situation that is beneficial to all parties and in this case, the youth. Clearly, the lowering of the voting age limit from 21 years to 18 years clearly raises various public perceptions.

There are parties who agree and there are parties who disagree with regards to this implementation. There are some who agree with lowering the voting age because they think this will give young people the opportunity to speak up and choose their leaders. However, not all of these 18-year-olds are interested in politics and their lack of understanding of politics will affect political decisions (Othman, Yusoff, Awang & Jupiter, 2016). Besides that, this will interfere with the management of Malaysia's economic development because the 18-year-old group is easily influenced by a political body that is not strong. Apart from that, some parties also think that 18-year-olds are not suitable for politics because they are not mature and need to learn more about politics because at the age of 18, they tend to act recklessly without thinking more intensely. The main question is the level of maturity of young people aged 18 to get involved in politics and as voters.

Therefore, several programs and activities have been planned at the national, state and district levels that aim to produce healthy and successful youth when they realize the importance of the role and responsibility of the youth. Ministry of Youth and National Sports was established in 1964, by the Malaysian Government when it realized the importance of youth in the development of the country in order to lead the empowerment of the youth. Ministry of Youth and National Sports is also responsible for the development and implementation of DBN (Hamid & Hanafiah, 2016). In addition, in the Management of Youth Organizations under the Youth Organizations and Youth Development Act 2007, DBN's main goal is to nurture a harmonious and comprehensive youth, as well as provide a strong spirit and positive moral values. In order to achieve this goal, it emphasizes the development and improvement of skills among youth. In addition, institutions and the media play an important role in applying political understanding to society.

When the age limit is lowered to 18 years, institutions such as schools and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) need to promote a good understanding of politics. School or university experience is seen to have a great impact on the perception about politics (Othman, Jupiter, Awang & Yusoff, 2017a). The government has taken several steps before the implementation of lowering the voting age, among which SPR has also through the Election Academy, implemented education and awareness programs on the democratic process and elections involving target groups as early as primary and secondary school students, institutes of higher education and certain community groups such as the general public and political parties. In addition, Ministry of Youth and National Sports has established a Special Youth Committee consisting of youth leaders and young women of the main political parties to discuss current issues involving youth. Therefore, the mass media should be a channel for delivering good political information to the community (Hamid & Hanafiah, 2016).

On June 23, 2021, the National Principles @Belia Program was made possible by Ministry of Youth and National Sports to continue to nurture the understanding, appreciation and practice of the National Principles in the form of activities and practices that are easily accepted by the current young generation. This program is aimed at discussing issues related to the spiritualization of young people to the spirit of patriotism, nationhood, identity building and the responsibility of the youth to the development and well-being of their beloved country. This program was created especially for young people, because the appreciation of National Principles is fading, and the appreciation by the young people is only moderate, so the call to renew the spirit needs to be implemented. Therefore, the National Principles School organized by KBS should continue, as well as programs that aim to understand the spirit of National Principles, such as programs related to unity, patriotism, volunteerism, and leadership, need to be increased.

### ***The Spirit of Malaysian Family Sports***

The concept of 'Malaysian Family' outlines three main cores and 20 enrichment values that underlie the new government led by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, in order to work together in recovering the country from the problems and effects of the Covid pandemic-19 (Sinar Harian, 2021a). According to the booklet containing brief information on the 'Malaysian Family', the three main cores are Inclusivity, Common Ground and Gratitude. The enrichment of the values associated with the three cores includes instilling a culture of integrity in the family, making the culture of trust a family culture, making the principle of justice the pillar of family strengthening and making consultation a family practise. According to Othman, Yusoff, Mohd Shah, Mokhtar, Abang Muis, Marinsah & Marzuki (2021i), Malaysia's background as a multi-racial, multi-religious country and overflowing wealth that exists as a result of the uniqueness of a plural society is a vital asset that catalyzes the international student diaspora. The vision of the 'Malaysian Family' is to restore the country, attain the status of a developed and high-income nation, and, as a long-term aspiration, resist future challenges in achieving that vision based on 'Happiness Success' (Ramli, 2021).

The idea of the 'Malaysian Family' needs to be fuelled and supported by various parties. In this regard, the field of sports needs to play a significant role in reviving the spirit of the Malaysian Family. Ministry of Youth and National Sports plays an important role in realizing this idea. Sports not only have a positive effect on health but are also able to foster unity in the lives of various races. This field of sports can be an incentive to revive the spirit of the family. This is due to the fact that sports activities, whether competitive or organised, can unite communities

of different races when a sporting event is held, especially popular sports events like football and badminton. In addition to fostering the spirit of unity and fostering a healthy mind and body, sports can also strengthen friendship and goodwill. This is especially true for those of us who live in diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, where sports can promote a healthy mind and body in addition to fostering the spirit of unity.

