SCHOOL DROPOUT AMONG SEMAI PUPILS:
CASE STUDY: SEKOLAH RENDAH SATAK, RAUB PAHANG

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Bachelor Degree in Social Sciences
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Student’s Declaration

I hereby declare that this project is my own work done under the supervision of En. Dolly Paul Carlo. All the sources that I have used in this work are quoted and have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any university.

I also hand in this project to the Faculty of Social Sciences for the purpose of publication if is found suitable.

____________________________________________________
Submission Date

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Approval by Supervisor

This project with the title SCHOOL DROPOUTS AMONG SEMAI PUPILS is been done and submitted by AMY MARINA BINTI AKIM (15950) in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of Social Science with honours (Social Work Studies), is hereby accepted.

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ABSTRAK

Abstract

School dropout among the school children of Orang Asli are increase every year as can be shown their participation in secondary and high education level is decrease. From the primary level, school dropouts start to happen. The purpose of this research is to find out what factors contribute to school dropout in Semai pupils. The factors have link with the psychosocial, parents, cultural and environment in which influence the students to dropout from school. The research being conducted as case study in Sekolah Rendah Satak, Raub Pahang and the respondents are among the pupils, parents, teacher and Head of the Village. There is also several of recommendation included in the research in order to reduce the dropout in primary school.
# TABLE OF CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT DECLARATION</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.0 The Study about</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Background of the study</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Scope of the research</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Problem statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Research objective</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Significant of the study</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Introduction</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Definition of Dropout</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Race, Ethnicity, and Gender</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Family Influence</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Poverty</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4 Individual's Characteristic</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5 Peers and Community</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.6 School System</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Conclusion</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Introduction</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Subject</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Research Design 16
3.3 Tool of Data Collection 17
3.4 Place of Data Collection 18
3.5 Sampling 18
3.6 Method and Procedure 19
3.7 Data Analysis 21
3.8 Ethical Issues 21
3.8.1 Anonymity and Confidentiality 21
3.8.2 No Harm to Participation or Respondent 22
3.8.3 Voluntary Participation or Respondent 22
3.9 Limitation of the study 23
3.10 Summary 23

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction 24
4.1 Respondents’s background 25
4.2 Findings 27
4.2.1 No role model in the family and community 27
4.2.2 Poverty in the family 29
4.2.3 Non-delivery of School Assistance 31
4.2.4 Customary Practice 33
4.2.5 School Experience by the Respondents 35
4.2.6 School System 38
4.2.7 Impacts of Dropouts among the Respondents 40
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction 44

5.1 Discussion 44

5.2 Recommendation 47

5.2.1 Introduction of social work in the school 47

5.2.2 Improve Parent-Teacher Associations in school 49

5.2.3 Accommodating changing pupils needs within school 49

5.2.4 Encourage more of teacher from the Orang Asli community 50

5.2.5 Encourage the students to stay in hostel 51

5.3 Conclusion 51

REFERENCES

APPENDIX
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.0 The Study about

This chapter will focus on the background of the study, problem statement, scope of the study, research objectives, and significant of the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Orang Asli are the indigenous minority peoples of Peninsular Malaysia with their population of 106,131 in 1997, in which make up just 0.5% of the national population. In the Orang Asli, they can be divided into three major categories with 18 ethnics groups (Nicholas, 2000)

The first group known as Negritos in which indicate a little over 3% of the Orang Asli population, the smallest group in these three categories and among the oldest group have been in the Malay Peninsula. Most of the ethnics in this group are ‘Kensiu’, ‘Kintak’, ‘Jahai’, ‘Lanoh’, ‘Mendriq’, and ‘Batek’. Then, the second group known as Senoi is the largest group of Orang Asli with about 54% of the Orang Asli population. They have six ethnics in this group such as ‘Semai’, ‘Temiar’, ‘Jah Hut’, ‘Chewong’, ‘Mah Meri’ and ‘Semoq Beri’. Finally, the third group is Aboriginal Malays (Proto-Malay) in which about 43% of the Orang Asli population and the second largest group. The ethnics in this group are ‘Temuan’, ‘Semelai’, ‘Jakun’, ‘Orang Kanaq’, ‘Orang Kuala’ and ‘Orang Selatar’ (Nicholas, 2000)
Some of the ethnics live permanently in rural areas while some of them start to live in urban area but still very few. For example, in Pahang is the state where the majority group of Orang Asli are located and the Senoi are mostly found in the Central region, whereas the Jakun are mostly concentrated in Southern Pahang (Nicholas, 2000). The Orang asli community can be seen as left behind compared to the mainstream society in achieving good standard of living, especially in areas of education, economic, politics and social achievements.

