ASIAN PENDIDIKAN

The Concept of Labelling by Socialization Agents That Encourages Adolescents to be Delinquent in Rural Areas

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Abstract: This study aims to study the concept of labelling by socialization agents that encourages adolescents to be delinquent in rural areas. The focus of this study is to understand the types of labelling performed by socializing agents. A random sampling technique was used to select the sample group. Data was collected from 100 students aged 13 and 16 from a school in Jeneri, Sik, Kedah. This study adopted the survey method through a quantitative approach. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 25.0 to analyze data using descriptive statistics - mean and standard deviation . The findings show that this type of formal and informal labelling are common among adolescents in rural areas. Therefore, the researcher has proposed several strategies to ensure that the concept of labelling by socializing agents can be reduced in society. The research implied that various parties including parents, schools and teachers can take into account that the concept of labelling influences youth of deviant problems and accordingly take the best steps to avoid adolescents who are trapped in delinquent behavior.

Keywords: Labelling, delinquent behaviour, adolescents, rural areas

1. Introduction

In this post-globalization era, there are several serious disciplinary incidents that have occurred in the schooling world that has played pivotal roles in tarnishing the hopes and aspirations of the National Education Philosophy in producing a balanced human capital in terms of physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social. The problem of delinquency is characterized by behaviour that violates school rules, societal norms that reflects moral decline among adolescents. Therefore, good morality is a critical factor that will determine the pattern and appearance of the individual in all aspects of his life.

The increase in crime rates committed by school students such as delinquent behaviour leading to rape, free sex, gangsterism, stealing, bullying, murder, drug addiction, vandalism, *'rempit'* and so on has raised concerns to many regardless of race and religion. Although various rules and disciplinary guidelines have been set by the school authorities, student misconduct still occurs and is increasing from year to year. According to Berita Harian dated 18 February 2019, a total of 10,154 disciplinary cases for various offenses involving students in the state were recorded during the last year. According to the Director of the Negeri Sembilan Education Department (JPNS), Datuk Kharuddin Ghazali, out of that number, skipping school recorded the highest number of 7,709 cases, while the balance includes impolite behaviour, personal hygiene and vandalism. In another study, Mustafa et al. (2016) showed that the Religious Secondary School is also not excluded from being involved with symptoms that are considered delinquent. Moreover, Yahaya, Idris, Maalip (2007) conducted a study in the urban areas of Johor among national secondary school students to study the level of aggressive behaviour. The study revealed that students' level of aggression was at a high level.

In solving the problem of delinquent behaviour among these adolescents, there is one factor that motivates and encourages an individual to fall into the realm of deviant problems, namely labelling. According to Bernburg (2019), labelling theory provides a sociological approach that focuses on the role of social labelling in the process of developing criminal and deviant activities. The concept of labelling was introduced based on a theory known as labelling theory whereby some individuals were labelled as deviant. Then after, the individual began to think of themselves as deviant and eventually behaved like a real deviant. There are studies that look at aspects in explaining formal and informal

labelling in influencing adolescent misconduct (Kavish, Mullins, & Soto., 2016). This study was conducted on adolescents from grades 7 to 12 in the United States. On the other hand, limited to no studies on the concept of labelling in influencing adolescent behaviour has been carried out in Malaysia especially focusing in rural areas.

The phenomenon of giving "titles" to some individuals in the society is believed to be a dominant factor in shaping adolescent deviant behaviour (Kavish et al., 2016). In describing this situation, an evil or mischievous child when being labelled as a delinquent will eventually become a criminal through a process of "naming, defining, separating, describing, and emphasizing" strongly on such behaviour until the person described or narrated becomes categorised delinquent. Thus, this quantitative study aims to examine the types of labelling, namely formal labelling and informal labelling performed by socialization agents in shaping delinquent behavior of adolescents particularly in rural areas. The implications of the findings from this study can be used as a guide to identify appropriate and adequate solutions to overcome the problem of adolescent delinquent behaviour by stakeholders by taking into account the factors that influence adolescent involvement in deviant problems. This study can also assist other researchers to use the research findings effectively by continuing further this research in related fields.

