



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS AMONG CHILDREN ATTENDING
SAIDINA SMART FAMILY PROGRAMME: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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**Bachelor of Science with Honours
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**ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS AMONG CHILDREN ATTENDING SAIDINA SMART
FAMILY PROGRAMME: A QUALITATIVE STUDY**

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This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science
with Honours (Cognitive Science)

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ABSTRACT

Adjustment and adaptation are important variable that strongly related with education. This research study the adjustment problems among 11 years old students that attending Saidina Smart Family Programme. The specific objectives of this research are to study the curriculum adjustment problem, to study the instructional adjustment problem, to study the environment adjustment problem, and to study the time management adjustment problem among the children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme. The current trends of education had been changed nowadays with increasing number of education center, coaching classes, tuition center, motivation center can so on. These changes will affect the student's academic performance, psychological problem and other issues related such as overloaded academic work among the children. These results highlight the specific adjustment problems among the all of six informants who attending Saidina Smart Family Programme.

Keywords: adjustment, curriculum, instruction, learning environment, time management.

ABSTRAK

Penyesuaian dan adaptasi merupakan tunjang yang penting di dalam kehidupan mahupun pendidikan. Kajian ini mengkaji masalah menyesuaikan dikalangan pelajar berumur sebelas tahun yang menghadiri kelas tambahan di Rancangan Keluarga Bestari (Saidina Smart Family Programme). Objektif khusus kajian ini ialah untuk mengkaji masalah penyesuaian kurikulum, masalah penyesuaian arahan, masalah penyesuaian persekitaran dan masalah penyesuaian pengurusan masa dikalangan pelajar. Perubahan hala pendidikan masa kini telah berubah dengan peningkatan pusat pendidikan, kelas bimbingan, pusat tuisyen, pusat motivasi dan lain-lain. Perubahan ini memberi kesan terhadap prestasi pelajar, masalah psikologi dan isu berkaitan seperti kerja akademik yang sarat di kalangan kanak-kanak. Dapatan kajian menekankan pada objektif khusus mengenai masalah keenam-enam informan yang menghadiri kelas tambahan di Rancangan Keluarga Bestari (Saidina Smart Family Programme).

Kata kunci: penyesuaian, kurikulum, arahan, persekitaran pembelajaran, pengurusan masa.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Adjustment in learning is the most important element needed by students. Some student will easily expose to a lot of distraction and unpleasant environment during the learning period. Many students will face this problem due to fail of finding and adopting modes of behaviour suitable to the environment or the change in the environment. The child adjustment is determined by many factors, both personal and environment in nature. All human beings possess the ability to stand back and observe themselves. Now in the field of education it seems to have become very important, as many other factors seem to depend on this reflective quality (Yellaiah, 2012).

Adjustment can be defined as a process wherein one builds variations in the behaviour to achieve harmony with oneself, others or the environment with an aim to maintain the state of equilibrium between the individual and the environment. However, adjustment is defined as a process in psychology. This is because learning is part of cognitive processes that include understanding, thought, experience, and so on.

Hence, when the adjustment is related with additional education like tuition center, education center, extra curriculum activities and so on, some of student might have their own perspective and interest. Imagine how the 12 years old students wake up at 6am every day and going back from the school at 4pm. At night, they need to attend extra class that had been registered by their parents for their academic strength. As result, some of the researcher agreed that additional learning and tuition class did not helpful for the children. At the same time, wasting their parent's money to pay the high fee.

But, some researcher denies it and stated that many extracurricular activities have proven to be beneficial in building and strengthening academic achievement, even if the activities are not obviously related to academic subject (Marsh & Kleitman, 2002). Some of student might saying that going to extra class, with a cheerful peers and tutor, learning environment and others factor will help them to get studying 'moods' rather than just doing revision alone at their home.

1.1 Background of Study

Saidina Smart Family Programme is a private learning centre that located at Taman Molek, Johor Bahru. It consists of more than 200 students from 11 years old until 18 years old. For students from 11 until 12 years old, they will be taught to more focus on academic as they will sit for Primary School Achievement Test, also known as *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (commonly abbreviated as UPSR; in Malay). Saidina Smart Family Programme was established about 9 years ago, with the aim of empowering knowledge and skills in the aspects of individual development. Saidina Smart Family Programme also balancing the individual needs in learning with focus on emotion, spiritual and intelligent quotient of the students through the learning processes there for example extra class, camping, seminar, outdoor activities and so on.

This learning centre is a “One Stop Training Center” to get multiple services from bumiputras motivation, academic and consultants. Therefore, this place also disclosing to students, the methods to possess mental, physical, emotional and spiritual strengths in the face of the challenges of education and personality in this 21st century. While through many programme and activity that have method of interesting learning, most of the students here are enjoying the class and have a positive improvement in an individual development and academic achievement.

