

Application of Tinto Model in Explaining Secondary School Dropout from Teachers Experiences in Pasir Gudang, Johor

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ABSTRACT

Secondary school dropout is an issue in many countries including Malaysia. However, a framework was developed by Tinto (1993) to explain tertiary education dropout which suggests academic and social integration to ensure students engaged to commit to the institution. This study explored the academic and social issues which lead to secondary school dropout from the experience of the teachers in Malaysia. A school in Pasir Gudang was selected from the list of school with highest number of dropped out students. Five secondary school teachers with at least 10 years teaching experience were interviewed. This study found four issues related to academics which are students' attitude, classroom practices and syllabus, students' interest and family. On the social aspect, there are two related issues which are peers or in-school friends influence and dropped out or older and working friends' influence. these are the issues which impede the attainment of academic and social integration in school which result in students dropping out of school. This study found that it is not just internal issues within the school but including external factors in influencing secondary school students to dropout. This study shed lights on the multifaceted reasons behind secondary school dropout through the insights of experienced teachers, revealing the academic and social issues from students schooling experience that affect the disengagement from schooling which led up to secondary school drop out.

Keywords: School Dropout, Tinto Model, Academic Issues, Social Issues

INTRODUCTION

Dropout is referring to children who have withdrawn from the education system or stop schooling without any intention of returning to school or they start joining the labour force (Patel, 2014). Lim (2021) reported that in a written parliamentary reply, the Education Ministry stated that dropouts refer to students who were schooling but left the education system without completing the full education years. In Malaysia, even though the percentage of dropout rate is considered low, but the primary concern is when in absolute numbers in thousands actually dropped out of secondary education and dropout at secondary level is critical (Patel, 2014). In Malaysia, a recent concern addressed by academic expert is on the critical number of dropouts from the previous Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination, involving 75,455 candidates as students were working as food delivery riders during the Covid-19 pandemic and they started earning financially (Susan, 2022). The issue of school dropout should be a concern in Malaysia as well as it involves the future of the children which affect the future of the nation (Alkaabi & Noor, 2020).

In studying the issue of school dropout, there has not been any established theoretical framework specifically for secondary school in explaining the process of dropout which can be applied to conduct a study. Unlike, at tertiary level, Vincent Tinto is renowned for the Student Integration model that is used to explain the process

of coming to the decision to drop out of the institution. Overall, the framework consists of Pre-Entry Attributes and Institutional Experiences (Academic and Social System) and Outcome (Persistency). This study only focused on the Institutional Experiences which in this study it is referring to the schooling experiences involving the Academic System and Social System of the school.

Patel (2014) reported that in Malaysia, poor academic performance is the reason for parents permitting their children to drop out of school. There are previous findings that explained school dropout in relation to academic failure, class level, student's absenteeism, factors related to structure and environment of the school and students' own perception on the education quality they received (Zorbaz & Özer, 2020). On the other hand, the social factors involve relationship among students, teachers, administrators, parents and communities of the school. Students who negatively experienced schooling are predicted to be likely being involved with disciplinary issues, having few interactions with teachers and peers, unfamiliar and facing difficulty to adapt to the environment of the school and these increase the tendency for students to drop out of school. (Shuger, 2012 as cited in Zorbaz & Özer, 2020). Moreover, teacher-student relationships have been found to promote students' engagement and achievement in school (Zorbaz & Özer, 2020)

This study relied on the framework by Vincent Tinto in explaining the academic and social issues which cause secondary school dropout from teachers' experiences. This study focused on capturing the academic and social experiences of the students from the teachers' experiences in dealing with secondary school dropouts' students. In order to overcome the issues of school dropout, it is important to gain understanding into the risk factors or issues (Gubbels et al., 2019). This study would provide additional knowledge to the body of literature on the issue of secondary school dropout in Malaysia as no such study been conducted in Malaysian context and no study ever found in applying the Student Integration Model by Tinto (1993) to study dropouts in Malaysian secondary school.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of this study which are to:

- i. explore the academic issues for secondary school students to drop out school from teachers' experiences
- ii. explore the social issues for secondary school students to drop out of school from teachers' experiences

Tinto Model of Institutional Dropout

Tinto's (1993) Institutional Departure Model explains tertiary students' withdrawal or dropout. The theory was developed to provide a model in explaining the processes involved in making the decision to leave a college or university before graduation. The theory is applied widely at tertiary level but has never been applied in studying the issue of dropout at secondary level specifically in Malaysia. Undeniably, besides individual factors, the issue of school dropout occurs within the school and there are factors related to school level that are significant which serve as predictors to dropout decision (Simić & Krstić, 2017). Tinto (2017) exclaimed that motivation to remain within the institution is influenced by perception of the students on the value of their studies which may arise from interaction within the classroom between teachers and students as the lesson is being delivered.