The involvement of the youth in this field of sports will enhance the international reputation of our country when individuals become athletes who represent the nation in various prestigious sports competitions, such as the Olympic Games, the Thomas Cup, the AFF Suzuki Cup, and many others, such as the national badminton athlete Datuk Lee Chong Wei, a three-time Olympic silver medallist, and Lee Zii Jia, a youth athlete who won the All England's cup championship. Therefore, the field of sports can not only foster the family spirit of Malaysians, but also enhance the country's reputation. Accordingly, sports can unite the population because they are a unifying force that will rekindle the spirit of the "Malaysian Family." For instance, sports activities can both strengthen friendships and instil participants with discipline and integrity.

Consequently, various sporting events must be intensified to increase community participation, particularly among adolescents and young adults. Malaysia, for instance, hosts the Malaysian Sports Games, or SUKMA, every two years, which can promote unity among players and spectators. Participating in the SUKMA sporting event are all Malaysian states and athletes of various races and nationalities. This will strengthen the good relations between each Malaysian state, particularly the peninsular states with Sabah and Sarawak. The National Sports Council (MSN) will continue to organise the SUKMA sporting event prior to the Hanoi SEA Games in 2022. Ministry of Youth and National Sports ensures that efforts to discover talent for the SEA Games, Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, and Asian Games in Hangzhou, China can be carried out. In addition, the country agreed to find a way for all previously agreed-upon events to continue, and the age limit for athletes was raised so that all athletes in training could participate in the Games. This enables the organisation of sporting events such as SUKMA to provide new athletes with opportunities to showcase their abilities. This will also ensure that the Malaysian family concept is fostered.

In reviving the spirit of the Malaysian Family, this sport needs to be given sufficient funding and given encouragement from the government itself. This is to ensure that the quality of the country's sports can be upgraded so that more sports events can be introduced to ensure community involvement in various sports activities that they are interested in. This can be proven when the sports field receives help from the government during the presentation of the 2022 Budget. According to the presentation of the 2022 Budget presented by the Minister of Finance, Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, who announced the allocation of RM10 million specifically to improve the training program for athletes and implement the Para Sports League in preparation for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games (Berita Harian, 2021c). Allocation of RM159 million to build, upgrade and maintain sports facilities throughout the country, RM50 million for the cultivation of an active lifestyle, 'Fit Forever' and National Sports Day (NSD), and RM20 million for the development of national e-sports including RM5 million for creating a Drone Sports Centre of Excellence, (Berita Harian, 2021d). With the available financial resources, this will provide facilities for sports events to be carried out smoothly. Hence, with the availability of sports facilities in each state, it will also encourage community involvement,

especially youth, in engaging in sports activities, thus reviving the spirit of the 'Malaysian Family'.

Thus, in accordance with the national education philosophy, the one-student-one-sport principle can also contribute to nation-building, the development of human capital, and the improvement of educational institutions (Kimpia & Salamuddin, 2022). With this, the field of sports is very significant and has become a tool that will strengthen the unity of the community and thus revive the spirit of the Malaysian family. In addition, the steps that must be taken to revive the spirit of the 'Malaysian Family' include the young generation, i.e., adolescents and youth, so that they are involved in reviving the spirit of the Malaysian family in sports. To bring the concept of the Malaysian Family to life, the youth must be given greater consideration than others. The spirit of the 'Malaysian Family' can be bolstered by encouraging the community, particularly the youth, to participate in sports-related activities that can unite the people.

### Conclusion

The focus of the study is on the influence of the national sports industry's continued development on people's participation in the national sports industry as well as its ability to generate lucrative profits. The sports industry plays an important role in the economic development of the country. This is due to the fact that this industry is influential in ensuring that the total national income is increasing, thereby providing substantial profits to the development of the country's economy. With the improvement of the country's sports industry, there is no doubt that the community outside is paying more attention to the capacity of our country's athletes. Especially for the new world of sports, which is e-sports, is becoming more popular throughout the country. E-sports is very profitable for our society because the amount of income that can be obtained is very high. Therefore, Ministry of Youth and National Sports should be aware to the development of our country's sports industry. The country's sports industry is able to compete with the sports industry of foreign countries if there are many changes or methods to ensure that our country's sports industry grows more advanced.

