

Correlates of Human Development amongst Adolescents in Malaysian National Religious Secondary Schools

OTHMAN MOHAMED, ABDUL RAHMAN MD. AROFF,
ABDUL AZIZ ZAKARIA and NORAN FAUZIAH YAACOB

Department of Education,
Faculty of Educational Studies,
University Pertanian Malaysia
43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

Keywords: Correlates of human development, adolescents, Malaysian National Religious Secondary Schools

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meninjau korelasi faktor-faktor pembangunan manusia di kalangan pelajar Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama di Malaysia selaras dengan pendekatan identiti epigenesis Erikson (1968) dan vektor perkembangan remaja Chickering (1972). Kajian ini merangkumi model analisis regresi dengan pembangunan manusia sebagai pemboleh ubah bersandar dan lapan pemboleh ubah penentu, iaitu faktor keluarga, persekitaran sekolah, tujuan hidup, sendiri, masyarakat, akademik, kokurikulum dan persekitaran asrama. Nilai regresi adalah signifikan, iaitu $F(8, 1099) = 18.475$, $p < .05$, dan $R^2 = .119$ menunjukkan bahawa kelapan-lapan faktor penentu dapat menerangkan pengaruh sebanyak 11.9% terhadap pembangunan manusia. Sumbangan ini adalah sederhana. Amnya, responden sedar tentang matlamat mereka berhubung dengan apa yang hendak mereka capai. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa pelajar Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama telah maju ke arah autonomi sendiri berhubung dengan kesedaran mereka terhadap pembangunan manusia.

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the correlates of human development among National Religious Secondary School students in Malaysia, consistent with the Erikson (1968) epigenesis of identity approach and the Chickering (1972) vectors of adolescent development. The research design incorporated a regression analysis model with human development as the dependent variable with eight predictors, i.e. the family, the school environment, sense of purpose, self, society, academic, co-curriculum, and the hostel environment. The regression value was significant, $F(8, 1099) = 18.475$, $p < .05$, with R^2 of .119 indicating that the eight predictors explained an influence of 11.9% towards human development. The contribution was moderate. Generally, the respondents were aware of their sense of purpose with regards to what they intended to achieve. Moreover, the National Religious Secondary School students have moved towards self autonomy in relation to an awareness of human development.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescent development has been defined in varied formulations, differing in respect to emphasis, according to various theoretical approaches and inclinations. The basis of these formulations focuses on different facets such as biological, cognitive, psychological, moral, or social development. Nevertheless, Travers (1982) indicates that development is not a chronological sequence of ages and stages, rather an integrated series of meaningful events.

Theorists such as Piaget (1962) forwards the emphasis on cognitive development. Kohlberg (1971) emphasizes the moral development of the individual. Erikson (1968) derives the epigenesis

of identity approach in adolescent development consistent with Freud's (1949) development of the id, ego, and superego in psychoanalytic theory. In the Ericksonian approach, the life cycle is categorized under six stages, beginning with infancy, early childhood, childhood, school age, adolescence, and beyond identity.

Erikson (1968) indicates that the school age is guided with the wisdom to learn readily, quickly and avidly. It is a period of sharing obligations, sense of discipline and performance. Also, it is seen as a period of expansion of the imagination and an eagerness in constructive endeavours. It is a stage preceded by an affirmation of goals, verbalization and initiative during childhood.

Subsequently, the age of adolescence is a transition towards adulthood. Puberty and maturity emphasize a catalytic attempt toward establishing an identity. Among adolescents, there arises a preoccupation with a need for comparison between what is personally felt with the ideation of how other people perceive them. There is trust and yet mistrust; an encounter not without experimentation in social relationships. In fact, this is the infamous Eriksonian stage of identity crisis in the epigenesis of identity development (Erikson 1968).

Chickering (1972) suggests seven vectors related with adolescent development. Competence, emotions, autonomy, interpersonal relationships, purpose, identity, and integrity have their own direction, either in a spiral or step by step developmental process. Although the conceptual formulations are basically for young adults, it is however relevant in explaining growth and human development.

The thesis here is that of the universality of the concepts in synthesizing and explaining adolescent development in a changing and increasingly complex society. Malaysia is undergoing a societal transformation at a pace without parallel over the past few decades. Education has been a prime ingredient in the rapid societal and economic development of the nation.