2.   Literature Review

Labelling theory states that differences are due to the labelling by society on a person who then tends to extend those differences (Taufiki & Dawi, 2013). Essentially, this theory emphasizes the extent to which a behavior is said or labelled as a social deviant and its influence on a person's behavior. According to Humphrey and Palmer (2013), labelling is a full and complete essential part of a society's reaction although it is sometimes interpreted as a separate process. Does the way the society around us see and react to ourselves affect how we think about ourselves and behave? This labelling theory suggests that every behavior produced by an adolescent is the result of a labelling process given by socialization agents. Labelling is a process by which some individuals are labelled as deviant, then the individual begins to think of themselves as deviant and then will behave in actual deviant behavior.

For example, if society often calls a teenager that he will be a good and useful person in the future, then he will try his best and best to achieve every word uttered by the society. This indirectly shows that the labelling given by the community will shape the teenager's self in the future. In contrast to this one situation, if society labels an adolescent as he or she is someone who has unethical behavior and has no future, the adolescent will behave negatively and become as labelled. In the long run, the label is carried along in the process of growing up as an adult to behave and continue living the label.

Every behavior exhibited by a teenager is due to the labelling process they receive. According to Humphrey and Palmer (2013) when a person is labelled, anyone who performs the labelling sets an expectation that a person's behavior will in the future coincide with the behavior expected of that individual. This labelling is also a formal form issued by the authorities such as courts, prisons and so on. In fact, labelling is also available in informal forms performed by socialization agents such as community, family and friends. Children who play games with each other also sometimes show the process of labelling without us realizing it by labelling each other with a bad title.

Mustafa et al. (2016) conducted a study of delinquent behavior among adolescents at Religious Secondary School. The findings of the study showed that the external factors that cause adolescents to be involved in delinquent phenomena are the influence of peers and families who do not play a role in shaping adolescents thus contributing to delinquent behavior among Religious Secondary School students.

Wahab (2004) found that social problems, especially related to behavior, occur a lot during adolescence. The four most common social misconduct among adolescent boys are smoking, drug use, illegal racing and school discipline. Among female students, the most common social misconducts are hanging out, school disciplinary problems and free sex. Abdullah et al., (2014) explained that the obstacle to effective teacher communication in the classroom is the teacher's attitude, behavior and socioemotional issues namely missing their class, intolerance, boring and incontrollable. The results showed that dominative teachers have more negative effects on student development and progress. Proposed solutions to delinquent behavior through adolescent personality development models are also being implemented. A Model of Student Personality Development/Integrated Youth Muslim to address delinquency among students in Malaysia was developed by several researchers. This model involves the role of all stakeholders in the society including parents, schools, ministry of education, social institutions such as Parents-Teachers Association (PTA), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious institutions , mass media, housing welfare bodies and security forces particularly the police and law enforcers (Tunggak, Ngadi, & Naim, 2015).

Khuluqo & Sumedi (2016) explained that the difficulty in shaping the behavior of children is firstly the lack of awareness related to early education provided by parents about good morals and deeds. Secondly is the need for Islamic educational institutions to improve the quality of teaching and learning of the program as a whole. In addition, researchers also found that lack of religious activities in daily life is also a factor when facing difficulty in shaping adolescent behavior. Hassan & Thambu (2018) explained that during adolescence, a person faces a critical challenge of forming and developing self-identity. Failure to overcome such challenges can make adolescent experience a crisis of confusion about their role in life. In the age of technological revolution and information boom, the formation of self-identity is rather a complex process which involves the construction of gender identity and appropriate employment identity.

Kavish et al. (2016) discussed labelling theory research on juvenile delinquency and crime. The researcher noted that there is a difference between the formal criminal justice label and the informal label used by educational institutions, stakeholders and parents. Chiricos et al. (2007) that the formal labelling given to felony conviction will decrease after two years. Researchers also stated that being adjudicated guilty as a felon significantly and substantially increases the likelihood of recidivism in comparison with those who have adjudication withheld. The findings of the study showed that those who are generally more likely to recidivate are less disadvantaged by a formal label than are women, whites, and those without an early prior record.