The theory in Figure 1 by Tinto (1993) presupposes that student background characteristics and pre-college academic achievement which are termed as "Pre-Entry Attributes" has direct influence on students' early commitment to the goal of graduating and commitment to the institution. Nicoletti (2019) explains the model at first perceives that individuals enrol into institutions with preconceived emotion and intellect which comprise of their own individual traits, previous schooling experiences and the differences of family background and these affect the motivation the individuals to enrol in the institution to obtain a degree that is known as individual's commitment prior entering the institution.

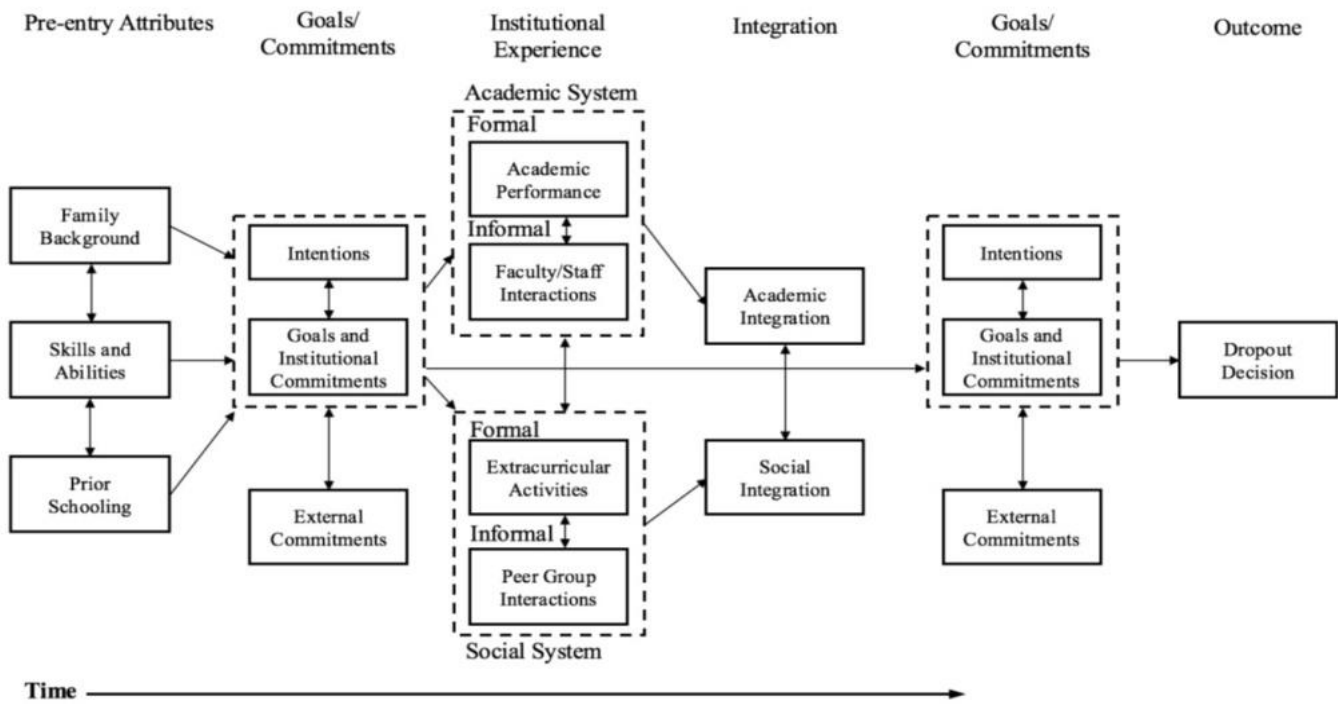


Fig 1. Tinto's Institutional Departure Model (Tinto, 1993, p. 114)

The term 'integration' is used by Tinto to explain the process of internalisation when individual's own value system is integrated and incorporated to the values and norms of the environment of the college (Tinto, 1993). Tinto and Cullen (1973) states that dropout could be caused by voluntary withdrawal or from forced withdrawal (dismissal) which could arise due to reason such as poor grade performance because an individual may be socially integrated but due to inadequacy of integration in the academic domain would also lead to dropout. Therefore, the importance is for students to be integrated in both the social and academic system. The prediction which can be made is the greater the individual being integrated in academic and social system, the greater his or her willingness to commit to the institution and finally, they are dedicated to remain persist and without the intention of dropping out from the institution (Nicoletti, 2019). On the contrary, a voluntary decision to drop out may indicate unsuccessful integration of the individual into the institution's academic system and social system.

