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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PARENT-TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS IN PROMOTING LIFELONG LEARNING IN SABAH

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Abstract

This paper presents the teenagers' perception on the effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Association among rural secondary school of Sabah in promoting the idea of lifelong learning. Specifically, it discusses whether the Parent-Teacher Association of rural secondary school in Sabah, Malaysia has been effectively promoting the lifelong education for the sake of their teenagers and also to examine what exactly are the factors associates with the efficacy of Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) in promoting lifelong learning of rural areas in the state of Sabah in Malaysia. Information were gathered using a set of survey questionnaire. In this study, 100 teenagers (secondary school students) were chosen as the respondents with a median age of 14. In general, the study reveals that the Parent-Teacher Association of the rural secondary school have been effectively promoting the idea of lifelong learning, but never progressed any substantial influence greater than the society of a school. Nevertheless, this reveals that the Parent-Teacher Association could be one of the best organizations having high capability in promoting lifelong learning in this country. Hence, it is essential for each school to make their own effective Parent-Teacher Association and offer training to the members or even their leaders especially on the field of leadership, activities management and organization management. The leadership skills, activities management skills and organization skills are the

factors associated with the Parent-Teacher Association level of effectiveness in promoting the lifelong learning agendas.

Key Words: *Lifelong Learning; Parent-Teacher Association; Rural School; Sabah.*

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The concept of lifelong education or lifelong learning is referring to continuous process of gaining knowledge through learning activities, an idea that has taken origin in a whole host of dissimilar organizations (John Field, 2006). It is an attitudinal in which one is expected to be open to new notions, decisions, skills or behaviors. John Field (2006) have been also recited that this concept pitches the proverb ‘You can't teach an old dog new tricks’ outdoor. It views citizens provided with learning chances at throughout physical development process and in number of contexts such as at home and over leisure activities, not just through formal stations such as school and higher education but, there are countless channel of gaining own skills and knowledge.

It thus generally hailed as a pedagogical method which often made through distance learning or e-learning, continuing education, home teaching or mail courses. It also includes advanced programs for those who want to improve their educations, bring their skills up to date or reinstruct in a new line of labor. Internal corporate training has alike goals, with the concept of lifelong learning used by organizations to encourage a more active worker base, being able to respond in a sprightly manner to a fast fluctuating climate. In far ahead life, especially in retirement, continued learning takes assorted forms, crossing traditional academic boundaries as well as leisure events.

This concept has been emerged in accordance to the increases in the needs of the international companies and the desires of society are shifting rapidly. Based on this account, young people or the students with insufficient set of skills and are incapable to adjust quickly to normal society changes are no longer required by companies and society in general (Hayes, 2007). In fact, there is an expectation among many that the leaders of tomorrow must be one that is technically talented, being an effective team player, easily be able to adapt himself with others and the organization as well as the new technologies, and most importantly comprehend with the needs of the societies in which they work and live.

Hence, to prepare our teenagers to make great aids to society in this 21st century, we must help them advance a set of capabilities that are not overtly articulated in many societies or anywhere else. Many even portrays that such aim can be attained through significance investment in a wide-ranging concept of lifelong education/learning which

focusing on various areas. The realization of a popular concept that is lifelong learning will reposition such nation as well as Malaysia for the next century to ensure its citizens are well prepared for the challenges ahead.

Besides, this is of course has been among the key reasons why lifelong education has turn out to be so significant in the speeding up of scientific and technological growth. In this new world, the knowledge and skills concluded as the root of our life which is so called the core of the man ambitious. These are the reason why most country in this new world being promotes the concept of lifelong learning through its agencies or even by private sectors. In Sabah, Malaysia, Parent-Teacher Association has become one of the parties which have the greatest role in promoting such concept. Associations like these could popularize the term lifelong learning through communication which consists of verbal communication (seminar and talks) and non-verbal communication (exhibition and leisure activities relevance to learning process). Therefore, all these aims will be achieved based largely on the belief that investing in education betterment is a strategic venture for Parent-Teacher Association in the subsequent ways. In other words, it means that the Parent-Teacher Association must enhance their competitive advantage, strategic internal investment and increasing its contribution to the society.

Responding from this little marvelous fact, a study on the effectiveness of such agencies as well as Parent-Teacher Association must be carried out. This job must be done to make our life more colorful and of course it would generate the improvement of teenagers' involvement in lifelong learning process very soon which will then in the long run benefit not only the teenagers specifically but the society as a whole.

2.0. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since many decades, there has been a mounting measure to understand the way people learn and how young folks are familiarized into the society. Home-schooling, charter schools, cyber schools, un-schooling, lifelong learning are the ways young people introduced into society. The movement has been rising exponentially each decade since the 1980s. It has turn out to be a contest to the traditional school/teach/education system. Life-long learning has been promoted by the management guru Peter Drucker in 'Post Capitalist Society' on one end of the spectrum and, on the other end, by Elise Boulding in 'Building Global Civic Culture', and by many scholars in between (Bass & Avolio, 1995; Bennis, 2000).

