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PARENTAL MOTIVATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ORANG ASLI STUDENTS

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Abstract

The important key factors make the Orang Asli children to not attend schools are lack of parental motivation and low economic status. The Malaysian Ministry of Education continues to make some changes to improve the educational system so that no one will be left behind in achieving Vision 2020. Among the significant changes are serious attentions to improve the education level of the Aboriginal students through the Malaysia development plan. Hence, this research was designed to study the relationship between parental motivation and academic achievement among the Orang Asli students in Cameron Highlands District, Pahang. The descriptive analysis, inferential statistic, and t-test were applied to analyze the data collected. The analysis indicates a significant correlation between parental motivation and academic achievement of the respondents showing that the parental motivation contributes positively to academic achievement of the Orang Asli children. Accordingly, there is no a significant correlation between parental motivation of boys and girls and their academic achievement. The findings of the present study suggest that the academic achievement of form four and form five of the Orang Asli students in Cameron Highlands District are low.

Keywords: Orang Asli, parental motivation, academic achievement.

1. Introduction

Education is considered as the foundation towards modern development. Therefore, the Malaysian government is committed to expand the field of education to ensure all Malaysians receive proper education. Educational development in the country continues to see rapid growth, the Malaysia Ministry of Education introduced several new policies to improve the Malaysia educational system. Among the significant policy changes are; the exam-based system such as Primary School Assessment (UPSR) which has been replaced with Primary standard Curriculum (KSSR) and the Secondary School Assessment (PMR), also has been replaced with School Based-Assessment (PBS).

In addition, Malaysian Government has given serious attention to improve the educational level of the Aboriginal students. This responsibility is reflected through the development of a comprehensive education plan in each Five-Year Development Plan and the Long Term Development Plan of Malaysia (EPU / UNDP, 2011). However, the Orang Asli communities remain to some certain extent at side lined in this development. A critical factor that often determines success and failure in learning

among the aboriginal communities is lack of parental motivation to study (Azizah Awang 2008; Melayu 2007; Nicholas 2005; 2006 Utusan).

Family economic status plays an important role in determining the academic success of their children. According to Sa'ibah (2000), family economic status is a strong base for academic achievement of the children. When financial status of a family is established, children are more motivated to strive for learning requirements and consequently, improve their family position academically and financially. Though, there are also children from poor families who succeed academically and achieve good positions in the public and private sectors. The respondents have a high level of awareness about the importance of education and its ability to change individual socio-economic living standards.

The dropout rate among aboriginal students in Malaysia is due to poverty, lack of educational aid, culture and pedagogy differences, and parental perceptions. Based on the Secondary School Assessment (PMR), most of the indigenous students obtained weak exam results (Azizah 2008; Nicholas 2006).

In line with the above, this study focused on parental motivation to improve academic achievement of the Orang Asli students, form four and five in three selected schools, Cameron Highlands, Pahang, Malaysia. To achieve this, the research has identified three specific objectives, they are: 1) to investigate the relationship between parental motivational support and academic achievement of the Orang Asli students. 2) to compare the academic achievement scores of boys and girls. 3) to examine the differences in parental motivation of boys and girls.

Further, several studies have focused on education among Aboriginal communities (Johari and Selma 2007; Abdul Razak and Zalizan 2009). However, research related to parental motivation and academic achievement of the Orang Asli students is limited. Thus, this study was conducted to bridge the gap.

2. Methodology

The steps used in this research to get the intend result are six, namely; the research design, research location, population and sampling, research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis. The population in this study consisted of form four and five students in three secondary schools in Cameron Highlands. All these schools are within the state of Pahang. For the purpose of this study, a purposive sampling was used to select a total of 90 students, form four and five, from the three chosen schools.

The researchers used a self developed questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire is generally divided into four parts; a) students' information, b) family background, c) 10 parental motivation items, and d) students' academic achievement (PMR). The copies of the questionnaire were distributed to selected schools. Thus, a total number of 90 students of the Orang Asli in Cameron Highlands participated in this study, 37 male and 53 female. The Information obtained from the Orang Asli students in Cameron Highlands, Pahang was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistic through the use of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.

