MY MOTHER'S OR MY OWN? CASE STUDIES ON SELECTED MOTHERS' EXPERIENCES ON RECEIVED PARENTING STYLE AND ITS INFLUENCES ON THEIR PRESENT PARENTING.

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ABSTRACT

This research will be discussing precisely on the parenting experiences selected mothers had during their youth. Often people did not bother to stop and listen to the reason for a person to do something. Realizing the importance of parenting role especially in handling their teenage daughter in today's world, this research trying to explore the experiences that selected mothers had gone through and how that had impacted on them. Throughout this research, clarification will be made on whether there are changes occur within the family precisely on the parenting style by looking at certain relevant issues such as modernization, attachment, cultural and society's expectation and also perceptions on the importance of education in today's world of which all these issue will be discussed throughout the research on whether it is influential to the parenting mothers practices these days or vice versa. By listening to their stories and experiences, it may not only help in solving the social problems amongst teenagers these days but also to enable us to jump into any conclusion which may be more prone to blame parents for not being able to parent better without even looking at the circumstances they are in and what made them to practice such way.

It will be presented with critical and in-depth discussion and the approach that is used presenting the information will be in the form of story (narrative). With all the findings, discussions and recommendations that are presented in this research, it is hoped that it may contribute to the field of study and to society as a whole.
ABSTRAK

Kajian ini akan membincangkan tentang pengalaman para ibu yang dipilih berdasarkan kumpulan umur mereka tentang cara mereka dibesarkan oleh ibu mereka khususnya pengalaman yang berkaitan dengan zaman remaja mereka. Masyarakat seringkali cenderung untuk mengabaikan dan tidak mengambil masa untuk mendengar penjelasan di sebalik kelakuan seseorang. Menyedari kepentingan peranan keibubapaan terutamanya dalam menangani anak perempuan mereka dalam keadaan dunia masa kini, kajian ini cuba untuk mendalami pengalaman yang pernah dilalui oleh para ibu yang dipilih dan bagaimana pengalaman tersebut memberikan impak kepada mereka. Dalam kajian ini, klarifikasi akan dibuat tentang samaada terdapat sebarang perubahan yang dibuat oleh para ibu dalam keluarga khususnya perubahan dari segi keibubapaan iaitu cara mendidik dan juga membesarkan anak mereka.

Perkara ini akan dikaji dengan melihat kepada isu-isu yang relevan seperti isu modenisasi, perapatan, tanggapan dan jangkaan masyarakat serta budaya dan juga persepsi berkaitan dengan kepentingan pendidikan dalam dunia masa kini yang mana hal-hal ini akan dibincangkan sepanjang kajian ini tentang samaada ianya mempengaruhi cara jagaan dan didik yang diberikan oleh para ibu masa kini ataupun sebaliknya. Dengan mendengar kepada cerita dan pengalaman hidup mereka, bukan sahaja mampu membantu menyelesaikan masalah sosial remaja pada masa ini tetapi juga dapat membuatkan kita berfikir dan tidak terus membuat kesimpulan dengan menyalahkan ibubapa kerana kegagalan mendidik anak mereka dengan baik tanpa melihat kepada keadaan yang dilalui mereka dan apakah yang menyebabkan mereka mempraktikkan cara tersebut.
Semua ini akan dipertemukan dengan perbincangan yang kritikal dan secara lebih mendalam dengan menggunakan pendekatan penceritaan (naratif). Dengan segala dapatan kajian, perbincangan dan rekomendasi yang akan dipertemukan dalam kajian ini, diharapkan agar ia mampu menyumbang kepada lapangan ilmu dan kepada masyarakat secara keseluruhan.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research is a qualitative study of the parenting experiences selected mothers had during their youth and how that influenced the parenting they gave to their teenage daughters. This study was run in one of the districts in a rural area in Sabah, Malaysia. This chapter discusses the background of the study, problem statement, objectives, significance, limitations and also will be explaining and clarifying some terms to get an overview of the research.

1.0 BACKGROUND

Most people will start their life in a family. All over the world, there are a range of family types which at the same time provides different parenting style in handling and living with their children. By looking at this, it opens up our mind and perspective about life in a family where each individual has different experiences of it. Such experiences made a person to be as who he/she is today. Some may had experience sharing beautiful life with their family and that their family is the most important part in their life. However, there are those who live in a family which provide less or no love or sense of belonging at all to its members. Or some might only be close to certain members in their family such as only being close to a father or mother. This again, shows that there exists of lots of indicators of why such outcomes; differences of each person exist in our society.

