EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, PARENTAL ATTACHMENT, AND PEER ATTACHMENT AS PREDICTORS OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

LEE PHAIK GAIK

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By

LEE PHAIK GAIK

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

November 2015

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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November 2015

Chair: Maria Chong Bt. Abdullah, PhD

Faculty: Educational Studies

This study aims to investigate whether emotional intelligence, parental attachment, and peer attachment predict the level of delinquent behaviour amongst secondary school students. The study also intends to ascertain the relationships between emotional intelligence, parental attachment, peer attachment and the delinquent behaviour amongst secondary school students, as well as to determine the extent to which emotional intelligence, parental attachment and peer attachment predict the level of delinquent behaviour amongst students.

Data were gathered from a sample of 400 secondary school students aged 15-18 in Selangor. Four instruments, namely, surveys on the "Behaviour of Students", "Malaysian Emotional Quotient Inventory (R)-Adolescence (MEQI)", "Inventory of Parent attachment" and "Inventory of Peer attachment" were utilised to collect the research data, which were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

This study utilised a correlation design to address the research objectives. The findings from this study show that among the six categories of delinquency, it was found that 'disruption in school' was the highest (*M*=2.50, *SD*= .58) compared to the other categories. 'Crime' (*M*=2.03, *SD*= .39) ranked second follow by 'vandalism' (*M*=1.82, *SD*=.58) ranked third. The lowest category of delinquency was 'drug' (*M*=1.16, *SD*=.60). This study also presented a complete profile of emotional intelligence whereby among the seven domains, self-awareness (*M*=42.59, *SD*= 11.66) was the lowest and spirituality (*M*= 74.50, *SD*= 10.56) was the highest. Mother attachment (*M*=3.50, *SD*=1.00) and peer communication (*M*=3.54, *SD*=.62) show the highest level in attachment among the students.

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The results also revealed a significant and negative relationship between emotional intelligence (r = - .465, p< .001), mother attachment (r = -.288, p< .001) and father attachment (r = -.146, p< .001). These findings imply that if emotional intelligence, mother attachment and father attachment of the adolescents increase, delinquency of the adolescents would decrease. In contrast, a significant and positive relationship was found between peer attachment (r=.225, p<.001) and delinquent behaviour. These findings imply that if adolescents had high attachment to the peers, the delinquency would also be high.

Multiple linear regression analysis showed the combination of five predictors: emotional intelligence, mother attachment, father attachment, peer same gender, and peer different gender which accounts for 38.0% of the variation in delinquent behaviour R^2 = .377. Emotional intelligence is the strongest predictor of delinquent behaviour. Hierarchical multiple regressions showed that gender moderated the relationship between peer same gender and peer different gender and delinquent behaviour of the students. It shows that male students were prone to delinquency. Similarly, family income moderated the relationship between mother attachment, father attachment, peer same gender and peer different gender and delinquent behaviour and delinquent behaviour.

This study contributes to the knowledge of the importance of emotional intelligence in preventing delinquent behaviour. Promoting emotional intelligence in classroom plays is essential to help the students to regulate their emotions. Parents play an important role in the development of the adolescents. Parents who are supportive, convey emotional closeness with their children, would have a positive effect on thier children's behaviour. Finally, the results of this study provide a clear direction for the prevention of delinquent behaviour. Addressing the predictors, such as parental attachment and emotional intelligence would probably prove to be effective in reducing delinquent behaviour.

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Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah.

KECERDASAN EMOSI, PERTAUTAN IBU BAPA, DAN PERTAUTAN RAKAN SEBAYA SEBAGAI PERAMAL TINGKAH LAKU DELINKUEN DALAM KALANGAN PELAJAR DI SEKOLAH MENENGAH DI SELANGOR, MALAYSIA

Oleh

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November 2015

Pengerusi: Maria Chong Bt. Abdullah, PhD

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Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meninjau sejauh mana kecerdasan emosi, pertautan ibu bapa dan pertautan rakan sebaya meramal tingkah laku delinkuen dalam kalangan pelajar sekolah menengah. Selain itu,kajian ini bertujuan meninjau sama ada wujudnya hubungan yang signifikan antara kecerdasan emosi, pertautan ibu bapa, pertautan rakan sebaya dengan tingkah laku delinkuen pelajar, seterusnya meninjau sama ada jantina dan pendapatan keluarga merupakan moderator kepada hubungan pemboleh ubah peramal dengan tingkah laku delinkuensi.

