

Exploring the School Dropout Factors among Indigenous Students in Melaka

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to determine the most contributing factors that influence indigenous student's dropout from school in Alor Gajah, Melaka. It is specifically focused on the Indigenous students who came from nine schools in Alor Gajah Melaka area. This study employed quantitative approach and the data was analysed using the multiple regressions test. Education is one of the important aspects in achieving the Vision 2020 so that no one will be left behind in the modern development. Hence, it is the responsibility of the authority agencies to provide equal opportunity for every one of her citizens. In this context, if the indigenous people still dropout and left behind, it will be the problems for Malaysia to achieve the status of the developed country. This study found that there is a significant relationship between level of income, parent's education background, infrastructure and basic amenities influencing Indigenous students to drop out from school. Indeed, parent's education background revealed to be the most dominant factor in influencing Indigenous students to drop out from school. However, the findings do not generalize to every Indigenous students in Malaysia and only applicable to Alor Gajah, Melaka area. Further research needs to be done to add the distances as the independent variables to see the relationship of Indigenous students drops out from school.

Keywords: Indigenous students; school dropout; secondary school; influences

Introduction

Malaysia is a country that rich with multi-ethnic who practiced many unique cultures. The majority of the ethnic group is Malay, Chinese and Indians. Meanwhile, Malaysia also has a uniqueness of a minority group which is Orang Asli. Orang Asli which is known as Indigenous people is those who lived in the Peninsular of Malaysia. The Orang Asli is a Malay term which translated from the "original people" or "first people". These Indigenous people consist of 18 sub-ethnic groups that are generally classified for official purpose. They are divided into three tribes which are Negrito, Senoi and Proto-Malay. It was estimated that there are 869 Indigenous villages throughout the Malaysia and about 322 are in remote areas (Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli, 2014).

As the citizens of Malaysia, Indigenous people were also granted the same right as another ethnic group in terms of development, social and education. The government

has set up the Department of Orang Asli Development (JAKOA) in order to protect the welfare and manage the development of these Indigenous people in our country. Today, some of the villages were equipped with the basic facilities such as resettlement projects, access to education and health facilities (Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli, 2014). In this context, it is the responsibility of the JAKOA to ensure that Indigenous community comes together into the mainstream of the national economic development and focus to improve their quality of life through educational programmes and other program such as land development, economic and social development, resettlement, provision of infrastructure and public amenities, training and also human development (Nicholas, 2005).

Generally, the government has given serious attention to improving the education level among the Indigenous people. EPU/UNDP (2011) reported that this responsibility reflected through the development of comprehensive education plan in each Five Year Development Plan and Long Term Development Plan of Malaysia. According to Ibrahim (2016), in Malaysia Five Year Plan, government strategically planned to increase human resources through improving the education systems and learning facilities. Likewise, education is also one important indicator of the National Key Results Area (NKRA) that launched in 2009. With regard to NKRA, the government had targeted that by 2012, all students would acquire the basic reading and writing skills after 3 years of attending school. In addition, by 2015, the government also targeting that all children in this country to have at least primary school education and Indigenous peoples was not to be left behind in the focus of educational development. Hence, enormous effort has been taken since independence up to now just with the aimed to improve the standard of formal educational especially to those who live in rural areas.

This effort was taken by JAKOA who are the development agent to execute the government's short term and long term development plans (Zainal, 2012). JAKOA (2011) reveals that among the programs to solve these problems are the introduction of the specific strategies and incentives. For example, Education Assistance Scheme, 2010 Educational Development Action Plan for Orang Asli Community, Friendly Teaching Programs, Mini Hostels Program, motivational programs as well as special awareness programs for Indigenous parent. Besides that, one of continues effort of the government is to bring along Indigenous people in achieving their standard of living.

The Prime Minister, Dato' Seri Najib Abdul Razak stated that the Indigenous people would not be left out of the National Development agenda in ensuring that they also could enjoy the changes through development mainly in education (The Sun Daily, 2014). The government has allocated almost RM6, 770,826,300 in 8th and 9th Malaysian Plan to be distributed directly to the Indigenous students in term of stipends,

bursaries and scholarship, schools supplementary food program, textbook loan schemes and tuition classes. In addition, government pursuant in 10th Malaysia Plan to allocate a budget to increase their access in education. Thus, government also adopt the Special Mode School to minimize the dropout rate in secondary schools due to their constraints of living in the remote area that far away from their school (Economic Planning Unit, 2016).