However, there are also reasons concerning the emergence of the variety of parenting styles in today’s changing world. After the World War II, there are lots of changes in the economic, political and social occurred among Malaysians in order to cope with the new way of
living as the government was planning future plan for its people. At the same time, these rapid changes had also affecting the family institution which also include the changes in the environment for the parent upon generation. More and more parents including the female starting to go out and search for any kind of job for the sake of their family. The situation in Sabah itself,

"After the World War II, people from villages came out to search for new living in the town realizing that there will be more job opportunities for them there," (Abdul Samad Hadi, 1990, p. 19).

New life been started, build family in a totally different environment. The existence of more and more movement in the country has somehow give impact to the way people think and act towards one another, both inside the home and in the world at large.

For instance; people who do not stay in their hometown but seek job outside their own kampong which had lead them to change the way they live their life in order to adapt with the society they entered. This resulted with children that are being brought up to, are very different from one parent to another. This is because human has their own way of thinking and dreams to be achieved. People created (either with or without intention) their parenting style to be practiced towards their children. Parenting style in a family had often been used as an indicator on the behavior, ways of thinking or the outcome of a person. According to Baumrind, 1991; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts & Fraleigh, 1987; Maccoby & Martin, 1983),

"Parenting has increasingly been recognized as an important predictor for the outcomes of the offspring. Warm and supportive parenting was repeatedly credited for its association with children's higher educational achievement, better psychosocial
development, and a lower rate of deviant behavior. "(Cited in, Zeng & Kaplan, 2005, p. 118).

People might not want to practice the same parenting style they had in the earlier stage of their life to their own children in present time. However, there might be some people that still willingly practice the same parenting style they had. Therefore, researcher find it valuable to understand the changes so that people will not feel that they are making a mistake in practicing their parenting role for not knowing what parenting should be like.

There are lots of issues arise when talking about parenting and how that had brought us to reflect back on our experiences we ourselves had. Thoughts such as does mothers experienced satisfaction in their teenage when they were parent by their own mother before had aroused as an interesting topic to be studied. With each of the experiences they had, researcher is interested in knowing whether there are any changes in the way they parent their children particularly daughters. Linking to that, had brought researcher to go deeper into this issue whereas researcher is interested in knowing how that parenting style was capable to be as an indicator on the way mothers parent their daughter nowadays. In other words, researcher want to know what make it altered and what make it stay the same way. By this, researcher is able to know how that practices differ in comparison with the way they were parent in their teen age years.

Being a teenager, there would be a lot of issues that would be faced not only by the mothers (in terms on handling) but also by daughters as they enter teenage and reach puberty because entering those stages in their life might give them new experiences and urges to be fulfill. Skills on parenting may possibly be affected by the way one live his/her life which geographical and level of modernization might be one of the factor that influenced this to
happen. Different experiences might occur for not all parents had the chance to parent their children if they are working or when their children went to a boarding school and only came back once in a month. Therefore, researcher wants to discover how mothers use their parenting skills in handling their daughter to face issues teenagers have in today’s world. According to Herbert (1987),

“Parents might interpret the teenage years as something to be confronted rather than shared, endured rather than enjoyed... “(Cited in Hoghughi and Long, 2004).

This had often drives them not to listen to their children or try to understand the logical reasons that might caused it to happened but rather choosing a path which is to finish the problems once and for all through their own way.

When handling their teenage daughter, what is the most important part that mothers will be emphasizing on? Researcher is interested in knowing whether attachment which is defined in this research as closeness is important in parenting or the other way around. This will also be based on the experiences mothers had in their youth such as had they really get what they want in the kind of parenting they had before such as has their needs of being listen to been met an so on. By knowing the level of attachment and how did it functioned may bring researcher to understand more on the stage of understanding mothers had on their daughter. This is because, attachment in a relationship may give impact on the level of closeness which has a potential in indicating how a teenage girl may cope in her life particularly in handling issues or problems in her life with the involvement from her mother either directly or indirectly. If they (mothers) had ever experienced closeness in their relationship with their mother, how did that made them feel and vise versa. By this, it catches the attention to know that based on their experiences will they
want the same parenting to be practiced on their daughter particularly with the existing of intimacy?

