

# Motivation and Academic Achievement: A Case Study of Malaysian Aboriginal (Orang Asli) Students

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DOI: 10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i14/3687 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i14/3687>

## Abstract

Study on the relationship between motivation and academic achievement is undoubtedly important, therefore this study aimed to identify the motivation level of Malaysian Aboriginal students and to investigate the relationship between motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), academic achievement and economic status among Malaysian Aboriginal students in Kuala Langat, Selangor, Malaysia. The study was conducted amongst Aboriginal students from all secondary schools in Kuala Langat, Selangor from the age of 16 – 18 years. There were approximately 100 students in the population. 87.9 % of the respondents considered failed in PMR, 8.1% were moderate, meanwhile only 4.0% obtained good result. Majority of the respondents which is 56.6% of the sample obtained medium score (65-102), while 28.3 obtained low score (<65) and 15.2 % of the respondents obtained high score (>102). The result of the study indicated there is a relationship between intrinsic motivation ( $r = 0.571$ ), extrinsic motivation ( $r = 0.506$ ) and academic achievement. Finally, recommendations are given to parents, teachers and policymakers.

**Keywords:** Academic Achievement, Intrinsic Motivation, Extrinsic Motivation, Aboriginal Students, Teachers.

## Introduction

Malaysia is a multiracial country of various cultural backgrounds. Studies about factors influencing the academic achievement tend to focus on students' motivational factors from various schools and locations. Most studies focused more on students in majority of Malaysian population, not the ethnic minority. However, this paper stressed that the study of student motivation among the minority group like aboriginal/indigenous (Orang Asli) students is also important as their development may contribute to the education development in Malaysia. Although aboriginal people make up only a small percentage of Malaysian population, they are disproportionately affected by poverty. Most of them still live on the fringes of Malaysian society, cut off from most social services, poorly educated, making a meagre living.

Bidin (2010) reported that most of Aboriginal students stressed the cause of their school withdrawal are because of their mentality and attitude. However Bidin (2010) perceived that there must be other critical reasons for them to choose not to remain in schools. Therefore, this

paper attempts to discuss the issues and problems in the academic achievement of Malaysian Aboriginal students.

The effort to develop education system for Aboriginal people has started since Malaysian independence in 1957 and the Malaysian government is still doing consistent effort in this matter. The population of Aboriginal people in Malaysia is about 180,000 people and most of them have been introduced to socio-economic development programs. The economic development programs focus mainly on development of land for agricultural crops such as oil palm and rubber trees. The government provides all the necessary knowledge, skills, and monetary assistance to improve the Aborigine's socio-economic status, apart from the provisions of education, housing, health care and infrastructure facilities (JAKOA, 2011; Ramle et al., 2013). JAKOA (The Department of Aboriginal Development) is the Malaysian government agency entrusted to oversee the affairs of the Aboriginal people. This body is under the Malaysian Ministry of Rural Development, and was first set up in 1954.

Eventually, the rate of poverty among Aboriginal people has significantly decreased over the years, bringing the percentage to only about 32% (JAKOA, 2011) as compared to 80% in 1990. It is considered a commendable reduction (Lim Hin Fui, 1997; Ramle et al., 2013). But what is still lacking in Aboriginal communities is motivation towards education. By instilling motivation towards education will definitely give the positive implications on Aborigine communities. They will understand the purpose of education, the importance of education and how to improve themselves and their communities through education.

Malaysia Education Blueprint aspires to ensure universal access and full enrolment of all children from preschool to upper secondary school level by 2020. Moreover, by 2025, Malaysia Education Blueprint aspires to ensure those aboriginal students, other minority groups and students with physical or learning disabilities to go to schools which have all the facilities and equipment needed to create a conducive and supportive learning environment (Malaysian Education Blueprint, 2013).