Tinto (1997) explains that classroom is the essential location where both social and academic integration can be established. Classroom is seen as the location where integration occurs as formal learning takes place and students socially interacts with peers and teachers as they develop their experiences and perceptions within the four walls. The model by Tinto (1993) is relevant to this study as in school, classroom is the main teaching and learning occurs, and where students socialise. Therefore, by identifying the issues related to the academic and social aspect in the secondary school classroom would help to provide an insight on the strategies can be taken to reduce the school dropout rate. This [study focuses](#) on the secondary school teachers as the starting point to introduce the framework in Malaysian secondary school context to understand the issue of school dropout.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted qualitative research approach applying case study design aligned to the objective of this study which are to explore the academic and social issues for secondary school dropouts from teachers' perspectives. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) describe case study as an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system which refers to a phenomenon, a programme, an institution, a community or a policy. This study was conducted specifically on secondary school in Pasir Gudang, Johor. Schoch (2020) explains case study involves a comprehensive and intensive analysis of a particular event, situation, organisation or social unit and it is an in-depth investigation within a clear real-life context. In Malaysia, there has been few qualitative studies conducted involving teachers' perception on the issues of academic and social in explaining secondary school dropouts.

Schoch (2020) for case study, it is effective to apply purposeful sampling that enable in-depth focus on a phenomenon. There are 35 daily government secondary school in Pasir Gudang district and based on the data from Johor State Education Department, Pasir Gudang has the highest numbers of secondary school dropout students. This study chose one secondary school in Pasir Gudang district which has highest number of students dropped out within the district with a total of 77 students dropped out based on data ended year 2022.

This study used purposive sampling technique. The respondents of this study involved 5 secondary school teachers for the interview and they were appointed by the school administrators based on the criteria required for this study such as teaching experience of more than 8 years and held the position of class teacher because they have direct experience with dropped out students besides being academic teachers.

Interview Protocol

The use of semi-structured interview for collecting data requires for the development of interview protocol. The interview protocol was created parallel to the objectives of this study and a pilot test was conducted on two teachers from a different secondary school in Pasir Gudang district to ensure the validity of instrument developed. Feedbacks were taken into consideration and necessary changes were made to ensure the interview protocol is able to achieve the objective of this study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher obtained permission from the Education Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education, Johor State Education Department, and Pasir Gudang Education District Office. The researcher met the secondary schools' principal for permission and determining the procedures for carrying out the interview including selecting the teachers for the interview. The interview was conducted at the room designated by the principal and the teachers only come in when they are free from any academic lessons. The participants selected filled in the consent form and were explained on the ethics and the purpose of the study before the interview session. They interview were conducted for about 35 to 45 minutes and it was recorded using digital recorder.

The interview recordings were transcribed and checked with the recordings to ensure no missing data. The transcript and audio are labelled and all participants are remained anonymous. The transcripts were read through for familiarisation before being coded and thematic analysis were carried out using the codes derived.

FINDINGS

The findings of this study are based on the experiences of the secondary school teachers. Table 1 shows the substitution of real names and code used in this study, gender, teaching experience of the participant, and whether they have experience being class teacher during their teaching experience. The years of teaching experience is a criterion of selection for participant of this study which is above 8 years minimum to ensure the participants of this study have the experience in dealing with dropped out students.

Table 1: Information of research participants

| Participant | Gender | Teaching Experience (years) | Experience as class teacher |
|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Participant 1 (P1) | Male | 10 | Yes |
| Participant 2 (P2) | Female | 11 | Yes |
| Participant 3 (P3) | Male | 10 | Yes |
| Participant 4 (P4) | Male | 14 | Yes |
| Participant 5 (P5) | Female | 12 | Yes |

Academic Issues

The themes in relation to academic issues below were derived from the thematic analysis done.

Students' Attitude

This study found that one theme emerged under academic's issues in secondary school is students' attitude and all the participants voiced similar issue. The attitude of the secondary school students which cause them to drop out of school as they could not focus as they are externally influenced their peers and needs. The extracts below present the academic challenge faced by the students due to their attitude. One reason to such attitude towards academic is due to parental involvement as mentioned by Participant 5. Based on this study. the attitude of the students is conveyed through behaviour shown like playing truant, sleeping in class during lesson, lack of focus in class, and coming late to school.