The National Religious Secondary Schools together form one system under the main umbrella of the Malaysian secondary school system. The Malaysian secondary school system is guided by the National Philosophy of Education that places an emphasis on human development as an educational objective in a complex multi cultural environment. In this regard, the Malaysian Religious Secondary Schools are playing a role in the education of a segment of Muslim students towards this objective.

Since 1977 38 religious secondary schools have been established throughout Malaysia. Originally, the religious schools placed priority on the learning of the Arabic language and Islamic education. At present, equal emphasis is given to academic subjects other than the Arabic language and specialized courses on religion (Noran Fauziah Yaacob *ed al.* 1993)

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study was undertaken to investigate the correlates of human development among adolescents in Malaysian Religious Secondary Schools. In the light of the emphasis in the Malaysian national philosophy on education in human development, the study attempted to determine the factors that influence human development among students at the Malaysian Religious Secondary Schools.

METHODOLOGY

A correlational study using a regression model was found suitable as the research design for this study. Also, an initial factor analysis was conducted to determine the relevant factors consistent with the purpose of the study.

Instrumentation

The construction of the survey instruments focuses on three areas. The first part deals with the demographic background of the respondents. The second part consists of eight items on the concept of human development. The third part of the instrument consists of 39 items to measure the various factors related to human development.

Subsequent factor analysis revealed eight factors related to human development. The eight factors were the family, the school environment, sense of purpose, self, society, academic, co-curriculum, and the hostel environment.

The Likert scale on the basis of "strongly agree," "agree," "quite agree," and "disagree" was used in soliciting responses for each item on the concept of human development, and the factors related to human development. Subsequently, based on the data obtained from a pilot study, the reliability of the instruments was at an acceptable Chronbach α of .60.

Sampling Procedures

The sample size for this study was determined by the effect size required by the test statistic under the regression model. Cohen (1992) and Barcikowski (1988) have determined that a regression effect size of .15, with power set at .8 and $\alpha = .05$ based on eight predictors needs a minimum sample size of 160 subjects. In this study, the sam-

TABLE 1
Correlations between the predictors with human development

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Human Development	.135**	.184**	.172**	.309**	.087*	.153**	.081*	.005
1 = Family		5 = Society						
2 = School Environment		6 = Academic						
3 = Sense of Purpose		7 = Co-curriculum						
4 = Self		8 = Hostel Environment						

(n = 1214)

Note: ** Sig. at .001 level; * Sig. at .01 level

ple size of 1,214 Form 4 students from 21 National Religious Secondary Schools throughout Malaysia exceeded the requirement, thus reducing Type II error.

Data Procurement and Analysis

The data were collated from 21 schools throughout the country during October 1992. The subjects answered the questionnaires in groups within a classroom environment. No time limit was set in answering the questionnaires. However, subjects took an average of 20 minutes to complete the questionnaires.

The data were analysed using the SPSS/PC+ (Norusis 1988). A frequency analysis was computed for all the dependent and independent variables. A regression model was run to explain human development as the criterion vari-

able with eight predictors, i.e. the family, the school environment, sense of purpose, self, society, academic, co-curriculum, and the hostel environment.

In this regression model, the sequence of the variable entry was based on the strength of the correlation of each predictor variable with the concept of human development as the dependent variable (Table 1).

RESULTS

General Concept of Human Development

The general concept of human development as perceived by the National Religious Secondary School students is congruent with the National Philosophy of Education (Table 2), i.e. the respondents perceive human development as a balanced growth from all possible aspects. Indeed,

TABLE 2
Means and standard deviation of students' responses on human development

Item	agree	disagree	M	SD
Human development is identified with the National Philosophy of Education.	1019 (85%)	181 (15%)	3.56	1.32
Human development is synonymous with religiosity.	903 (76%)	286 (24%)	3.60	1.25
Physical handicap is an obstacle to human development.	83 (7%)	1124 (93%)	1.36	.569
Human development involves a balanced personality development.	1126 (94%)	78 (6%)	3.64	.569
A sound faith in religion helps one's development.	1179 (98%)	25 (2%)	3.80	.408
Human development involves a balanced development from all aspects of growth.	1196 (99%)	11 (1%)	3.92	.277
Human development means achieving competency.	1071 (89%)	132 (11%)	3.32	.690
Human development gives more emphasis on individual well-being than national well-being.	350 (29%)	851 (71%)	2.24	.779

(n = 1214)

TABLE 3
Influence of predictors towards human development

Source	DF	SS	MS	R ²	F	Sig F
Regression	8	732.851	91.606	.119	18.475	.000
Residual	1099	5449.000	4.958			
Total	1107	6281.851	95.864			

(n = 1214)

the National Philosophy of Education has a specific objective to develop balanced and harmonious individuals in respect to the cognitive, social, physical and religious perspectives.

