

Diversity Of Urban Socio-Ecological Supports Among Multi-Ethnic Youth In Urban Areas

Mohd Ariffuddin Kamari¹, Abdul Razaq Ahmad², Mohd Yahya Mohamed Ariffin³, Norshariani Abd. Rahman⁴, Hutkemri Zulanidi⁵, Andries Lionardo⁶

Abstract--- *Youth life depends on diversity of urban socio-ecological support in their environment to achieve a healthy life. Thus, the study aims to determine the level of diversity of urban social ecological support among multi-ethnic youth in urban areas. This study used stratified random sampling involving 2400 multi-ethnic youths living in six Kuala Lumpur City zones. Data were obtained using questionnaire as research instrument. A pilot study that was conducted on 203 youths showed that all items had high reliability with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.8 and were suitable to be used in the actual study. The study data were analyzed using descriptive analysis involving mean, standard deviation and percentages. The findings show that the overall level of social support for youth survival in Kuala Lumpur are at a high level (mean 3.821). In term of the majority, 65.4% of the respondents indicated that social ecology support was high, while 33.6% stated social support was moderate and only 1.0% indicated low social ecological support level. Among the aspects studied in social support are family support, virtual platform support and local community support while the level of institutional support is moderate. Results from this study may help in giving the input to various parties such as the Local Council, the Ministry of Youth and related NGOs in making plans either physically or socio-economically which will affect the youth development in the city.*

Key words--- *Social Ecological Support, Survival, Youth, Ethnicity, City.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Youth are those who are in the transition period between adolescence and adulthood. This transition period is a difficult time. According to Bahls [1], this group will go through a critical phase due to physical, psychological and social changes. The transition to adulthood is a stage in life where young adults face a variety of challenges in life.

Youth is a very important asset to the country as today's youth will determine the future of a country [2]. They were given special attention by the government through various programs and activities. This is an effort to produce the youth who have high life survivability whilst providing them with a variety of skills, entrepreneurship and knowledge [3]. In addition, various youth development initiatives have also been implemented by the government to appreciate and enhance the potential of youth as well as enhancing their survivability in various aspects [2].

Survival is a dynamic process that will give people value in relation to the development of their lives whether positively or vice versa [4]. According to Renwick [5], survival is something that will make one feel happy, content and a

sense of meaningful life. Survival also refers to well-being derived from many other aspects such as social support, family relationships and psychology [6].

*Mohd Ariffuddin Kamari¹, Abdul Razaq Ahmad², Mohd Yahya Mohamed Ariffin³, Norshariani Abd. Rahman⁴, Hutkemri Zulanidi⁵, Andries Lionardo⁶, ¹Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, ²Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, ³Faculty of Leadership and Management, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, ⁴Institute of Islam Hadhari, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, ⁵Faculty of Education, University of Malaya, ⁶Faculty of Social and Political Studies, University of Sriwijaya, Palembang, Indonesia.
Email: ir.ariffuddin@mps.gov.my*

However, the current scenario shows an increasing rate of crimes among youth which has caused a concern for many. Every day, various crime news has been reported in various media, whether it is street crime, violence or crime involving properties [7]. Among the crimes committed by the youth are drug abuse, sexual misconduct, corruption, robbery, burglary and theft [8]; [9].

According to Rahman [10] youth measure their self with the degree to which the people around them shape themselves. Tam et al [11] studied the relationship between social support for survival among youth in Malaysia. The results of his research found positive relationship between social support and survivability among the youth. In addition, Teoh & Afiqah [12] also studied the survival of life among youth, social support and personality and reveal that personality and social support significantly correlated with the survivability among the youth. Based on the statements and previous studies described above, this study aims to examine the level of diversity of social-ecological supports towards improving survival among multi-ethnic youth in urban areas. The levels of social ecological support are explored from institutional, family, local community and virtual platforms.

II. LITERATURE RESERACH

THEORY OF SOCIAL ECOLOGY

This study uses the social ecology theory introduced by Bronfenbrenner in 1989 [13]. In this theory, the social environment is divided into 5 layers known as microsystem, ecosystem, mesosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem. This environment is influenced by the attitude of the individual who lives in a community. In this study, social ecological support was identified in improving the quality of life of the youth in the city. Social support is one of the important elements in helping communities to live in harmony [14]. However, a good community need to have a close relationship between one another to improve the quality of life in a community.