Thus, to help the community achieve a good and decent standard of living, the Orang Asli community must be empower through better education, as the education is the only way that help the community’s future to acquire much needed knowledge and skills for their survival in the modern world.

It is due to low literacy rate among the Orang Asli which it can be seen through high percentage of dropout rates has lead many to believe that Orang Asli education is a lost cost. According to statistics provided by the Department of Orang Asli Affairs of Malaysia (JHEOA) shows that in year 2006, a total of 1,322 out of 3,853 Year Six students did not continue to Form One; while 871 out of 1,882 students’ fails to complete their Form Five education (Sunday Star 24.2.2008 p.E2) The dropout of these Orang Asli students from completing their schooling can be attributed to several factors such as due to their parent attitudes, peers, teachers, cultural, poverty and geographical location of their settlements.
1.2 Scope of the research

Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Satak is located in rural area of Kampung Satak in Raub Pahang. The distance from the school to the town is about 34 kilometre. Most of the students in the school are among Orang Asli Semai and stay at the Kg. Satak. The school consists of 23 of teachers including the principles and has 139 students. Recently, the school has being upgrade to be more comfortable in which hostel being provided for the students. Apart from that, the facility in the school is currently upgraded by the government and services provided in the school. For example school lab also being open to help the student learn about computer programs. Even though the facilities are being provided for their teachers and students but the students tend to leave the school very early due to several reasons. Every year the students decline in every classroom by showing poor attendance and lastly they quit schooling. So the research is to find out the factors contribute to the student’s decision to drop out and their experience during and after their drop out. The research will consider their point of view about what they think about drop out, as well as their parents view and also the teachers and community.

1.3 Problem Statement

Laporan Jawatankuasa di Atas Kajian Pendapat mengenai Pelajaran or Laporan Murad or Laporan Keciciran being introduced in 1973. The function is to identify problems and factors of dropout among the students in primary and secondary schools. The result show that lack of infrastructure in school and students health can contribute to poor quality of education (Sufean, 1993: 35 & 53).
In Malaysia the Ministry of Education see school dropout as serious problem showed by Laporan Murad. In order to overcome the problem, government has provided free education for all students especially in rural area. In order to improve the services in education system, the government also providing free text book start in 1975, ‘Amalan Makanan dan Pemakanan’ or ‘Rancangan Makanan Tambahan’ start in 1976, scholarship to the poor students and school in rural area (Sufean, 1993: 53).

There are several of definition that define dropout and according to Malaysia Ministry of Education dropout can be define as “when the student could not continue their schooling, their names will be dropped from the school register” (Hj. Julaihi Hj Bujang, 2002). In other word, the students who not going to school without any notice to inform the teachers, his or her name will drop from the school registration.

Meanwhile, according to The National Center for Education (NCES) has defined dropout as an individual who:

1. Was enrolled in any school at some time during the previous school year for example 2000-2001, and
2. Was not enrolled at the beginning of the current school example 2000-2001, and
3. Has not graduated from high school or complicated a state- or district-approved educational program, and
4. Did not transfer to another school district or private school, was not in a correctional facility, and was not temporarily absent due to suspension or an excused illness (Young, 2003: 1-2)

From the definition of drop out also can be define as seasonal dropout and absenteeism. According to Hj. Julaihi Hj Bujang, 2002:2 seasonal dropouts as “berlakunya fenomena murid atau pelajar yang telah tercicir bagi suatu tempoh

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"diterima semula memasuki sistem persekolahahan" This definition in (Nicholas, 2006:8) happened among Orang Asli children which absence from school during harvest seasons and annual fruit season. The event is very important to the children and their family and absence from school is necessary for them. In the school system, if the student absence from school for certain period without acknowledgement from their parent, the student can qualify as quit schooling. Most of the time, the school will give the student the warning letter and lastly black list the student’s name in the registry form.

