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Retention of Cultural Identity and Moral Values of Indigenous Students at PIPOA Kuala Rompin

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the elements of cultural identity and moral values of the Indigenous students at PIPOA Kuala Rompin. This study is based on the adaptation of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory which looks at the microsystem element of the environment. This study also assesses the impact of the Indigenous students environment in PIPOA to maintaining the identity of inherited traditions. The methodology of this study is qualitative technique and case study design. The selection of subjects was conducted by purposive sampling involving 12 respondents consisting of form two to form four students, PIPOA Unit Head and GPK HEM SMK Rompin Permai. There are two types of research techniques used in data collection which were partially structured interviews and through observation. The data were analyzed by conducting simultaneous analysis with data collection, interpreting data and translating narrative reports. The results showed that there is an element of cultural retention among Indigenous students in PIPOA and two elements of moral values among Indigenous students in PIPOA. The findings also show that sewang are strong cultural element practiced by Indigenous students at PIPOA. The findings also show the elements of moral values such as maintaining family traditions and simplicity are core to the pursuit of moral values in PIPOA. The conclusion from the study show that the retention of cultural identity and moral values of Indigenous students in PIPOA is still strong based on the analysis. The implications of the study show that the application of educational elements in the environment in PIPOA has maintained the cultural and moral values of Indigenous students.

Keyword: Indigenous, Culture, Moral Value, Education, PIPOA

Introduction

The Indigenous means the original or originally quoted from Arabic which is the original meaning (Isa, 2014). The term Indigenous is a call for ethnic groups believed to be first identified and residing in Malaysia (Seong, 2016). A variety of terms referring to Indigenous in Malaysia including Aborigines, Asala, Sakai, The Pagan Races, Landlords, Indigenous Peoples and Old Brothers. But they are more likely to be called the Indigenous (Nor, 1998).

Indigenous is a community that has proven to be rich in culture and tradition as well as the wisdom of nature management (Kamarudin & Ngah, 2007). The application of science-related knowledge enables the Indigenous community to identify land and suitable areas for agriculture and become a residential area (Zaenal, 2002). The Rio Declaration of 1992 states and recognizes the importance of the values of tradition and knowledge of Indigenous peoples to be maintained (Earth Summit, 1992).

Through Rio's 1992 declaration, it is clear that communities should provide and support the identity and culture practiced by the Indigenous community as well as provide them with space in education. Education can ensure cultural sustainability, community stability and create world-class human capital (Afizi et al., 2014). In addition, education is also a phenomenon that relies on religion, science, technology and environment to produce a knowledgeable society and have good morals (Alsagoff, 1985).

Identity is the character or characteristic of a person that introduces and separates it from others (Abu Samah & Hamsan, 2016). For the Indigenous community, identity is a diversity of cultures, abstinence, beliefs, health practices and the value of life that forms the identity of the Indigenous community (Faedah et al., 2017). Apart from that, the Indigenous community is also known to have a harmonious culture and moral values among their peoples and their environment (Aslam & Abdullah, 2004).

But the speed of globalization that includes development and technology affects the traditional culture and values of the Indigenous community (Wee et al., 2013). Learning problems and low knowledge cause the Indigenous community to face cultural issues as well as values that affect their identity. Without education and knowledge, it is difficult for Indigenous community to maintain their identity and positive values practiced and transmitted from the previous community (Yanai, 2001).

Planning and development of education for Indigenous communities not only to enhance academic achievement, but also to preserve traditional identity and culture of the indigenous ancestors (Yahaya, 2008). The process of planning and transforming the mind into the Indigenous community starts at educational institutions. Educational institutions are the main components or structures that serve as a means of transmitting knowledge and related skills as well as applying positive values (Mahat et al., 2017).

In line with that, JAKOA has set up an Indigenous Student Intellectual Center (PIPOA) in Kuala Rompin aimed at enhancing academic achievement as well as maintaining the cultural identity and moral values of Indigenous students (JAKOA, 2016). With the establishment of PIPOA, the implementation and enhancement in terms of living goals, social status, noble values and improving the quality of Indigenous education can be strengthened in line with the objectives of MOE to ensure the Indigenous education program (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1987).