Studies on the relationship between motivation and academic achievement are no doubt an important part in the development of education. In spite of the fact that countless number of researches had been conducted to study this relationship in various aspects and scopes, the attention towards Aboriginal student motivation remained limited. For instance, the study conducted by Amraia et al., (2011) only investigated the academic motivation and academic achievement in the scales of task, effort, competition and social concern. There were no variety among students of different background thus there is no indication to see how students from different parts of society are displaying the relation between motivation and academic achievement (Amraia et al., 2011). Although Malaysian researchers had contributed their research toward the scope of motivation and academic achievement but the research on Aboriginal students' motivation and academic achievement is still lacking. For example, Othman and Leng (2011) studied the relationship between self-concept, intrinsic motivation, self-

determination and academic achievement among Chinese Primary School Students. Their findings indicated that correlations between the factors self-concept, intrinsic motivation and self-determination and academic achievement were low (Othman & Leng, 2011). This finding cannot be applied to all students. Most importantly the finding cannot be fitted into students of different family and socio-economic background. Therefore, it is important to diversify the same study into different and varied subjects such as students from Aboriginal community and students from different socio economic background.

The above findings also indicated that it is necessary to study the motivational factors among the aboriginal students in Malaysia as the school dropout rate is still high even though they have been provided with good facilities by the government. According to the summary of studies about the impact of school facilities on students and teachers, the impact appears to be positive when the school receives complete facilities from their particular governments. However, in places where there is lack of facilities, teachers are unhappy and students do not perform well (Stevenson, 2001). The current situation of the aboriginal students contradict with this finding. Therefore, this study aimed to identify the motivation level of Malaysian aboriginal students and to investigate the relationship between motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic), academic achievement and economic status among Malaysian aboriginal students in Kuala Langat, Selangor. As well as to compare academic achievement of aboriginal students based on gender and economic status.

### **Literature Review**

The aborigine improvement programs in Malaysia mainly focus on education as the key factor in improving their quality of life (Mohd Tap, 1990). The earlier effort of this educational program was administered by Department of Aboriginal Affairs (Jabatan Hal Ehwal Orang Asli or JHEOA) before 1995. JHEOA implemented a three-stage program to prepare the aboriginal children to enter the national education system (Asian Indigenous & Tribal Peoples Network, 2008; Kamarulzaman & Osman, 2008). JHEOA provides their field staff to teach the aboriginal children in the village schools for the first three years of the program. After three years, the students continued their studies until Standard Six at the central schools that accommodated larger community of Orang Asli. An exam was taken at the end of Standard Six. The students who passed the exam were then allowed to continue their studies at normal secondary schools (Masron et al., 2013)

The expectancy of success or failure (the academic achievement) is one of the descriptors of learning motivation. This relationship also reflected in the work of Brophy (2010) where it can be deduced that learning motivation reflected in the academic achievement of the learners. Learners who are more motivated tend to show higher academic achievement, if the academic achievement is measured through the learners scores (Shamshuddin, 2008) or learners who are more motivated hold higher schooling level, if the academic achievement is measured through the schooling level (Trejo, 2008).

Broussard and Garrison (2004) have studied the relationship between motivation in classroom and academic achievement involving elementary school children. They were actually studying the relationship between motivation and academic achievement among adults, older children, and younger children. They hypothesized that the relationship are better established in adults and older children. The first phase of their study only involved the younger children. So, the objective of this study was to identify the relationship between motivation in classroom and academic achievement of elementary school children. The respondents were 122 students in first grade and 129 students in third grade from a moderate city in southern USA.

Broussard and Garrison (2004) also highlighted a study by Boggiano et al., (1992) who studied children in fifth grade. This study reported higher reading and mathematics scores for children with intrinsic motivation than children with extrinsic motivation. Children with intrinsic motivation also obtained higher overall achievement scores. Broussard and Garrison (2004) conjectured a gap in their study, saying that a different finding might have been obtained if the experiment included another type of motivation assessment and other theories such as self-regulation theory, self-efficacy theory, or attribution theory. Many other factors or types of motivation may influence the outcome, and these factors may not be based on reflectance, considering the fact that human nature and behaviours are very complex. The study by Boggiano et al. also did not apply a longitudinal design, leaving the relationships between motivation and achievement over time unknown.