Furthermore, truancy also can be defined by Hj. Julaihi Hj Bujang, (2002:2) as “seseorang yang datang ke kelas kemudian ponteng dan akhirnya tercicir”. In this statement, if the student who is regularly skipped class will be left behind in the class due to lack of knowledge and having difficulty to understand the teaching process. As the option, they tend to drop out from school.

1.4 Research Objective

The general objective of this research is to explore the pupils of Orang Asli experience while their in school and after their quit school.

The specific objectives are:

(1) To identify the issues contribute to dropout from school

(2) To assess the impact of dropout towards them

(3) To identify the prevention provided by the school in order to reduce the dropout among the pupils.
1.5 **Significant of the study**

My reason to conduct this research is to find out the issues that contribute to high level of school dropout among the Orang Asli community in primary school as they would be decrease to be schooling in secondary school. Then, the study is to try helping the outsider to understand the cultural and social of the community. It's very important to see the issue from the root of the problem so that the parents, teachers and Non Government Organisation will plan suitable policy to help the minority group in comprehensive way. Beside that the study is to know their experience while studying in the selected school. The statistics provided by the JHEOA cited in (Lim, 1997) showed that their dropout rates are higher since starting school at primary 2 between 6.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter will explain the definition of dropout and also literature review that significant to the research. Then in this chapter also I will discuss the factors contribute to dropout, and impact of dropout.

According to Sharan (1998: 55), "literature review is narrative essays that integrates and critique that important thinking and research on particular topic". Literature review has advantage in term of validity because every book or a journal that being published has been proved.

2.1 Definition of dropout

Overall the most suitable definition of drop out can be define by Hj. Julaihi Hj Bujang et al, (2002:2-3) as "suatu keadaan di mana seseorang pelajar atau murid telah terpisah daripada aliran persekolahan ata sebab-sebab tertentu dan kekal tidak berdaftar di mana-mana sekolah" Another than that in Sarawak context, drop out is “suatu keadaan di mana individu yang berada dalam linkungan usia persekolahan tidak mengikuti mana sistem persekolahan sama ada kerana telah berhenti mahupun belum pernah berdaftar untuk berbuat demikian"
2.1.1 Race, Ethnicity, and Gender

According to Dryfoos, 1990 cited in Lawrence, 2007:100&101 “members of racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to drop out than white students and males dropout at a slightly higher than females. This situation also can be seen in Malaysia as well whereas the minority group lagging behind from education. A study done by JHEOA and by independent consultants reveals that “dropped out rate among the Orang Asli schoolchildren, at all levels, is disproportionately high compared to the national average...every 100 Orang Asli children entering Primary 1, only 6 will expected to reach Form 5 eleven years later which 94% would have dropped out then”. (Cited in Nicholas, 2006:1)

One of the reasons is due to ethnic background that have families are below the poverty line or on welfare.

2.1.2 Family Influence

Further to this, family institution also plays an important role to their children especially in motivate and inspires the children to go to school. According to Hj. Julaihi Hj. Bujang, et al., 2002: 14 “parent’s attitude also can influence the child academic and tendency to them to finish schooling. The parent who also dropped out from school has negative impression on school and less involve in school activity as well as they less to monitor their children attendance to school and academic achievement in school”.

This statement being support by Hallam (1996: 9) as “parent may also hold contradiction attitudes to school attendance for example their own experience of
school have been negative, they may perceive, and refer to, school as waste a waste of time. In addition to this, Hallam (1996), the attitudes will certainly affect their child’s perception of school and the importance attach to attendance will decrease until the child quit schooling. Moreover, the parents may support the child behaviour for not attending to school and feel happy because the child can help them does work.