Data diperoleh daripada 400 orang sampel yang terdiri daripada pelajar sekolah menengah yang berumur antara 15 hingga 18 tahun di negeri Selangor. Empat insturmen digunakan dalam kajian ini iaitu: “Tingkah laku Pelajar”, “Inventori Kecerdasan Emosi- Remaja (MEQI)”, “Inventory Pertautan Ibubapa” dan “Inventori pertautan Rakan sebaya”. Data dianalisis dengan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan inferen.

Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah soal selidik untuk menjawab objektif kajian. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan ‘kelakuan disruptif di sekolah” (*M*=2.50, *SD*= .58) adalah tertinggi diikuti dengan ‘jenayah’ (*M*=2.03, *SD*= .39); dan ‘vandalisme’ (*M*=1.82, *SD*=.58). Kategori delinkuensi yang terendah ialah ‘dadah’ (*M*=1.16, *SD*=.58). Kajian ini juga memberi profil yang lengkap tentang kecerdasan emosi pelajar delinkuen. Di antara tujuh domain kecerdasan emosi, kesedaran emosi (*M*=42.59, *SD*= 11.66) adalah domain yang paling rendah manakala domain empati (*M*= 74.50, *SD*= 10.56) adalah domain yang tertinggi. Pertautan ibu (*M*=3.54, *SD*= 1.00) dan komunikasi rakan sebaya (*M*=3.54, *SD*=.62) adalah pada tahap yang tinggi.

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Terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara kecerdasan emosi (r = - .465, p< .001), pertautan ibu (r = -.288, p< .001) dan pertautan bapa (r = -.146, p< .001) dengan tingkah laku delinkuen. Ini membuktikan bahawa remaja yang mempunyai kecerdasan emosi, pertautan ibu dan bapa yang tinggi mempunyai tahap delinkuensi yang rendah. Manakala terdapat hubungan yang positif dan signifikan antara pertautan rakan sebaya (r = .255, p<.001) dengan tingkah laku delinkuen. Dapatan ini menunjukkan sekiranya remaja mempunyai pertautan yang tinggi dengan rakan sebaya, tingkah laku delinkuen juga akan meningkat.

Analisis Regresi Berganda menunjukkan kecerdasan emosi, pertautan ibubapa, pertautan rakan sebaya adalah pembolehubah peramal yang menyumbangkan 38.0% (R^2 = .377) kepada varian tingkah laku delinkuen. Kecerdasan emosi adalah peramal yang utama dalam mempengaruhi tingkah laku delinkuen. Analisis hierarchical regresi, menunjukkan jantina dan pendapatan keluarga adalah moderator kepada hubungan pemboleh ubah peramal: kecerdasan emosi, pertautan ibubapa, pertautan rakan sebaya dengan tingkah laku delinkuensi.

Dapat dirumuskan bahawa pentingnya pengetahuan kecerdasan emosi dalam mencegah tingkah laku delinkuen. Ibu bapa memainkan peranan yang penting dalam perkembangan konsep kendiri positif remaja. Akhirnya, dapatan kajian ini memberi satu arah tuju yang jelas untuk mencegah tingkah laku delinkuen. Dengan tumpuan kepada pembolehubah peramal – pertautan ibubapa dan kecerdasan emosi, pasti akan menggalakkan kasih sayang, komunikasi dan kepercayaaan dalam keluarga, serta menggalakkan kecerdasan emosi dalam keluarga dan pendidikan.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 15th Nov 2015 to conduct the final examination of Lee Phaik Gaik on her thesis entitled Emotional Intelligence, Parental Attachment, And Peer Attachment As Predictors Of Delinquent Behaviour Among Secondary School Students In Selangor, Malaysia in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CVI	Content Validation Index
DB	Delinquent Behaviour
EI	Emotional Intelligence
IPPA	Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment
KPWKM	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development
MEQI	Malaysian Emotional Quotient Inventory
PA	Parental Attachment
PSG	Peer Same Gender
PDG	Peer Different Gender

