

## Relationship of Teacher Interaction and Self-Esteem with Perception on Baby Dumping Behavior Among Multi-Ethnic Secondary School Students In Sabah



### Education

**KEYWORDS :** teacher interaction, self-esteem, perception, baby dumping, multi-ethnic, school student

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### ABSTRACT

*The study aims to examine the relationship between teacher interaction and self-esteem with perception on baby dumping behavior among multi-ethnic secondary school students in Sabah. A total of 781 middle school students from diverse ethnic groups have taken part in this survey. This survey study conducted by questionnaires, School Attachment Questionnaire (SAQ) to measure teacher interaction, Rosenberg of Self-Esteem Scale to measure self-esteem, and perception on baby dumping behavior questionnaire to measure the dependent variable. Results showed that self-esteem correlates with perception on baby dumping behavior. In fact, the results also showed teacher interaction are not correlated with perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students from various ethnic groups in Sabah. Besides, there was no significant difference in the perception on baby dumping behavior among ethnic group students. Implications of the study were discussed.*

### INTRODUCTION

Adolescents often associated with social problems and this has become an increasingly serious (Mohammed Sharif, Zainudin & Jamaluddin, 2004). Almost every day we get to see the media reporting of social issues involving Y generation of adolescents, such as drug abuse, illegal racing and run away from home until reach the alarming levels.

Recently, other social problems are increasingly gaining attention involves adolescents are free of sexual activity and baby dumping. Even, more worrying when this problem often involves high school students (Azizi & Badrulzaman, 2006; Zainudin & Norazmah, 2011). Statistics of the Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) showing 407 of baby dumping cases were recorded from 2005 to 2010 (Mohd Fadzly, 2012). The issue of baby dumping among adolescents has become an attraction to the researchers (Sarnon, Mohamad, Fauziah, Alavi, Nen, Hoesni, Zaizul & Wan Jaafar, 2012). This can clearly be seen through the local newspapers that often constitute the emergence of baby dumping as a headline suggesting that something worrying is happening in the country indirectly (Nazni, Zaherawati, Mohd Zool Hilmie, Zaliha & Kamarudin, 2012).

Baby dumping issues involving infants aged less than 12 months left in the open or closed with the intention to get rid of baby regardless the security threats of the baby's life (Nazni, Zaherawati, Mohd Zool Hilmie, Zaliha & Kamarudin, 2012). Baby dumping behavior can be categorized into two divisions, namely exposure and abandonment. Exposure means putting someone out or isolated place in which have a very high risk of harm (Suresh & Chedda, 1988).

Triggers for baby dumping behavior are out of wedlock pregnancy. In particular, if this happens to adolescent especially those still in school then increasingly encouraging them to baby dumping behavior due to several factors, such as fear and panic (Harian Metro, 2011).

In discussing the problem of baby dumping among adolescents, especially secondary school students, the main thing in need of attention is that factors relating to the behavior and perceptions of the students about it. Numerous studies have been conducted to ascertain the factors related to the baby dumping behavior, however there was the question of how about the factor relates to the perceptions of the students to baby dumping behavior. The issue of students' perceptions which is adolescents toward baby dumping behavior is considered significant because it can be a predictor of risky behavior such as sexual behavior and remove infants. In fact, it should be noted also that not all the

students involved in the behavior and tend to dump the baby if in the situations of pregnancy out of wedlock. Therefore, to address the problem of abandoned babies, factors relating to the formation of perceptions on baby dumping behavior among adolescents in particular secondary school students should be acknowledged. This is because by knowing the related factors then the measures and appropriate interventions can be developed to tackle this problem persists.