Furthermore, Hallam (1996: 8&9), saying that “parents kept their children away from school to supplement the family income, the earning of children preserving many working class families from destitution”. Hallam (1996) also mentions that the children were required to help look after the younger sibling and cause them to miss classes. As the result, the children fallen behind in the learning process in the class and cause them lack of understanding in the subject. Tendency for them to skip class is higher due to poor performance in school.

Apart from that, according to Ekstrom et al., 1986: 359-360; Rumbenger, 1987: 109-111 cited in Lawrence 1998:95 “parental and family support and influence are important in determining whether a young person stays in school...and families of low socioeconomic status have higher dropout rates that includes single-parent families, low educational and occupation levels of parents and use of a language other than English in the home”. Due to lack of command of English language and total reliance on their own mother tongue make these children unmotivated towards schooling for example minority ethnics like Hispanic, Chinese American and indigenous peoples.

Another factor contributes to dropout phenomena is large family members will cause each of the children lack to receive necessary attention from parents and suffered financial problem. According to Bureau of Consultancy UKM, (2000:21 &
22) in rural area, large family being practice due to no knowledge about family planning method or contraceptive pills. To them, child is a gift from god and makes these culturally unacceptable.

2.1.3 Poverty

Most of the school dropouts will experience poverty and low income levels which relate to their parent’s occupations for example rubber tapper which not providing fix income in every month. A study found that, “impact of low economic status of the families of the dropout can be seen in terms of the difficulties faced by the family in financing their children schooling” (Bureau of Consultancy UKM, 2000:24)

Similar situation also happened in minority group in Malaysia for example according to Nicholas, (2006: 3) “as any parent of school going children will know that the education expenses are very expensive to send and keep a child in a school...it has been estimated that, without any subsidy or other financial support, a parent would need RM 100.00 to RM 150.0 per schooling child but not including the other siblings who is schooling.” If not enough pocket money to provide for the children, they feel less likely to go school with empty purse. Regardless to this, the parents also having difficulty to provide cash money to pay school fees, transportation and extra-curricular activity expenses which need the financial subsidy from the government.

Another issue arise with the school dropout is majority from the poor family less to have breakfast or have meals before going to school. They will go to school with empty stomach and some of them not enough pocket money to buy foods or drink during interval hours.
In poverty state also can effect the environment of the house. Big family and small space will less bring attraction to the children to do schoolwork in such environment (Bureau of Consultancy UKM, 2000:24)

2.1.4 Individual's Characteristic

Gaps in Attendance

Early sign to quit school is individual keen to skip class or have poor attendance in class. According to Hj. Julaihi Hj. Bujang, et al., 2002: 13 “dropout happen among the students who has serious truancy in school. Their absenteeism shows that they did not understand the teaching in school”.

Further to this explanation, another reason school dropout according to Nicholas, (2006: 8) “for Orang Asli schoolchildren who are academically weak to start with, missing out on classes for a stretch of time can push them further back academically such that it will be difficult for them to catch up with their non-Orang Asli classmates”

Without basic education for example pre-school or kindergarten at early age might bring difficulties to them to understand the learning as the teacher in primary school expected the student in primary one they should know how to read, writing and calculation. However, not all the student can accessible the facilities due to geographic factor such as live in rural area and having transportation problems or their current place do not have kind of such facilities.
Self-Esteem

According to Von Der Haar (2005:110) psychologist defined self-esteem as “include beliefs and cognitions about the self, self esteem involve our feelings and is therefore an affective component”. Moreover, high self-esteem is associated with positive consequences for individuals, such as success, popularity, and the ability to develop and maintain loving relationship. On the other hand low self-esteem is associated with negative consequences such as depression, failure, and poor interpersonal relationship. This evidence support by (Merton 1948) 2 “low self-esteem may actually involve what is known as a ‘self-fulfilling’ prophecy in which a child whose teacher has told him that he is stupid. In response to her expectation, the child develops low self-esteem and expects to do poorly. As a test approaches, the child actually reduces the amount of time spent on studying.