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In Malaysia, like other countries, schools practice the disciplinary policies of zero tolerance and punitive measures. Although punishment and exclusion may seem to work as a solution, it provides a short-lived reprieve from disciplinary problems (Abdullah,Phaik,Samsilah,and Maznah, 2015). The challenges most schools face is student delinquency. It is a recurring problem which affects school discipline, not only in Malaysia but also around the world. These delinquent students break school rules without fear of the known consequences. Even though, they know the consequences they are going to face such as either warning or suspension. Thus, delinquency in school will result students dropping out of school and giving them the opportunity to engage in societal problems, such as criminality, gangterism, drug addiction and rape (Moffit, 2007).

Beaver, Wright, DeLisi, and Vaughn (2011), in their research found that discipline problems are mostly caused by students with delinquent behaviour in schools. This is true as the involvement in delinquent behaviour by students continue to be a major problem in our society. This is evident whereby violence in school has increased as reported in the news and newspapers. Overtime, these delinquent students will become adult offenders, and, consequently, encourage the growth of criminal cases in the country if there is no active prevention taken.

The growth of violence is alarming whereby, in January 2015, an 18 years old boy from Miri was arrested for apparently stabbing his mother to death in the neck after quarrelling over a handphone, which was widely covered by the media (Star newspaper January 2015). Most of the crimes include rape cases, molestion, armed robbery and murder, which have caused fear among the public (Letchumanan, 2012). According to Letchumanan (2012), juvenile delinquency happens because the adolescents are unable to control their emotions and simply act according to what they feel, which, consequently, will lead to being even more delinquent.

Therefore, it was not surprising that juvenile crime has increased and 7,816 juvenile cases were recorded, mostly involving school students (Royal Malaysian Police via Electronic 2014). These juveniles were arrested for various crimes, such as crimes against persons and property including bullying, school gangsterism, murder, robbery, theft, drug peddling and abuse, molestion and rape, drunk-driving, illicit sex, new-born baby “dumping” and

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murder, and illegal motorcycle racing. This is quite alarming, and it should be remembered that social deviance among juveniles starts at school age. At the early stage, this delinquency is in the form of exploitation of school rules, such as truancy, vandalism and misbehaviour, but will develop into serious criminal activities such as causing injury to others, rape, and even murder.

Moreover, it was also reported that in 2013, a total of 104,641 students were involved in disciplinary cases of whereby 78,266 were students from secondary schools and 26,375 were from primary schools. Of the cases recorded, 13,766 involved crime, 15,059 involved truancy, 3,835 involved pornography, 3,804 involved vandalism and 14,984 cases involved other disciplinary problems (Ministry of Education: *Bahagian Pengurusan Sekolah Harian*). These are huge numbers, and within these numbers lay the potential dropouts and those who may fit the criteria of being suspended or expelled from schools. These students are left unattended by teachers, schools and parents; and eventually get involved in delinquency (Abdullah, Phaik, Samsilah and Maznah, 2015).

Realising the drastic increase in school delinquency, the Malaysian Ministry of Education is seeking to give more power to teachers and police in the hope of reducing disciplinary problems among students. As such, the Minister of Education proposed that the Police Act and Child Act to be reviewed. This is to prevent school delinquency from becoming even worse. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has also approved the Education Regulations (Student Discipline), 2005 to replace the Education Regulations (School Discipline) 1959, as a desperate measure to curb the rapid increase in juvenile delinquency and student indiscipline in schools. However, regardless of these efforts, delinquency is still on the rise as revealed in the statistics of Royal Malaysian Police (2014) and Ministry of Education (2013).