Saidina Smart Family Program also help the students to understand and apply leadership values, creativity, innovation with analytical and critical skills in shaping a strong and loving team spirit. Nowadays, competition in academic achievement and job market getting challenging for students. Hence, Saidina Smart Family Programme also help the student to improve their soft-skills with motivation programme, outdoor activities, communication seminar, and spiritual strength to help the students to have a high enthusiasm in life.

But, the learning module at Saidina Smart Family Programme are different from the regular school. This learning centre is not a tuition centre because the tutor will not have taught the students the syllabus that the students already learn it at the regular school. But, the learning module consist fully of skills and method to solve the problem. For example, speed maths (calculation method) that consist an expert way to solve in a short time like Adi Putra formula, English memory skills, past exam questions and so on.

To conclude, majority of student studying at Saidina Smart Family Programme has been taught to have a good attitude and disciplines through these beneficial programmes. The

student also always enjoying the coaching class at night and weekend because of the environment and interesting learning style from the instructor itself. The parents also have their own session to attend the parenting class and other programme to build an excellent family and positive individual development.

Researcher claiming that for or the slow learners, if you teach at a faster pace, they might have a hard time adjusting, whereas for fast learners, if you slow the pace they might get bored (Genato, 2017). Moreover, the study of adjustment and effect of tuition class had been proven depending on the student itself. Tuition class make the student tired, this student need to continue with tuition class right after school. They need to wake up at 6am and study until 4pm almost every day. All work and no play make Jack as a dull boy (Lim, 2016). In fact, tuition class or additional education become a trend at Malaysia and Singapore, even the parent noticed that the extra curriculum class not helping to raise their children grades in academic.

At the same time, this 10-12 years old children will obey to their parents as they ordering the child attending the extra class at the evening and night. The overload of homework and studies task that need to be done will affect the stress among the children. In fact, there is a case where a primary school suicide herself because the overloaded stressfulness of studies in Singapore. This problem occurs when the children did not able to manage themselves with the environment and even take a decision to suicide herself (Ariff, 2017)

1.2 Problem Statement

In fact, tuition and extra class become an education arm race, based on the survey at Singapore, tuition has become the mainstay of the majority did not surprise many, but several educationists and academics interviewed were alarmed that the rat race starts with children as young as five years of age (Davie, 2015). Four in 10 parents with pre-school children now purchase extra academic coaching for them. Some of researcher agreed and relate it to due to expensive rate of tuition fee. It might be a waste if the children did not able to adjust themselves to the place and got a bad academic achievement as the result.

For students studying at Saidina Smart Family Programme, financially are not the problem. During the observation period, the researcher noticed that some of the students did not adjust themselves well through the learning processes. Some of student have difficulties in understanding the syllabus and instruction given. Some of the students also always absent due to the parent's cooperation to send their children during the night coaching class and weekends to attend the class at Saidina Smart Family Programme. The redundancy of extra class at night that held by their regular primary school also being the problem for the students. During weekends, some of the secondary school always holding extra class and extra curriculum activities. Since the students are compulsory to attend, some of the student might absent for coming to Saidina Smart Family Programme classes.

During the program and coaching classes, some of students seems to not interact each other. But, they can communicate and be friend well after a week. At the same time, some student has difficulties to adapt themselves with the environment and take a long time to adjust themselves to enjoy the learning processes here. Therefore, some program and classes that held at Saidina Smart Family Programme will mixed the academic potential level of the children. By that, the slow and fast learner will be studying together and there is a much problem of the slow learner student since the instruction given are directing together in that class. At the same time, the slow learner one will have some difficulties to understand and need more attention from the tutor there. To specified, the adjustment problems among children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme are:

- i. Curriculum adjustment problems
- ii. Instruction adjustment problems
- iii. Environment adjustment problems

- iv. Time management adjustment problem

1.3 Objective

Based on the experiences and adjustment problem that noticed by the researcher, the main and specific objective will help the researcher to explore this adjustment problem deeply among the student attending Saidina Smart Family Programme. The broad aim of this research is to study the adjustment problems among children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme.

General Objective:

1. To study the adjustment problems among children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme.

Specific Objectives:

1. To study the curriculum adjustment problem among the children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme.
2. To study the instructional adjustment problem among the children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme.
3. To study the environment adjustment problem among the children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme.
4. To study the time management adjustment problem among the children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme.

1.4 Research Question

A formal qualitative study will be conducted by the researcher with the children at Saidina Smart Family Programme. The research question is related with the specific objective that will help researcher to gather information about the adjustment problem among the children throughout the learning processes at Saidina Smart Family Programme. The research questions that will be studied are:

1. What is the adjustment problem with the syllabus?
2. What is the adjustment problem with the instructions?
3. What is the adjustment problem with the learning environment?
4. What is the adjustment problem with time management and how the students dealing with the packed schedule?