Liu (2000) conducted a research to study the peer attitudes toward delinquency and peer participation in delinquency. This research found that parental labelling has a stronger effect on youth delinquency when peer attitudes toward delinquency are more positive. Parental labelling (actual and perceived) and youth delinquency are consistent with the labelling argument that stigmatizing reactions from parent may have a detrimental impact on subsequent youth involvement in delinquency. The researcher also found that when peers are more supportive of delinquency and when youths are associated with more friends who participate in delinquency, this factor will be the greater increases in subsequent youth delinquency.

3.   Theory

3.1   Labelling Theory

Labelling Theory states that the difference is due to the labelling by society on a person who then tends to extend the difference (Taufiki & Dawi, 2013). Basically, this theory emphasizes the extent to which a behavior is said or labelled as a social deviant and its influence on a person's behavior. This theory shows that every behavior produced by an adolescent is the result of a labelling process given by socializing agents. Labelling is a process in which some individuals are labelled as deviant, so the individual begins to think of themselves as deviant and then will behave as real deviant.

According to Humphrey and Palmer (2013) when a person is labelled, anyone who does the labelling sets the expectation that a person's behavior will in the future coincide with the expected behavior of that individual. This labelling is also in the form of a formal labelling that is issued by authorities such as the court, the prison and so on. In fact, labelling is also available in informal labelling that is performed by socializing agents such as the community, family and friends. Children while playing games, sometimes unconsciously demonstrate the process of labelling by labelling each other with inappropriate titles.

For example, if society often calls a teenager that he will be a good and useful person in the future, then he will try his best and best to achieve every word uttered by the society. This indirectly shows that the labelling given by the community will shape the teenager's self in the future. In contrast to this one situation, if society labels an adolescent as he or she is someone who has unethical behavior or disfunctional and has no future, the adolescent will behave negatively and become as labelled.

Every behavior exhibited by a teenager is due to the labelling process they receive or have received. According to Humphrey and Palmer (2013) when a person is labelled, anyone who performs the labelling sets an expectation that a person's behavior will in the future coincide with the behavior expected of that individual. This labelling is also a formal form issued by the authorities such as courts, prisons and so on. In fact, labelling is also available in informal forms performed by socialization agents such as community, family and friends. Children who play games with each other also sometimes show the process of labelling without us realizing it by labelling each other with a bad title.

4.   Methodology

This study deploys a descriptive quantitative survey method. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistic to describe the research problem comprehensively on the types of labelling carried out by socializing agents. This sample group for this study involved 100 respondents which were selected randomly. The respondents consist of 50 students from form 2 (high school level) and 50 students from form 4 (high school level) in School A from a town called Jeneri, Sik in Kedah. A survey form was distributed to the respondents of this study. In this study, demographic features included gender, age, ethnic, religion and educational level (form). The survey contains 2 main constructs and 15 items - demographics (5 items), formal labelling (5 items) and informal labelling (5 items). The data analysis in this study uses Statistical Package for The Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25.0 which presents descriptive analysis findings such as mean and standard deviation.

According to Konting (1990), testing the level of validity is important to ensure that the items made are appropriate to the respondents to be tested. To determine the validity of this study instrument, the researcher requested evaluation from experienced experts for the purpose of proving the accuracy and validity of the content when evaluating the research instrument to be appropriate and accurate. The labelling process is measured by based on two types of labelling: (1) formal labelling and (2) informal labelling.

