

Pondok Educational System in Malaysia—Its Effectiveness and Limitations

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Introduction

'Pondok' originate from Arabic word "Funduq" which means a place or shelter. Hence, it can be inferred that 'sekolah pondok' consist of small building for the temporary shelter of students. Sekolah pondok began in 1450 in Malacca but it was only in the 19th century that it spread to the other states like Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah. It reached its height of popularity in the early 20th century due to highly trained religious teacher, strong religious beliefs among the Malays, adequate facilities and secularism. The school of thought in Mecca influenced much of the education. However, by 1918 sekolah pondok began to wane. The contributing factors include the increasing acceptance of the English and Malay school, lack of knowledge religious teachers and financial support as well as the conflicting views of scholars concerning Islamic education. In spite of the pressures and challenges, 'sekolah pondok' was not completely eliminated. In fact with the current social problems among adolescents, parents and the society at large are reviewing the important of religious education and the inculcation of values. As a result, many parent begin to send their children to 'sekolah pondok'. The questions are: Will 'sekolah pondok' regain its past popularity? What are the effects on the student? Will employers and society accept the student? These were the question to be answered by this study.

Materials and Methods

This is a descriptive study, utilizing both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. The main variables were aspirations and perception. Under the qualitative approach open-ended items were administered. Under the quantitative approach a liker-type items were mainly used.

Results and Discussion

The respondents on the study were 842 students of which 514 (61%) female and 328 (39%) males. The ages of the subjects was between 11-16 years and their length of study at the sekolah pondok was 1-13 years. The number of school in the study was 7 (5 in Kelantan and 2 in Kedah). The findings indicated that the majority of the student came from the Government secondary school (46.8%) and non-Government religious schools (27.7%). The student's perception towards 'sekolah pondok' was mainly positive by which 81.4 % said that the education received was adequate; 89 % said that they acquired a lot of knowledge and 95.9% stated that they could study religion in depth. The students also had positive perceptions towards the community view of them. They were confident that their knowledge will be highly regarded (50.1%), that the community will encourage the development of the 'sekolah pondok' (54.7%). And the community will always support the school financially and materially (45.4%). Their perception towards the views of employers was equally positive. They were confident of getting job easily (46.5%), they could adjust well in the working environment (53.6%) and

that employers will not have negative perceptions towards students with 'pondok' qualifications (45.6%)/ with regards to students aspirations, 42.8% would like to become religious teacher, 13% religious lecturers, 7.3 % professional like doctors, lawyers and architects, 92.4% would like to further their studies in the universities, religious school or colleges.

Conclusions

The fact that parents, society and the students themselves have positive perceptions towards 'pondok' education, there fore it is pertinent that the 'sekolah pondok' should be given equal recognition and financial support as other government schools. There should be collaboration between 'sekolah pondok' and all relevant agencies towards the students' development and opportunity in the society.

Benefits from the study

Not reported.

Literature cited in the text

None.

Project Publications in Refereed Journals

None.

Project Publications in Conference Proceedings

Ismail Abdul Rahman. (1992). Pendidikan Islam Malaysia. Kumpulan Kertas kerja 19 Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Bangi: Kumpulan Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

Graduate Research

None.