#### 1.1 Research Problem

Increased issue of sexual symptoms without marriage among adolescents especially school students nowadays like a sign of the emergence of new sub-culture in Malaysia. The issue is not just limited to only that behavior, but become a factor to other current issues and even more worrying, is baby dumping behavior. The problems of baby dumping have been increasingly prevalent over the past few years. According to statistics released by the Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) on baby dumping cases from 2007 to 2010, the highest state of most of baby dumping occurrence is Selangor, i.e. total 82 cases, and Sabah ranked third in this social issue (Nazni, Zaherawati, Mohd Zool Hilmie, Zaliha & Kamarudin, 2012). Although Sabah is not the most cases of baby dumping, but the problem is still considered alarming because it involves a life and misconduct of crime are categorized in the crime of murder as defined in the Children Act 2001 (Mohd Fadzly, 2012). If this issue is left alone without action, it will be on the rise and can lead to other risky behaviors, such as the repetition of the free sexual behavior among teenage and baby dumping as well as risks of health threat. More concerning are many cases involving adolescents who are still in high school.

Based on the findings of studies conducted, teacher interaction (i.e. Pallas, 1989; Wan Zah, Hajar, Azimi & Hayati, 2009) and self esteem (i.e. Fergusson & Horwood, 2008; Rosenberg, Schooler, & Schoenbach, 1989; Sprott & Doob, 2000) were contributing to adolescent risk behavior, such as participation in sexual behavior and baby dumping. When scrutinized, these agents can also be related to the formation of adolescents' perceptions of the behavior of dumping the baby.

For the role of schools and teachers, the United State Public Health Service (2001) emphasized the unique role of schools in providing education and information avoid students' involvement in risky behaviors, which is through the knowledge provided and the formation of perception on baby dumping behavior. The active involvement of the role of schools and teachers can lower the involvement in risky sexual behavior, which is then can be a trigger to other risky behaviors that is pregnant. And, pregnancy may lead to two things either become young

parents or baby dumping behavior. Besides, according to Faloan (2011) that self-esteem is one factor that can lead students to the problematic behavior such as baby dumping. The statement was supported by Crokenberg and Soby (1989) that high self-esteem has an impact on sexual behavior in men than in women.

Clearly be seen in the diversity of the findings and mostly conducted in the West. Moreover, the findings are very limited used in the Malaysian context that emphasizes cultural factors and subjective norms in behave. In fact, the findings will also be a constraint in the development of appropriate interventions in the Malaysian context. Thus, the researchers establish questions, i.e.; what about the factors relating to the perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students in Sabah? And, do the self-esteem and teacher interaction related to secondary school students' perceptions of the baby dumping behavior? This is because Sabah is clearly multi-ethnic states and every ethnic have norms and culture respectively.

Therefore, this study was undertaken to resolve questions about the factors selected based on previous studies of self-esteem and teacher interactions related to the perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students in Sabah. This is because these factors may be leading to the perception on baby dumping behavior.

**1.2 Research Objectives**

1. Examine the relationship between teacher interactions with perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students in Sabah.
2. Examine the relationship between self-esteem with perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students in Sabah.
3. Examine the differences in perception on baby dumping behavior based on ethnicity in Sabah.

**1.3 Conceptual and Operational Definitions**

**1.3.1 Teacher Interaction**

Interaction is a dynamic social relations and in respect of relations between individual, individual with a group or cluster with other cluster (Idianto, 2004). Interaction linking human as a social being, which helps human beings realize their existence in a social system. Effendy (2003) in Idianto (2004) said the interaction as a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the environment. In addition, Kimball and Raymond (1965) explain the interaction as a social relationship between individuals until there is mutual influence of each other. Interaction not only patterns of relationship, but a process of reciprocity between individual and environment that influence dynamically and serves in changing attitudes.

In this study, the interaction of the teacher operated by the form of feelings when students are in school and relationships with teachers, where if the student have a good interaction with the teacher then can be influenced the perception of student on baby dumping behavior.

**1.3.2 Self-esteem**

According to Rosenberg (1979), self-esteem covers the entire individual feelings of self as an object. People with high self-esteem will respect self and regard as a useful individual. While individuals of low self-esteem, would not accept self and sees self as useless and deprivation. In other words, self-esteem described as positive or negative attitudes in self-evaluation (Azizi & Jaafar, 2005).