5. Results

The demographic characteristics of the population sample are summarized in Table 1. Analysis of the respondent profile in Table 1 shows that the total sample is 100 people. From the total, it was found that 50 respondents were male and the remaining 50 were female. In terms of age, a total of 50 respondents are 14 years old and the rest are 16 years old. In addition, the demographics of this study also look at the ethnic and religious aspects. The majority of respondents in the study are Muslims (100 respondents). A total of 50 respondents were pursuing their studies at form 2 and the remaining 50 respondents were at form 4.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N=100)

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	50	50
	Female	50	50
Age	14 Years	50	50
	16 Years	50	50
Ethnic	Malay	100	100
	Chinese	0	0
	India	0	0
	Other	0	0
Religion	Islam	100	100
	Buddhist	0	0
	Christian	0	0
	Hindu	0	0
	Other	0	0
Form	Form 2	50	50
	Form 4	50	50

Table 2 shows the overall mean and standard deviations scores for the type of formal labelling performed by socialization agents in rural areas. For item A1.1 on "adolescent who were arrested by the authorities for committing delinquent behavior will be labelled as a "bad" adolescent even if he first commits the negative act", the mean value shown is (M = 4.12, SD = .686). The lowest mean value obtained was for item A1.3 which is for the "police intervention in the development of adolescent life will encourage adolescents to be actively involved in delinquent behavior" shows a mean value of (M = 3.88, SD = .902). Item A1.5 representing on "adolescents from low social status families will be labelled as adolescents that involved in delinquent behavior" shows a mean value (M = 3.92, SD = .992). For item A1.2 which represents "court proceedings that adolescents go through will cause the adolescent to be labelled as an individual with behavioral problems" shows a mean value (M = 4.24, SD = .668) which is the second highest mean value. Item A1.4 obtained the highest mean of (M = 4.33, SD = .711) representing "adolescents released from prison will be labelled as troubled adolescents in society".

Table 2: Formal labelling (N = 100)

Item	Formal labelling	Mean	SD
A1.1	Adolescent who were arrested by the authorities for committing delinquent behavior will be labelled as a "bad" adolescent even if he first commits the negative act.	4.12	.686
A1.2	Court proceedings that adolescents go through will cause the adolescent to be labelled as an individual with behavioral problems.	4.24	.668
A1.3	The police intervention in the development of adolescent life will encourage adolescents to be actively involved in delinquent behaviour.	3.88	.902
A1.4	Adolescents that released from prison will be labelled as troubled adolescents in society.	4.33	.711
A1.6	Adolescents from low social status families will be labelled as adolescents that involved in delinquent behavior.	3.92	.992

Table 3 shows the overall mean scores and standard deviations for the informal labelling types performed by socialization agents in rural areas. The findings of the study found that item A2.5 recorded the highest mean value (M = 4.00, SD = 1.231) which represents "the school administration will accuse you in the event of cases of violation of school rules, for example: cases of smoking in school toilets". As for "your classmates will stay away from you when you are close friends with students who have disciplinary problems" represented by A2.4, the mean value shown is (M = 3.96, SD = 1.024) which is the second highest mean value . Item A2.1 states the lowest mean value of (M = 3.68, SD = 1. 254) which represents "teachers like to label students in the classroom even if they are not involved in delinquent behavior,

for example: your face is like a gangster". Next, a mean value of (M = 3.77, SD = 1.127) was recorded for item A2.2 on "teachers label you as a 'bad' boy if you hang out and make friends with students who have disciplinary problems". Finally, item A2.3 on "parents label you as a troubled child when doing prohibited things", the mean value recorded was (M = 3.75, SD = 1.077).

Table 3: Informal labelling (N = 100)

Item	Informal Labelling	Mean	SD
A2.1	Teachers like to label students in the classroom even if they are not involved in delinquent behavior. Example: your face is like a gangster	3.68	1.254
A2.2	Teachers label you as a 'bad' boy if you hang out and make friends with students who have disciplinary problems.	3.77	1.127
A2.3	Parents label you as a troubled child when doing prohibited things.	3.75	1.077
A2.4	Your classmates will stay away from you when you are close friends with students who have disciplinary problems.	3.96	1.024
A2.5	The school administration will accuse you in the event of cases of violation of school rules, for example: cases of smoking in school toilets. Example: cases of smoking in school toilets.	4.00	1.231

6.   Discussion

6.1   Formal Labelling and Informal Labelling

In this study, the first objective that has been outlined is to understand the types of labelling done by socialization agents that leads to delinquent behavior. The researcher has outlined two types of labelling done namely formal labelling (focusing on labelling involving authorities) and informal labelling (focusing on labelling done by socializing agents). Studies also show that these two types of labelling performed by these authorities and socialization agents play a dominant role in influencing adolescents in engaging with delinquent behavior in rural areas.