However, from the data collected by JAKOA (2014) showed the increasing rate of school dropout although education assistances have been provided for them. According to Tamanna (2014), Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD) and Ministry of Education (MOE) tracked the cohorts in order to gauge how many students complete their primary or secondary schools and how many leave the conventional schooling system. In the year of 2011, there is about the 30 % of the Indigenous student who failed to complete their study. These problems have lead in the increasing of the Indigenous student who dropout from school, which lead them to live in poverty.

Besides that, based on the Orang Asli Strategic Development Plan (JAKOA, 2011), the percentages of Indigenous students who passed the public examination in primary and secondary schools was also very small rather than other races. For examples, only 880 of the Indigenous students have completed their tertiary education between 1971 and 2010. Moreover, problem of drop out is higher in the transition from Year 6 to Form 1, which is between the ages of 11 to 12 years and within the subsequent year in secondary school. This was affirmed by the data produced by the Education Planning and Research Division (EPRD), Ministry of Education that shows the transition rate from primary to secondary in 2012 was 90.42 % yet little changed from 2003 rate of 90.31 %.

In short, thousands of students are still dropping out from the school system. Many literatures on dropout issues noted that dropping out is not a one-off occurrence but it is a process and students end discontinuing school due to a variety of push and pull factor. Therefore this study aims to determine the contributing factors of Indigenous students' at secondary level dropout from school that very much gave an impact towards the development of the human capital in Malaysia.

The Application of Social Efficacy Theory

In order to determine the contributing factors of the Indigenous students towards dropout behaviour the Social Efficacy Theory has been applied. This theory has been used to build up the framework in identifying the most influencing factor on Indigenous students drop out from school. Self-efficacy is “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura,

1997). Self-efficacy serves as a model to better understand the factors influencing students to drop out of school. Through the Bandura's self-efficacy theory, student's perception of their own abilities towards dropout from school behaviour was examined.

The social efficacy theory determined that an individual holds his or her ability and outcome on his or her effort influencing how he or she will behave. According to Bandura (1997), efficacy beliefs depend mostly on early experience at home. In this context, self-system is believed to provide an individual with the capacity to adjust his environment and give influenced to his subsequent performances. For example, feeling efficacious helps an individual to put more effort and act in an appropriate manner which becomes necessary to maintain high achievement. In relation to this, student's motivation belief may affect his or her approach in learning activities and the academic outcomes (Schunk, 1996).

Thus, for this study, two elements were adopted from Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory that could influence the dropout issues among indigenous students in Melaka. First is the personal factor that consists of level of income and parents education background. Second element is the environmental factor that consists of infrastructure and basic amenities. Further discussion will be highlighted in the next session.

The Literature Review

Indigenous people have been living in isolation for many years. They have been deprived of proper education and other areas. Education is one of the key mechanisms to improve the quality of life, especially for the Indigenous people (Mohd Asri, 2012). Although the number of Indigenous students entered the primary school and secondary schools have increased, the dropout rate among them is still high. According to Kamaruddin and Jusoh (2010), about 62 % of Indigenous student drop out from school every year and about 94 % not completed their secondary school. This situation has become worse when there is about only 43% to 59 % of Year 6 students of the Indigenous student pass to enter the secondary school compared to 78 % at the national level.

However, according to Noriati, et al. (2011), lack of interest in learning among the Indigenous community is the related to their general characteristics. The indigenous people known as a very humble, shy, passive and not like being forced to do something, enjoys the freedom of movement, sensitive, love the physical activity and like to work in the group rather than an individual (Noriati, et al. 2011). Besides that, indigenous people were less resilient and have the short memory. Thus, they can easily get bored and lose the attention in learning. However, lack of exposure and lack of awareness about education is still low.

According to Tikly and Barrett (2010), to ensure the indigenous people experiencing the quality of the education, there are several factors should be addressed by the government and NGO's such as education policies and the infrastructure of the school. This is important for the students to have a better and quality studies time. In achieving this, it is important for all, especially teachers and the community get to understand the policies implemented by the government. Inadequate of school infrastructure restricts the student opportunity to access to the education which also negatively affects the attendance of the students (Shadreck, 2013; Kamarulzaman and Osman, 2008). For example, limited classroom space is more likely will affect the performance and achievement of the students to participate in classrooms. This situation discourages Indigenous parents to send their children to school.