Operationally, in this study self-esteem refers to how students evaluate and appreciate him, which would affect the way to perceive baby dumping behavior.

**1.3.3 Perception on Baby Dumping Behavior**

According to Chaplin and Smith (2006), perception is the process of knowing or recognizing an object and objective event with the assistance of the senses, or intuitive awareness about the truth and confidence of an affair. Meanwhile, Leavitt and Donovan (1985) explain perception as one way to understand and

interpret things. The definition perception is supported by the definition of the Epstein (1995) given, the individual process of recognizing, organize and interpret information obtained from environmental stimuli.

In this study the perception on baby dumping behavior studied based on how students' perceptions on the matter or situations affecting the behavior of baby dumping.

**METHOD**

**2.1 Research Design**

This study is a survey method using a questionnaire that aimed to examine the relationship between factors of teacher interaction and self-esteem with perception on baby dumping among secondary school students in Sabah. A questionnaire was used to obtain data from respondents.

**2.2 Sample**

A total of 781 secondary school students in Sabah selected as respondents. Respondents consisted of 436 female students and 345 male students, who come from various ethnic backgrounds and religions. Respondents were in the age group 13 to 18 years, from form one to five. The respondent selection based on random sampling, in which all secondary school students in Sabah have the opportunity to choose in this study.

**2.3 Location**

Some areas in Sabah have been selected as the location of study. Among the areas involved are Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan and Tawau. A total of 14 schools from the area randomly selected to go through the work. Nine schools selected from Kota Kinabalu, four schools from Tawau and one school of Sandakan. Distribution of respondents according to school and district are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Distribution of Respondents According to School and District**

| District      | School                   | Total of Students (N) |
|---------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Kota Kinabalu | SMK Likas                | 20                    |
|               | SMK Teknik Likas         | 20                    |
|               | SMK Telipok              | 20                    |
|               | SMK Sanzac               | 20                    |
|               | SMK Inanam               | 63                    |
|               | SMK Agama Inanam         | 62                    |
|               | SMK Tun Fuad Stephens    | 64                    |
|               | SMK Datuk Peter Mojuntin | 100                   |
|               | SMK St. Micheal          | 101                   |
| Tawau         | SMK Tawau                | 50                    |
|               | SMK Tawau II             | 58                    |
|               | SMK Pasir Putih          | 60                    |
|               | SMK Kabota               | 60                    |
| Sandakan      | SMK Sandakan             | 11<br>83              |
| Total         |                          | 781 Students          |

**2.4 Instruments**

This study has used a set of questionnaires to collect the needed data. To determine the relationship of teacher interaction and self-esteem with perception on baby dumping behavior in sec-

ondary schools in terms of multi-ethnic in Sabah, then set of questionnaires were designed to assess students' perceptions on baby dumping behavior.

The questionnaires designed based on the aspects of study requirements. The questionnaires consisted of three parts including teacher interaction, self-esteem as well as perception on baby dumping behavior.

**2.4.1 Part A: Profile of Students Demographic**

Part A obtaining students' personal information such as gender, ethnicity, age, grade and school name. This section aims to consider the extent of demographic factors influence the perception towards baby dumping behavior.

**2.4.2 Part B: Teacher Interaction Scale**

This section uses Questionnaire on Teacher Interaction (QTI) developed by Wubbels and Levy (1993), which consisting of 12 items to measure respondents' interaction with the teacher/school. The instrument used Likert scale of four consisting of positive and negative items.

**2.4.3 Part C: Self-Esteem Scale**

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale developed by Rosenberg in 1965 was used to measure respondents' self-esteem. The total of the original instrument is 10 items. However, only 9 items used for an item was removed because affected on the Alpha Cronbach during the pilot study. The instrument uses a Likert scale of four consisting of positive and negative items and have carried out Back Translation to facilitate respondents answered in Malay.