Environment Risk

In addition environment risk also can contribute individual to drop out from school. According to Schriver (2004:174) “condition are those factors in the physical setting (example substandard housing, exposure to lead paint) or in the family or other social institution (example parent caregiving capabilities, low socioeconomic level, cultural values that preclude medical care) that have potential to influence negatively young children’s developmental progress”,

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2 Merton, 1948 cited in Von Der Haar (2005: 111-112)
2.1.5 Peers and Community

"I wasn't interested; I didn't care. You know, I just wanted to go and have fun. I wanted to see my friends and I wanted to go party. And I wanted to have a social life. But I could not make school into a social life...so I would “ditch” (cut school) all the time”

Studies have shown that individual will keen to drop out when they have friends or siblings that did the same thing. According to Vollstadt, (2000:30) “a negative peer culture very strong among the minorities in which they often feel not fit in with white middle-class values of the school”. Social acceptance in school less accepted by other ethnic such as African-American, Hispanic-American and Black-American likely to be isolated from school compare to white middle class. Even, the student really excellent in academic also will quit study due the pressure of peers to conform. Otherwise he or she also will be isolated by the same ethnic if not follow the trend in the peer group.

In addition to this, sense of belonging in a group or gang influence the individual to do positive or negative activity. For example being friends with good group of students will determine the individual to stay in school. But, in contrast situation also could happen where as the peer groups influence and motivation to do something that break the school regulation and cause disciplinary problems. (Bureau of Consultancy UKM, 2000:26)

2.1.6 School System

“School was boring because they were not teaching me what I needed to know. They were not teaching what will help me in the real world”

School Curriculum and the Teaching

After Malaysia gain its Independence Day 31 August 1957, a policy education known as “Dasar Pendidikan Malaysia” being introduced to the public. In the policy had emphasised “satu sistem pendidikan yang mengutamakan Bahasa Kebangsaan atau Bahasa Melayu sebagai media pengajaran dan pembelajaran bagi semua pendidikan...yang tertakluk di bawah bidang kuasa kerajaan” Sufean, (1993:90)

Apart from that, according to Thomas, (2000:19) “the policy dictates that the language of instruction will be Bahasa Melayu for the purpose mainly of national unity, all teacher are faced with reconciling all the cultural differences that emerge on a day-to-day basis”. It meant, the education institutional in Malaysia using Bahasa Malaysia in primary, secondary, high school and university level. In the classroom, have students from different cultural of background like Malay, Chinese and Indian will use Bahasa Malaysia. The issue using different dialect or communication relate with Bahasa Malaysia as national language sometime bring difficulty to understand the meaning as come from different ethnic background.

*Quoted in Barnes, Retention of African-American Males in High School, p.75 cited in Vollstadt, 2000:22*
2.2 Conclusion

Overall this chapter has explain on the factor contribute to dropout from school by providing relevance literature review. There are also findings from another researcher on the relevant topic is used as literate review. For the next chapter will focus on methodology.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter I will be discussing on the methodology that I used during the research fieldwork. The aspects involve in the methodology are research design, sampling, research instrument, location of the case study, ethic and data analysis.

3.1 Subject

This research is about school dropout among the Semai community in Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Satak, Raub, Pahang. This research will be conduct in Satak, Raub, the teachers and the respondents who are the ex-pupils of Sekolah Rendah Satak as well as their parents will be interviewed in order to meet the objective.

3.2 Research Design

In this research I use case study as a qualitative approach in exploring many theme and subjects, which is focus on the respondents that have been identified. According to Stake (2000)\(^5\), “case study can prove invaluable in adding to understanding, extending experience and increasing conviction about a subject”. Whereas Yin (1994: 13)\(^6\) define case study as “...an empirical inquiry that investigate a contemporary phenomenon within real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”. He also mention “case

\(^5\) Cited in Gray (2004:123)

\(^6\) Cited in Gray (2004:123)