

SOCIAL CHANGES AMONG ORANG ASLI STUDENTS THROUGH ICT LITERACY PROGRAM BASED ON RISALE-I NUR APPROACH

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Abstract

Truancy is not a new problem among Orang Asli students in Malaysia. If the problem is not tackled, the nation will lose a part of human resources that can contribute for the development of the nation. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the integration process of ICT literacy program and Risale-i Nur approach may influence social changes on the acceptance and awareness of education among Orang Asli students. Qualitative case study was used in order to explore the process that took place on the participants involved in this program. Interviews and observations were made to obtain detailed information on the matter. The findings of this study show that the integration of ICT literacy program which was designed based on students' learning styles and five attributes of meaningful learning and Risale-i Nur approach have increased the interest of Orang Asli students to go to school. In addition to that, the awareness towards the importance of education for their future also has increased. The participants are satisfied with the ICT literacy program that they have undergone as it gave them new experience and knowledge to be applied in their daily lives. In conclusion, the integration of ICT literacy program which was designed based students' learning styles and meaningful learning with Risale-i Nur approach plays an important role in influencing social changes among Orang Asli students.

Keywords: Social changes, Orang Asli, ICT literacy program, Risale-i Nur, learning styles, meaningful learning

1.0 Introduction

Lifelong learning (LLL) is an education democratization process which includes knowledge, skill and competency acquisition programs formally or informally based on experience and training (National Higher Education Action Plan 2011). LLL is important in increasing the added value to the community and in being the biggest contributor to the national productivity and development (Alicia 2011; Muhyiddin 2012). This dream is achievable with the active involvement of the youth who will lead the nation with educational programs which are integrated with technology (Rossemi et al. 2011). However, the education process for Orang Asli students are not integrated with technology and this causes them to remain isolated from the main development stream of the nation. Therefore, continuous research should be conducted to identify the needs and problems faced by Orang Asli in education to ensure that they are not left behind (Muhyiddin 2012).

The effort to strengthen the national education system from childhood to high education level has taken account all needs of the community including Orang Asli community in rural areas under the

10th Malaysia Plan (Muhyiddin 2012). However, there is a problem remains unsolved among Orang Asli students which is truancy. Thus, YAB Tan Sri Dato' Haji Muhyiddin Haji Mohd Yassin, Deputy Prime Minister cum Minister of Education (2012) has introduced seven initiatives in Orang Asli Education Transformation Plan as one of the efforts to tackle this problem. If the problem is not tackled, the nation will lose a part of human resources that can contribute for the development of the nation (Mohamad Johdi et al. 2009). Besides that, the awareness of Orang Asli students towards the importance of education is low. Therefore, it is important to implement social change in terms of awareness towards the importance of education so that they will be able to improve the quality of life and able to compete with the outside community (Mohamad Johdi et al. 2009).

2.0 Problem Statement

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, a well-known Turkish thinker who wrote *Risale-i Nur* stated that there are three main enemies of man which one of them is ignorance and it can be overcome through education. This shows that education is an important element in the process of removing an individual from the clutches of ignorance especially for Orang Asli community in Malaysia (Bemen & Christopher 2012). Truancy among Orang Asli students is one of the factors that cause ignorance among them. This may lead them towards illiteracy, inability to master 3Rs (Reading, Writing, Arithmetic), and to obtain low achievement level (Mohamad Johdi et al. 2009; Bemen & Christopher 2012). Therefore, the issue of truancy has to be focused on in ensuring that the nation will not lose a part of human resources. There are several of issues that may contribute towards the increase of truancy rate among Orang Asli students. In this study, the researchers are giving main focus on two of the issues. The first issue is related to the teaching and learning (T&L) methods which do not go well with the learning styles of Orang Asli students. This issue causes no meaningful learning to take place and causes the students to lose their interest and willingness to go to school (Sumathi 2014; Chona 2013; Bemen & Christopher 2012; Nicholas 2010; Mohamad Johdi et al. 2009; McAnany 2009; Salili & Hoosain 2007; McLoughlin & Oliver 2000)

In the process of addressing this issue, technology plays an important role in creating meaningful learning based on the learning styles of the students (Shutterstock 2011; Rosseni Din 2011). Despite of that, there are several issues in implementing technology among Orang Asli students such as the differences in the level of competency among Orang Asli students (Michelle & Stuart 2010), low literacy and achievement level with lack of suitable training (Kral & Schwab 2003; Eady 2004; Greenall 2005), and flawed ICT facilities in terms of the speed or function (Hassan Mat Nor 1998; Amir Zal 2009). Therefore, based on the problems emerged, this study took the initiative to design a ICT literacy program by taking account the dominant learning style of Orang Asli students in order to create meaningful learning for them. This is to instill the passion of the students to go to school and to obtain meaningful learning based on their learning styles.