From the survey that has been conducted it shows that the formal labelling process that occurs to these respondents is high with an overall mean of 4.09 compared to the overall mean value of informal labelling which only recorded a total mean of 3.83. This indicates that the respondents are aware of the existence of this formal labelling mainly involving criminal offenses tied to the authorities. The results of the study found that most respondents agreed that formal labelling as a result of criminal offenses tied to authorities such as the police did indeed occur in shaping juvenile delinquent behavior. The statement "adolescents released from prison will be labelled as troubled adolescents in society" recorded the highest mean score of 4.33. This is in line with the opinions of Hansen (2015) who stated that it may be noted that by highlighting criminal justice intervention as an important source of labelling and stigma, labelling theory contradicts the classic notion of specific deterrence, namely, that punishment ought to deter offenders from committing crime in the future. Punishment which was previously considered as one of the ways to reduce the rate of criminal offenses instead became one of the sources to carry out the labelling process by socializing agents against criminal offenders. In the end the perpetrator himself will continue to commit the crime for continuing to be labelled a criminal punishment by the authorities and has the intention not to repeat it.

According to Bernburg (2019), labelling theory has emphasized that formal labelling involving the police and labelling against criminals in particular is a strong source of labelling. Furthermore, Shakunthala (2017) argues that formal labelling requires a "transition ceremony" that marks a change into a deviant status such as a criminal trial with complicated measures and excessive procedures. After all, even though some individuals did not receive a formally applied label, the process of being arrested and prosecuted is likely to lead to the development of informal labels or negative self-labelling (Chiricos et al., 2007). So, the respondent agrees that the criminal trial in court for example will cause the defendant or the accused party to be labelled as an individual involved in delinquent behavior problems even though the court decision has not decided whether the individual is guilty or not. Moreover, when punishment has been carried out, there are no analogous official ceremonies in place to cancel the criminal stigma, and thus bring the person back into society. The stigma of having been formally processed as a criminal offender tends to "stick" to the person (Bernburg, 2019).

Furthermore, the results of this study also found that the police intervention in the development of adolescent life will encourage adolescents to be actively involved in delinquent behavior. This is in line with the opinion of Lopes et al., (2012) who stated that formal labelling, such as police intervention during adolescence, has a significant indirect effect on criminal and non-criminal outcomes later in life. Formal labelling or police intervention, significantly affected non-criminal outcomes such as education, employment, and financial stability. The ongoing experience of the "criminal label" from the police and probation officers, as well as significant others in their lives, may become reinforcing for these adolescents, which could lead them into further deviance (Lee et al., 2017).

Next for informal labelling, the research finding shows that the respondents' level of knowledge of informal labelling is high with an overall mean of 3.83. The results of this study have shown that respondents understand that socialization agents such as teachers, parents, community, and peers are also involved in creating and establishing informal labelling. According to Kavish et al. (2016), informal labels is applied by educational institutions, significant others, and parental figures. Informal labels that are reflected in parental perceptions of the individual in adolescence, later on, will each be associated with adult engagement in criminal behaviors (Lee et al., 2017). The findings of the study found that the school administration will accuse you in the event of cases of violation of rules in the school. This is in line with the opinion Kavish et al. (2016) who stated that being expelled from school is a very different stigmatizing experience than being labelled as a deviant or "rule breaker" by a teacher.

Subsequently, the findings of the study found that peers or schoolmates were also involved in this informal labelling process. This can be seen when friends label a friend of theirs as a troubled individual when befriending individuals who have disciplinary problems and delinquent behavior. External factors (social environment) such as peer influence are more important than internal factors (individuals and families). The findings of this study are supported by the study of Turner et al. (2009) who showed that environmental factors, especially schools, playing an important role in shaping adolescent behavior. In addition, youth perception of informal labelling too is likely to predict delinquency directly (Liu, 2000).

