

# **A STUDY ON THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE BABY DUMPING PROBLEM IN MALAYSIA: A CASE STUDY IN KEBAHAGIAAN WANITA DAN REMAJA (KEWAJA)**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Malaysia is now experiencing a huge social concern by a series of reports regarding on baby dumping which becoming one of the headlines in the media nowadays. The babies were left to die in manner such as leaving the newborn in a dumpster, garbage bin, sewage tank, on the signboard and include outlets at isolated places such as at abandoned shop-houses and etc. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between factors which contribute on baby dumping and also to identify the most influential factor that contribute towards baby dumping problem. The research was conducted in one of the non-governmental organization in this country that is known as Kebahagiaan Wanita dan Remaja (KEWAJA). The findings revealed that there are significant relationships between four factors which are family problem, premarital sex intercourse, lack of religious knowledge, and mass media influence that contribute towards baby dumping problem. However, there is one factor that did not have significant relationship to baby dumping which is lack of sexual knowledge. Furthermore, through the findings, the researchers had identified the most influential factor that contribute towards the problem of baby dumping which is family problem while the least factor that contribute is lack of religious knowledge.

Keywords: Baby dumping and newborn

## **INTRODUCTION**

Social problem involving the youth is one of the major concerns in any country around the world. As stated by Hashim (2008), the increasing of social problems show that the moralities of the people are getting worse and also proved that the country development process is imbalance. Thus, social issue will create huge challenges to the government in creating a nation which have a moral and ethical concern. Some of the social problems include vandalism, brutality, abuse of drugs, free and unprotected sex, baby abandoned and others.

The cases of baby dumping continue to increase year by year (Nazni, Zaherawati, Mohd Zool Hilmie, Zaliha, Kamarudin & Jennifah 2012). The increasing of baby abandoned cases is some sort of manifestation towards the social illness among the Malay community and some called this action as the 'modern Jahiliyah'. Jahiliyah can be defined as an extreme ignorance (jahl) and disbelief in God and it is use to describe the era before the revelation of Al-Quran and Islam (Islamic-Dictionary.com, 2012). Therefore, the term Jahiliyah had been use to represent the repetitive action which had occur thousand years ago among the Jahiliyah society. Parents have to kill their baby girl as they are afraid that the baby will be raped or involve in the premarital sex. This however, different with the current situation, where the baby was abandoned regardless of the gender because the mother was involved in the premarital sex. By abandoning the baby, the mother is said to help them solve their problem. The issues of being hated by the society and by the family is ceased to exist.

The act of baby dumping is not only considered as a social problem, but this immoral activity possesses much attention from the country's authority because the individual who proved guilty for abandon the babies are considered as a criminal. With the rising cases of baby dumping every day, it forces the Malaysian government to think about putting baby dumping cases for murder or attempt murder under the Malaysian Penal Code. The person that is responsible for the baby that found dead will be investigated same as the murderer case. In the other hand, if the babies were found alive, then the wrongdoer will be considered as having an attention of killing (thestar.com, n.d). This is fair, as the act of baby dumping is affecting the human right of the baby itself.