Through the establishment of PIPOA, the government and JAKOA emphasized the learning, analytical and intellectual culture as the primary medium to develop the human capital of the Indigenous regardless of their class and background (Syed Ismail et al., 2010). Objectives and goals emphasized in the PIPOA are also aimed at applying family values, maintaining a culture of positive value, responsibility, high purity, simplicity and some moral values in line (Aminah & Wee, 2005).

Indigenous community education is specific to local context, holistic and value-based and culturally (Atker, 1993). Referring to the above statement, the human capital program in PIPOA was set up so that Indigenous students will have good level of education and manage to cultivate positive and moral values. Through the education system in line with their cultural and practiced traditions, Indigenous students can shape their individuality, noble values and cultured ways that can be maintained and passed down from one generation to the next (Salleh, 1977).

Therefore, this article is trying to analyze elements of cultural retention and moral value elements that are still practiced in the study area. In addition, this article also attempts to identify factors that influence the retention of cultural identities and moral values of Indigenous students in PIPOA and then submit a preliminary proposal on the appropriate program form to maintain the cultural identity and moral values of Indigenous students in general.

Statement of Problem

The influence of culture has narrowed the minds of the Indigenous to accept change and convert the style and standard of living (Mohamad Johdi Bin Salleh & Abdul Razak Ahmad, 2009). The beliefs of animism as well as the traditional cultures of the Indigenous community have affected their lives. However, there are also studies showing the moral collapse among the Indigenous. The Indigenous community is seen as not practicing and forgetting the traditional heritage as it changes according to age and technology. Therefore, they see the value of culture as something that has no meaning in their lives.

The study by (Aminah & Wee, 2005) states that cultural aspects of Indigenous communities such as customs, sewing, identity and symbols have been eroded as a result of the rapid development program. The impression of development and the absence of knowledge among the Indigenous communities, new and foreign values are pervasive and become a threat to the traditional identity of the Indigenous community. This is because the Indigenous community has less information of how to preserve the heritage of inherited tradition from generation to generation.

The family factor of the Indigenous community is also one of the biggest issues and challenges that needs to be addressed. The Indigenous community is a society that values family relationships and their social relationships between families and ethnic groups (Sulaiaman & Abdullah, 2010). Hence all forms of learning and knowledge are applied from one generation to another. Due to the low level of education, Indigenous parents cannot afford to help their children in studies and also apply the importance of preserving their culture and values towards their children.

Education systems and school environments that do not fit into the culture of Indigenous students have led them to lose interest in school (Izzuddin & Ramli, 2010). Unconducive school environments cause Indigenous students to not interested in completing formal education. Beside the school environment, the problem of dropout of Indigenous students is due to the failure of

Indigenous students to adapt with other races (Mazdi et al., 2014). The curriculum taught in schools also does not fit with the culture of the Indigenous and causes them to lose interest in schooling.

Conclusively, based on studies that have been carried out, educational factors play an important role and have a special goal for Indigenous students at PIPOA to maintain their cultural identity and moral values as well as to embrace the pride of inheriting traditional culture.

Method of Study

Data collection was carried out through a partial structured interview process and observation process involving purposive sampling method in the study area. The respondents semi-structured interviews involve Indigenous students from form two to form four. Interviews were also made to Head of Unit PIPOA and GPK HEM SMK Rompin Permai. Semi-structured interviews are conducted based on a questionnaire form that has been certified by an instrument appraiser prepared for PIPOA Indigenous students. Questionnaire forms for PIPOA Unit Head cover respondents background and involvement of respondents in the management of Indigenous students while for the GPK HEM SMK Rompin Permai covers the background, teacher task challenge and improvement suggestions.