Several studies related to social ecological support have also been researched by to examine the contribution of social ecological support in several aspects such as patriotism and racial tolerance [15], well-being Ahmad [16] and life satisfaction [17]; [18]. In addition, a study conducted by Dubois & Felner [19] considers social ecological support as one of the dimensions of the self-esteem construct because individuals interact daily with neighbours who may be considered as family and when relationships are conducted in a harmonious environment, they can influence appreciation feeling and positively impact an individual's life.

THEORY OF SURVIVAL

The theory of survival was introduced by Spencer in 1976, explaining that an individual need to adapt to the social changes that occur in the environment which requires the individual to enhance his survivability in a challenging life. To

enhance survival in a challenging and dynamic city life, an individual needs to be strong in the aspects of personality, self-regulation, *intelligence quotient* (IQ), *emotional quotient* (EQ) and social intelligence needed to enhance knowledge, skills, lifelong learning and creativity [20]. Survival is the development of human evolution which is the basis of individual development that aims to meet their needs [21].

Nilsson [22] found that an individual's skills, interpersonal skills, survival and character influence an individual's career. Sail & Alavi [23] also found that youth with high survivability and interpersonal skills tend to be involved in lifelong learning to improve their quality of life. In addition, the study also found that survival can influence youth work performance. This shows that survival coupled with the youth's soft skills can influence their quality of life.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study population consisted of 19- to 35-year-olds living in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur City. The youth population around Kuala Lumpur is 416,000. Based on the formulas and tables of sample size determination by Krejcie & Morgan [24], the number of samples of each zone needed for the study is 384 people. However, the researchers assigned 400 respondents from each zone. Therefore, the total sample for the six selected zones is 2,400 youths. In addition, this study also involved a total of 1133 Malay youths and 1267 non-Malay youths.

Cresswell [25] described research instruments that can be used for a study are existing research instruments, modified research instruments, integrated research instruments or self-constructed study instruments. The instruments used in this study were instruments developed through expert references to ensure the validity of the content and obtain reliability coefficients through a pilot study conducted, with *Cronbach Alpha* values above 0.8. The questionnaire used was the Social Ecology and Survival / Survivability of Kuala Lumpur Youth Survey which comprises of four sections: Demographics (9 Items), Social Ecology Support (32 Items) and Survivability (31 Items).

The data analysis of this study used descriptive statistics involving mean and standard deviation. Scores, percentages, mean and standard deviation were used in this descriptive statistical analysis to measure the degree of social ecological support for urban survival. Mean score interpretation table is as follow:

TABLE 1. MEAN SCORE INTERPRETATION

Scale range	Mean score interpretation
1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.66	Moderate
3.67 – 5.00	High

Source : Nunnaly (1994)

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The level of diversity of urban social-ecological support for youth survival in Kuala Lumpur is based on four aspects: institutional support, family support, local community support and virtual platform support. The results found that the overall level of diversity of urban social-ecological for youth survival in Kuala Lumpur is high (mean 3.821). In terms of the majority, 65.4% of the respondents indicated that social ecology support was high, while 33.6% stated social support was moderate and only 1.0% indicated low social ecological support level. The results are in line with the results of the study from Zulkifli et al [26] which stated that positive support from parents and friends affects the physical and psychological well-being of youth. In addition, studies from Darling et al [17]; Gilman [18] also find that environments such as neighbourhood experiences and involvement in recreational and sports activities are significant contributors to life satisfaction. The findings of the study are also supported and strengthened by studies from Rahman [15]; Ahmad [16] who found that diversity of urban social-ecological and especially virtual platforms have led to positive values and lives among youth.

In order to see in detail the level of support of diversity of urban social-ecological, a descriptive analysis of each aspect of social ecological support was performed. There are four aspects of social ecological support: institutional support, family support, local community support and virtual platform support.

INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

This section has an analysis of the items to obtain respondents' feedback on institutional support. Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of each item in institutional support.