These also proven by the studies done by Kamarulzaman and Osman (2008) that average Indigenous students had to travel 1 kilometre to 15 kilometres to go to school. Studies found that public transportation is available to Indigenous students such as school buses and trucks. However, the operation of transport services provided is still unsatisfactory in terms of quality, quantity and student service. These also supported by the Department of Orang Asli (JAKOA), 31.7 % of the Indigenous people village located in the rural, 61.45 % near the city and 1.38 % in the city (Zainal Abidin, 2010; Sigei, 2014). Some of them were enjoying the facilities through various projects implement by the government. For example, village resettlement, roads, electricity and water supply.

Generally, some research indicates that educational level of household members is significantly influential in determining whether and how long children access to the schooling. Ersado (2005) stated that parental education is the most consistent determinant of child education. In this context, few reasons were highlighted and put forward for the link between parental education and student retention in school. Many research shows that students from families where their parents less educated systemically perform worse in school rather than students whose parents have the education (Kainuwa and Najeemah, 2013).

According to Pryor and Ampiah (2013), the level of highest educational background by the family member is found to influence enrolment rates. Undeniably it contributes to the regularity in attendance positively and dropout among student negatively. Pryor and Ampiah (2013) also stated that enrolment rates are the highest 92% in rural area and 97% in the urban area in the household with some member having the degree from the university. Additionally, lack of interest in pursuing studies among students is also one of the main factors that caused the increasing numbers of school dropout problems. This is supported by Boyle, et al.(2010) on their studies. Based on their reports, some parents were reluctant to send their children to the school because they thought there would be no job at the end of it and as such, limit the returns on their investment.

Based on the above discussion it were found that the issues of dropout among indigenous was not a unique issues but it also applied to other nations as well. However there was too little research that has been highlighted the most influence factor that contributed to the school dropout among indigenous students in Malaysia. The application of the social efficacy theory as a basis of the discussion in this research indicated a favourable to this study.

Methodology

This study conducted quantitative study, and was cross-sectional. The questionnaires have been distributed to investigate the factors of Indigenous students' dropout from schools in Alor Gajah, Melaka. This study involved the indigenous students as respondents in 8 schools in Alor Gajah, Melaka. The schools consist of SMK Sultan Mansor Shah, SMK Sungai Udang, Kolej Vokasional Datuk Seri Mohd Zin, SMK Seri Pengkalan, MRSM Kem Terendak, SMK Durian Tunggal, SMK Sultan Alauddin and SMK Tebong.

In order to determine the sample size, the Krejcie and Morgan model has been used to define the sample size for this study. Based on this model, the proper sample size for this study was 169. The stratified random sample requires the population to be divided into the smaller group called strata (Ahmed, 2009). Then, the random sample can be taken from each stratum or group. For this study, the researcher used stratified random sampling by divided the sample according to the district such Jasin, Alor Gajah and Melaka Tengah. Then, choose the district that has the largest number of the students. Hence, this study was focusing on Proto Malay ethnics and specified on Temuan tribes which are the largest tribes in Melaka (Jabatan Kemajuan orang Asli, 2016). The total number of Indigenous people in Melaka is 1865 (Jabatan Kemajuan orang Asli, 2016).

In this study, the descriptive analysis was used to analyse the data of the respondents. The result from descriptive analysis such as frequencies count, percentage, means and standard deviation allow the researcher to make analysis and answering the objective of this study. Besides that, this study used SPSS to test the goodness of the data.

Table 1
Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Reliability Statistics Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Indigenous Dropout from School	.792	7
Level of Income	.819	9
Parents Education Background	.759	9
Infrastructure and Basic Amenities	.736	9

Table 1 shows the reliability test of the instrument that been used in this study had a strong value. The result indicated Cronbach's alpha of 0.819 for level of income, 0.759 for parents education background, 0.736 for infrastructure and basic amenities. Based on the result, the values indicated as strong value and consistent reliability as the Cronbach's Alpha are above 0.6 are considered as acceptable and the value above 0.8 preferable (Pallant, 2011).

Findings and discussion

Profile of respondents

Table 2 shows that from 169 respondents, 50.3% were females and 49.7% were males. The majority of the respondent is been range in the age range of 16 to 18 years which is 61.5% and only 38.5% age 13 to 15 years. The breakdown by respondents by form or level as 4.1 % were Form 1, 15.4% were Form 2, 18.9% were Form 3, 16.6% were Form 4, 35.5% were Form 5 and 9.5 % were Form 6. Total siblings showed 58.6 % of them have 3 to 4 siblings, 28.4% have more than 5 siblings and 13% of respondents have at least 1 to 2 siblings.