The foundation of this measure is to make available the independence, prospect and resources for independent learners to decide or choose to

learn what they are desired, when and how they exactly learn. Despite the rapid growth of this movement, it has drawn little positive attention from governments. Professional educators and their unions have shown concern that the proliferation of lifelong learning will draw funds away from the public-school system. A limited public-school structure has acknowledged the challenge and established special programs to provide would-be homeschoolers and other self-learners more autonomy within the public-school system.

In Sabah, Malaysia, quite a lot of society as well as institutions that are public agencies or the private entities are endorsing lifelong learning as the effort to upsurge the literacy level which could make them utilize human resources more effective. The lifelong learning that included in their development agendas are of course important to them. Therefore, promoting lifelong learning is of the most critical development challenges facing several country or state including Sabah in the twenty first century. The implementation of this learning method in Sabah has its effects on the rural society transformation process as well as improving human quality of life in general. Moreover, participation among many agencies in promoting this learning method has been increased, which represents that this kind of society is going a step forward to transform its social aspect into more improved society, rather than traditional which predominantly have ineffective human resources management methods.

In accordance lifelong learning may contribute well to the improvement of teenagers' quality of life in the next years as it may lead to the transformation of rural teenagers' society into a new rural teenagers' society. The effectiveness on the practice of lifelong learning in rural areas, which were promoted by several agencies, however, will not be similar at all. The differences of lifelong learning promotion activities among them are highly dependent on the agencies working for it. Responding from this fact, with the difference in activities to foster the concept of lifelong education/learning, in the medium to longer term a critical question related to the practices of lifelong learning must be answered.

The question arises concerning the implementation of lifelong learning concept in Sabah particularly focuses on how does the concept have been promoted by the Parent-Teacher Association for the benefits of teenagers in rural areas of Sabah, Malaysia? So far, not so many, in no even a study has been conducted in this area. Since the Malaysia government as the national development effort has implemented the concept of lifelong education/learning, it must be of significant interest to investigate the application of the lifelong education/learning in order to address the following questions:

1. Has the Parent-Teacher Association been effectively promoting the lifelong education/learning concept in rural areas of Sabah in Malaysia?
2. What exactly are the factors usually contributed to the effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Association in promoting lifelong education/learning of rural areas in Sabah of Malaysia?

3.0. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the field investigation which this paper is based is to examine the teenagers' perception on the effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Association of rural secondary school in Sabah to promote lifelong learning concept.

Accordingly, the specific objectives the study which this paper is based are including:

1. To identify whether, the Parent-Teacher Association of rural secondary school in Sabah, Malaysia has been effectively promoting the lifelong learning concept for the sake of their teenagers.
2. To identify what exactly are the factors generally related with the effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Association in promoting lifelong learning of rural areas in Sabah, Malaysia.

By attaining these objectives, this study is hoped to offer a well understanding of the notion of lifelong learning being promoted by the government of Malaysia that may lead to the transformation of rural teenage society into a new teenage society. This study also provides some suggestions to stake holders or policy makers such as from both public agencies and private companies in encouraging target groups decision to promote and adopt lifelong learning concept. In short, the researchers are positive that this study contributes to the thoughtful of the applicability of the concept of lifelong learning among rural teenagers as a tool for effective transforming rural teenager society into new or even advanced rural teenagers' society.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional study was adopted in this study. The researchers were interested in understood the influence of inter-group relations towards the rural adolescent psychological aspect that is the desire to further their study. The cross-sectional study was found as suited for this study because it has a high capability to describe the topic under study or being studied. Smith (1988) commented with regards to this statement recited that the cross-sectional study is the most relevant and suited for the study of any aspect that needs to be known (the result) at once. In short, the cross-sectional study is found as the most suited method to for this study.

Moreover, considering that the study which this paper is based aimed at making an interpretation of the residents grounded on characteristics of the chosen sample, careful probability sampling is viewed as a sampling technique that provides a group of information providers or the respondents whose characteristics may largely reflect those of greater population, and sensibly created standardized from all respondents (Barbie, 1995). Thus, it is argued that sampling design which simplifies the process of dispensing and gatherings of completed set of survey questionnaires (research instrument) need to be determined. Based on this sampling technique, 100 secondary students in selected rural areas of Sabah were identified as the respondents of this study. The rural areas are comprised of rural areas in the district of Kudat and Kota Marudu. The questionnaire is consisted of: (A) Respondent's Background; (B) Perception on the Effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Association in promoting Lifelong Learning Concept; and (C) Factors Associates with Effectiveness of P-T Association in promoting Lifelong Learning concept. This self-administered survey questionnaire is originally English but translated into the Malay language; the language widely spoken by the population there.