In this study, delinquent behaviour refers to the set of behaviours, such as crime, taking or selling drugs, pornography and sexual behaviour, dishonesty, truancy and disruption in school, that is against any established rules or norms (Ministry of Education Guidelines; 2005). For the context of this study, these delinquent behaviours occur in schools and it is believed that the early stage of delinquent behaviour has the potential to cause impairment in socio-emotional development, peer rejection, delinquency, and adult crime (Moffitt, 2007). According to Loeber & Farrington (2000), the early onset of delinquency significantly increases the risk of serious crime and violence in later years.

Most psychologists have attempted to explain how and why delinquent behaviour develops in adolescents from different perspectives, for instance, the psychoanalytic perspective, social interaction perspective and social cognitive perspective. From these perspectives, it is understood that delinquent behaviour is very subjective and is highly influenced by the adolescent's emotional, cognitive, social and spiritual development.

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There are many other factors that contribute to delinquent behaviour. These factors originate either from a student's own characteristics or external factors, which include an individual's past experiences, personal characteristics, influences, attitudes, and expectations from parents (Quinsey, 2004). This is consistent with the research done by Patterson, Calpadi and Bank (1992), who described in detail the environmental factors, such as parents, peers, schools and individual factors that influence the development in the child, in respect of their physical, affective, social, cognitive and wellbeing.

The family is the main environmental factor that has been identified by researchers as a reliable factor that influence delinquent behaviour. There is a clear and well established relationship between parental behaviour and adolescent delinquency. Different characteristics of parental behaviour, such as inconsistent discipline, low parental involvement, and poor parental monitoring may affect the child developmental period. These factors would continue to influence the child throughout their development until adolescence.

According to Berk (2012), the stage of early adolescence is a time of both intensive and extensive transitions that affect an individual physically, psychologically and socially. During this period of transition, adolescents are more exposed to emotional eruptions and they are said to become more impulsive, rebellious, and deviant as well as lacking self-regulation. During this time, adolescents not only begin to seek information from parents, they also seek social and emotional support from their peers. Therefore, because of these conflicts adolescents begin to experience the transition from family to peer relations. They would spend most of their time with peers and place importance on this relationship, while, in reality, they still depend on their parents. They try to gain peer acceptance and respect and also try out their potential of their ability in making decision. But, unfortunately, some of these adolescents are exposed to certain risky behaviour such as alcohol, crime, drug abuse and other misconduct. As such, it is vital to emphasise the importance of relationships with parents and peers during childhood and even more so during adolescence.

In addition, Robinson (2007), indicated that adolescents begin to achieve a realistic sense of identity and experience in different ways through their appearance and behaviour. While experiencing these different ways, they learn to cope with stress, manage emotions and developed their own identity. Some of them would experience low self-esteem and become self-interested and are unable to empathize and relate to others. Similarly adolescent who had delinquent behaviour often brawl with difficult personal and emotional problems (Abdullah, Phaik, Samsilah and Maznah, 2015). Psychological factors could be a promotive factor in providing protection against delinquent and violent behaviour patterns, such as the ability to be flexible during periods of change in school, having effective and efficient communication skills, the ability to use humour to deescalate negative situations, and the use of a wide range of social skills (Berk, 2012).

According to Goleman (1998), adolescents with delinquency often lack self-control. This causes them to react negatively to criticism and renders them the inability to accept the opinion of others. Therefore, the inability to control their emotions and moods, will lead them into conflicts with other adolescents and adults.

The rationale for carrying out this study lies in the answer to these speculations: What are the delinquent behaviours that students usually commit in school? What causes students at the age of 15-16 years old to be involved in delinquency in the secondary school? What are the predictors that contribute to the delinquent behaviour among the students in secondary school?