“Challenge is to persuade the students to focus on their academic before getting certificate rather than they work. Meaning they should stop working...” (P1)

“Challenges, will be students' own will for example, they do not want to study so we have to influence them, attract their interest. As I said earlier there may be lots of factors for school dropouts... as I mentioned earlier, students do not have the interest to study.” (P2)

... we repeat the lesson on the topics especially for students who are lost and frequently not attending school. But it actually disrupts the lesson... So, when we have to repeat the topics it takes our time. (P3)

“Here one challenge is students coming late to school. Now they like to come late to school. They are supposed to come in at 7.15am but they come in at 9.15am. The reason given is they work at night; they woke up late. So, they come late to school and later sleep during class.” (P4)

“For the students, they feel it is challenging for them. Maybe that is how they feel. If I observe in this school, if students become loss of interest, doesn't attend school, because they feel it is difficult for them or it is a factor of self ...” (P5)

The responses reflect the attitude of the individual self is the issue as students lost interest and no longer focus on their own academics because they perceive learning as difficult and challenging for them. One behavioural display before dropping out of school besides playing truant or not attending school is coming late to school. Teachers are trying their best to help their students but the attitude disrupts the lesson when teachers have to repeat the previous lesson for students who did not attend school and prolonged, they missed out in academic which made them decide to drop out of school.

Another reason for students' attitude is students being forced to go to school by their parents. For parents it is their responsibility to provide the necessary education for their children but for the children, they perceive as being forced. They came to school with behavioural and displaying attitude problem as a sign of protest by not committing to their study.

“Students will not study and not even come to school. But there are students who come to school because their parents force them. Students do not have the will to come to school and study at all. They come to school without bringing their books because they just come to school” (P3)

“There are students who came to school because their mother forces them to. His mother is not working but his mother forces him to go to school because she could not cope with him at home. Mother should listen to the needs of the child as we may not know what they are facing.” (P5)

Students' attitude is an issue in academic which affect their learning and it is the reason for secondary school dropout.

Classroom Practices and Syllabus

Classroom is important and as described by Tinto (1997) it is where integration with the academic and social occur. However, this study found that there are issues within the classroom like syllabus, and having mix abilities classroom which impede such integration from being established. The practices in classroom involving the teaching and learning process including the syllabus are other issues prevailed in this study. Participant 2 explained the implication of having mix abilities students in one classroom which pose a challenge for the teachers and students as well. Students are no longer streamed according to their level of abilities and in having to meet the differences in abilities in a classroom, the teachers are required to prepare different materials to meet students' abilities. It suggest that in ability to meet the students' interest led to the loss of interest by the students.

"A challenge for teachers when we have mix abilities in one classroom. For me, it is one of the factors too... difficulty to teach in the classroom when there are different levels of students which we have to attend to as we have to prepare a lot of materials, variety of methods. Students may be of advance level but he is put in class with of low level so how is it possible for him to further advance... we have difficulty to teach. It is the reason because not everyday teachers can prepare materials of different levels." (P2)

"They are not of the same level... But what I observed, like the class that we teach has different levels, there is advance and there is also of low level. So, at least they get a gist if others can describe, the low-level students can be just at knowledge level, it doesn't matter. At least, they do not perceive it as difficult. If not, they might say, 'Ahh, I am lazy study with teacher as such, lazy to be in the class'. They feel like that, and we do not want them to have such perception." (P5)

In classroom practice one element is on the implementation of syllabus or curricular planned by the Ministry of Education. The syllabus drastic change seems to affect students' motivation as it is reported that students lost interest in academics. A teacher shared students complaining that they feel learning is difficult and it indicates students are affected by the syllabus and their ability to cope with their learning affect their perception that learning is difficult. Difficulty in coping with the academics causes students to lose interest in learning and further lead them to dropping out of school.

"Another thing is the syllabus implemented today is too difficult for some students. They feel that it is difficult and they lost the interest to study in class. Students like certain subject and there are subject disliked by students too. So, the issue of interest maybe has something to do with the syllabus ..." (P4)

"I think, nowadays academic is an issue involving difficulty with the syllabus itself. For the students, they feel it is challenging for them. Maybe that is how they feel. If I observe in this school, if students become loss of interest, doesn't attend school, because they feel it is difficult for them or it is a factor of self. But what they think is studying is difficult and they would say they have lost their interest. I always heard such thing. 'Not interested teacher, difficult...'" (P5)

When Participant 5 was asked to explain further on the issue with the syllabus, she mentioned about the drastic revamp of the secondary syllabus and the topics covered are not according to the development of students by their which made it difficult to the low performance students or 'slow learner' to cope and again it relates back to the issue of students losing interest which affect their behaviour and attitude.