1.5 Definition of Term

This study consists five term that describing the study of adjustment problem among children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme. This key word will help the researcher and readers to understand the conceptual and operational definition of this study deeply.

1. Adjustment

- i. **Conceptual Definition:** A variation in personality, performance, or each by someone regarding the realized requirement or longing for modification (Nugent, 2013)
- ii. **Operational Definition:** The method of children's adjustment through the learning processes at Saidina Smart Family Programme.

2. Curriculum

- i. **Conceptual Definition:** Curriculum refers to the means and material which student will interact for achieving identified educational outcome (Edward S. Ebert II, 2013)
- ii. **Operational Definition:** The syllabus and module used for the learning propose at Saidina Smart Family Programme.

3. Instruction

- i. **Conceptual Definition:** Instructions was defined as the purposeful direction of the learning process and one of major teacher class activity (Huitt, W.,2003).
- ii. **Operational Definition:** A guide or order from the tutor or teacher at Saidina Smart Family Programme.

4. Learning Environment

- i. **Conceptual Definition:** The place where teaching and learning take place in the most effective and productive manner ((Finger & Trinidad, 2002)
- ii. **Operational Definition:** Surrounding factors that affect the student's adjustment at Saidina Smart Family Programme.

5. Time Management

- i. **Conceptual Definition:** Time management is a skill to help an individual manage his time to accomplish his tasks, reach his goals, and still make time for himself (Jussila, 2011)
- ii. **Operational Definition:** The method of the children manages their school schedule and other extra class and still attend classes at Saidina Smart Family Programme.

1.6 Significant of Study

There is some potential benefit that can be gained by Saidina Smart Family Programme after the completion of this study. At the same time, the feedback and comment from the children are received formally by the researcher and will be integrated by the staff there to improve the learning schedule, syllabus, environment and standardizing the needs to the children. Since Saidina Smart Family Programme is an education centre that consist three significant needs for children nowadays: IQ (Intelligent Quotient), EQ (Emotion Quotient) and SQ (Spiritual Quotient), it will be proven as a special education center tha special with other education center. Besides, this study will help the awareness of slow learner's children that need more support from the tutors there.

1.7 Limitation of Study

This study restricted a very small sample size which is six informants. Hence, it means not to be generalize for childrens attending Saidina Smart Family Programme. The informants are categorized as 11 years old students. By that, it means not to be generalize for other age of students that attending Saidina Smart Family Programme.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of past research, issues related, and theory used that related with adjustment problems among students. Some of that issues also related with the factors that will affect the adjustment in learning such as peers factor, overloaded of tuition class, environment, socio-economic factors, and so on. This chapter also will explain the Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development and the specific objective of this research that will deeply study the adjustment problem among children attending Saidina Smart Family Programme through their learning processes.

Generally, children who attending extra curriculum class will a little bit different with other children in school. They might have a proactive work and time management due to already adapt with a life with a lot of homework, pack schedule, and so on. Moreover, they also need to face a lot of challenges to adapt to and adjust themselves towards the environment, at the same time facing the tiredness throughout the day. Some researcher reveals the stress level of the children attending extra class and how they cope with that. But, some of the children and students admitted that extra studying time give an effective and positive changes towards their academic achievement and discipline also.

To differentiate, every human has their own learning style and behavior due to their environment and biological that inherited from parents itself. But, a human development also will affect the entire of life, also the psychological changes in human behavior. In the context of learning processes, Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development will reveal the adjustment problems and how the student able to cope with that problems.

2.1 Issues related to the study

There are some issues related to this study which is stressfulness of children attending extra class. This issue became famous at Singapore because this country known as distinctive and advanced in education. At the same time, it is also famously known as "pressure cooker" and the students pressured a lot until there are several suicide cases (Nayak, 2016). To elaborate, Malaysia and other countries also known with tuition class and education center that established with their own aim and academic goals.

The relationship with tuition center issues and the adjustment problem among children will be explained in term of curriculum, time management, environment and instructional adjustment. The relation between the numbers of subject taken, studying total hours, threat of examinations and more other factors that will affect depressions and develop unbalance childhood needs. Tuition appears some sort of remedial class meant to help weak students individually or in very small groups. Over the years, however, this function has been distorted to a large extent and private tuition has permeated other levels, including preprimary and tertiary (Foondun, 2002).