Influence of the Factors on Human Development

Using the regression model, the eight factors as predictors were thus placed in the regression equation. The regression coefficient for the eight factors with the concept of human development was significant, $F(8, 1099) = 18.475, p < .05$ (Table 3). The R² of .119 indicates that the eight factors explained an influence of 11.9% toward human development.

The results indicate that four factors stand out amongst the eight independent variables. The factors, in the sequence of importance are self, the family, sense of purpose, and the hostel environment. This influence was reflected from the R² value of the stepwise regression equation (Table 4).

TABLE 4
R² contribution of the predictors, Self, the Family, Sense of Purpose, and Hostel Environment towards the stepwise regression equation

Predictors	R	R ²	Sig F
Self	.310	.096	.000
Self & the Family	.325	.105	.000
Self, the Family and Sense of Purpose	.332	.110	.000
Self, the Family, Sense of Purpose, and Hostel Environment	.337	.113	.000

(n = 1214)

Specifically, the importance of each of the predictors could be determined from the beta values as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Contribution of the Beta weights towards the regression equation

Variable	B	Beta	Sig T
Hostel Environment	-.023	-.058	.042
Society	.027	.017	.557
Co-curriculum	-.049	-.034	.273
The Family	.129	.089	.002
Academic	.092	.053	.085
Sense of Purpose	.260	.068	.028
Self	.248	.253	.000
School Environment	.028	.044	.208
Constant	14.277		.000

Also, the combined four influential predictors of self, the family, sense of purpose and the hostel environment contribute 11.3% of the regression variance as indicated by the result of the regression equation, $F(4, 1103) = 35.270, p < .05$. Although the influence of the four factors was significant, it was, however, moderate (Table 6). The linear model univariate regression analysis for the four predictors is shown in the following equation:

$$y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + e_1$$

In this equation, y is the scores for the dependent variable human development, β is the regression coefficients and x is the scores for the

TABLE 6
The contribution of the predictors, Self, the Family, Sense of Purpose and Hostel Environment towards human development

Source	DF	SS	MS	R ²	F	Sig F
Regression	4	701.031	175.258	.113	35.270	.000
Residual	1103	5480.821	4.969			
Total	1107	6181.852	232.310			

(n = 1214)

subjects on the predictor variables and e is errors of the regression.

DISCUSSION

Self as Factor of Human Development

The independent variable, Self, as a factor is the most influential factor contributing as much as 9.6% of the variance explained. This result was consistent with the perception of 75% of the students who agreed on similar Self factor items. Such a perception indicates that among the students, there exists an awareness that human development should begin from within one's own self. This perception could also be reinforced from statements of students that the main elements in human development were (1) self discipline; (2) believe in one's own self; (3) confidence in oneself. Therefore, among the Religious Secondary School students, there was an awareness with regard to the importance of the concept of autonomy to initiate a movement towards self achievement.

Family as Factor of Human Development

As many as 65% of the students in the study agreed with the statement that Family, as a factor, is important in human development. This is a moderate percentage consistent with the lower beta weightage of .089, indicating that there was some need for familial support. However, students in the study may not be totally dependent on the family for their personal development. Since the majority of these respondents were residential school students, peer interaction in their school hostels might have lessened parental influence (Noran Fauziah Yaacob *et al.* 1993). Nevertheless, the students' perception that Family is an

important human development factor is an acceptable phenomenon.

This autonomous function seems consistent with Chickering's (1972) percept of emotional and instructional independence. Adolescents are free to carry out independent activities, to be self sufficient and have the ability to realize the shifting relationships with parents and authority.

Sense of Purpose as Factor of Human Development

Consequently, Sense of Purpose, as a factor contributed only 0.5% toward human development. As many as 88% of the students agreed with the positive statement regarding the schools' expectations of students. There exists a reciprocal action. The expectation leads to an effect on, and awareness of the the students' roles towards human development. There exists a realization that this sense of purpose implicates a formulation of plans for action and a setting of principles (Chickering 1972). It is consistent with the earlier 9.6% influencing variance harnessed by the Self factor in the growth of the human development of the National Religious Secondary School students.

