Prevalence and Factors Affecting Child Marriage Practice among Rural Indigenous Communities in Sibu, Sarawak.

Rosalia Saimon, Ali Puji, Razitasham Safii

To Link this Article: http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i14/8570 DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i14/8570

Received: 12 November 2020, Revised: 14 December 2020, Accepted: 30 December 2020

Published Online: 24 January 2021

In-Text Citation: (Saimon et al., 2021)

Copyright: © 2021 The Author(s)
Published by Human Resource Management Academic Research Society (www.hrmars.com)
This article is published under the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY 4.0) license. Anyone may reproduce, distribute, translate and create derivative works of this article (for both commercial and non-commercial purposes), subject to full attribution to the original publication and authors. The full terms of this license may be seen at: http://creativecommons.org/licences/by/4.0/legalcode

Special Issue: Contemporary Business and Humanities Landscape Towards Sustainability, 2021, Pg. 233 – 244

http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/IJARBSS JOURNAL HOMEPAGE

Full Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at http://hrmars.com/index.php/pages/detail/publication-ethics
Prevalence and Factors Affecting Child Marriage Practice among Rural Indigenous Communities in Sibu, Sarawak.

Rosalia Saimon, Ali Puji, Razitasham Safii
Faculty of Medicine and Health Science, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak
Email: srosalia@unimas.my

Abstract
Child marriage could impinge the accomplishment of at least six out of eight of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Malaysia recorded an average of 1000 child marriage applications annually. Sarawak recorded the highest child marriage cases. This study aimed to determine the prevalence and factors affecting child marriage among rural indigenous communities in Sibu, Sarawak, Malaysia. A validated questionnaire assessed the socio-demographic, knowledge on marriage law, and perceptions on child marriage factors among 244 respondents, aged between 13 to 50 years old. The mean age of the respondents was 34.9 (SD=10.4) years old. The prevalence of female child marriage was as high as 13.2%. More than 50% respondents perceived that child marriage could protect girls from premarital sex and unwanted pregnancy. Almost all respondents (91%) have a misconception about the minimum age of marriage. Education and gender were significant factors that explained about 25% of the total variance of the child marriage occurrence. Based on these findings, there is an urgency for an effective education for sexual health among teens to prevent teenage pregnancy; reformation of the educational system for each child to complete their secondary education up to Form 5; and certainly to establish a clear legal age for marriage at 18 consistent with the international standard.

Keywords: Child Marriage, Determinants, Indigenous, Malaysia

Introduction
If the child marriage trend continues to persist, many girls will be deprived from their fundamental rights to health, education and safety (UNICEF, 2018). Child marriage, defined as the formal marriage before the age of 18, is currently affecting 650 million women and over 150 million men (UNICEF, 2020). It is often a precursor to teenage pregnancy, which poses severe health risks towards teenagers whose bodies have not fully matured enough for motherhood (United Nations Population Fund, 2020). Teenagers who give birth before the age of 15 are reported to be five times more likely to die in childbirth than girls in their 20s (World Health Organisation, 2020). Besides maternal