Hence, this study focuses on adolescents as delinquent behaviour appears to be at the peak period in during their adolescence. At this time of development, adolescents experience a lot of emotional disruptions and conflicts with the people around them. As such, the aim of this study, first, is to investigate the emotional intelligence, parent and peer attachment and level of delinquency among students in secondary school. Each domain in the emotional intelligence, construct in the parental and peer attachment and categories in delinquent behaviour are intensely examined. Second, the study would like to determine the relationships that exist between the emotional intelligence, parent and peers attachment and the delinquent behaviour of the students. Third, this study will identify the predictors of delinquent behaviour. Following that, the study will also investigate whether gender and family income moderate the relationship between the predictors and delinquent behaviour.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Juvenile delinquency would influence the national and global development such as the impact of economic, human capital, students' psychological development and well-being. The impact of the psychological development is related to behaviour such as delinquency, vandalism, and antisocial (Feist et al, 2006). If these conditions persist, then adolescents would not be able to contribute to society and the nation; and would be an obstacle in the achievement of Vision 2020 as an assertive Malaysian society, pervaded by strong moral and ethical values, tolerant, caring, dynamic, and resilient.

After reviewing the findings from various literature, the researcher realised that the emotional intelligence is overlooked as a protective factors, and, hence, remains a gap in the study. There are not many studies concerning the relationship between emotional intelligence and students displaying delinquent behaviour in Malaysia. In contrast to studies conducted in other countries, most of the emotional intelligence research concerns the leadership of the teachers, counsellors and university students (Mohd. Najib 2000; Noriah 2003; Syed Najmuddin 2005; Syafrimen 2008; Rorlinda 2010), and not delinquent

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students (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey 2000; Goleman 1995). In addition, although research concerning emotional intelligence and academic achievement, family and peers has been conducted in Malaysia (Chan Siok Gim et al. 2012), such studies on emotional intelligence and adolescents only focused on certain domains of emotional intelligence, such as empathy, self-regulation, and self-achievement (Fortin et al., 2002; Swiatek, 1995, 2001, as cited by Erasmus, 2007). Most research lacked a complete study on the subdomain(s) such as self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social skills, maturity, spirituality.

Secondly, parent-child relationship such as social bonding was not emphasised in many studies. Most past studies focused on family processes, such as divorce, broken family, single parent (Aguilar et al., 2000; Badrulzaman Baharom, 2006; Arshat et al., 2009), big family size, parents' criminality (Farrington, 1979; Badrulzaman Baharom, 2006), and the lack of parental involvement (Patterson et al., 1998). Thus, we cannot determine which critical aspect of parenting practices contributes most to the development of delinquent behaviour and other social adjustment problems because there are many aspects, such as the parent-child relationship within the family context, which are embedded in parenting practices.

Finally, past studies mostly relate to the influence of peers on the adolescents and do not consider the attachment of adolescents to their peers, such as close friends. Most of the attachment research focused on the relation between attachment and future academic adjustment, socio-emotional functioning and relationship (Volz, & Kerig, 2010; Noriah, 2000; Zainudin Abu et al., 2008). There is little research that links the attachment with poor emotional awareness and poor self-control, which, in turn, may lead to delinquency in young adolescents (Greenberg et al., 1993; Simons et al., 2001). Between the past and current research, there is still limited research that links parental attachment and peer attachment with delinquent behaviour, especially in Malaysia. What triggers the violent behaviour amongst Malaysian youth, including school students, is yet to be understood although considerable research has been conducted that is mostly associated with the social environment – family, peers, school, neighbourhood and community.

Hence, to bridge the gap, one of the areas that are focused upon in this study is attachment, in particular, parental attachment and peer attachment; and also protective factor such as emotional intelligence which is considered important in adolescents' development. Thus, there is a need to understand how do these factors influence the adolescents' behaviour and to what extent do these factors predict the delinquency.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study aims to examine the delinquent behaviour of the students in secondary schools. It also aims to examine the level of emotional intelligence, parent and peers attachment; and also delinquent behaviour of the students. Subsequently, this study intends to ascertain the relationship between emotional intelligence, parent and peers attachment and delinquent behaviour; the predictors of delinquent behaviour and also the interaction effect of gender and family income on the relationship.

Based on the speculations in the statement of the problems, this study is conducted to investigate the following six objectives:

1 To determine the level of delinquent behaviour reported by students in respect of a) crime, b) drugs, c) vandalism d) pornography and sexual behaviour, e) disruption in school, and f) dishonesty.