The Hostel Environment as Factor of Human Development

Life in the hostel has taken over the interactive atmosphere within the family. Even though the hostel environment as a factor is significant, yet it gives an inverse influence towards the human development of the students, reflected by the negative regression beta value of $-.058$. Furthermore, the small contribution of 0.3% of the variance reinforced the findings of this study. In the study, only 2/3 of the students agreed that the facilities

at the hostel motivate human development. In conjunction, some 28% of the students indicated that the regulations at the hostel were restrictive. During this stage of adolescent development, the need for independence and leisure is necessary for a balanced self development.

The development of emotional independence begins with the disengagement from parents (Chickering 1972). Clearly, there is an early realization from the respondents along this vector. However, this study found that the stay at the hostel had not contributed much to the development of an autonomous lifestyle devoid of rigid and structured restrictions and regulations. Also, it might be possible that the lack of facilities at the National Religious Secondary School hostels contributed to the hostel environment being a weak factor influencing the human development of the students.

Other Factors Influencing Human Development.

The contributions of four other factors, i.e. the general school environment, academic, social and co-curriculum towards the growth of human development of the National Religious Secondary School students were minimal. The collated percentage for these factors, after removing the effect of the other four factors, was only 0.6%.

Although their contribution was low, the general school environment, academic, social and co-curriculum factors need to be given some attention. The National Religious Secondary School students perceived that human development could not be integrated through their academic activities. This is evident by the low beta weight of only .053 attributed to the academic factor towards the regression equation. Also, the social factor, which could be perceived as an equilibrium element in the process of human development, was lacking among the respondents. Evidently, these findings were further supported by the low contribution of the general school environment and co-curriculum activities towards human development.

The school climate or environment is important in the growth and development of adolescents in a boarding school. It is generally influenced by the hidden curriculum, which involves the interactional relationship between students and students, between teachers and teachers, and be-

tween teachers and students. However, the research findings indicated that only 40% of the respondents emphasized the importance of the informal school environment. Also, only 38% of the respondents indicated that co-curriculum activities contributed more than the academic factor (which itself was not considered as contributory) towards human development. This phenomenon is in contradiction of the vector, the freeing of interpersonal relationships (Chickering 1972), where social interaction, tolerance of idiosyncracies, and shifting intimacies are developed as part of the process of growth in human development.

CONCLUSION

Generally, the National Religious Secondary School students are aware of their sense of purpose and what they intend to achieve. They have moved towards self autonomy in relation to an awareness of human development. The findings also show that they are still in need of some familial support. However, the self autonomous climate is still wrought with restrictions as a result of the non-formal school climate which is not conducive to the students' human development. The importance of the hidden curriculum is still not realized by the students when taken in conjunction with the lack of awareness amongst students that societal interaction is also important in human development.

REFERENCES

- BARCIKOWSKI, R. S. (Ed.). 1988. *Collected lectures on regression analysis in education*. Mimeograph, College of Education, Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.
- CHICKERING, A.W. 1972. *Education and Identity*. San Francisco: Jossey - Bass Publishers.
- COHEN, J. 1992. A power primer. *Psychological Bulletin*. **112**, (1), 153-159.
- ERIKSON, E. 1968. *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- FREUD, S. 1949. *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- KOHLBERG, L. 1971. Stages of moral development as a basis for moral education. In *Moral Education: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, eds. C. M.Beck,

- B.S. Crittenden and E.V. Sullivan. New York: Newman Press.
- NORAN FAUZIAH YAACOB, ABDUL RAHMAN MD. AROFF, OTHMAN MOHAMED, ABDUL AZIZ ZAKARIA. 1993. Family dynamics and adolescent development: Perception of Malaysian religious school students. Paper presented at *Seventh Biennial Conference Asian Regional Association for Home Economics*, 19-23 July, 1993, Kuala Lumpur.
- NORUSIS, M. J. 1988. *SPSS/PC+ Advanced Statistics Guide*. Michigan: SPSS Inc.
- PIAGET, J. 1962. *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- TRAVERS, J. F. 1982. *The Growing Child*. Glenview: Scott, Foresman and Co.

(Received 3 December 1993)