Linking to that, researcher's enthusiasm to do this research was also driven by own experiences in life which is the sense of closeness that researcher has with her own mother such as sharing feelings, close relationships and holding each other very dear in hearts all the time and how all that had made researcher stronger in facing life especially at times when difficulties arise. However, experiences in life differ from one to another and that is what researcher realized in her arbitrary observation among people around her. Therefore, it made researcher wondering why there are differences and what had caused it to happen? As the basis of this idea is researcher's relationship with mother, researcher choose to do the research on female line whereas mother-daughter stories and experiences (which will be told by second generation mothers) will be used in order to have more in-depth understanding other than the personal instinct as a female researcher has which researcher believe could give researcher more ability to understand and formulate the data that will be gained.

1.1 SABAH

'Sabah is the second largest state in Malaysia where the population is heterogeneous and culturally diverse, with more than 30 different ethnic races and over 80 local dialects spoken.'(www.sabahtourismboard.com). Whereas the various races and ethnicities live within the same land such as the KadazanDusun, Murut, Rungus, Lundayeh Bajau, Tidong, Suluk, Sungai, the minorities (in numbers) like Chinese and Indian and so on. This had brought Sabah to be one of the places that is colored with diversity in Malaysia. The Sabahans has various kinds of jobs which some require them to leave home and travel to earn money for living. Some works
as government servant while some bought land in other district in Sabah just so that they can start a new life with their family. However, Abdul Samad Hadi and Sulong Mohamad (1990, p. 13), in their study about the process of transformation of rural and urban in Sabah noted that

"...although the villagers moved to the town and stayed there for long term, they still keep in touch with their village and come home to visits from time to time and quite a number of them send money home...Relatives also went to the town to visit them in turn."

(Quoted in, Abdul Samad Hadi and Sulong Mohamad, 1990, p. 13).

This shows that although one had left his/her own village, it is not necessarily that he/she had been totally set free from their family, home and culture influences and change their self identity and practices.

One of the traditional values is that women should be obedient and should be willing to always be in their husband's side carrying out their responsibility in the marriage as a wife and a mother which is also been practiced in Sabah. This had created the tendency for women to follow their husband whenever their husband had been transferred to other district for work. Therefore, the tendency for every district in Sabah to have people who are not originally from that particular place to live there are high.

Currently, Sabah is well developing in terms of economic, political and social condition. Although the cost of living in Kota Kinabalu is not as high as it is in Kuala Lumpur, but it has been improving from time to time. People tend to move to the city to seek for job in order to survive in life. However, life in the kampong in Sabah is not fully abundant. People who
migrated or work outside their birth village will come home whenever there are festivals such as Kaamatan, Christmas, Hari Raya, and so on to meet their family.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

There is an arising number in social problem that are affecting youth in Malaysia which have affected the equilibrium in the society by conveying sense of insecurity among the members of the society. This has somehow captured the government’s attention, realizing that these is a threatening condition as it can be a factor which affecting the country’s development and well being in future especially when statistical data had shown that teenagers are one of the groups that contribute to social problems such as drugs, bullying, stealing, and prostitution and so on. According to a report in Berita Harian,

'There have been an arising number of emotional and behavioral disturbances which leads to social problems in today's world and Malaysia is one of the Asian countries attaining a high percentage of social problems... what is more heartrending, these problems is believed to have come from the parents' (Cited in, Berita Harian, August 21, 2006, p. 7).

As teenagers are in the age of development, they needed guidance in living their life. However, some teenagers had often feels that parents are unable to understand them for various of reasons and this had drive them away or to be not so much close to their parents. Some, whom may have attached a good relationship with their parents, might also find it difficult for their parents to understand them, let alone to share their problems. When this happened, teenagers will try to find other solution, either beneficial to them or totally the wrong track which is damaging
their future. Realizing the emergence of this condition, it has driven Malaysian government to take some action including emphasizing on the parental role in the family which is seen as something crucial in generating a good generation in the future, believing that most people-although not all, starts their life in a family. According to Hoghudhi (2004, p. 5),

‘Parenting is the crucial process and transmission mechanism in shaping children’s future.’

(Hoghudhi, 2004, p. 5)

These means that, the parenting style in a family is an important indicator of what types of person will one be and attitude as well as types of achievement a person may perform in future.