As soon as the information were collected, the survey items and averaged score on performance score were coded beforehand the data were shifted to the computer for scrutiny. The system that use to analyze the gathered data is the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), which is the system that assesses and analyzes data. The raw data has been printed out to check for any irregularities in patterns. SPSS is chosen to analyze the gathered quantitative data because it is a statistical tool for organizing, describing and analyzing quantitative enquiry (Kinner & Gray, 2000; Rahman, Ationg & Zulhaimi, 2017; Ationg, 2017; Ationg, 2020). Accordingly, is important to stress here that any error during the process of data entry identified and thereafter resolved. The presentation and analysis of the data are guided by the objectives of this study. Besides, descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, percentages, range, and standard deviations are used to describe the general characteristics of each variable. This statistical package is usually used for analyzing the respondent background, of course the respondents' perception on the effectiveness Parent-Teacher Association in promoting the lifelong learning concept and the factor associates with the effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Association in promoting lifelong learning.

In all the statistical analysis of this study, the level of significance chosen is 0.05. This is conventionally selected because social scientists consider this level of significance as neither too risky to adopt nor to

conservative. Similarly, the 0.05 level is generally an acceptable threshold for the scholarly journal in communication (Smith, 1988).

6.0. RESULTS

6.1 Respondent Background

The response rate among the respondents of 100 per cent was accomplished (N=100). 50 per cent of the respondents were males, while the other 50 per cent of respondent were the contradicting gender (females). The 14 years was a mean age and that there were about 70% of them had either PMR or UPSR, about 30% were with SPM.

6.2 Effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Association in promoting lifelong learning

As explained earlier, this study was utilized the self-administered survey which later examined using SPSS. Hence, the result of the data examination is shown as in the Table 1.

Table 1: Effectiveness of P-T Association in Promoting Lifelong Learning

Level of Effectiveness for Parent-Teacher Association in Promoting Lifelong Learning	The Respondent	
	n	%
Effective	78	78.0
Ineffective	22	22.0
OVERALL	100	100.0

Table 1 showed that 78.0% of the respondents stated that the Parent-Teacher Association have been effectively promoting the concept of lifelong learning to the rural teenagers in Sabah. Minimally however, 22.0% of the selected respondents stated that the Parent-Teacher Association have never been effectively promoted the concept of lifelong learning to the rural teenagers in Sabah. This means that the Parent-Teachers Association is the effective agencies or organization in promoting the concept of lifelong learning in Sabah, Malaysia. Such result, however, is applicable to the society associated with the Parent-Teacher Association of a specific school and therefore excluded other society. This suggest that, the efficiency of Parent-Teacher Association in promoting the idea of lifelong learning have never advanced any momentous impact larger than the society of a particular school.

6.3 The Factors

The factors associated with the effectiveness of Parent-Teachers Association in promoting what we call lifelong education or lifelong learning as according to the respondents are including leadership skills, activities management skills and organization management

skills. This means, these three factors must be considered in making the policy related to the concept being promotes. Without taken these factors into account, the policy or the development agenda (lifelong learning) would not meet its aims at all.

7.0. CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed that the Parent-Teacher Association of the rural secondary school has the ability to influence teenagers to uphold the idea of lifelong learning. Nevertheless, it is argued that such phenomenon is applicable to the society associated with the Parent-Teacher Association of a specific school. This suggest that the effectiveness of Parent-Teacher Association in promoting the idea of lifelong learning have never progressed any substantial influence larger than a particular school. For this reason, the Parent-Teacher Association of the rural secondary school in Sabah, Malaysia are urged to be more aware on the importance of widely promoting the concept of lifelong learning to their teenagers. They should improve their level of effectiveness in promoting such concept as well as lifelong learning by encountered many activities relevance to the concept. Moreover, through this research we identify that the Parent-Teacher Association could be one of the best organization or agencies having high capability in promoting lifelong learning in this country.

In conclusion, it is essential for each school to make their own effective Parent-Teacher Association and offer training to the members or even their leaders especially on the field of leadership, activities management and organization management. The reason is that the Parent-Teacher Association members or even the leaders are the pillar of our country, should be more aware, understanding and appreciative with the term lifelong learning promotion. Their leadership skills and management capability are our main asset to sustain the educational improvement.

8.0. IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

An implication has emerged from the results of the present study. The implication found is that when a marvelous concept is being promoted by the relevance agencies, which concerned about the teenagers' future, the agencies or the stake holders must look carefully on the enhancement of leadership skills training, activities management and organization management skills improvement course. For instance, the government agency has to promote the relevance training or the courses to improve the implementing agencies skills.

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