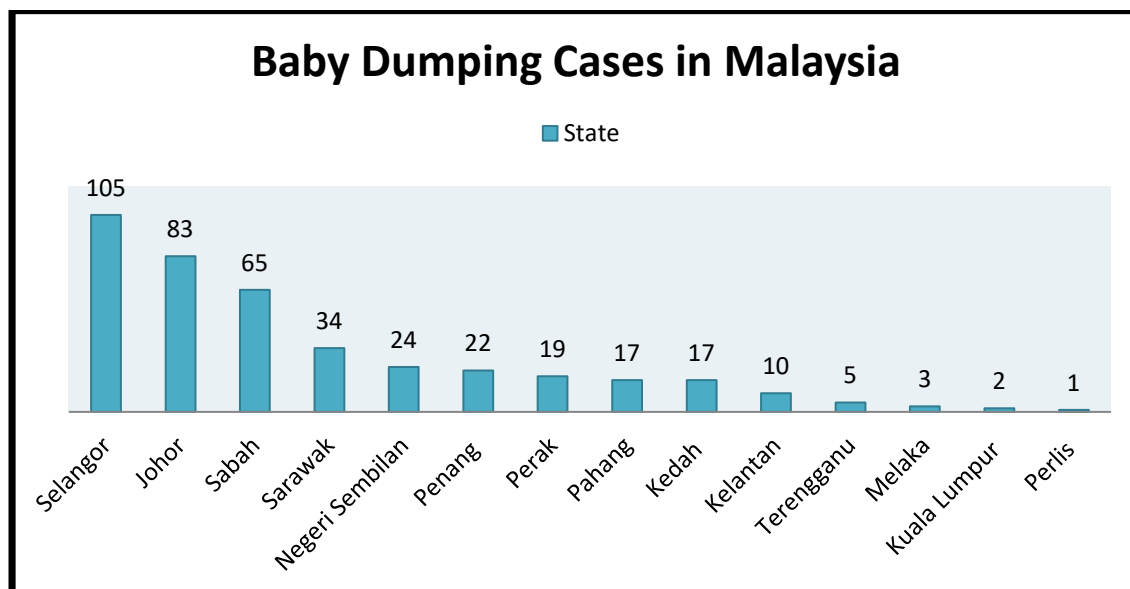
As this social illness become one of the major discussions in mass media, the public as well as various groups and organization starting to put much attention to avoid this issue from becoming a trend among the wrongdoer. This includes the establishment of non-organization body to provide a shelter and protect the mother by helping them in making a good option in their life instead of abandoned the baby. The organizations include; Wanita Jemaah Islam Malaysia (WJIM), Kebahagiaaan Wanita dan Keluarga (KEWAJA) as well as Pusat Perlindungan Wanita Darul Ihsan. Another drastic implementation taken by the non-governmental organization is the establishment of baby hatch centre in a hope that there will be a reduction in the number of babies abandoned at the insecure places which may harm the baby's life. On the other hand, Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development had established a Careline called 'Talian Nur' to help the government in settling this problem through reporting the baby dumping case direct to the right authorities.

By referring to the current situation, there are numerous numbers of factors that would lead towards baby dumping problem in our country. Hence, it is crucial to search for a clue that causes this serious issue, so that any prevention methods can be effectively carried out by the government not only to avoid this problem from spoiling the teenagers themselves but also the country as the whole. Therefore, in this study, the researcher want to discover the factors that contribute toward baby dumping problem, which had been become one of

the major social problems, that need serious concerns by all the members in the country today.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Recently, Malaysia is experiencing a huge social concern by a series of reports regarding baby dumping which becoming the headlines in the media. The babies were left to die in a cruel manner such as leaving the newborn in a dumpster, garbage bin, sewage tank, on the signboard and include outlets at isolated places such as at abandoned shop-houses, etc. Based from all of the reported cases in Selangor and Perlis, both states have the highest and the lowest number of baby dumping cases in Malaysia respectively. The statistic of baby dumping cases from 2005 until 2010 can be viewed from the figure below.



**Figure 1.2.1 shows the number of baby dumping cases from 2005 until 2010 according to the state**

(Source: Nazni, N., Zaherawati, Z., Hilmie, M. S., Zaliha, H. H., Kamarudin, N., & Jennifah, N, 2012)

In addition, until 2011 the total of baby dumping cases had reported to reached worrisome level where it increase from 407 cases in 2010 to 517 in 2011. However, this statistics only covers the cases that been reported by the responsible party or individual, which mean that the number of unreported cases are not included. It shows that people becoming less humanity since they view this action as one of the problem solver without consider the effect caused to others. Apart from that, baby dumping problem had become one of the critical issues that get high concern from the government and the society itself as this action was forbidden by any religion either Islam, Christian, Buddhist and so forth as it involves others life and also that action as one of breach in the Penal Code (Revised 1997) (Act 574).