However, the reality is not all parents understand the importance of their role while some might find themselves burdened by the demand of being a certain kind of parent where they still have to cope with the complexity of life. Claude Levi Strauss noted that,

‘The problem of the family should not be approached in a dogmatic way. As a matter of fact, this is one of the more elusive questions in a whole field of social organization...’

(Cited in, Schulz, 1976, p. 2)

This shows that there exist of several of possibilities that might explain the reasons pertaining certain action and behavior of why parent chose to parent that way. It is clear that parents do play an important role in shaping their children in their developmental processes. However, it is crucial to look at this condition from other angle which is through the eyes of the parents in trying to understand what they perceive as the challenges in performing their role as a parent. What impact had they had from their own life event? What issues had been surrounding them? It
may be useful to pause for a while to listen to their reasons and try to understand the situation and experiences of that cohort of parents who lived in one phase of experiences before jumping into a conclusion that it is just a one party role in overcoming social problems which is—parents should parent better. Therefore, it needed to be understood from the root and considering the circumstances through various points of view.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

There are several objectives underpinning this study.

1. To discover whether the respondents (mothers) practice the same parenting style they experienced during their own childhood or teenage years.

2. This leads to the second objective which is what had influenced their present parenting style? In other words, know on what basis that had made them (mothers) changes their mind in the way they parent their daughter or what made them stick to the same one. This might bring us to understand and discover more on the issues that had occurred in their time which is view by them as an important part that their parent should have been focusing on before such as education and attachment. It might as well open up opportunity not only to know but also to have an in-depth understanding on the feelings mothers might have regarding the parenting they had.

3. In viewing the changes, researcher is interested to know whether intimacy exist or not in the relationship between mother-daughter and how that had give impact in the way they communicate by comparing between the past experiences of the mothers and the present time as they (the mothers) now have their own family and having to parent their daughter.
1.4 SIGNIFICANCE

Generally, this study is important as it may provide additional knowledge about family in term of parenting style. However, as there are already a wide area of study that had been run before around the same topic, this study than have some significance that made it as a worth study to be run and read by the readers. One is- it is able to make people reflect back on themselves especially the way of parenting they had or might have given to their daughters nowadays. It may make people think again on whether what they are doing is the best way of parenting or vice versa. Getting people to think and reflect of themselves is already a great opportunity and worth to do as it is not an easy task to make people change in a blink of an eye. It might also be a guide for the parents particularly, family members and to the society as a whole.

However, the most significance of this study is because, there is no data regarding such research are ever been obtained especially when the research is involving a cohort of an age group in Sabah who were born after the Second World War. It is a valuable data as their experiences, what they gone through in their life may vary from the previous generation or age group. Getting to know the changes might enable us to understand how it then gives impact to each of the individual in the society and as what had been stated earlier, these might make people reflect on their own selves and life they had live on through.

By looking at the study as whole, it may as well provide meaning for mothers to understand what is it in the changing world that may have affected the issues and development of their daughter as a comparison to their era when they were parent before. It might also provide knowledge in sharpening mothers-daughters understanding of each other particularly this study
are run in Sabah where there consist of multicultural people with each has different background although residing in the same geographical area. This means that there will be varieties of stories that will be presented in this research which some important issues might as well arise and this open an opportunity for researcher to present a useful understanding based on the analysis, assessment and observation that is done.

Besides, by running this study researcher will be able to get first hand stories from mothers on their experiences on the way they were parent and how that had lead to who they are now and the way they choose to parent their daughter. Based on the stories gain, researcher can be able to apply what researcher had studied UNIMAS that is relating on social work studies. This may provide useful knowledge in understanding the phenomena better for researcher had already been exposed to the field. This will be beneficial for researcher’s knowledge and understanding.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

On this chapter, researcher will be presenting some definitions and also citation on previous studies that is related to the study that researcher is examining such as from academic books, journals, research reports, paper cutting, and internet's data where it might link the study to existing knowledge. Critical discussion will also be presented in this chapter where it is useful in gaining more understanding on the study by looking at it from various angles.

2.1 DEFINITIONS AND ISSUES

In order to understand more on the topic presented in the study, it is crucial to clarify on the terms that are widely used in this study. However, there consist of various important dimension that needed to be considered. Therefore, this chapter will go beyond stating definition, by discussing and looking at different relevant concepts, theories and issues that is relevant to this research.

