Family Bonding and Self-Concept: An Indirect Effect Mediated by School Experiences among Students

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Abstract—School experiences, family bonding and self-concept had always been a crucial factor in influencing all aspects of a student’s development. The purpose of this study is to develop and to validate a priori model of self-concept among students. The study was tested empirically using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the structural model. To address these concerns, 1167 students were randomly selected and utilized the Cognitive Psycho-Social University of Malaya instrument (2009). Resulted demonstrated there is indirect effect from family bonding to self-concept through school experiences among secondary school students as a mediator. Besides school experiences, there is a direct effect from family bonding to self-concept and family bonding to school experiences among students.

Keywords—Confirmatory Factor Analysis, self-concept, family bonding, and school experience

I. INTRODUCTION

The experience gained by the individual in school is important considering that each individual spends about eleven years in school from primary to secondary school. Hence, it is certain that school experience can result in significant effect on various aspects of a person’s development especially in intellectual and spiritual aspects. Student experiences in school refer to a process of individual development resulting from an educational system experienced and how the individual perceives school. Besides that school experience can also be evaluated based on the individual’s experiences with teachers as well as service obtained from the school and recognition given by the school to the student.

Based on past studies and theory, three aspects have a close association with experience obtained by the student in school, and these are school engagement, school attachment and school bonding. These three aspects will give an indirect effect on the individual’s development process because they involve three important dimensions namely affective, behavioral and cognitive (Shane, 2003) [1].

The affective dimension refers to the student’s feelings about school, teachers and peers. The behavioral dimension is the behavior that can be observed or achievement of the student in co-curriculum activities, in examinations whether outstanding achievement or moderate or weak or ability of student to finish homework assigned.

School attachment can be measured based on the direct behavior of the student and efforts by the student to improve academic achievement (Finn & Rock, 1997 [2]; Johnson et al., 2001) [3]. Indicators of school attachment refer to activities related to schooling, grade achievement of the student, total time allocated to finish school work, and amount of homework completed by the student. Elements of delinquency, school absenteeism, or rebellious behavior are also included in measurement of school attachment (Bullis & Yovanoff, 2002 [4]; Finn & Rock, 1997 [5]; Sinclair, Hurley, Evelo, Christenson, & Thurlow, 2001) [6]. Shane et al. (2003) [1,7] also found that a concept often used in measuring school attachment is feeling of belonging, school community, membership in school, and closeness to school. The concept of school community refers to the student’s behavior towards the school environment and does not include academic orientation. The school community involves mutual interaction with the students.

In the mean time, self-concept represents one factor that can influence various aspects of student development. Rogers (1961) [8] defined self-concept the way a person thinks about him or herself based on awareness of strengths and weaknesses and information received from others. According to Shavelson, Hubner, and Stanton (1976) [9], self-concept is multidimensional in characteristics and can be categorized into academic, physical and social self concept. Academic self-concept refers to the perception and evaluation of people toward their ability to learn and achieve success from the academic standpoint. Physical self-concept is explained as the opinion of people regarding their body, health, physical image, sexuality, and looks (Fitts & Warren, 1996) [10]. Social self-concept is defined as the evaluation of people toward their capability to develop friendships and socialize well. Social self-concept of students refer to how they relate to other people in society especially fellow students in the school.

Past studies show that aspect schooling integration can produce impact such as reduce dropout risk rate and delinquency among students. According to Murray and Greenberg (2001) [11], specifically school integration refers to element such as students liking teachers who teach them,
student’s wish to go to school, and extent of student belief in teachers. Based on past studies, indicators used to measure schooling integration aspect include closeness rate or bond rate and commitments towards school goal achievement (Eggert, Thompson, Herting, Nicholas, & Dicker, 1994) [12]. Feeling of belonging to the school, school settings and (Eggert, Thompson, Herting, Nicholas, & Dicker, 1994) [12]. Feeling of belonging to the school, school settings and membership in school are usual aspects categorized as feeling of closeness to school or feeling of inclusiveness (Firestone & Rosenblum, 1998 [13]: Johnson, Croesnoe, & Elder, 2001) [14].

II. INSTRUMENTATION

In this study, a priori model of self-concept was measured through 63 item questionnaire adapted from various self-concept scales and CoPs (Cognitive psycho-social profile of the Malaysian) instruments.

It sought to find out students’ perceptions on:
1) Self-concept (17 items; K1-K18)
2) School Experiences (22 items; F1-F22)
3) Family Bonding (24 items; S1-S24)

The response to each item is in the form of five-point scale of “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “undecided”, “agree”, and “strongly agree”. The first section of the questionnaire relates to demographic characteristics and contains questions on the respondent’s background information (gender, school type, and school location).

III. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

The samples for this study consisted of tenth grade 16-year-old students in public secondary schools in Malaysia. The study sample involved 1167 Form Four students from secondary schools chosen at random from boarding schools, Religious residential schools, day schools, and technical secondary schools in rural and urban areas of Malaysia. The age of sample was 16 years. The sample consisted of 611 males and 556 females.

The instrument used in the study was one set of self-administered survey forms containing two sections, Section A and Section B. Section A collects demographic information of the sample and section B explored students’ experience of school, family bonding and self-concept. The instrument used was a survey questionnaire developed during the project IRPA: No: 07-02-03-1042 EA142 CoPS (2007), which has been adapted to meet the needs and level of thinking of the participants. Instruments used in this study were subject to pilot testing and found to be having good validity and reliability. This study is a quantitative study. The data in this study were analyzed using SPSS, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS (Analysis of Moment Structure) version 16.0.

IV. RESULT OF RESEARCH

The reliability of the instrument used in this study was assessed based on estimates of internal consistency (Cronbach alpha) and the instrument for self-concept Cronbach alpha value is .828 and the instrument for Student School experiences is .911. The alpha values of both instruments exceed the cut-off point for Cronbach alpha .7. The a priori model of self-concept developed in this study was tested using SEM and as recommended by Kline (2005) [15], at least three types of goodness-of-fit indices should be used in the testing. In this study, Jorsky Sorbom Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Bentler Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) and Root Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were applied to test the fit of the full model. The cut-off for acceptable model fit based on GFI, CFI, and TLI is 0.9 with value greater than 0.9 indicating adequate model fit. As for RMSEA, value smaller than 0.006 is signifying good fit of a model (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1999 [16]; Kline, 2005 [15, 17]; Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2010) [18]. The types of effect of school experiences among students to self-concept were determined based on a priori model of self-concept shown in Figure 1 and the full model fit the data empirically.

Table I reports the analysis standardized direct effect, standardized indirect effects, and standardized total effect for the construct of student’s experience in school on the construct of self-concept and its sub constructs based on a priori model of self-concept.

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Fig. 1 A priori model of self-concept
Results of analysis show that family bonding can result in students’’ experience with school bonding, school attachment, and school experience standardized total effect in school positively and significantly. This finding is consistent with Shane (2003)[1,7, 19]. This is because students’ experience is related to students’ experience in school. Schools that serve students well such as respecting students, giving them appropriate freedom as individuals and involving them in making decision on school activities can not only increase schooling attachment levels (Shochet et al., 2007) [23] but in fact can shape positive self-concept(Gang & Chin, 2008 [24]; Hoge et al., 1990)[25]. This is because students will be giving high assessment on themselves because they have been honored and can be given the responsibility of the assignment. Furthermore, according to Smith (2006) [26], students who are close to the school have been found to exhibit less of delinquency problem and behavior and this could lead to shaping of positive self-concept considering the close relationship between self-concept and problem behavior (Brownfield & Thompson, 2005[27]; Lau & Chan, 1997) [28].

VI. CONCLUSION

The survey results had shown us the important role of school institution in influencing the student’s development. Experience that students achieve during the schooling process can give impact on shaping their self-concept, namely one of the important factors in deciding academic success, in fact the student’s future. All citizens especially school teachers and school administrators should play the role respecting for providing a conducive to environment so students can feel very close and bonded with school, in fact even make school part of their existence. Positive experience in school also involves treatment given to all students including the low achievers. Teachers have to treat all students the same without considering their background. Teachers should establish relationship that is friendly and close with students before starting the teaching and learning process. This is because familiarity with teacher is the key to an effective teaching and learning process.
The school should recognize students’ presence as part of the school community and should give them opportunity to involve themselves in school activities; students’ opinion and heartfelt needs also should be considered before the school makes whatever decision involving students. Apart from that, the study findings also feature indirect effect which is normally hidden but plays an important part in analyzing the relationship between two variables (Raykov & Marcoulides, 2007) [29]. Although directly students’ experience aspect in school could only give effect on self-concept only, however, the influence achieved by student experience in school is much more than that. This is because events that students experience in school also can give impact on self-concept assessment whether in academic, physical or social self-concept through self-concept which functions as mediator. This means that in efforts to increase the academic, physical and social self-concept of students, their positive experience in school must be given proper consideration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors are very grateful for the extensive support and guidance of Professor Dr. Saedah Siraj, Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. Z. Ishak, and F.P. Chew thank University Malaya Research Grant (UMRG), University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur for the financial and sponsor support.

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