"Previously, the topic that was in upper secondary History subject, that topic is being studied by Form Two students. Uh, meaning Form One students are learning topic on Civilisation..., the topic was in Form Four. They are not of the same level. We thought, the students are advance but not all students are such. But the change of the syllabus is rather drastic, too drastic for students as such in my school from such category of students. So, it is rather difficult. They are slightly slow learner but it is not that they totally cannot at all, they are slow." (P5)

However, regardless the challenges, teachers realise the importance of academic performance and they are willing to help the students to ensure that they get the benefit from completing secondary school with SPM

examination certificate. However, students attitude seems to impede the effort given by the teachers.

“Personally, it is important for teacher to give academic support because we depend on academics for better future but certain students may not be good in academics too. But at least they have certificate as the basic so they have to study.” (P2)

“We want to help but they do not have the effort to accept our help. When we asked students to meet us after class, they do not turn up.” (P3)

Classroom practices affect students’ interest in learning while posing issue for the teachers as well in managing the lesson.

Students’ Interest

One participant pointed out that students are more interested in sports compared to their academic’s matter. It seems that students’ interest is significantly important as it could motivate them to engage and commit to the activity. However, students’ interest is towards other matters than academics like sports. If their interest is not met, students would not participate and would get bored.

“... students in this school prefer sports activities... They like sports. If early of the year, during sports they would always come. But towards the end, our focus is on academic, their attendance began to decline. If sports, they are interested.” (P4)

“They are active when involving sports activity. Meaning, in the morning they have Physical Education in the timetable, the attendance is good. If no Physical Education, sometimes ... They come just for football.” (P1)

“If they do not like the activity, they will not participate in anything, they will feel bored. They will feel bored because they do not to get involved with the activity with the reason “I don’t like”. (P5)

In this study, students who do not having interest in academic is a problem as they would not participate and they would not perform which lead them to dropout.

Family

This study found the home condition actually affects the schooling experience of the students especially on attitude and behaviour. Family and home environment are important. However, there are adverse implications when students are forced to go to school by parents especially when they do not have the motivation to learn. They display rather rebellious attitude when they are in school and based on this study, it is reported students intentionally want to attract the attention of the teachers which they did not get at home from parents. Parental divorce is an issue which causes students to drop out of secondary school and they are missing in academics.

“At home, they do not get the attention. There are students who create problem at school because they said they are bored at home. ... “at home he has a sister who is handicap, a sister and mother are working, so I am bored”. (P5)

The implication from family problem or having broken family or not staying with family is quite detrimental as students tend to create problems like being rebellious and it is the one reason students to be easily influenced by friends as they could not get the attention from family at home so, they turn to their friends.

“So far, those students who are involved with discipline problem, majority of them are from broken family, parental divorce. They are not staying with their family; they are staying with their grandmother or brother”. (P1)

“From my personal view, there are students whose parents are divorced, so these students are seeking for attention. So, they are attracted to their friends. So, when they play truant, the others will follow.” (P3)

“If we look at students with bad relationship with family, they will be involved with many problems including relationship with teachers and peers. ... Even though they do not have problem with the economy but parents do not take care of the family relationship, they do not learn to care for the relationship, the child can be rebellious as students are influenced by friends.” (P5)

Family issues is a reason for academic failure, and attitude problem which consequently, these students drop out of school.

Social Issues

Social issues were also explored in this study and the one common theme is related to peers' influence.

In School Peers and Out of School Friends Influence

Generally, this study found a common social issue which led to secondary school dropout which involves the influence of peers. However, the participants of this study had different perspectives on how students are being influenced by their peers. Secondary school students seem to have friends not just their peers in school but also outside of school who are much older in age. Peers influence in school are the one who left out in academics and have disciplinary issues. Students are easily influenced by these friends especially those who are already working in factories or doing odd job which attract the students and causing the loss in interest to go to school because school has no value as without academic qualification or completing school, they can still get a job. In relation to the issue of secondary school students working, apart from the socioeconomic reason, other reason is being influenced by peers. Peers' influence is indeed a factor which leads to other issues.