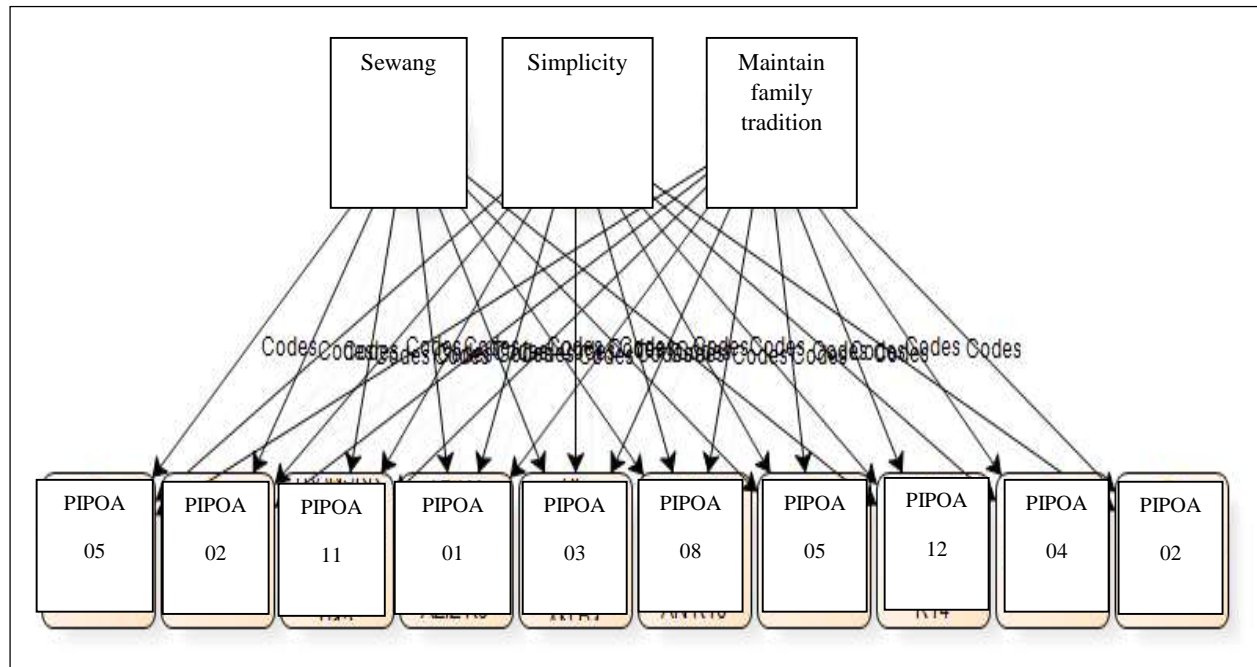
In addition, the data were also collected through field observation methods related to education infrastructure in the study area, school condition including hostel and placement of Indigenous students. In addition to the data obtained from the observation methods, the survey data is also obtained from various government agencies which engage with Indigenous affairs such as JAKOA, Ministry of Education Malaysia and the school, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Rompin Permai. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews with officials from government agencies involved with related Indigenous affairs with the types of assistance provided and the development program for improving educational achievement are also implemented.

In this first form, researchers will collect information on the site, compile information into categories, transform information into story format and write reports (Bogdan, & Biklen, 1998). These presentations are presented through tabular form information tables such as information categories, informants categories, fields, demographic variables, timely information order, role order and others to enable the findings of the study.

Findings and Discussions

The findings of the study on retention cultural identities and moral values of Indigenous students in PIPOA are based on the identified themes. Findings of the study is divided into cultural preservation among PIPOA Indigenous students and the preservation of moral values among PIPOA Indigenous students. These can be formulated by theme i) sewang, ii) maintain family tradition and iii) simplicity.

Table 1. Semi Structured Interview Data



Sewang

Sewang is a descending tradition ceremony to get solution for solving problems. The art of sewang song is derived through a dream by Tok Halaq. According to the local village tradition, the ceremony is held at night for 3 to 7 consecutive days depending on the food provided (Edo, 2004). It is different from the sewang ceremony at the PIPOA presented at public which takes 15 minutes by PIPOA Indigenous students.

The study concluded that nine survey respondents expressed a sense of pride with cultures practiced in PIPOA. PIPOA 01 respondents also acknowledged “..a sewang dance indeed exists. It is also about proud, because my schooling time is also in the sewang dance..”, respondent PIPOA 02 also stated “..in PIPOA, PIPOA wants to keep it, do not forget the tradition ..”, PIPOA 10 respondent also admitted “..Proud. it is one of our art. Is like our cultural identity. In addition, we are proud and therefore the dance is not forgotten...”.