At the same time, a study of “The Shadow School System and New Class Divisions in India” suggest to immediately need to stop the practice of burdening children, especially the very young ones, with ‘home tasks’ (Majumdar, 2014), this proven that children nowadays getting stress from the extra-curriculum class and task. A study about attending tutorial classes claimed that the existing education system is emphasizing too much on the academic results and making students have a wrong attitude that the most important thing is to get high score. Besides, the spoon-feeding way of teaching used makes students not encourage to have critical thinking. Yet it is fortunate to find that general respondents desire two way interaction actually.

On the other hand, extra class could have a positive impact on the children if they facilitated the learning processes, engaged and motivated children, and maximized their learning potential well (Ha et al.,2007). This issue had been proven nowadays because some of the children might love to attend the tuition class rather that their regular school. The environment and support might have many differences and it will affect the moods of the children itself.

A study about the hidden education problem claimed that a group of pupils comes to school just to avoid being questioned by the school administration but shows no interest when there. Financially also could be the problems and many researches had been proven as tuition class become a financially burden to poor families in the rural area. Thus, according to a national survey, seven out of 10 college students feel stressed about their personal finances and nearly 60 percent said they worry about having enough money to pay for school, while half are concerned about paying their monthly expenses (Grabmeier, 2015).

Other than that, the mentality of parents regarding the usefulness of tuition class also could be the problems. Some of the parents will send their children to attend extra class during night and weekend because of other parents also doing that. The influence of nowadays trends of education become seriously happen in Malaysia and other Asian country. In fact, Deputy Education Minister II Senator Datuk Chong Sin Woon said parents must learn to change the

perception they have about the need to send their children for tuition classes. Before, parents used to send their children for tuition because the child might be weak in certain subjects. Today, that is not the case because parents seem to think without tuition a child won't do well in their exams (Meikeng, 2018)

The high impression of parents nowadays toward the more they pay for the tuition class, the high score on that subject and relies an "A" grade from the tuition institute and did not realise how much stress they put on that children, without asking the learning feedback and how the children through their day at the tuition place. Somehow the word "examination" brings much fear, anxiety and pressure to 12 years old student because they need to score good grades for the "UPSR" examination. This proven as the mentality of student getting more worst in term of get a good noticed by parents and teacher.

The studies carried out in the context of adjustment in the field of education reveals that no systematic attempt has been made to develop a tool for the assessment of adjustment problem of school students (Raju & Rahamtulla, 2007). Furthermore, some adjustment study in the field of health, socio-economic status, anxiety, intelligence and so on. Few of that also study about the family background and relationship with the parents.

At the same time, an adjustment studies examined the relationship between academic, behavioral, and social difficulties were linked to low end-of-year grades, and positive characteristics were linked to high grades. This study found and suggest that academic, behavioral, and social adjustment are all part of a system of factors that are associated with students' end-of-year grades. Other factors at the individual, family, and community levels are also likely to contribute (Farmer, Irvin, Thompson, Hutchins, & Leung, 2006)

Several correlational studies, including one done by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2015, have found no link between tuition and better performance (Davie, 2015). Some previous research has also analyzed the relationship between school variable and student showing behavioral problems, indication students who are violent in the school context also have more negative interaction with the teachers, have lower level of school self-concept and not accepted by the peers (Hay, Payne, & Chadwich, 2004). In fact, majority of parents in Singapore are spending hundreds of dollars every month on private tuition, despite knowing that extra class may not significantly help raise their children grades (Davie, 2015).

For the slow learners, if you teach at a faster pace, they might have a hard time adjusting, whereas for fast learners, if you slow the pace they might get bored (Jelita, 2017). In addition, there are few known studies about extra-curriculum and additional learning for children, some study claiming that many extracurricular activities have proven to be beneficial in building and strengthening academic achievement, even if the activities are not obviously related to academic subjects (Carr & Wang, 2006). Thus, tuition and extra class become an education arm race, based on the survey at Singapore, tuition has become the mainstay of the majority did not surprise many, but several educationists and academics interviewed were alarmed that the rat race starts with children as young as five years of age. Four in 10 parents with pre-school children now purchase extra academic coaching for them (Davie, 2015).

2.2 Theory / model related to the study

This adjustment study will use Jean Piaget's Theory of Adaptation in Cognitive Psychology. This theory is related with the Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development. Jean Piaget trying to explain how the children develops themselves that happen due to interaction with the environment and others factor. Generally, children are born with basics that genetically inherit from their parent.

To Piaget, cognitive development was a progressive reorganization of mental processes because of biological maturation and environmental experience. Children construct an understanding of the world around them, then experience discrepancies between what they already know and what they discover in their environment (McLeod, 2012). To elaborate, Piaget's Cognitive Theory consist three basics component that will help us to understand the human psychology development. It was scheme, adaptation process, and stage of cognitive development. For this study, the researcher will explain more about the adaptation process that consist another three important components which is equilibrium, assimilation, and accommodation.