2 To determine the level of emotional intelligence (EI), parental attachment (PA) and peer attachment (PSG & PDG) among students with delinquent behaviour in secondary schools.

3 To investigate whether delinquent behaviour (DB) among students is significantly different based on gender and family income.

4 To determine the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), parental attachment (mother and father attachment) and peer attachment (PSG & PDG), and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools.

5 To investigate whether emotional intelligence (EI), mother attachment, father attachment and peer attachment (PSG & PDG) predicts the level of delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools.

6 To investigate whether gender and family income moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), mother attachment, father attachment, peer attachment (PSG & PDG) and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypothesis

Given the above scenario, 12 research questions and 8 hypotheses are constructed based on the theoretical framework and past studies discussed in the study. The research questions and hypothesis of this study are as follow:

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1.4.1 Research Questions

Objective 1:

1 What is the level of delinquent behaviour (DB) reported by students in respect of a) crime, b) drugs, c) vandalism, d) pornography and sexual behaviour, e) disruption in school and f) dishonesty?

Objective 2:

2 What is the level of emotional intelligence (EI) and EI domains among the students with delinquent behaviour in secondary schools?

3 What is the level of parental attachment in respect of a) trust, b) communication, and c) alienation among the students with delinquent behaviour in secondary schools?

4 What is the level of peer attachment in respect of a) trust, b) communication, and c) alienation among the students with delinquent behaviour in secondary schools?

Objective 3:

5 Is there any significant difference in delinquent behaviour based on gender?

6 Is there any significant difference in delinquent behaviour in terms of family income?

Objective 4:

7 Is there any significant relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), EI domains and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools?

8 Is there any significant relationship between Parental attachment (mother and father attachment) and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools?

9 Is there any significant relationship between peer attachment (PSG & PDG) and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools?

Objective 5:

10 Does emotional intelligence, mother attachment, father attachment,peer attachment (PSG & PDG) predicts the delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools?

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Objective 6:

11 Does gender moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence, mother attachment, father attachment, peer different gender, peer same gender and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools?

12 Does family income moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence, mother attachment, father attachment, peer different gender, peer same gender and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools?

1.4.2 Research Hypothesis

Research hypotheses are constructed to achieve the above research objectives and research questions. The alternative hypotheses of this study are stated below:

H1: There is a significant difference in delinquent behaviour based on gender.

H2: There is a significant difference in delinquent behaviour in terms of family income.

H3: There is a negative linear relationship between EI domains and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools.

H4: There is a negative linear relationship between Parental attachment (mother and father attachment) and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools.

H5: There is a positive linear relationship between peer attachment (PSG & PDG) and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools

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H6: Emotional intelligence (EI), mother attachment, father attachment and peer attachment (PSG & PDG) does predict the delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools.

H7: Gender does moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), mother attachment, father attachment, peer different gender, peer same gender and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools.

H8: Family income does moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI), mother attachment, father attachment, peer different gender, peer same gender and delinquent behaviour among students in secondary schools.

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1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes significantly to the existing knowledge in delinquency by identifying predictors of delinquent behaviour amongst students in secondary schools. Such knowledge would be beneficial to the Ministry of Education about the importance of enhancing moral values, emotional development among adolescent especially students in secondary school. This could be achieved if the curriculum planners use these findings to formulate a policy and plan a better framework of education towards achieving the vision of the country.

This study provides important information regarding the aspects of emotional intelligence, parents, and peer attachment among students with delinquent behaviour. The information is useful to parents, school teachers, and school principals in order to understand the behavioural problems of students. With this information, parents would be more mindful of their children's wellbeing and create not only a caring relationship, but will be able to instil trust in their children and spend more time communicating with their children. This information will also help parents improve their parenting skills.

This study will provide recommendations to strengthen discipline among students. One of which is to help parents in parenting skills. It will also give parents information concerning their children's emotional growth because parents will be aware of what is needed and give adequate attention to their children.