As a different scope in the relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic achievement, Lepper, Corpus, and Iyengar (2005) studied the differences in the relationship based on the differences in age. They reported low intrinsic motivation in older children compared to younger children, which was quite alarming. They said that the children were not enjoying the learning process in school. On top of that, the system applied in American schools in order to keep the students on track seemed to backfire because the extrinsic incentives and constraints implemented were not in balance with the children's intrinsic motivation. It appeared that the current scales used did not address the development of intrinsic motivation or internalized motivation, to be exact. Internalized motivation is a motivation that was originally an external motivation that has assimilated into a person's personal goal and value systems over time. Although it may be true that studying for an exam is not an enjoyable pursuit, children can still be taught that the idea of learning is something good and worthwhile for them.

Othman and Leng (2011) also found a weak connection between student's intrinsic motivation and their academic achievement. According to them, the attitudes of the parents of the respondents who likely use extrinsic motivation such as money, rewards, presents and so on towards their children for their excellent achievement in a test might have influenced the result. However, Othman and Leng (2011) argued using Deci's (1971) report which emphasized on a trend that showed decreasing intrinsic motivation if money was given to their children as reward or external motivation. Othman and Leng (2011) added another argument by Pritchard

et al. (1975), which confirmed the findings presented by Deci (1971). Othman and Leng (2011) suggested that conditional monetary reward for an achievement decreases the intrinsic motivation to perform the activity that leads to the achievement. Most importantly, they found higher detrimental effect of tangible rewards on younger children compared to college students.

The researchers found more proof about children's motivation in the study of Schunk et al. (2008) which stated that children are more motivated to learn new information and skills when they are surrounded by intriguing environments that trigger their curiosity and offer moderate challenges they can handle. Thus, Othman and Leng (2011) suggested that homes should have many activities that stimulate children's thinking, as well as books, puzzles, and others. The above studies had shown both positive and negative relationship between learning motivation and academic achievement of the research sample. The different conclusions might have been due to the different research samples and the study locations. However there is a need to repeat a similar study by diversifying the sample into various types of learners.

Statistics show that the Aboriginal people in Malaysia is one of the poorest population with a high rate of poverty (50.9%) and extreme poverty (15.4%) relative to the national figures of 7.5% and 1.4%, respectively (EPU, 2007). As reported by The Star (1997), JHEOA confirmed that 80% of the aborigines are living below the poverty line relative to the national figure of 8.5%. On top of that, 50% of them are among the very poor relative to the national figure of 2.5%. Malaysian government has been putting continuous effort in developing the Aborigines, socio-economically and educationally. They provide all the necessary knowledge, skills, and monetary assistance to improve the Aborigines' socio-economic status, apart from the provisions of education, housing, health care and infrastructure facilities (JAKOA, 2011; Ramle et al., 2013). These efforts were made to help integrate the suburban Aboriginal community with the national population. The economic development projects were a success, increasing their household income and improving their socio-economic standing. It has brought changes in their lifestyle and perspective (Ramle et al., 2013). Eventually, the rate of poverty among Aboriginal people has significantly decreased over the years, bringing the percentage to only about 32% (JAKOA, 2011) as compared to 80% in 1990s. It is considered a commendable reduction (Lim Hin Fui, 1997; Ramle et al., 2013).

Johari Talib and Nazri Muslim (2006) listed family's socio-economic status as one of the factors contributed to the failure of Aboriginal children in school. Family's socio-economic affected all aspects in life including the basic needs such as foods, shelter, emotional stability, family bonding, and also the children education. In order to enhance the Orang Asli's quality of life, these are the basic problems that need to be addressed. The basic needs of the children needs to be fulfilled to improve academic achievement among Orang Asli. According to Johari Talib and Nazri Muslim (2006), the socio economic problems of the Aboriginal people is due to unparallel economic wave. Their economic or income sources derived traditionally from the forest while money is vital for transaction in modern economy. With limited income and after several allocation of money to buy basic foods such as rice, flour, cooking oil, sugar, and many

more groceries, a little is left for children education. Without money, children are unwilling to go to school.