TABLE 2. MEAN SCORE AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF EACH ITEM IN THE INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT VARIABLES

Item	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
The physical properties provided in the residential area enhances various living skills	3.864	0.740	High
Information disseminated by DBKL through apps / signage provides convenience to residents	3.779	0.798	High
The cleaning service and the surrounding atmosphere by DBKL are good and satisfactory	3.582	0.830	Moderate
The availability of the infrastructure provided many opportunities for me to develop myself	3.654	0.724	Moderate
Many of the programs organized by DBKL enhance my knowledge and life skills	3.543	0.800	Moderate
The various programs in the community organized by the DBKL can incorporate civic values into my life in the city	3.594	0.807	Moderate
The various cultural events organized by DBKL during the festive season have increased my understanding of multicultural culture	3.657	0.832	Moderate
There are various business and career opportunities that I can follow through the programs organized by DBKL	3.513	0.907	Moderate

Overall Level of Institutional Support	3.648	0.560	Moderate
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Based on Table 2, the overall level of institutional support was moderate (mean = 3.648; sd = 0.564). This study found that the institutional support from the aspect of physical properties provided in the residential area and information disseminated by DBKL through apps/signage provides convenience to the residents are on a high level. The result is parallel to the study by O'Brien [27] who found that good physical facilities has helped the urban community to improve a variety of skills related to individual skills as well as skills in the community.

However the aspects of DBKL's cleanliness services, availabilities of infrastructure facilities, DBKL-sponsored programs to enhance knowledge and life skills, community programs organized by DBKL can foster civic values, a variety of cultural events organized by DBKL during festive celebrations in enhancing the understanding of multicultural culture and the diversity of business opportunities and career programs organized by DBKL is at a moderate level. This is also supported by Stapa et al [28] who found that the environment plays a significant role in the development of individual identity. The identified social environment factors which have a significant impact on individual identity formation comprises of parents, peers, schools, teachers and the mass media.

FAMILY SUPPORT

This section has an analysis of the items of respondents' feedback on family support. Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviation of each item in the family support variable.

TABLE 3. MEAN SCORE AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH ITEM IN FAMILY SUPPORT VARIABLE

Item	Mean	S. D.	Interpretation
Family encourages me to improve my knowledge	3.992	0.842	High
Family has always driven me to be creative and innovative in today's urban life	3.955	0.881	High
My family builds a strong sense of resilience in facing various urban settings	3.942	0.864	High

My family becomes the role models in embracing civic values in modern urban life	3.931	0.899	High
I learned dialect and language skills through parenting and family interaction	3.930	0.868	High
Many parents build my self-confidence in communicating ideas and making the right decisions when interacting with others	3.664	0.846	Moderate
My parents and family raised me to adhere to religious teachings	4.182	0.788	High
Parents and families emphasize good manners and civility in urban life	4.240	0.778	High
Overall Family Support	4.021	0.646	High

Based on Table 3, the overall family support is at a high level (mean = 4.021; sd = 0.646). This study found that family support in all aspects of the study was high. It has been found that families are motivated to improve the youth knowledge, constantly encourage them to be creative and innovative in their day-to-day life as well as help to build a strong sense of resilience in facing various urban settings. In addition, family also becomes the role model in embracing civic values in urban life, teaching dialects and language skills through parenting and family interaction, teaching adherence to religious and emphasising on good manners and civility in urban life. The findings of this study are similar to the findings of Engbee & Ahmad [29] who found that family support is a vital factor in ensuring that their children receive a wide range of education and skills that can improve their survival skills especially in the context of urban community.

However, the role of parents in building self-confidence in communicating ideas and expressing their thoughts when interacting with others in youth is only in moderate level. This study is in line with Engbee & Ahmad [29] who found that parental support is the most important factor in shaping their children's personality because the parents are closer to their children and more aware of the emotions, knowledge and skills of their children as compared to others.

LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT

This section has an analysis of the items of respondents' feedback on the support of the local community. Table 4 shows the mean and standard deviation of each item in support of the local community.

TABLE 4. MEAN SCORE AND STANDARD DEVIATION FOR EACH ITEM IN LOCAL COMMUNITY SUPPORT VARIABLES

Item	Mean	S. D.	Interpretation
I gained civic awareness through the interaction within the urban community	3.890	0.739	High
I feel valued through involvement in the local community	3.745	0.750	High
My thinking has changed through discussions and conversations with friends in the local community	3.814	0.745	High
I think the connection with the local community is improved through socialization	3.828	0.782	High
I often work with friends from other ethnicity in local community to help advance my career	3.624	0.801	Moderate
I enjoy being around the local community	3.895	0.792	High
Overall Local Community Support	3.833	0.561	High