The second issue focused in this study is the awareness of the Orang Asli students on the importance of education. Previous studies indicate that the awareness of Orang Asli students on the importance of education is still at a low level (Mohamad Johdi, Andul Razaq Ahman & Zalizan Mohd Jelas 2009; Mohamad Johdi Salleh, Norul Khairiah Idris, Nur Awanis Abd Aziz et al. 2009; Sheldon 2011; Bemen & Christopher 2012). The awareness on the importance of education is important in ensuring the Orang Asli students will not be left behind in the development of lifelong learning (Logan 2001; King 2006; Charlotte & Fred 2009). An ICT literacy program designed is used as a medium to identify the social changes towards the awareness on the importance of education among Orang Asli students for this study. In the implementation process of this program, *Risale-i Nur* approach is integrated with the program in order to examine the social changes among Orang Asli students. Modern science approach used in this study is through the ICT literacy program as a medium of change and integrated with moral values to increase the awareness of Orang Asli students towards the importance of education. This discovery is important in enduring that Orang Asli students will not be left behind on the main education stream (Logan 2001; King 2006; Chartard 2006; Charlotte & Fred 2009).

3.0 Operational Definition

This section is explaining the operational definition for the variables used in this study.

3.1 Social Changes

The changes observed among Orang Asli students who have been involved in truancy, so that they are more interested and more passionate to go to school than before and the increase on their awareness on the importance of education.

3.2 Risale-i Nur

Risale-i Nur is a book published in Turkey while the writer was in exile in west Anatolia. This section is divided into two subsections which explains some basic information on the writer of the book and briefly discusses on Risale-i Nur approach.

3.2.1 Bediuzzaman Said Nursi

Bediuzzaman Said Nursi was born in 1877 and died at the age of 83 years old. He was the most influenced Muslim thinker in Turkey in the 20th century (Thomas Michael 2014; Colin Turner & Hasan Horkuc 2009; Sukran Vahide 2005). In addition to that, he was also a scholar who studied science from religious and modern point of view. He had the highest level of excellence in learning in his youth and was given the title Bediuzzaman which means 'the perfection of all time' (Sukran Vahide 2012). He stated that the main enemies of man are ignorance, poverty and conflict, and we have to declare war against the three enemies through education, industry and unity. He wrote all his efforts of 40 years into a book called Risale-i Nur which means 'the message of light'. This study is focusing on the first enemy mentioned by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi which is ignorance which can be overcome through education. This study aims to reduce the ignorance level of Orang Asli students on knowledge so that they will be able to be independent and competent in the future.

3.3.2 Risale-i Nur Approach

Risale-i Nur is a book written by Bediuzzaman Said Nursi which illustrates on the Quran (Thomas Michael 2014; Sukran Vahide 2005). Among the collection of Risale-i Nur are The Words, The Flashes, The Letters, The Rays, the wonders of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, day of resurrection and the hereafter, honesty and relationship, social changes, guideline for teenagers, guideline for women and etcetera. Risale-i Nur was written in the forms of narration, comparison, explanation and enclosed with supporting arguments. Besides that, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi also proved that Risale-i Nur to be the book that explains on the wonderful scientific discoveries and universe that support and strengthen the religious truth (Sukran Vahide 2012). Risale-i Nur is unique as it is not only meant for Muslim but it is also suitable for all regardless of religion or ethnicity as the contents are based on modern man thoughts which is corrupted by materialism. This book specifically answers all questions and doubts caused by modern human thoughts (Sukran Vahide 2012). Risale-i Nur also stated that technology is a useful medium in conveying information within a minimum period provided that it is used for a good cause (Hakan Gulerce 2014).

This study is using the approach for teenagers as mentioned in Risale-i Nur. In addition to that, since the content of Risale-i Nur is applicable to all regardless of the religion, it is suitable for this study as the participants of this study are non Muslims. This study also uses technology as a medium to convey information as supported by Risale-i Nur as a relevant medium for T&L.

3.3 ICT Literacy Program

ICT literacy program used in this study is referring to the process of obtaining information, skills and experience through reading, writing and communication. This process is using ICT as the medium of

instruction which is implemented in theory by using computer and printed materials as well as in practical by using computer software. This program is implemented with the assistance and guidance from the facilitators based on a structured module. This program is designed based on the learning styles of the students in order to create meaningful learning for them

3.4 Learning Styles

For this study, learning styles are referring to the dominant sensory or sociology learning styles of Orang Asli students. These learning styles are used in designing the ICT literacy program conducted. The dominant sensory learning styles for the Orang Asli students are kinesthetic, tactile, visual and auditory meanwhile their dominant sociology learning style is in group followed by individually. This is to ensure that the program develop caters to the learning styles of the Orang Asli students.

3.5 Meaningful Learning

Meaningful learning in this study is referring to the five attributes which are active, constructive, authentic, cooperative and objective. The ICT literacy program designed for this study is based on the dominant learning styles of the Orang Asli students. This is to ensure that the learning is meaningful to the students.