Besides the learning motivation and socioeconomic status, gender is also another factor that influences the academic achievement as presented by few scholars. Daylu and Türüt (2004) established in their study that female undergraduate students surpass their male counterparts during their college years, even though they might have lower university entrance scores and under-representation in most departments. The multivariate analysis showed that the school status does not give impact on female students' achievement.

Ayub (2010) had looked into gender perspective in studying the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on academic achievement. The author hypothesized that the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are positively related to the academic performance. Another hypothesis of this study is that different gender display different relation between the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and academic performance. The finding in regard to the first hypothesis of the study was found to be significant, whereby the motivation has significant effect toward the sample's academic achievement. Ayub (2010) also found that the girls in the sample showed higher academic achievement compared to the boys. The girls were found to have intrinsic motivation while the boys have extrinsic motivation.

### **Methodology**

The design of the research was a case study research because this study is done among the Aboriginal students at secondary schools in Kuala Langat, Selangor. It was difficult to find a school with the correct number of Aboriginal students and at the same learning stage. In Kuala Langat district there are 13 secondary schools. Three of the schools are new schools which only consist of Form One and Form Two students (13-14 years old). Therefore, the study was only conducted in 10 secondary schools in Kuala Langat district which has students age 16 to 18 years old who had recently obtained their PMR (Penilaian Menengah Rendah) or (Lower Secondary Assessment) results, there were approximately 100 students in the population.

PMR (Penilaian Menengah Rendah) or (Lower Secondary Assessment) results was used as the score for academic achievement of the sample. The independent variables of motivation which is divided into the components of extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. The reasons for the intrinsic part of the motivation are usually the self-satisfaction and long lasting advantages. The questions related to extrinsic motivation will be inquiring the respondents about the material aspects that motivates them to learn or the possible future rewards that they are looking for by accomplishing their schooling successfully. The original questionnaire of Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) was developed by Vallerand (1992), however this study used the instrument of AMS that was modified by Maurer et al. (2012). A pilot test have been carried out on 30 respondents with the score of Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = .77$  for Motivation questionnaires.

## Results and Discussion

The finding showed that majority of the respondents which is 49.5% (n = 49) of the students were categorized in medium level of motivation, while 29.3% (n = 29) of the students were categorized in high level of motivation and 21.3% (n = 21) of the students considered in low level of motivation. In term of intrinsic motivation, majority of the respondents which is 55.6% (n = 55) of the students considered in low level of intrinsic motivation, while 24.2% (n = 24) categorized in medium level of intrinsic motivation students and 20.2% (n = 20) categorized in high level of intrinsic motivation students. Followed by extrinsic motivation, majority of the respondents which is 47.5% (n = 47) of the students considered in medium level of extrinsic motivation, while 31.3% (n = 31) categorized in low level of extrinsic motivation students, and 21.2% (n = 21) categorized in high level of extrinsic motivation students.

Table 1. Level of Motivation (Intrinsic and Extrinsic)

| Variable                    | n (%)     | Mean  | Std. Dev |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-------|----------|
| <b>Motivation</b>           |           | 67.33 | 22.983   |
| Low (<56)                   | 29 (29.3) |       |          |
| Medium (56-88)              | 49 (49.5) |       |          |
| High (>88)                  | 21 (21.2) |       |          |
| <b>Intrinsic Motivation</b> |           | 33.66 | 11.189   |
| Low (<28)                   |           |       |          |
| Medium (28-44)              | 55 (55.6) |       |          |
| High (>44)                  | 24 (24.2) |       |          |
|                             | 20 (20.2) |       |          |
| <b>Extrinsic Motivation</b> |           | 33.68 | 12.042   |
| Low (<28)                   |           |       |          |
| Medium (28-44)              | 31 (31.3) |       |          |
| High (>44)                  | 47 (47.5) |       |          |
|                             | 21 (21.2) |       |          |

The findings of this study found that there is a significant positive relationship between intrinsic motivation ( $r = .571$ ,  $p < .01$ ), extrinsic motivation ( $r = .506$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and academic achievement. The magnitude of the relationship ranged from medium to large (Cohen, 1988). This means that higher level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation signifies high level of academic achievement among the Aboriginal students and vice versa.