“Having dropped out friends also influence the students as they are pulling them so they do not study. there are also students who befriends with adults or people older than them which also pull them out.” (P1)

“Social factor that is causing students to drop out of school is more to peers' influence and there is influence from adults actually. ... they are of age of 25 and not married... Their friends can help them to get the job at the factory. School has become valueless. School has no value to them.” (P3)

“There are students who just mimic the attitude but it is not the way they behave and they too are left out in their study. So, only one student with problem. But others who do not have problem tend follow him. They are pulled towards the attitude.” (P3)

“If here in term of social it is related to peers' influence. Maybe they have problem with their friends too. They are not comfortable with the circle in classroom and in school. That too can be the reason they felt lazy to come to school.” (P2)

“When their friends bought a motorcycle, they also want to buy motorcycle.” (P4)

“... if this school they are not in poor category. They are of intermediate. But when their friends work, their friends start to earn money and their parents do not bother.” (P5)

In school teachers can control the social activities in the classroom or school through participation in activities. It is the effort of the teachers to give students purpose and ensure that they are not constantly influenced by peers or outside school friends. However, these students need encouragement and need to be persuaded and active participation has positive effect on students' motivation as on the contrary, without participation, they will not have the sense of purpose of coming to school. Teachers provide the opportunity for participation as they believe it is important to control the students especially in attracting students interest to remain schooling. The experience shared by the participants reflect the engagement element in the framework by Tinto (1993). Teachers believe that engagement is important to prevent school dropout.

“We always firstly control their social activities so they don't go astray, then we give encouragement to good social activities. For example, in sports, they participate in competition, encourage participation in many activities. So far, we encourage students to participate in school and outside of school.” (P1)

“Students feel that they are involved in the activities in classroom, they will feel proud. If students are able to participate in all activities in class, it will attract students’ interest. I will make sure; I prepare a lot of activities for them to participate.” (P2)

“Normally, students who are active in school, they have better tendency to study. if students do not have any feelings towards the school, he will not be involved with something else. Students will not study and not even come to school.” (P3)

“If they do not participate in anything, they will feel bored. They will feel bored because they are not involved. There are students who are willing to participate and there are students who we need to identify, there are those who do not show anything but we force them to participate.” (P5)

DISCUSSION

This study applied the framework by Tinto (1993) and two most important aspect is on the academic and social system which build the institutional experience of the students. This study identified the academic and social issues from teachers’ experiences to explore the reasons for secondary school dropouts in Malaysia. The conceptual framework developed from the finding of this study is illustrated in Fig 2.

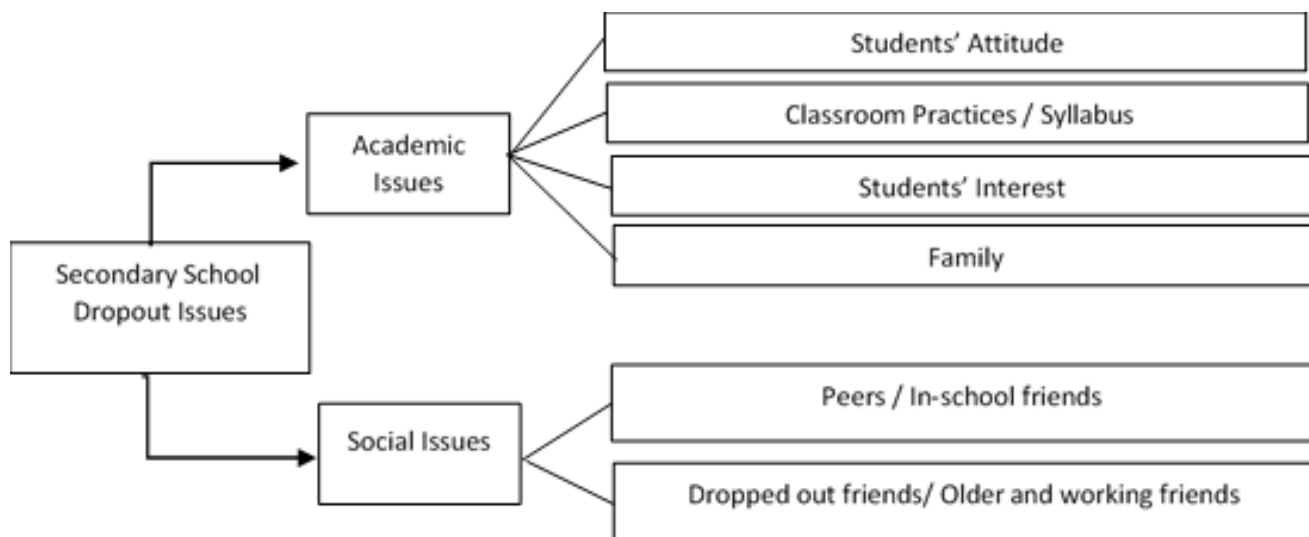


Fig 2. Conceptual Framework of Academic and Social Issues of Secondary School Dropouts

