

# Influenced Factors of B40 Students' Academic Achievement

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## Abstract

This paper aimed to discuss the influenced factors on the students' academic achievement among the B40 family. Identified factors are the findings after collecting views and findings from research studies. The student's level of academic achievement is influenced by a variety of factors such as parents, teachers and peers. This paper focusing on factors affecting the academic achievement of students from B40 family at the MARA Science College Mukah (MRSM). The establishment of the MARA Science College (MRSM) by the People's Trust Council (MARA) is to provide advanced education in science and technology to intelligent, highly educated Bumiputera students in line with national goals and requirements. However, the flexibility given to MARA gives priority to students from the B40 community living in rural and urban areas. In Sarawak and Sabah, MARA gives opportunities to the students to apply using the Primary School Assessment Exam (UPSR) qualification. It is hoped that this paper will be able to identify and understand the factors affecting the students' academic achievement of the B40 family. This is because, these students will be the human capital that will contribute to a competitive workforce and thus set a high level of economic achievement compared to other developed countries.

**Keywords:** People's Trust Council (MARA), Academic Achievement, B40 students'

## 1. Introduction

Student academic achievement is a reform agenda towards quality education in the plan of the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2015-2025. Education is an important asset because it is a tool that can change a person's life depending on the level of education one receives. With the knowledge gained, whether direct or indirect, he can make a better change in their life. Level of academic achievement means the ability and ability of students to

accept and master the lessons learned in school (Norzahida, 2013). According to Zalizan et al (2005), academic achievement presented in the form of good results in secondary or tertiary examinations is often to measure of their intellectual and mental development. This resulted in motivation to students to achieve excellence in academics. However, the level of academic achievement of each student is different as they have specific barriers to academic excellence. According to Remmers (1962) there are several factors that give rise to the problems faced by students such

as residence, religion, gender, status, socioeconomic status and parental education level.

## 2. Problem Statement

B40 or Bottom 40 is the definition used to refer to the lowest income group in Malaysia. 40% of the population in Malaysia comprises of the B40 population with an average household income below than RM 3860.00. A study conducted by the Department of Statistics Malaysia in 2017 showed that the governments can accurately identify the income range of Malaysians'. This income range is not based on individual income but household income. This report has assisted the government in formulating and planning the types of subsidies and subsidies that should be provided to the population, especially for those in need. Even though there's an increase in income that becomes the indicator for the economic growth, but an increase in the cost of living would put pressure on the lower income group.

People's Trust Council (MARA), through the establishment of MRSM has always ensured that outstanding students from low-income families (B40) especially in rural areas receive the best secondary education by providing facilities covering basic schooling, financial aid and learning activities that will be sponsored by MARA.

The public thought that the academic achievement of Mukah MRSM students should be excellent as they are selected based on their academic excellence. In ensuring the level of academic excellence of these students, there are various factors that are related to it. Thus, this study will explain these factors in order for the community to know and better understand regarding the student's academic achievement level. As stated above, MARA has granted the flexibilities on the conditions of admission to students from group B40 applying for MRSM in Sarawak and Sabah.

## 3. Literature Review

According to Zuraidah et. al (2019), children from poor families need financial support from parents in the form of financial provisions to fund their education, positive and non-violent encouragement and understanding of their teenage souls. In fact, these students need parental support beyond the need for teacher support, teacher assistance, financial support, tuition and supplementary books. Students from the B40 family group at MRSM were provided with assistance such as scholarships, monthly allowances, school kits and early payment exemptions and they are mostly from rural areas. According to Buarque, Spolar, and Zhang in Siti & Narimah (2018), low-income groups comprising rural people are unable to access the facilities provided by the

government due to their faraway residence and lack of access to special education.