Table 2. Relationship between Motivation (Intrinsic and Extrinsic), Academic Achievement and Economic Status

| Variables                   | Academic Achievement |                 |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
|                             | Correlation (r)      | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| <b>Intrinsic Motivation</b> | .571**               | .000            |
| <b>Extrinsic Motivation</b> | .506**               | .000            |
| <b>Economic Status</b>      | .148                 | .145            |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The current study found that the Aboriginal students are moderately motivated in education, moderately motivated by their extrinsic factor, and less motivated by their intrinsic factor. Therefore, the students achieved low in academic achievement. One of the issues emerging from this finding is it is crucial to increase Aboriginal students' intrinsic motivation towards education in order to improve students' academic achievement. A further study needs to focus on how to motivate Aboriginal parents towards education in order to influence the motivation among their children is suggested.

In reviewing the literature, Broussard and Garrison (2004) highlighted a study by Boggiano et al. (1992) who studied children in fifth grade. Boggiano et al. reported higher reading and mathematics scores for children with intrinsic motivation than children with extrinsic motivation. Children with intrinsic motivation also obtained higher overall achievement scores. In line with this finding, Lepper et al., (2005) added that measuring the internalized motivation along with other types of motivation could be useful and more informative. According to them, increasing the intrinsic motivation and internalizing the extrinsic motivation could minimize the loss of students' motivation, if not maximizing their overall motivation. Although intrinsic motivation may eventually decrease, the internalized motivation could potentially substitute the intrinsic motivation and leads to a better performance.

The finding showed that there is no significant relationship between economic status ( $r = .148$ ,  $p > .05$ ) and academic achievement. In contrast, there is a positive significant relationship between intrinsic motivation ( $r = .571$ ,  $p < .01$ ), extrinsic motivation ( $r = .506^{**}$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and academic achievement. The magnitude of the relationship ranged from medium to large (Cohen, 1988). This means that higher level of motivation signifies higher level of academic achievement among the Aboriginal students and vice versa.

The current study found that almost 30% of the Aboriginal students come from family with household income less than RM1000. However, the result shows that there is no relationship

between economic status and academic achievement among Aboriginal students. Statistic declared by EPU in 2007 shows that Malaysian Aborigine is one of the poorest populations with high rate of poverty. Johari Talib and Nazri Muslim (2006) listed family's socio-economic status as one of the factors contributed to the failure of Aboriginal students in school. Family's socio-economic affected all aspects in life including the basic needs such as foods, shelter, emotional stability, family bonding, and also the children education. In order to enhance the Aborigine's quality of life, these are the basic problems that need to be addressed. The basic needs of the children needs to be fulfilled to improve academic achievement among the Aborigines. This study also found that most of Aboriginal students are moderately motivated in education. Thus, the students had low academic achievement. As Malaysian government has been putting continuous effort in developing the Aborigines economically and educationally, it might be very important to determine the effective way to increase Aboriginal students motivation towards education in order to improve their economic status. These findings were in line with earlier study by Boggiano et al. (1992) and much earlier study by Gottfried (1985). Both earlier studies indicated the existence of positive relationships between motivation and achievement in young children.