Generally, most studies on school dropouts will relate to the implication of poor academic performance. Gubbels et al. (2019) conducted a study on the issue of school dropout discovered one issue is on students experiencing difficulties in learning and low academic achievement. On the contrary, in this study, none of the participants mentioned about low academic performance as an issue as they all agreed that students’ academic performance is influenced by attitude, classroom practices, students’ interest and family related issues. It signifies academic achievement is the implication from the issues identified like students’ attitude towards school. Arslan and Peker (2023) conducted a study on 10 high school students who dropped out at secondary level in Turkey. The finding is similar as a common theme identified is on low academic motivation in attending school and willingness to commit to school is also low apart from display of negative attitude. Students dislike school and they did not want to attend school because they are bored. This study found the teachers have the effort in providing the academic support for the students. In this study, teachers tried to provide the academic support needed for the students but it is the acceptance and reaction of the students which pose a challenge for the teachers which again related back to the attitude of the students. Student’s attitude is the most important issue as all participants brought up the issue from their experience.

In relation to students’ attitude, a study by Sumardi (2020) discovered similar finding as factor originating from the individual self which include laziness, lack of motivation of going to school and having negative perception on their academic ability in learning. Among the issues of secondary school identified is students’ negative attitude towards learning and school which hinders academic integration. In explaining the attitude of

the students, Balakrishnan and Andi (2019) explained school refusal behaviour includes children and adolescent being entirely absent from school for a period of time, who purposefully miss classes, who are consistently late to school, who have severe morning misbehaviours in attempt to miss school and who shows reluctance to attend school. The display of behaviours is considered as manifestation of students' attitude towards academics. The students' attitude issue explained in this study depicts the school refusal behaviour which could be caused by the demand on academic achievement is burdening the students. As found in this study, the syllabus development throughout the schooling cohort impose difficulty to students as they begin to perceive learning as difficult. In relation to the issue on having mix abilities students and syllabus highlighted by the teacher, Bakar (2023) identified one of the challenges in the fulfilment of Malaysia Education Blueprint Aspiration is weak student progression as the focus of the education system is on the high achievers rather than providing for the needs of underachieving students in Malaysia in which would help these students to progress along with the high achievers' students to foster the equitable education.

In relation to students' attitude, it implies the importance of engagement which is shown through students' interest. Engagement refers to the quality of attentiveness and effort given, which can be inferred through indirect indicators such as the amount of participation, show of interest and enthusiasm (Rumberger & Lim, 2008). Based on researches done, students who are engaged with school have tendency to accomplish better grades in academic (Wang & Eccles, 2012), and the risk to drop out is greatly reduced (Wang & Fredricks, 2014). However, the challenge is to promote engagement as students advance through the academic years in school, they tend to be disengaged with the school. However, based on the participants experience, students' interest is indeed important but the concern is the interest is not on academic matters. Students do want to come to school to play football rather than being in class learning even though it demonstrated the commitment given by the students when they are much interested in something.

The model by Tinto (1993) focuses on the institutional experience of the students in academic and social system but still recognised the influence of family matters under pre-entry attributes. Undeniably, family is one factor that causes drop out and Rumberger (1995) acknowledged that family background is the most important prominent factor to success in school and parental education and income are the two predictors relate to socioeconomic factor that is commonly studied in relation to school achievement and dropout behaviour. In his study, it is found that family issue is one of the issues affecting academic integration in school and the participants emphasis was on the parental support and home environment including single parent family which is related to the behaviour and attitude their children displayed in school. Family does not provide the academic support for the students. Karhina et al. (2023) conducted a study on the relation between parental separation and school dropout in Norwegian. They reported that adolescents from separated parents have higher risk of dropping out of school compared to peers with non-separated family. Similar to this study, the participants with family issues have the tendency to be '*rebellious*' and creating behavioural problem in school as they seek for attention and they got the attracted to their friends rather than family.