The findings will also be useful for parents and teachers to understand how students that manifest delinquent behaviour, especially in Malaysia, manage their emotions. Furthermore, there is a need to identify emotional intelligence since it is one of the main domains that is still lacking among students with delinquent behaviour. It allows teachers to recognise the way to deal with disruptions and behavioural issues. It is also useful because there will be mutual trust between parents and teachers, who are jointly responsible for the education of school going children.

These findings will provide insights to counsellors to organize community-based after-school programmes, which constitute an effective delinquency prevention approach. The findings of parent and peer attachment can also be used by counsellors to encourage parents to understand the issue of students' antisocial behaviour.

As acknowledged, adolescents with delinquent behaviour are likely to experience poor adjustment in multiple factors – home, peers, school, and community. The findings of this study will provide important information to the Ministry of Education to design an effective intervention programme to curb

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delinquency among secondary school students. Early intervention will help to prevent and reduce delinquent behaviour from an early age. Since the findings pertain to emotional intelligence, parents and peer attachment, and delinquent behaviour, intervention may be carried out through an individual based approach, family based approach, school based intervention or community approach.

The information from this study can also aid in the development of individual and family interventions for abusive parents, children from broken homes, etc. by the counselling unit, Women Development Department, Ministry of Women, and the Family and Community Development, Malaysia (KPWKM). In addition, the programme can foster a closer and healthier relationship between adolescents and their families, while, at the same time, reducing delinquent behaviour among adolescents.

Since there is no comprehensive profile of emotional intelligence (EI) for delinquent students in Malaysia, the findings from this study, especially the subdomain(s) of emotional intelligence, will serve as a basis for further research in this field. This is important as the psychological well-being of children including adolescents is the development of emotional intelligence.

In addition, parental attachment and peer attachment based on trust, communication and avoiding alienation will be a pivotal contribution to the existing knowledge of the family context, and, eventually, will become a necessary factor concerning the importance of parental and peer attachment. The findings of the current study would give realisation to the parents on the importance of parental and peer attachment to the behaviour of their children.

Finally, the findings from this study are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge pertaining to the development of delinquent behaviour among adolescents. This study will also enhance the literature concerning the psychological and environmental factors that contribute to students' delinquent behaviour.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

The population of this study is limited to students in secondary schools in the State of Selangor. The population may not fully represent the entire population with delinquent behaviour. Moreover, higher risk adolescents are most likely not represented in this sample because the sample is not from rehabilitation schools, such as the Henry Gurney School. Furthermore the data collected do not have enough information on family structure such as extended family issue (single parent, or grandparents).

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Self-rating instruments were used in this study to measure all the variables (personal competencies, social competencies, motivational, beliefs, parental attachments and peer attachments). According to Gay & Ariasian (2005), self-rating instruments or scales are more direct measurements of personal variables than other techniques, and, depending on their reading ability, are appropriate for adolescents. Hence, all the instruments employed to examine attitude, interest, emotive feelings and perception are self-rating measures (Gay & Airasian, 2005). However, it is acknowledged that responses in self-rating instruments may be inconsistent, and, hence, the researcher cannot be sure whether the subjects expressed their true responses, as opposed to 'socially acceptable' responses.

In order to ensure the reliability of the responses, the researcher provided clear written and oral instructions to the respondents before they were required to complete the instruments. Respondents were convinced that there was no right or wrong answer and that it was important for them to answer the questions honestly. They were also assured that their responses were confidential and would only be viewed by the researcher.

1.7 Operational Definition of Variables

The operational definitions of variables are provided in this section.

1.7.1 Delinquent Behaviour

In this study, the term delinquent behaviour refers to antisocial behaviour/ conduct problems, norm-violating conduct and minor/major deviant acts (Frick, 2004). In this study, delinquent behaviour is defined as a set of behaviours that are against any established rules or norms. Such behaviour includes crime, vandalism, drugs, pornography and sexual behaviour, dishonesty and disruption in school. The instrument used to measure these variables is the "Behaviour of Students", which comprises 33 items to assess student involvement in delinquent behaviour over the last eight months (Rozumah et.al, 2003).