**2.4.4 Part D: Students' Perception towards Baby Dumping Behavior**

Part F measuring individual's perception towards baby dumping behavior. The instrument of perception towards baby dumping behavior was used developed by the researcher. The instrument consists of 13 items of a Likert scale of four.

**2.5 Procedure**

Before the administration of actual study is held, the researcher conducted a pilot study on 30 students. The aim of the pilot study was to examine the reliability and validity of the survey instrument to evaluate the construct items.

**THEORY**

**3.1 Theory of Primary Socialization**

Primary Socialization Theory (PST) is a theory developed by Oetting and Donnermeyer (1998) to explain the formation of deviant behavior in students resulting from the relationship between the individual and the social context. Based on PST, deviant behavior resulting from the process of learning, and learning takes place in the context of a close relationship (Bandura, 1973; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000).

Three important groups as agents of socialization in influencing the formation of deviant behavior whether directly or indirectly, the family, peers and school (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998). Based on PST, the more closely the students with socialization agent the higher the level of influence the formation of deviant behavior are revealed to the students. Important construct in PST is bonding. Agents of socialization family, peers and school was the moderator of the formation of a student with behavior, depending on the level of bonding that exists between students with any agent of socialization. Thus, exposure of students on either a deviant behavior or prosocial is subject to normative patterns of behavior revealed by any agent of socialization (Hirschi, 1969).

Primary Socialization Theory (PST) is often used to discuss the influence of different contexts on student behavior (Sallis & Owen, 1996), and appropriate to understand deviant behavior (Oetting & Donnermeyer, 1998), such as free sexual behavior and baby dumping.

**3.2 Maslow's Hierarchy Theory**

Maslow's Hierarchy theory is a theory that discuss human needs

in life. Abraham Maslow (1968) divides human needs into two, namely the physiological and psychological needs. Physiological needs are the most basic needs in life such as eating, drinking, breathing and sexual relationships. Meanwhile, the psychological needs cover the need for a safety, love, esteem and self-righteousness.

Self esteem is an important aspect in the formation of human identity (Azizi, Jamaluddin & Wei, 2006). Maslow's Hierarchy putting self esteem as a fourth important element in the lives of individuals (Dacey & Kenny, 1997). According to Maslow (1968) that individuals tend to make judgments of himself based on the assessment of people around him, for example, individuals tend to make a positive assessment of themselves if the people in the environment making the same assessment. Thus, how individuals evaluate themselves will influence the attitudes, social interaction and personality.

In this theory, self-esteem is divided into two parts, high level and low level. Low self esteem associated with his ego, that there needs to be respected by others (Azizi, Jamaluddin & Wei, 2006). In the low self esteem of an individual requires the acceptance of others. Rosenberg (1979) described individuals with low self esteem tend to not be able to accept herself and sees herself as useless and inadequate. This often makes the individual fall to risk behavior as an easy way to cover weaknesses that felt.

Meanwhile, a high level of self esteem is meant by Maslow (1968) is self-respect. The level of self-esteem requires less maintenance, which is the perfection of the individual felt would feel self respect as a permanent part of the self. Thus, Rosenberg (1979) described individuals with high self esteem always looked positive with potential, but very satisfied with yourself (Azizi, Jamaluddin & Wei, 2006). In addition, individuals with high self esteem is always taken to ensure that the behavior does not threaten or risking yourself (Maslow, 1968).

**RESULT**

**4.1 Reliability of Instruments**

Researchers have been using the method of Alpha Cronbach coefficients to evaluate the reliability of the instruments. Set of this questionnaire consists of three types of instruments that measure three variables, is teacher interaction, self-esteem and perception on baby dumping behavior. A pilot study conducted with 30 of secondary students. Table 2 presents the results for the level of reliability of each instrument used in this study.