The above analysis coincides with some studies on the Indigenous culture that expresses the role of the environment and the knowledge of making the Indigenous community proud of the sewang ceremony. The sewang ceremony practiced in PIPOA also serves as one of the mechanisms to develop self-esteem and confidence among Indigenous students in PIPOA. Referring to a field note and research observer, all Indigenous students at PIPOA will be exposed with a sewang ceremony and they undergo sewang dance exercises every weekend.

Culture practices influenced the actions, ways of thinking and character of the Indigenous students. The diversity of cultures practiced in the village area and the native environment of Indigenous students, will produce positive and intelligent Indigenous students in dealing with

situations. The pride of this sewang ceremony can be seen through the actions and speeches of Indigenous students such as the analysis below.

PIPOA 11 respondent also admit that *"..we actually have an academic and personality program and we ask these students to succeed in academics and to maintain their identity, because here we have different tribes that have their own unique culture and identity .."*

Respondent 11 PIPOA also explained that *"..as an example of the Senoi Indigenous tribe in Kuala Lipis still maintaining its original culture, they love musical instruments and dancing. So in a sewang ceremony at PIPOA we will usually engage all students, but there is no problem because this year's students are more to musically inclined. The cultures practiced can be preserved by them.."*. The PIPOA 12 respondent also admit that *"..PIPOA students are performing a sewang ceremony at school.."*

Through this sewang ceremony, it represents one of the forms of culture that helps to shape moral values aimed at producing wise Indigenous students whilst respecting family traditions. Meanwhile, in terms of the role of PIPOA, it is seen as an institution to educate and the environment that fosters encouragement in maintaining the traditional culture of Indigenous students.

Maintain Family Tradition

Values is a cultural that can describe a variety of issues and questions about socio-cultural society. The moral values determine the dynamism of a culture and can reflect on the progress and pride of a society. Cultural elements such as customs, traditions, languages, philosophy and beliefs will shape the value and identity of a person. Therefore, PIPOA is responsible for giving knowledge and emphasizing the moral values and as well as actions that are appropriate to the moral values maintained by the Indigenous community.

The study by Hussin (2017) on the Bajau Laut community in Sabah has link with preserving identity and culture of the Indigenous as this study mentions that maintaining and preserving ancestral heritage, beliefs and practices is a key to the identity of society. This can be ascertained through observation and data collection conducted with PIPOA student. Respondent of PIPOA 01 stated that *"...here we still practice traditional culture such as a sewang ceremony in PIPOA and sometimes there is also woven art too..."*.

PIPOA 04 respondent also stated that *"...what is there to shame with our own language, because the Indigenous language is not a despicable language. If we want to be a successful person, we should be proud of the Indigenous language and instead of just talking in Malay and English only..."*.

Statement by the respondents above is parallel to the study stating that the educational program is a social modernization tool that emphasizes the importance of maintaining good values for the change and modernization of a society (Rahman, Ahmad, Malek, Awang, & Mahzan, 2016). Through the emphasis on education and human capital programs conducted at PIPOA, it has succeeded in shaping the character of outstanding Indigenous students that respects traditional culture.

The study by (Aslam & Abdullah, 2004) can be confirmed through a statement by PIPOA 11 respondent who stated that *"...Alhamdulillah so far the Indigenous students are able to adapt to the PIPOA hostel. After they successfully adapt to PIPOA, they strive to succeed in PT3 while maintaining*

the traditional culture inherited... ". The statement by PIPOA 11 respondent was also acknowledged by PIPOA 12 respondent who stated that "...all PIPOA Indigenous students were involved with the programs carried out in PIPOA and through the programs carried out at PIPOA have shaped a good personal identity such as positive attribute, feelings of sympathy and attitude are different from Indigenous students who are not following the PIPOA program ... ".

Based on the statement by PIPOA 1, PIPOA 4, PIPOA 11 and PIPOA 12 respondent, the programs conducted at PIPOA have successfully demonstrated the uniqueness of traditional cultures practiced by PIPOA Indigenous students. Their traditional way of life such as helping and respect are traditionally characteristic of the cultural Indigenous (Kamarudin & Ngah, 2007). With the encouragement by PIPOA for Indigenous students, it allows Indigenous students in PIPOA to maintain family tradition.