A total of 43.8 respondents reported a monthly income of RM1001 to RM2000, 30.2% had a monthly income of RM2001 to RM3000, 11.2% had a monthly income less than RM1000, 10.1 % had a monthly income from RM3001 to RM4000, 3.6% had a monthly income more than RM5001 and 1.2 % had a monthly income from RM4001 to RM5000. Highest education reported by respondents showed 39.1% had an SPM, 32% had a Certificate, 18.3% have no education background and 10.7% had bachelor degree.

Table 2
Summary the Profile of Respondents

Respondents Profile		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	84	49.7
	Female	85	50.3
Age	13-15	65	38.5
	16-18	104	61.5
Form	1	7	4.1
	2	26	15.4
	3	32	18.9
	4	28	16.6
	5	60	35.5
	6	16	9.5
Siblings	1-2	22	13.0
	3-4	99	58.6
	More than 5	48	28.4
Income	Less than RM1000	19	11.2
	RM1001-RM2000	74	43.8
	RM2001-RM3000	51	30.2

	RM3001-RM4000	17	10.1
	RM4001-RM5000	2	1.2
	More than RM5001	6	3.6
Level of Education	None	31	18.3
	SPM	66	39.1
	Certificate	54	32
	Degree	18	10.7
School Attendance	Very often	14	8.3
	Fairly often	21	12.4
	Sometimes	113	66.9
	Almost Never	20	11.8
	Never	1	0.6
Parents School Attendance	Very often	4	2.4
	Fairly often	30	17.8
	Sometimes	95	56.2
	Almost Never	36	21.3
	Never	4	2.4

The profile shows that of how frequent the indigenous students attended school, 66.9 % of them sometimes attend the school, 12.4% of them fairly often attend the school, 11.8 % of them almost didn't attend the school , 8.3% of them very often and 0.6 of them never attend the school. Then, in terms of how often did their parents attend to school, 56.2% of parents sometimes attend school, 21.3 % of parents almost never attend school, 17.8 % parents fairly often attend school and 2.4% of them very often attend school.

Table 2 indicated that parent's education background as the most influential factor in influencing Indigenous student drop out from school as it has the highest beta value compared to other three variables. Results of the findings showed that parent's education background has Beta value of 0.273, t-value of 3.649 and the significant value less than 0.05 ($p=0.000$). In addition, the second most influential factor of Indigenous people drop out from school is infrastructure and basic amenities with the Beta value of 0.074 and the t-value of 1.075. Besides that, it was also found that there is the significant relationship between infrastructure and basic amenities with Indigenous student drop out from the school where $p=0.000$. Furthermore, these analysis also demonstrated there is a significant relationship between level of income with Indigenous student drop out from school as significant value of $p=0.000$.

The analysis of the data found that level of income, parent's education background, infrastructure and basic amenities have influences towards the Indigenous student dropout from school. Indeed, the findings of the study has found that parents education background is the most dominant factor influencing Indigenous student drop out from school, follow by infrastructure and basic amenities as the most influencing factor and third is level of income as the last factor that may give influence on Indigenous drop out from school.

The findings of these study have very much relevant with Ragnhid (2011) study that in the context of parents education background emphasized on formal education someone has completed. It means that social position or culture that someone comes from that will influences Indigenous students drop out from school. As referred Bandura's Theory, when students don't get support from their parents to go to the school, they will withdraw from school due to lack of motivation. The study done by Sharifah et al (2011) has proven that there is a significant between parents education background and Indigenous student drop out from school and claimed that most of the Indigenous parents did not receive any formal education while only a small part of them just getting an education up to primary school and it solely determined by level of parents education background that causes high illiteracy among the parents cause them unable to assist their children in education.

The Indigenous students would feel discourages to enrol in school to finish their study. This has reaffirmed by the study done by Ersado (2005) who found that parental education is the most consistent determinant of child education. Additionally, Brown and Park (2012) reviewed that, from their study at China has shown that each additional year's parent education, the probability of his or her children drop out from the school falls by 12% to 14 %. This number reflected the levels of education among the parents play an important role in curbing the increasing number of students who drop out from school.

This study indicated that the low of parent educations lead to some negative impact. Firstly, low parental and family educations cause negative affected Indigenous experiences of and attitudes towards education system. Secondly, it reduces the capacity of Indigenous parents and families to engage actively with the education system. Besides that, it reduced parental involvement in school-based activities and decision making. Last but not least, it limits the capacity of Indigenous parents and families to support their children in education and employment. In short, Indigenous parents that illiterate could not provide the right guidance to their children as to their studies. This situation leads them to unable to see the significant between education and daily life.