Khalip & Hariza (2015) found that MRSM teachers have a moderate level of interpersonal skills of teachers and need to be improved. This is because in the context of MRSM students are intelligent enough and this potential cannot be developed if they are not exposed to appropriate learning experiences and activities. In contrast to the students in this study are, some of these students are at a moderate level in terms of academic achievement due to the flexibility in student enrollment. In addition, Mohana & Faridah (2019) shows that the MRSM non-teacher workload is high but the relationship with teacher performance is relatively modest. According to Jaafar (2014), teachers are not only assigned to the academic related field, but also need to ensure the cleanliness and enjoyment of school area, like the field, canteen, classroom, teachers' room, *surau* and so on, as well as to ensure the safety of the students. This situation has slightly affected teachers' focus on teaching and learning in the classroom.

Muhd Zuri et. al (2013) found that the influence of peer attitudes has an effect on the interaction or relationship with academic achievement among smart students in MRSM. This finding was supported by the American Association of Suicidology (in Ann Margaret & Mohd Zuri, 2008) which states that positive environments in families, peers, schools and communities are essential in helping and nurturing the cognitive development and effective needs of academically intelligent students.

## 4. Theory

### 4.1 Ecological System Theory

Ecological system theory has been developed by Bronfenbrenner, 1979 (in Che Nidzam Che Ahmad, 2013). This theory emphasizes on the influence of the environment on the development of individuals from birth to adulthood. Individual development is the result of the interaction between the environment and the individual. This means that the interaction between the individual and the environment is believed to influence the process of growth and development of the individual. Based on this conceptual concept, children are individuals who are in the microcosm. Bronfenbrenner defines an individual development environment consisting of five systems: Microsystem, mesosphere, ecosystem, macros, and chronosystem.

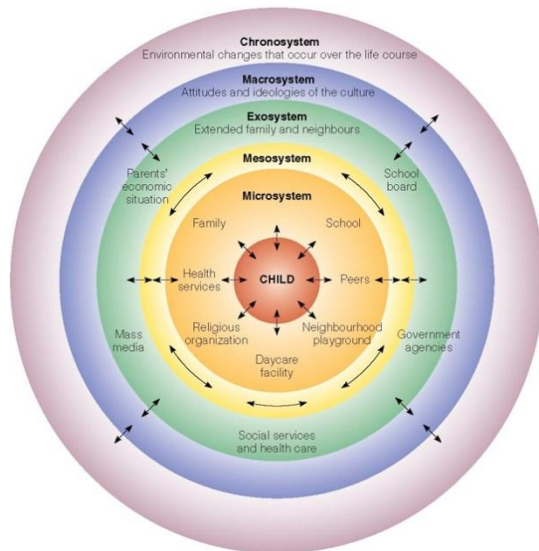


DIAGRAM 1: Adapted from Urie Bronfenbrenner

Microsystems refer to the closest environment in the child's world. In this first layer, it represents children's relationships and interactions with parents, siblings, friends, neighbors and teachers. It is the closest environment where children have direct interaction and spend most of their time. Many think that children are vulnerable to the culture of the environment that is brought directly to them based on what they see, feel and experience. But based on this theory, children have been absorbed in skills and culture through teaching and teaching techniques. Mesosystems layer is a continuation of the microsystem layer. This layer is the interface between the microsystems. This means that anything that happens in the microsystem can affect the interactions with other microsystems. For example, if the child is naughty at home, then it is not possible for the child to do so at school.

Ecosystems are the systems that involve the child's external environment. It does not involve children, but their development is affected by the individuals in this ecosystem. Children will have better understanding about their surroundings. In the relationship between schools and restaurants, for example, if children line up for lunch at the school dining hall, they will line up when they take food out at the diner.

Macro system is an individual development that is influenced by the norms of life, values and community practices in the environment. Children will be in tune with the interests of the surrounding community. For example, children are subject to the taboo that some people practice. Macro system can stop the attack on children. For example, women are not allowed to hold high positions in

administration. The effect is that children who grow up in this environment do not want to work.

The chronosystem is the last layer in Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory. This system is more effective and relevant to children's development. It is a visible change in the behavior and behavior of children. For example, if there is a new birth in the parent-focused family more than the newborn, the child will feel marginalized and shift to those who focus on him such as playing with peers.