Based on Table 4, it is found that the overall level of community support is at a high level (mean = 3.833; sd = 0.561). It is found that the youths are aware of civic awareness through interactions that occur in urban communities, feel valued through involvement in the local community, their way of thinking changes through discussions and conversations with friends in the local community. In addition, it was found that they felt a sense of connection with the local community through socialization, and that they enjoyed interacting with the local community. This study is in line with the study of Rahman [15] that stated community engagement can foster good interactions both with friends and neighbors which can further tolerance among ethnic youth. In addition, this was also supported by Hussain et al [30] who found that family relationships alone were not sufficient to ensure well-being and need to be complemented with good neighborhood relationships. The findings of this study are also in line with Bronfenbrenner's [13] social ecological theory which states that the community environment is a very important factor in influencing community life in their daily lives.

VIRTUAL PLATFORM SUPPORT

This section has an analysis of the items from the respondents' feedbacks on the virtual platform. Table 6 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of each item in virtual platform support.

TABLE 5. MEAN SCORE AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF EACH ITEM IN VIRTUAL PLATFORM SUPPORT VARIABLES

Item	Mean	S.D.	Interpretation
My online friends helped me to filter out scammer interference and internet fraud risk	3.767	0.888	High
I am able to make money through various internet applications	3.707	0.916	High
I use various internet resources to improve my skills in urban life	3.848	0.887	High
I increase my knowledge / skills through online courses	3.739	0.946	High
I was able to expand my social network through virtual platform to gain benefits from various activities	3.744	0.964	High
I was able to add new information to improve knowledge / info from internet sources quickly	3.856	0.961	High
I made many new friends online that helped me develop myself	3.796	0.939	High
Overall Virtual Platform Support	3.780	0.679	High

Based on Table 5, it is found that the overall support of virtual platforms is at a high level (mean = 3.780; sd = 0.679). This study found that the support of virtual platforms in all aspects studied was high. Online friends are helping young people to filter out scammer interference and internet fraud risk, capable to generate income through various internet applications, using various internet resources to improve their skills in urban life and improve their knowledge / skills through online courses. Youths have also been able to expand social networking through virtual platforms to benefit from various activities, added new information to increase knowledge or info from internet sources quickly, and gained many new online friends which help to develop themselves.

This is in line with a study conducted by Rashid et al [31] on school students who showed that almost 90.4% of students use the Internet at home as a medium for interactions. Whereas Yaacob & Samsuri [32] discuss the basic needs that the youth need to possess which are unlimited knowledge and basic ICT skills in building critical and creative thinking.

V. RESEARCH IMPLICATION

This study can provide input to various parties in making plans for both physical and socio-economic development with these empirical inputs. The responsible parties can construct a comprehensive planning to make the city life meeting the requirement for various communities living in the city. The findings of this study can also help the parties to understand the issues facing the urban community. As such, input from the bottom-up is essential to balance the top-down input in designing a city that can guarantee the quality and well-being of its community that meets the needs of the community in building a prosperous city.

One of the efforts that can be implemented is to upgrade the neglected areas to become more user-friendly, which allow the youth to involve in beneficial activities more comfortably. In example, dysfunctional playground and recreation areas in residential areas where some of these facilities are not functioning properly and poses a danger to the user's safety should be upgraded and supervised. Thus, it is the responsibility of the planning experts to review and re-evaluate any existing development to be given a new look in line with the current requirements so that it remains sustainable and not becoming a white elephant project.

Various community programs need to be implemented to strengthen the social integration and volunteerism spirit in order to foster a greater sense of tolerance and unity among Malaysian youth. This will provide a door of opportunities for the urban youth to interact with the local community. The results of many previous studies me stated that the youth in the city do not have the chance to interact and mingle with their residential communities. Social interaction activities through organizations and programs such as the National Pillar and Social Networks Clubs should be intensified. The program will be able to be implemented effectively in collaboration with government agencies, the private sector, and NGOs.

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion in this section, it is clear that social ecological support is important in determining survival skills among multi-ethnic youths in Kuala Lumpur. As a conclusion to this study, various parties, especially the city and regional ministries, Kuala Lumpur City Hall and relevant government agencies, NGOs and local communities should work closely together to ensure the development of multi-ethnic youth in Kuala Lumpur as well as in other major cities to ensure the nation's aspiration in creating a successful youth generation will become a reality.

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