2.1.1 FAMILY

Although in this study researcher will be focusing on the area of parenting, researcher is aware that parenting has always have to do with family and that parenting has most commonly associates with family institution. According to Murdock (1949),

"A family is a social group characterized by a common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction [including] adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a
socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults” (Cited in, Jones et.al, 1995, p.3).

This most commonly means that in a family they might exist of adult/s and other members such as children. However, as the world is changing the definition of what a family is are not easy to define due to the emergence of family type such gay or lesbian families, single parent family, cohabiting couples who have children and so on which is becoming more and more common among the society around the world.

Most family resides in a home which they maintain and practice their own way of living their life; a place where each members wish to get love and sense of belonging from the other family members. To be at home, should be a place where one feels more comfortable, as that place is one’s own place that had been the place to rest and be as whom he or she exactly is without trying to maintain his skills or behavior he or she practice outside of a home. This is accordance to what Noller and Fitzpatrick (1993), noted;

"Most of us like to think of home (as consequently family relationships) as where we can relax and be ourselves without having to keep up the pretenses we may act out in our lives outside the home...", (p. 77).

This at once shows that those who reside in that particular house must have a bond (of any kind) towards one another because of how one feels comfortable to be at and with.
Most people feel to be at home when they experience love and care from the member of the house. According to, Lerner and Spanier (1978)

"...family has functions as the social unit which accepts responsibility for the socialization and nurturance of the children," (Cited in, Noller and Fitzpatrick, 1993, p. 5).

As there is a need to care for each other in a family where the adults tends to be the protector to the young that is still developing and have not face issues in life as what the older people which in this case will most probably means the parents; had faced. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, researcher will be narrowing down to look deeper on the mother-daughter relation in a family.

2.1.2 PARENTING

When looking at the discussion on top, whereas a family is a provider of love, security and sense of belonging to the members of the family which all of that is possible to be given through parenting.

"Parenting may be defined as purposive activities aimed at ensuring the survival and development of the children. It derives from the Latin verb parere- to bring forth, develop of educate," (Hoghughi, 2004, p. 5).
This activity involves a lifelong interaction for the reason that the relationship among the family members are tied and each have the sense of obligation in caring and performing their responsibility to others. According to Chodorow and Contrantto, Mcmahon and Parke, (1982, 1995),

*Mothers are more involved in performing parenting roles compared to fathers. One of the reasons for this is because fathers are most commonly associated with paternal obligation such as breadwinner.* (Cited in, Peterson et.al, 2000, p. 88).

Because of this, mother will normally be the one who will be spending more time with the children and this may drew the relationship closer. However, the close relationship may be both positive and negative because we cannot generalized that spending a lot of time together will make one feels comfortable and happy with it.

*What is rewarding to one person might not be so to another. Carers (parents) can think they are offering incentives, when the sense to the young person is quite different.* (Neville, et. al. 1998, p. 121).

This is because; there are those (children) who might feel tied up because haven’t got the chance to be alone and do things he/she likes. Some may even feels more closer to the father as the father has little comment to give and did not interfere too much with his/her daily living or interest compared to her mother who is often there. This contrasted with what parents (particularly mothers, in this discussion) thought in their mind and may make them disappointed for not being able to be a good parent who knows their children well. Therefore, it is not all about how parents perform but also
"... How the child perceives and interprets parental actions within a total context is what matters in terms of outcomes,"


However, (as it will be stated further in the research design in the next chapter), this cannot be aspect cannot be generalized or assumes as the data about what and how the daughter feels and opinion about this matter is missing in this research as researcher only interviewed the second generation mother. Nevertheless, the relevance to understand that particular issue of children’s interpretation and understanding of parental action is to understand the dimension and explanation which suggests that responsibility of who the child might be in future and how he/she live her life will not be totally depend on how parents parent.

In addition, having to perform multiple roles at a time could add up stress on mothers and this may made them end up to be harsh to their children in order to make the children obey and with this reduce the workloads she has. However, harsh way of parenting may not be a good choice of parenting as it might drives one to be more rebellious especially in teenage stage where one is in the stage of wanting to try everything that is new to her. Neville et al. (1998, p. 118-119), found that in parenting, encouraging what is better to do to overcome a difficult situation is better then punishing for causing that difficult situation.

"...to increase a wanted behavior it is necessary for parents to choose an alternatives behavior to the one which is troublesome... increasing an alternative thus reduces opportunity and likelihood that the unwanted behavior will continue."

(Cited in, Neville et al., 1998, p. 118-119)