In relation to the theoretical model by Tinto (1993), family background is the pre-entry attributes which is important for students to set the initial goal and commitments, and define their intention of coming to the institution. Parallel to the finding of this study, the family issue sort of predetermined the attitude or behaviour students bring to school and it definitely impede the academic integration and they do not have the commitment towards their academic which explains the participants' view on attitude problem as an academic issue and in the end, these students will drop out of school as Nicolleti (2019) explained that greater integration to the academic and social system will enhance students dedication to commit to the institution and will not have the intention to drop out. However, Balakrishnan and Andi (2019) found there is non-significant differences between children from single-parent family and two-parents because parents are busy with their work causing lack of supervision from family and lack of emphasis and expectations on academic achievement which eventually would lead to refusal behaviour. The state of the family is an issue but another consideration is on parental involvement. Students lacking of family support are less likely to develop commitment and motivation to perform academically. However, in this study, it is reported parents force their children to go to school, but these students came to school without having the interest in schooling and learning.

This study found peers or friends outside of school influence is a strong factor which impede social integration in school. Dirik and Aslan (2021) explained through their finding that students socialise in school and the

experience they have upon encountering the wrong choice of friends can lead to their own negative behaviour as they are being influenced by their friends. Friends who had dropped out and working are also a great influence as they begin to perceive school as important as they could not earn money like their friends (Dirik & Aslan, 2021). The third finding of a study by Sumardi (2020) is on the social relationship of the students which consists of association with peers who are not in school or have dropped out. This study found that the influence of friends outside of school who are much older and working is also an issue to be considered. Indirectly, it explains the impact of social relationship has on influencing the students regardless within or outside of school and definitely the outside influence is a worrying issue as students are exposed to and have greater tendency to be involved with negative activities.

According to this study from the experience of the teachers, the academic and social issues discovered are jeopardising and impede students' motivation and commitment to complete their schooling years. However, this study had identified issues within the school and source from outside the school. As Arslan and Peker (2023) concluded in their study that there are many factors to school dropouts and generally involving interaction between individual, family, school, peer group, and living environment. These constant interaction and exposure affect students' perception, attitude and behaviour towards education and their future. The academic and social integration are undeniably important to eliminate to provide the optimum and conducive environment for engagement and building positive institutional experience.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion the prediction through the framework by Tinto (1993) is the greater the individual being integrated in the academic system and social system, the greater his or her commitment to the institution and finally, they will remain persist and without the intention of dropping out from their study. This study had found few issues which interfere with the academic and social integration in secondary school which leads to school dropout. This study identified academic issues related to students' attitude, classroom practices or syllabus, students' interest and family, while for social issues it is more to friends but can be divided into in-school and out-school friends who had dropped out or much older and working friends which seems to pose greater threat to persistence in schooling. These issues are internal and external to classroom and school which should be paid attention to at designing the effective intervention to ensure students complete their secondary education. These issues should be highlighted and they are factors to secondary school dropout and based on these issues, it clearly disrupts and complicate the utmost purpose which is to achieve academic and social integration so students are greatly engaged and will remain in school until completion as according to the model by Tinto (1993). In addition, the study emphasises the importance of engagement, as students who feel connected to their school with activities of their interest are less likely to be disengaged. This study reaffirms the requirement for a research framework that account for both academic and social aspects as outlined by Tinto (1993) through the institutional experiences to comprehend and address students' inclusive needs. Ultimately, encouraging a supportive and engaging school environment which aligns with students' varied backgrounds and interests is essential in the effort of reducing the risk of secondary school dropouts while enhancing students' commitment in ensuring secondary school completion.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

For future recommendations, more empirical studies should be carried out on the issue of secondary school dropout in Malaysia and applying different models or theory to understand the school dropout process and to issues that cause school students' attrition. This study applied Tinto's framework of 'Institutional Departure Model (1993) with focus on the academic and social issues which impede students' integration with the school based on the experience of the teachers. Another recommendation is for study to be conducted involving the dropped-out students to gain better insight from the own lived experience when they were schooling, the moment they chose to drop out and the challenges faced after they have dropped out of secondary school. This would enable academicians to understand the entire dropout process.

Undeniably, there exist limitations in this study. First, it involves the narrow scope as this study was conducted from one perspective only which is the teacher. This study had identified issues leading to secondary school dropout which includes issues external to school like family and influence of dropped out or older and working

friends. There could be bias or a different perception and explanation from the students' point of view to further clarify or explain the factor of school dropout specifically in Malaysian context. That being mentioned, future research could investigate the factors of secondary school dropout involving secondary school students who had dropped out and not returning to school as the primary source of data. Arslan and Peker (2023) emphasised that in examining the reasons for school dropout, it is important to understand the perception and thoughts of the students and importantly determine the reasons to reduce the percentage of school dropouts. Moreover, in future studies, a theoretical model could be derived to further explain the school dropout process involved to assist in planning for suitable and effective programme to overcome the issue of school dropout by the Ministry of Education and school.

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