Our country's economy will increase when our society takes advantage of this world of sports. Thus, this can give benefits to themselves. The greater involvement of our community in the world of sports will have more impact on the national sports industry thus contributing to the good of the national economy. Therefore, the potential for youth and sports income can be achieved by doubling the efforts that need to be implemented by the government, especially by the ministry of youth and sports to ensure the country's economic prosperity is guaranteed. The transition from the pandemic season to the endemic season coincides well for the future of the Malaysian sports industry. Ministry of Youth and National Sports proposes to MKN a strict SOP for the reopening of the stadium so that the public, especially sports fans, can experience the fun and excitement of sporting events as before the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, international sporting events have been unable to be held for a variety of reasons, including the inability of the participating teams to cover expenses, etc. This is very unfortunate, but the government's top priority is the protection and health of all citizens. The government also endeavours to provide the community with an understanding of SOP. Obviously, the government cannot establish SOPs for every situation. Therefore, individuals are reminded that self SOP is the most essential factor. Always pay attention to the use of face masks and maintaining a distance of 1 metre between individuals in order to prevent the spread

of Covid-19. Thus, the public can observe sporting events more comfortably, athletes can compete without restrictions, and organised sports competitions can run smoothly if standard operating procedures are adhered to and not taken for granted.

Therefore, every ministry should have and implement key performance indicators (KPIs) because these KPIs can measure the key factors that contribute to an organization's long-term success. In addition, in order to guarantee youth empowerment, the government must address issues related to graduate unemployment as one of its top priorities. In this regard, not only should Ministry of Youth and National Sports take action, but other government ministries should also collaborate to address the issue of graduate unemployment in the country. Through the collaboration, it will undoubtedly be able to provide graduates with a variety of opportunities, including increased job opportunities and programmes in which they can participate to gain new skills and knowledge. With these preparations, graduates will be able to compete in the job market, thereby decreasing the number of graduates who are unemployed. This will empower the youth, and most importantly, they will be able to generate their own means of subsistence. Hence, the government's ministries should provide cooperation and contributions through interdepartmental channels in order to solve the unemployment problem of these graduates and ensure that the youth are internally competitive.

Overall, the lowering of the voting age limit from 21 to 18 years old, also known as Vote 18, is very significant because young people are the largest group in contemporary society with distinct behavioural and cultural traits. Youth participation is required to select the party that will govern the country, and this is also seen as a clear indicator of the decline or advancement of political parties and leaders in this country. However, there are numerous obstacles to the implementation of Vote 18 that must be overcome prior to its full enforcement. Clearly, the reduction of the voting age from 21 to 18 years raises a variety of public perceptions. Therefore, it is the government's duty to ensure that young voters comprehend the gravity of their responsibilities. Various programmes have been implemented specifically for youth with the goal of fostering greater patriotism, nationalism, and identity.

In order to revitalise the spirit of the Malaysian family in this aspect of sports, politics in the field of sports must cease in order to free the field of sports from political influence that could negatively impact it whereby the political culture in this state's sports associations must end. It is evident that negative political influence can adversely affect sports harmony. Every association in the field of sports requires a powerful individual with a robust network in all aspects, particularly in terms of financial resources. The involvement of political leaders in the field of sports should not make the association a platform for the dissemination of political ideology, as the sports association itself has a mission and objectives that must be met. This is also to ensure that the harmony of all parties can be maintained despite their divergent political beliefs.

Therefore, the concept of the Malaysian family must be promoted in various spheres, particularly in sports. To make the Malaysian Family concept a success, various ministries must assume their respective responsibilities. To ensure that the concept of the Malaysian Family can be realised, all parties must be involved, regardless of their political ideology. Some parties believe that this concept is merely a political slogan symbolising the Prime Minister's leadership, while others remain sceptical about the concept's efficacy in building a society that accepts the concept of the Malaysian Nation (Ramli, 2021). This field of sports must be

expanded so that more people, especially youth, can participate in a variety of sports activities. In order to realise the concept of the Malaysian Family, this is done so that the community can be united through sports. Sports have a high moral value because they can produce a generation that is not only physically and spiritually fit, but also has the capacity to strengthen the well-being of diverse communities by preserving their unity and to participate in the process of celebrating the ethnic diversity of this country. It is not an exaggeration to say that sport is a catalyst for maintaining social harmony, consensus, and cohesion in the existing society. The purpose of sporting events in this country is not only to improve health standards, but also to unite the country's diverse societies.

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