Simplicity

Simplicity is defined to be not outrageous in making judgments and actions either in thought, speech or behavior without neglecting self-interest and others (Chang, 2010). Based on the findings from semi-structured interviews and observation notes conducted by researchers, the moral value of simplicity is one of the forms of traditional value that affects the lifestyle and behavior of Indigenous students in PIPOA. Definition by Chang (2010) also has its basis with the PIPOA Indigenous students when the field note also states that tolerance, polite speech and friendship are among the practices that the Indigenous students hold in PIPOA.

The moral values of simplicity such as tolerance, polite speech and friendship gained during data analysis semi-structured interview and observation notes are the traditional values of the Indigenous community that are still practiced by Indigenous students in PIPOA. Therefore, the role of PIPOA is important to build and instill simplicity values to make Indigenous students PIPOA succeed not only academically but also from the point of personality. The result of this study are supported by statements from respondents, and the reality of the respondents is parallel to the meaning and definition of the value of simplicity. Here is the statement by the respondents about the value of simplicity. PIPOA 01 respondent said *"..for example, my mother will advise me when I'm back to PIPOA, my mother advises to hardwork, be friendly, do not quarrel with people, do not waste your time .."*.

The statement by PIPOA 01 respondent who stated that friendly attitude and do not quarrel with people was also supported by a statement by PIPOA 04 respondent who pointed out that *"...all students live together, all must be friends and help each other. PIPOA also wants all native student to mix to learn the languages and cultures of Indigenous people..."*.

Statement by PIPOA 04 respondent stating that Indigenous students in PIPOA live together and always help each other is the positive values that exist among PIPOA students. These positive values are moral values inherited from PIPOA student ancestors. Statement by PIPOA 01 respondent and PIPOA 04 respondent coincide with the study by (Kamarudin & Ngah, 2007) which explains that the knowledge of the Indigenous community is a combination of experience and knowledge that creates positive values that lead to change and progress. The program conducted in PIPOA succeeds in reaching its goal in reference to the value of simplicity leading to the attitude change of Indigenous students in PIPOA to become successful in academics and personality.

The moral value of simplicity become the core to the success in the academic and personality of Indigenous students in PIPOA. This value teaches students to make judgments in thoughts, speeches or behaviors without neglecting the interests of self and others. In addition, the programs conducted at PIPOA also act to develop self-image and emphasize the value of simplicity that emphasizes the skills, integrity and moral strength that directly inculcate positive values among students. The success of this program in shaping the value of simplicity can be referred to through the statement of respondents PIPOA 11 and PIPOA 12 as follows.

The PIPOA 11 respondent point out that *"...after a month here, the Indigenous students are able to adjust themselves. If they are able to adjust in a month or two, that means the student can be educated to be excellent and have moral values..."*The statement by PIPOA 12 respondent stated that *"...PIPOA students both in terms of male students or girls, they have actually succeeded projecting the PIPOA image which emphasizes good values. They also have no discipline problems in school and always respect teachers..."*.

The result from the analysis of PIPOA 01, PIPOA 04, PIPOA 11 and PIPOA 12 respondents, indicates the moral value of simplicity is important to form the PIPOA Indigenous students so as not to overdo in making judgments and teaches students to make judgments in thoughts, speeches or behaviors without neglecting and others. Through these data, the moral value of simplicity will have an effect in producing excellent student in terms of academic and spiritual achievement as an impact of the program implemented in PIPOA.

Conclusion

The findings show the role PIPOA plays in maintaining the culture and moral values of Indigenous students studying at PIPOA. The findings also show that sewang culture is among the cultures that are still maintained and practiced in PIPOA. Other than that, the moral values of maintain family traditions and simplicity form the core of Indigenous students in PIPOA. This is in line with the results of the study by Mujahidah (2015) which states identity is the values embedded in the individual and is translated through action. Therefore, the study of cultural retention and moral values of Indigenous students at PIPOA is unique and through the results of this study, the culture of Indigenous ethnic groups can be highlighted to build understanding and cultural tolerance among Malaysians.

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