**Table 2 Results of Reliability Level of Questionnaires**

| Questionnaires                               | Alpha Cronbach Coefficients | Total of Items |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Teacher Interaction (Part B)                 | 0.643                       | 12             |
| Self-esteem (Part C)                         | 0.743                       | 10             |
| Perception on Baby Dumping Behavior (Part F) | 0.733                       | 13             |

**4.2 Results of Descriptive Analysis for Actual Study**

**4.2.1 Descriptively Test Results**

Descriptive analysis conducted to yield descriptively demographic background using percentage and mean.

**Table 3 Distribution of Research Subjects Based on Demographic Factors**

| Demographic Factors | N      | Percentages (%) |
|---------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Gender              | Male   | 345 44.2        |
|                     | Female | 436 55.8        |
| Ethnicity           | Bugis  | 152 19.5        |
|                     | Suluk  | 34 4.4          |
|                     | Dusun  | 105 13.4        |

|          |               |     |      |
|----------|---------------|-----|------|
|          | Malay         | 66  | 8.5  |
|          | India         | 2   | 0.3  |
|          | Sungai        | 1.6 | 2.0  |
|          | Kadazan       | 148 | 19   |
|          | Bajau         | 113 | 14.5 |
|          | Cina          | 32  | 4.1  |
|          | Kadazandusun  | 4   | 0.5  |
|          | Others        | 109 | 14   |
| Age      | 13 – 15 years | 52  | 6.7  |
|          | 16 – 17 years | 724 | 92.7 |
|          | 18 years      | 5   | 0.6  |
| Religion | Islam         | 476 | 60.9 |
|          | Christian     | 288 | 36.9 |
|          | Buddha        | 7   | 0.9  |
|          | Hindu         | 5   | 0.6  |
|          | No Religion   | 1   | 0.1  |
|          | Others        | 4   | 0.5  |

**4.3 Results of Hypothesis Analysis for Actual Study**

**4.3.1 Hypothesis 1:** There are relationship between teacher interaction and perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students in Sabah

**Table 4 Correlation between Teacher Interaction and Student Perceptions on Baby Dumping Behavior**

| Variables           | Perception on Baby Dumping Behavior |                 |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
|                     | Sig.                                | Correlation (r) |
| Teacher Interaction | 0.709                               | -0.013          |

k> 0.05

Table 4 shows the correlation between teacher interaction and students' perceptions on baby dumping behavior. The analysis shows that there is no significant relationship between the two variables [r = -0.013, n = 781, k>0.05]. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected.

**4.3.2 Hypothesis 2:** There are relationship between self-esteem and perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students in Sabah

**Table 5 Correlation between Self-Esteem and Student Perceptions on Baby Dumping Behavior**

| Variables   | Perception on Baby Dumping Behavior |                 |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
|             | Sig.                                | Correlation (r) |
| Self-Esteem | 0.037                               | 0.075*          |

k< 0.05

Table 5 shows the correlation between self-esteem and students' perceptions on baby dumping behavior. The analysis shows that there is a significant moderate correlation between the two variables [r = 0.075\*, n = 781, k<0.05]. Therefore, the hypothesis was accepted.

**4.3.3 Hypothesis 3:** There is a difference based on ethnicity in the perception on baby dumping behavior among second-

ary school students in Sabah

**Table 6 One-way ANOVA for the Perception on Baby Dumping Behavior among Secondary School Students by Ethnicity**

| Ethnic        | df  | Mean square | Sum of Squares | F     | Sig.  |
|---------------|-----|-------------|----------------|-------|-------|
| Between Group | 10  | 25.519      | 255.195        | 1.624 | 0.095 |
| Within Group  | 770 | 15.711      | 12097.138      |       |       |

k>0.05

Table 6 shows the differences by ethnicity in the perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students in Sabah. The analysis shows that there are no differences by ethnicity in this test. Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

**DISCUSSION**

**5.1 Perception on Baby Dumping Behavior**

The results of the study revealed a significant relationship between self-esteem and the perception on baby dumping behavior among secondary school students in Sabah. The result of the analysis shown in a positive but weak relation between the two variables. It means student who have positive self-esteem tend to have a positive perception on baby dumping behavior. In other words, a student who has positive self-esteem accept the behavior of baby dumping.