3. Findings on parental motivation and academic achievement

According to results of the t-test, there was no a significant difference between the achievement scores of boys (mean = 2.12; SD =.79) and girls (mean= 2.10; SD =.81), $t(88) = .05$, $p=.95$) see table 1. The null hypothesis one predicted that there is no a significant difference between academic achievement of boys and girls (Ho1) was supported by the findings of this study, therefore, the hypothesis was not statistically rejected. This indicates that the academic achievement of boys and girls were not different significantly.

Table 1. Academic achievement between boys and girls

Student	M	SD	Mean Differences	Df	t-value	p
Boys	2.12	.79	0.009	88	0.05	0.95
Girls	2.10	.81				

Further, results of the t-test analysis revealed no a significant difference between parental motivation of boys (mean = 3.21; SD =.36) and girls (mean = 3.19; SD =.47) $t(88) = .15$, $p=.88$) see Table 2. Therefore, the researchers failed to statistically reject the null hypothesis (Ho2: There is no a significant difference between the parental motivation of boys and girls).

Table 2. Parental motivation according to gemder

Student	M	SD	Mean Differences	Df	t-value	p
Boys	3.21	.36	0.014	88	0.15	.88
Girls	3.19	.47				

According to table 3, Pearson correlation result shows a significant, positive, and moderate relationship between academic achievement and parental Motivation, $r=0.356$, $p<.01$. The null hypothesis is rejected. This means there is a significant relationship between academic achievement and the parental motivation of the respondents.

Table 3. Correlation result

Variables	Dependent Variables
	<i>Academic achievement</i>
Parents motivation	0.356**

$p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

4. Discussion

Findings of this study contradict results of some researchers (Pajares and Johnson 1996) which showed that girls are more high in reading self-efficacy than boy. Boys and girls are also said to use different learning styles (Picou, Gatlin - Watts & Packer, 1998). The findings of the review also found that female students were more positive and give more serious attention to school work than male students (Fennema and Sherman 1978 ; Fennema and Tartre 1985 ; Halpern 1992).

In Malaysia, the excellent performance of female students is manifested with a laziness attitude of boys and with a total enrollment of female students in institutions of higher learning (IPTA). Although, there seems to be an imbalance in the enrolment

number of boys and girls in public and private institutions, however, the researchers hope that there are ongoing efforts from the ministry of education to improve the academic achievement of both of them.

In this study, there is no a significant difference between parental motivation of boys and girls. Also, the study shows that the parental motivation between boys and girls remains low. This is because Orang Asli parents have a little knowledge about the importance of their children motivation. Breakdown in family roles affects the education of their children as well as the family structure often influenced its economy efficiency and parent achievement (Rozumah 2001).

Further, this study shows a positive relationship between academic achievement and parental motivation of the respondents. The family institution was the earliest and most important institution responsible in the formation of the individual (Mustafa 1989). As such, parents who motivate their children are actually assisting them in achieving good examination results. The magnitude of motivation the parents provide for the children build their characters. Feeling the love from parents can develop obedience and loyalty and invariably facilitate greater performance of children academically and socially.

5. Conclusion and suggestions

Based on the findings of this study, the conclusion can be made here that the government, teachers, and society in general must work together in improving the positive attitudes of the aboriginal parents to aware the importance of their children's education. This is because parental motivation for academic achievement of their children remains weak. Complete infrastructure alone is not enough, without the maintenance and ongoing technical assistance, the government's intention to reduce the digital gap between aboriginals and other communities is difficult to achieve. Parents are responsible to ensure that their children get proper education. Parents' positive and negative attitudes will directly or indirectly affect their children's upbringing, attitudes, education, interests, and economic status.

In order to improve the academic achievement of aboriginal students and to compete with other communities in the country, the Program Kelas Dewasa Ibu Bapa Murid Orang Asli dan Pribumi (KEDAP) and Politicians should pay serious attention to the Program Pembangunan Tamadun Masyarakat Orang Asli (PETAMA). The program is designed to produce the aboriginal leaders in order to be a part of Malaysian mainstream societies. In addition, the PETAMA should operate in the heart of the aboriginal communities. Finally, there must be a link between the PETAMA and other departments involved, such as the Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli (JHEOA) and Badan Sukarelawan (NGOs). Such inter-collaboration effort is important to raise awareness among the Orang Asli parents, so that they can effectively participate in their children's academic improvement in line with other Malaysian communities.

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