4.0 Methodology

This study is using qualitative research design. The participants involved in this study are students from Kampung Orang Asli Belihoi, Mantin who have the record for truancy. Data collection process was conducted in two ways which are through interviews and observations. Individual interviews were conducted to obtain detailed data as well as to establish a good relationship between the respondents and the researchers. In addition to that, open-ended questions were also used to obtain the data for this study. The interviews were conducted after each two-hour session of the ICT literacy program. Observations were conducted without specific schedule in order to obtain authentic unrehearsed observation. Observations were made during the two-hour ICT literacy program. The data obtained is analyzed by using ATLAS.ti software.

5.0 Findings

This section will illustrate the findings obtained based on the observations and interviews conducted. It is divided into two subsections which are findings based on interviews and findings based on observations. Observations were made during the training activities in the computer lab while the interviews were conducted after session of the ICT literacy program.

5.1 Findings based on observations

Based on the observations conducted, there are three main factors that influenced social changes towards the awareness of the importance of education among the Orang Asli students.

5.1.1 Environment

The ICT literacy program designed was implemented in the actual environment of the students which was in Kampung Orang Asli Belihoi, Mantin. The researchers found out that the students were more adaptable to the teaching and learning environment. In addition to that, the facilitators often related the lesson to their environment so that it would be easier for the students to give feedback and react to the simulation mentioned by the facilitators. As for example, the facilitator gave an illustration on the importance of education in order to improve their lives and to take them out from financial distress. This was an actual situation of their lives as one of the parents was sick and was not sent for medical treatment due to financial distress and the facilitator explained that this should not be an issue if they are well educated. Other examples were related to buying a bigger and better house for the family and

supporting their family financially in surviving the ever increasing expenses and needs. Simulation conducted with the integration of their environment provided a clearer illustration on the importance of education for their future, not only to themselves but also to their family, community and the nation.

5.1.2 Desires

Despite of being in deprivation, they also own personal desires to live their dreams as others. They want their parents and family to live in a bigger house and have a better love. Furthermore, they also have a dream of owning fancy cars, to travel the world, to be an influential individual and so on. Thus, the facilitators emphasized on the importance of education to make their dream come true.

5.1.3 Ambition

The Orang Asli students of Kampung Belihoi have high ambition. There were some of them who want to be soldiers to defend the country, to be nurses to assist patients by giving the best treatment, and to be police officers to maintain the national security. In addition to that, there were some of them who want to be educators because they want to improve their community from being left behind academically and to give greater contribution to the development and wellness of their community. They have high vision to improve themselves and their community. Thus, they need to be aware on the importance of education in order to materialize their dreams and ambitions.

5.2 Findings based on interview

Findings based on the interviews are obtained based on the open-ended questions addressed by the researchers following the protocols of interview prepared prior to the study was conducted.

Question 1: What do you want to be when you grow up?

I want to be a soldier, teacher. Because I want to defend the country and I like their uniform because it looks smart.

Question 2: How can you be a soldier?

I have to study hard, teacher. I have to go to school, listen to the teachers, or else, I can never be a soldier.

Question 3: What did you get from the short course conducted?

It was fun. I've got to learn a lot of things that I have never learned before. It is easy to understand what the teacher is teaching. The teacher will explain first on what we have to do, if I do not understand, I can directly ask the teacher. If there are some of the things that I could not understand was because of me, because I did not give enough focus on the lesson. It was fun because I can do the activities together with my friends. My friends taught me a lot too if I could not understand certain things. Now, I understand the importance of education after the learning process.

Question 4: Why do you like to attend to this program?

I like it because I can learn easily, I got the chance to use computer and to do something new. It is easier for me to understand what the teacher taught. I have never attended your class before this, teacher, but now I want to come to this class all the time and I do not want to skip the lesson.

Question 5: Will you be playing truant again?

No, teacher. I like to learn. I want to chase my dream of becoming a teacher. I want to teach others,

just like you. When I come to this class, I know that if I know more than the others, I can teach them too. If I want to seek for knowledge, I have to go to school. When I am successful, I want to help my mother. I do not have a father anymore, teacher. My mother is always sick. I want to help less fortunate people. I like to see those who are less fortunate to have a better life. The training in this class has given me the motivation to keep working, so that I can be independent.

6.0 Conclusion

The findings of the study show that the integration between ICT literacy program and Risale-i Nur approach can influence social changes towards the acceptance and awareness of the importance of education among Orang Asli students from Kampung Belihoi, Mantin. This is because the approaches used are the combination of modern science and the moral values that cover the physical and spiritual aspects of the students. The ICT literacy program designed based on the learning styles of the students and created meaningful learning to the students is referring to the modern science while Risale-i Nur approach is referring to the moral values used in this study. The students gave high commitment for each learning session without any hesitation and showed full attendance for each session conducted. This situation can lift their determination to obtain knowledge at the fullest and to be aware on the importance of education for their future.

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