Finally, there is no significant differences between gender ( $p > .05$ ) and academic achievement. Hence, gender does not significantly affects the academic achievement ( $t = 1.528$ ,  $p > .05$ ) among Aboriginal students. The mean score for male respondents is 2.93 and the standard deviation is 0.267 while the mean score for female respondents is 2.78 and the standard deviation is 0.559. The main reason that both of the male and female students tend to have equal tendency in their academic achievement were due to the motivation level. In fact, all of them are lacking of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Thus, both male and female students seem to have similar level of academic achievement.

The finding of the present study are consistent with Ayub (2010) that looked into gender perspective in studying the impact of instrinsic and extrinsic motivation on academic achievement. The author hypothesized that the instrinsic and extrinsic motivation are positively related to the academic performance. However, result obtained from the Ministry of Higher Education (2009) shows conflicting findings that female graduates surpass male in every level of studies: Certificate, diploma, first degree, and master, and also in higher institution graduates of community college, polytechnic, Higher Private Institutions, and Higher Public Institutions.

Table 3. T-test Analysis between Academic Achievement and Gender

| <b>Academic Achievement</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>T</b> | <b>Sig-t</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| <b>Gender</b>               |             |           | 1.528    | 0.130        |
| Male                        | 2.93        | 0.267     |          |              |
| Female                      | 2.78        | 0.559     |          |              |

Based on the Analysis of Variance, economic status does not significantly affects the academic achievement ( $F = 1.074$ ,  $p > .05$ ) among Aborigine students. The mean score for students from no income family is 3.00 and the standard deviation is 0.745, the mean score for students from family income less than RM500 is 2.65 and the standard deviation is 0.351, the mean score for students from family income between RM500 to RM1000 is 2.86 and the standard deviation is 0.351, the mean score for students from family income between RM1000 to RM2000 is 2.91 and the standard deviation is 0.431, and the mean score for students from family income more than RM2000 is 2.88 and the standard deviation is 0.467.

Table 4. Analysis of Variance between Academic Achievement and Economic Status

| <b>Academic Achievement</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>F</b> | <b>Sig-F</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------|----------|--------------|
| <b>Economic status</b>      |             |           | 1.074    | 0.374        |
| No income                   | 3.00        | 0.745     |          |              |
| < RM500                     | 2.65        | 0.351     |          |              |
| RM500 – RM1000              | 2.86        | 0.288     |          |              |
| RM1000 – RM2000             | 2.91        | 0.431     |          |              |
| > RM2000                    | 2.88        | 0.467     |          |              |

According to JAKOA (2011), the rate of poverty among Aborigines have significantly decreased over the years, bringing the percentage to only about 32% as compared to the percentage in 1990s which was 80%. In addition, Johari and Nazri (2006) shows that the socio economic problems of Aborigine is due to unparallel economic wave. Their major sources of economy are mostly from the forest and in this modern economic days, money is important to live. As they have limited income left after several allocation for basic needs, the allocation of money for education is limited. Thus, without any money, the children is not willing to go to school.

Aboriginal culture and attitude also affect the effectiveness of their children's education. As a whole, culture is the main aspect related to the lifestyle of the communities like artefacts and community beliefs, how to behave and how to communicate. All of these aspects combined, make up what society has produced, such as language, ways of thinking, art, law, communication and is inter-related to one another to produce the attitude of the society itself. Aborigine community education is no longer just an issue for the Ministry of Education and the Department of Indigenous Development (JAKOA). Both of these organizations have taken careful planned steps, together with large allocations to enable these people to receive education and job. To realize Malaysia as a developed country by the year 2020, Aboriginal people should be brought together in the development agenda of the country, though there are often sound issues or stereotypes about Aboriginal people being less developed and going backward (Ma'rof & Sarjit, 2008). The report of the Department of Aborigine Affairs in 2009