#### 4.2 Havighurst's Development Theory

According to Havighurst (in Azizi et al., 2011), there are three stages in human development, namely, children, adolescents and adults. Each of these stages has its own developmental psychology. For children, the process of development is a form of introduction to life and the environment, while in adolescence stage; an individual experience and learns how to adapt to his surroundings. Adolescence is often associated with the ability to be responsible and independent. However, this is the day when they continue to experience many kinds of problems and conflicts. According to him the development tasks are divided into three stages:

- i. Democratic parents will help accelerate developmental tasks while protective parents will stifle developmental tasks.
- ii. Poverty and starvation affect children's cognitive development. Poverty also denies an individual's educational opportunity.
- iii. Incompatible and deeply entrenched households interfere with children's psychological needs. Childlike and attentive situations affect self-esteem, frustration and negative self-concept.

Peers and the surrounding community can help improve children's socialization. Children who are lonely and unfriendly delay the task of developing mentally, physically, socially and emotionally.

#### 4.3 McClelland's Theory of Motivation of Achievement

McClelland (1961) states that the individual's achievement is closely related to the internal motivation that shapes an individual's behavior. Therefore, he emphasized that there is a causal relationship between achievement motivation and success. Successful individuals are highly motivated individuals with the goal of pursuing success. He further argues that students who are motivated by low achievement will choose two methods of failure, whether it is an easy path

to success or choosing a path that is solely based on luck. This election will cause others not to blame for their failure. McClelland also explained that an individual's motive for achievement is always to achieve a goal. They exhibit traits such as hard work, perseverance, love to work with people who can contribute, always set standards of achievement, focus on the future, never mind fate, rarely take high risks and are responsible (McClelland, 1985).

## 5. Discussion

After reviewing the study carried out in the past, it can be said that parents play an important role in the education of their children especially when children need both physical and moral support in difficult socioeconomic conditions. Without support then these children are not growing well. This is as stated in the Havighurst theory where poverty can affect children's cognitive functioning. Yap Yoke Fong's (2000) study found that children's academic achievement is often associated with high levels of parental involvement. This is a bit different from the fact that the B40 parents of low socioeconomic backgrounds are struggling to send their children to MRSM and some of them have successfully graduated from school. With the serious involvement of parents in the children's academics, it will surely have an impact on the children's academic achievement. Full-time students like MRSM; they are far from their parents. Therefore, parental support is very important in motivating or encouraging their children as well as providing school finances and equipment. Parents' ways of managing their children are affected by socioeconomic conditions and environmental factors.

Teachers need to be highly motivated in providing education to students. MRSM teachers should not be in a state of stress with non-teacher responsibilities. This is in line with McClelland's theory of Motivation of Achievement with regard to successful individuals who are highly motivated. Motivation is very important for a teacher to give his best and not give up easily in educating students of different levels of academic achievement. According to Anuar and Nelson (2015) a teacher must have the element of competence to be a good teacher such as mastering the content of a taught subject, knowledgeable in pedagogy, capable of selecting teaching resources, capable of diversifying teaching strategies, possessing technology skills, having good communication skills with students as well as positive attitudes and personality such as motivation, humor and confidence. The findings of Zuraidah et al (2019) study show that teacher factors are very important in influencing pupils' academic achievement as teachers facilitate student learning. According to Kamaruddin (1997), teachers should be good at attracting and enhancing student motivation.

Friends are among the closest to children in Ecological Systems Theory. This can be seen in schools where students' behavior is influenced by peers. Friends can influence not only their behavior but their interest in learning. Student academic achievement also depends on how a student chooses a friend. According to Yahaya and Aliju (2010), students who choose good friends who excel in their subjects will also excel, but if wrong in choosing friends they will fall into failure. For students at MRSM, they spend a lot of time with friends from classroom learning to out-of-class activities.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings show that there are three main factors affecting the level of academic achievement of students from the B40 family. Issues regarding the level of academic achievement of B40 students in the context of MRSM remain to be addressed. It is hoped that this paper will provide an overview of the level of academic achievement of B40 students. With the challenging environment and economy, the academic achievement of these B40 students' needs to be emphasized and it is important that these B40 children are able to become excellent human capital and thus enable them to change their family life for the better.

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