Finally, informal labelling is also carried out by the parents themselves. The findings of this study also found that parents will continue to label their child as a troubled child without giving advice or motivation. The association found between parent negative labelling and child deviant behavior suggested that parents of this sample perceived their children reasonably accurately since the negativity of their labels moderately corresponded to the rate of child deviant behavior (Thompson & Bernal, 1982). These findings are in line with a study conducted by Holman & Koenig Kellas (2018) who found that poor communication between parents and children causes adolescents to be easily trapped by social problems. Previous studies have been conducted by Triplett & Jarjoura (1994) that found youths who experience actual or perceived negative labelling by parents and who are simultaneously associated with friends who engage in delinquency are more likely to be involved in delinquency activities than those who do not have such friends. Adding on to this, informal labelling given by parents has a stronger impact on juvenile delinquency to engage in delinquent behavior (Liu, 2000).

7.   Suggestions

With reference to the analysis of the findings of the study that has been done, here are some suggestions for improvement that can be given attention for future studies, among them are:

- This study focuses on rural areas in Jeneri, Sik, Kedah only. Therefore, the researcher would like to suggest that this study should be extended to rural areas in other districts and states so that the findings of this study are more varied and the results of the study will show differences or similarities for the topics studied. In addition, the sample of respondents of this study should also involve other form students such as form one to form four students as long as it does not interfere with students taking public examinations.
- Increase the total number of respondents who are of various ages and genders according to a certain area of the population to get more accurate study results.
- Conduct a study on how the forms and examples of labelling carried out by socialization agencies in urban or rural areas. The study of the forms and examples of this labelling is considered important so that socialization agencies are no longer wrong in giving their views on a teenager or another individual.
- The responsible parties are expected to conduct more studies on the concept of labelling in labelling theory to see the level of disadvantages of this labelling process on adolescents, especially those at the secondary or high school level. This is so that the next researcher can unravel the experiences of adolescents who have been labelled to be involved in delinquent behavior.
- Further studies also need to look at various perspectives from students who have experienced labelling process to see the differences in impact between adolescents that have been labelled and adolescents who are less labelled by socializing agents.

8.   Conclusion

The labelling process expressed through labelling theory is seen to play an important role in identifying socialization agents who commit the labelling process on adolescents. According to Knutsson (1977), an individual will gradually enter a deviant way of life, developing a deviant identity and eventually becoming what the society has labelled him. Labelling has a huge impact on adolescent growth and psychological development.

This study focuses on the concept of labelling carried out by the socialization agents themselves in influencing the delinquent behavior of adolescents in rural areas. A person's physical and mental development during adolescence is greatly influenced by the environment around him. Social environmental factors can influence or be a source of learning to the process of shaping one's behavior through various social learning patterns such as modeling, feedback, encouragement and barriers (Stapa, Ismail, Yusuf, 2012). The findings of this study strongly indicate that delinquent

behavior is due to the formal labelling experienced by the adolescents themselves. Studies also show that formal labelling by legal or higher authorities are more significant and impactful than informal labelling given by parents, teachers and peers.

The labelling process experienced by these teenagers has had a significant impact on the teenagers themselves in the rural areas. Therefore, this inherent problem requires appropriate response to control this labelling process from continuing in daily life. Society likes to place a negative stigma on an individual that seriously affects the self-development of adolescents. In addition, the scenario of society's attitude that is too fond of getting involved in other people's issues or whereabout and at the end freely labelling regardless of the feelings of other people will affect the individual's overall wellbeing.

This situation is in line with the view given by Becker (2010), that labelling refers to individuals who successfully portray deviant behavior as labelled by society. Furthermore, according to Mahoney (1974) who stated that community members not only classify an action as deviant, they also place a stigma and give a negative punishment to someone who is believed to have committed the act. Therefore, there is high need for adequate measures such as providing awareness and exposing the findings to the disadvantages of labelling to help reduce the rate of involvement of rural adolescents' delinquent behavior.

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