provides for a program to promote the education of Aborigine children involving an allocation of RM 3,476,585.00. Hassan (2006) explains the Ministry of Education is also not lagging behind in providing amenities to improve the Aborigine's achievement. Education assistance channelled covers uniforms, bus fares, school fees, stationery, food, and scholarships. In addition, parents' low education levels also affect the academic achievement of Malaysian Aboriginal children. This is because they cannot help their children in their studies. This opinion is supported by Yeung et al., (2002) that the educational level of the parents who do not know the primary cause of their education and development of children. Hassan et al., (2001) concluded in the findings, that Aboriginal children are not interested to attend school due to the difficulty of understanding lessons, less interested in school work and failure in a particular subject. This opinion is also shared by Ma'rof and Sarjit (2008) which explains the factors leading the Aboriginal children to be less competent in terms of knowledge, to render them from absent from school, is due to the difficulty in growing interests and the culture of learning, lack of motivation and enthusiasm to go ahead, and difficulty to understand presentation.

Shaari et al., (2011) in their study found that the reasons why Aboriginal students have not mastered the lessons taught by the teachers because they are forgetful. This is due to their low memory. In addition, Borhan (1981) also noted the performance and low academic achievement due to Aboriginal students not studying hard, and not knowing the economy through education. Aboriginal students also were less competent in terms of skills and having trouble mastering 3M (reading, writing and arithmetic) (Shaari et.al, 2011). Their parents' assumption towards education is also negative, presuming there are no benefits in sending their kids to school (Ahmad et al., 2009). However, this attitude is contrary to the attitude of the natives in Sabah, namely, Kadazan and Bajau. According to Abdullah (1999), the increase in Kadazan and Bajau children's academic performance in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, is because their parents have a positive attitude and mind towards the need of education. This shows that the attitude and behaviour is the most important element in the improvement of academic performance. In addition, the findings of the study are consistence with Self-determination theory (SDT), developed by Deci and Ryan (1985) and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. According to Maslow (1954) and Sichivitsa (2004), an intellectually and spiritually developed person has various interests and these interests are driven by their desire to learn or also known as growth-motivation. He said that everybody possesses the potential for self-actualisation, but not everybody possesses intrinsic motivation to learn and strive for achievement. In other words, only people with intrinsic motivation have the tendency to explore their talents, improve their abilities, and take their self-actualisation to the next level.

### **Conclusion**

Motivation is important, if individuals are highly motivated, learning is easier and likeliness to succeed is enormous. Extrinsic motivation should be created from external stimuli aimed at mobilizing individuals engaging in an activity that is of interest to them. Motivation is driven by recognitions, praises, incentives, and so on. Intrinsic motivation should be created from the internal stimulus of encouragement and interest of an individual to engage in an activity

without hoping for any reward. Bruner (1966) relates the intrinsic curiosity and the drive to achieve efficiency. For example, a student wants to achieve excellent results in exams because he wants to meet the needs of success or self-perfection. In the context of Aboriginal people, the parents also need to be motivated in order to encourage their children to excel in their studies, as well as being role models at home by showing examples that can move the culture of learning to motivate their children.

Physiological need is important for an increased focus, stabilized emotions, and students to realize, the core reason why do they need to learn. Safety requirement is a desire to protect themselves from the dangers and threats of the environment. Aboriginal children have low self-esteem and are shy to mingle with the outside community. When the basic needs have been fulfilled, the activities of Aboriginal children and the outside world will be feasible. To achieve high-level requirements, students should be exposed to activities that will unleash their potential by applying the elements of love, appreciation, and recognition for the works they performed, and the desire to live well (Maslow, 1960). High-level requirements will be able to make the students understand the need to improve their self-performance.

The result of the study showed that the motivation level of Aboriginal students in Kuala Langat, Selangor is moderate. The study also found that, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation affects academic achievement significantly. Besides that, the findings indicated that there was no relationship between economic status, and academic achievement, as to say that economic status does not affect the academic achievement. In addition, gender and economic status does not have significant differences in academic achievement of Aboriginal students in Kuala Langat, Selangor. Finally, it is hoped that the educators will refer to this research finding as a stepping stone in solving educational problems faced by the Aborigine community in Kuala Langat, and future educators and parents will take initiative in enhancing the motivation level of the Malaysian Aboriginal students.

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