1.7.1.1 Crime

Crime is considered as any act or omission prohibited by public law for the protection of the public made punishable by the state in a judicial setting in its own name. On the whole, crime concerns transgressions against public order. In this study, school crime refers gangterism, using weapons to harm somebody, and fighting.

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1.7.1.2 Vandalism

Vandalism may be defined as the wilful or malicious destruction of public or private property. Vandalism also refers to the intentional destruction of property. In this study, vandalism includes behaviour, such as damaging or destroying property on purpose, forced entry into a building and setting fire to a house, building or car.

1.7.1.3 Dishonesty

In this study, dishonesty is cheating, as lying and other forms of dishonest behaviour. Furthermore, according to Sims (1993), people who engage in dishonest behaviour during their school days will continue to do so in their professional careers. The measurement for this variable is the students' behaviour instrument.

1.7.1.4 Pornography and Sexual Behaviour

Li (2000), for example, defines pornography as "material that presents sexual content of some sort with the intent of being aroused". Hence, among the listed categories of pornography are violence, depicting and endorsing sexual violence and coercion, usually, but not solely against women (Fisher and Barak, 2001).

In this study, pornography for secondary school students includes watching pornographic videos and engaging in sexual behaviour, make obscene calls and paid to have sexual relations with someone.

1.7.1.5 Disruption in School

Disruption in school includes any behaviour that disrupts the teaching and learning activities, truancy, creating physical and psychological discomfort of other students at the school or in the classroom (Levin and Nolan 2000). In this study disruption in school refers to students playing truant because of working part-time to earn extra money, skipping classes for no reason, making fun or teasing their school friends.

1.7.2 Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the capability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote

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emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). EI also refers to a framework of abilities across five domains. Competencies in these domains are self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation or motivating oneself, identifying the emotions of others, and effectively interacting with others (Goleman, 1995).

In this study, the students' emotional intelligence (EI) is measured by the Malaysian Emotional Quotient Inventory – Adolescence (MEQI). This inventory of 180 items measures seven domains using a five-point Likert-scale response format. The inventory provides a total emotional intelligence score for seven domains: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-regulation, (c) self-motivation, (d) empathy, (e) social skills, (f) spiritual awareness, and (g) maturity awareness (Noriah et. al, 2000).

1.7.3 Attachment

In this study, attachment to parents or peers is considered to be an important variable that explains the development of delinquent behaviour. Attachment theory is the theoretical basis of this study. Therefore, attachment can be seen as an important concept in understanding the development and behavioural patterns of individuals.

Attachment in this study consists of three broad dimensions: degree of mutual trust, quality of communication, and the extent of anger and alienation. It measures the trust, detachment and whether the parents understand and respect the emotion of the subject. The instrument is a self-report questionnaire using a five-point Likert-scale response format. The respondents rate themselves from scale 1 (never true) to scale 5 (Always true). The Mother, Father, and Peer Versions comprise 30 items in each of the mother, father, and peer sections, yielding three attachment scores (Noriah, 1999).

1.8 Summary of the Chapter

Generally, students are finding it more difficult to meet the expectations set by parents and teachers. In addition, society expects students to produce academic excellence; hence, putting more pressure on them. In addressing such problems, the psychological aspects may be considered to be one of the influential factors affecting the students. The cognitive, emotional and/or social processes may impact these psychological demands, particularly the increase in delinquent behaviour. In addition, many people think of adolescence as a phase of storm and stress, rebellion, and conflict with parents.

The attachment of the adolescents to their parents and peers is considered to be an important environmental factor. These two factors are hypothesized as

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important constructs in understanding the future development of the behavioural patterns of adolescents. In addition, emotional intelligence is an important aspect in the lives of the adolescents as it relates to positive outcomes, such as pro-social behaviour, positive peer, good family relations and psychology well -being. Six objectives and eight hypothesis have been designed to be answered in this study. This study also postulates which predictors may contribute to delinquency. It is expected to provide some important suggestions primarily for teachers, school administrators, parents and society at large to combat the rising social stigma.

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