Self-esteem is one factor that can lead students to the problematic behavior (Faloon, 2011), such as baby dumping. Longitudinal study found that high self-esteem has an impact on sexual behavior in men than in women (Crokenberg & Soby, 1989). Neumann, Leffingwell, Wagner, Mignogna and Mignogna (2009) explained that student with high self-esteem usually is less likely to respond with information about a risky behavior. This is likely because, student with high self-esteem tend to higher confidence and boldness in taking decisions (Cole & Slocumb, 1995). Thus, students view that if they're in a desperate situation such as pregnancy without marriage, so the students decided to behave dumping the baby to protect themselves and avoid situations that could affect the value of their self-esteem. This is because; when students are found have a baby without marriage major pressure to be faced is stereotyping and rejection of the surroundings. Students may have to quit school to nurture the baby born, in fact tend to suffer from depression because they are too young to cope with the responsibilities of being a parent (Philpot, 2006; Ojedokun & Atoi, 2012) and begin to develop a low self-esteem due to the strain (Ojedokun & Atoi, 2012). So, the pressures making the student perceive accept that behavior, and is likely daring to do it.

In addition, at the level of adolescent, student tend to think and behave according to emotions and feelings (Halls, 1904). Meanwhile, self-esteem was generally involved a strong emotional reaction, is the perception and still to reach the stage of reality (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003). A low or high level of self-esteem still connects to powerful emotional involvement, which often contributes to the success or failure in life (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2003). Therefore, self-esteem and emotions are mutually responsible if students are confronted with the situation of pregnancy without marriage, then baby dumping was seen as an alternative for ensuring they survived from a condition that can be predicted restrictions on their future.

The findings of the survey indicated there was no relationship between teacher interaction with students' perception on baby dumping behavior. For students that have improved self-esteem after having relationships with their romantic partner, then the student is more likely based on the couple in making judgments and conclusions about a behavior. The study also found no significant differences based on ethnicity in perceptions towards baby dumping among students. Thus, researchers concluded that although Sabah consists of diverse ethnic groups, but stu-

dents still hold the same perception on baby dumping behavior. This is probably can be explained because secondary school students are a development and youth transition to adulthood. Although students differ in physical, emotional, mental and moral (Liu, Slap, Kinsman & Khalid, 1994), but every student who called adolescents are going through the same phases and challenges without being influenced by cultural factors.

### IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

Based on these findings, researchers can identify some of the implications of the study. The first implication is to provide information about factors relating to students' on towards baby dumping behavior. With the information obtained parents know about the things that could play other roles in the lives of their children. This is because parents often do not take note of the child's self-esteem and take it easy on the matter. So, parents will be able to use the factor of self-esteem as a way to establish attachment with their children and educate them to develop the right self-esteem, which served as the protector of the offense. The second is the school that also serves as a role in the education of students able to play their role in providing proper education to the students so that students develop high self-esteem and properly in accordance with the pattern of self-esteem that serves as prevent students from engaging in delinquent behavior instead of make students more daring commits an offense.

### CONCLUSION

In particular, this study aims to examine the relationship between teacher interaction and self-esteem with perception on baby dumping behavior among multi-ethnic secondary school students in Sabah. The findings indicate that self-esteem was significantly related to the perception on baby dumping behavior among students. Meanwhile, teacher interaction do not provide any contact with the perception on baby dumping behavior. Even so, the teacher interaction still seen playing a role in the development of a student's life, in which the researcher's view the three components might be related to their self-esteem. Thus, teacher still need to meet a particular responsibility in the proper formation of self-esteem to the students while providing coincided information so that the student can develop the right self-esteem, which intended to deflect them from developing a false perception and problematic behavior:

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