With regards to infrastructure and basic amenities factors this study has a similar finding with Sharifah et al. (2011). They found that lack of facilities has the significant relationship on causes of Indigenous student dropout from school. In this context, the unavailability of classroom facilities remains the main problems in delivering the quality of the education system either in primary or secondary schools. The context of infrastructure and basic amenities that being emphasized in this study is referred to classroom facilities such as desks, chairs, blackboard, LCD and furniture as it lead Indigenous student drop out from school. Besides that, it was also referred to the public facilities such as village resettlement, roads, electricity and water supply.

As referred to the Bandura's Social Efficacy Theory, infrastructure and basic amenities is one of the elements in the social factors that influence Indigenous students to dropout from school. Through the Bandura's Social Efficacy Theory, insufficient classroom facilities negatively affect the attendance of the students. The study done by Shadreck (2013); Kamarulzaman and Osman (2008) have proven that there is the influence between lack of classroom facilities and Indigenous student drop out from school. It is reaffirmed from the studies of Porteus et al.(2002) who found out the distance to school being the important element in access to the education system.

Even though, the findings of this study showed that level of income has the weak influence with student dropout from school, This result was in line with previous studies conducted by Cardoso and Verner (2009) who stated that household income significantly relates to some factors such as when the student start school, how often they attend the school, whether they have temporarily withdrawn and also when or if have the potential to drop out from school. Thus, it was reaffirmed that level of income play significant attributes that influencing Indigenous students to drop out from school.

Sharifah et al (2011) stated that dropout is a problem that disproportionately affects those who are from the lower socio-economic status background and those who are hardest to reach which is Indigenous people. This happened to the Indigenous people in Malaysia. These parents do not have a proper income as compared to the other native. These findings also consistent with studies done by Salleh and Ahmad (2009) who found that most of the Indigenous parents were still depending on forest product as their source of income. Nicholas (2005) studies positively reveal that Indigenous parents did not send their children to school due to the school year starts in early January and the month of November and December because this month are the wettest months which recorded the month with the lowest income. It is also the months when it is difficult to get the cash incomes. It is because at this period, those who rely on rubber found the yield is usually low.

Meanwhile, collection and sales of forest product such rattan is dangerous and not in demand. Thus, January is a time when Indigenous people that rely on rubber and forest product expected at a time when there is very little opportunities for cash incomes. In the absence of any government subsidiary or financial assistance, Indigenous peoples would have to divide out recurring expenses such as school fees, transportation, meal allowances and curricular activity. Kamarulzaman and Osman (2008) through their findings stated that none in the community had ever been to school due to the costs involved even though the school was about 7 kilometres from the village.

In addition, Namukwaya and Kibirige (2014); Boyle, et al, (2010); Hunter and May (2011) agreed that there were a relationships between poverty and student drop out from school . In fact the data from Department of Orang Asli Department (JAKOA) showed that the total population of Indigenous people in 2010 is 178, 197 people and it was estimated that 50.09 % of them was categorized as poor and 32.34 % is considered as absolute poverty. This reaffirms the level of income puts pressure on the student that lead them drop out from the school. As related to the Bandura's Theory, personal factors consists level of income is one of the potential factors that might lead students to drop out from school due to due to the poverty. These evidences were very much connected to the fact that poorer students are more likely to drop out from school.

Therefore, this study found that lack of parent education background is the main influence for Indigenous students to dropout from school. Thus, appropriate initiative needs to consider by the government to curb this problem so that it would bring along Indigenous people in achieving their standard of living. In this context, in order to increase social mobility and improve the quality of life for the Indigenous community, this issue needs to be examined more closely. So that, education is one of the important element to make sure they can live in better life.

Conclusion

Based on the study conducted, the level of income, parents education background, infrastructure and basic amenities influencing Indigenous students to drop out from school. Indeed, parent's education background revealed to be the most dominant factor in influencing Indigenous students drop out from school. It means that, the higher the parents' education background, the higher student's access to education, higher attendance rates and low dropout rates. In this context, they are also able to monitor and supervise their children's academic progress and performance.

Through the finding of this study, the new improvised approaches should be created and implemented as to reduce the number of drops out among Indigenous students in school. So that, government and all related parties can be more focused on increasing the number of Indigenous students enrol in secondary school because it is the only way to help this community from away from poverty. Simultaneously, educational program for community such heads of families and women folk should be enhanced. Perhaps by having considered all those issues, it can give some insight toward certain measures that can be taken by the government and all related parties in order to improve the education development and the quality life of Indigenous people.

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