The act of baby dumping is one of the critical issues faced by all countries around in the globe. In fact, the problem of baby dumping are not faced by Malaysia alone, it also happens in other nation such as in the United State, Africa, Vietnam, Thailand and so forth. In Namibia this problem had led to Parliamentary debate on the issue in September 2007. The issue had caused the government of Africa decided to make a research in identifying the reasons towards problem on baby dumping (Hubbard, 2008). While, by referring to our country condition where the majority of people living in this country are Muslim, this phenomenon will create a bad image and perception towards our country which is not only because of the number of cases that keep increasing but majority of the wrongdoer is among the Malay itself.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The issue regarding baby dumping are getting more serious and get a lot of attention in Malaysia (Nazni, Zaherawati, Mohd Zool Hilmie, Zaliha, Kamarudin & Jennifah 2012). On 12 August 2009, the Malaysian Cabinet has directed that any person involved in baby dumping cases have to be investigated under the Penal Code which is under the act of murder or attempted murder (Mohd. Taib & Noor Baiduri, 2011). From January to April 2010, there were at least 111 unmarried young girls were pregnant based on the report made by Malaysia Welfare Department. This is not including the other cases that was unreported and pregnancies terminated (Nazni et. al, 2012). According to World Health Organizations (WHO), about 16 million adolescent girls give birth every year or roughly and 11% of all births worldwide (WHO, 2007).

Official statistic from Bukit Aman Police Headquarters, since year 2005 until June 2011, it was reported that there were 472 baby dumping cases in Malaysia. Throughout in year 2009, about 79 baby dumping cases were reported where 25 cases were involving baby boys, 29 baby girls and another 25 cases are gender-undetermined due to dying at fetus stage. The amount of cases increased dramatically from January to April 2010 when 65 cases were being reported. From this amount, 26 are baby boys, 25 are baby girls and 14 involve fetus cases. Within the same period, 21 teenagers age less than 18 years old were detained due to being involved in baby dumping cases.

Report shows that the reason for cases increment has a connection with the increasingly sophisticated information technology. Apart from that, the fragility of family institution due to the busy schedule of working parents to sustain life also contributed towards this problem (Mohd. Taib & Noor Baiduri, 2011).

It is also reported in New Straits Times on 29th March 2012, the baby with its umbilical cord attached was found inside a plastic sack at 5.50 p.m by workers who were cleaning up the dump site. In addition, according to the report in The Star on 14th September 2011, an unemployed woman and her mechanic boyfriend were sentenced to two years' jail each at a magistrate's court of Johor Bahru for inducing a miscarriage and disposing of the eight-month-old fetus.

## **FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO BABY DUMPING**

### **Family Problem**

Coleman and Cressey (1993) defined family as a group of people by marriage, ancestry or adoption that lives together in a common household. Mahmood (1997) defined family as a social unit that consists of father, mother, children where certain life connection exists between them in that particular social circle. The concept of problematic family refers to family that have serious crisis in their family. These crises then lead to various negative conditions in the family relationship. Coleman and Cressey (1993) listed a few family problems such as divorce, children care, children abuse, domestic violence, single family, full-time working parents and family conflict. There are so many family problem issues being highlighted. However, for the purpose of this study, the focus is confined to several main issues which are full-time working parents and parental divorce.

The rises in the social problems especially in baby dumping cases are because of the community which they started to take for granted about the importance of the family (Nurhazlizat, 2010). Parents always busy with their work and they forget the real responsibility to build a happy family. The unhappy children might find a way to hang out outside of their house and hence could easily involve in negative activities.

### **Premarital Sex Intercourse**

According to Fine (2007), premarital sex can be defined as a person having vaginal intercourse before marrying. For students, premarital sex is view as acceptable, common and fashionable for young people (Shaw, 2009). In Thailand and Philippines, family structure was connected with premarital sex. Those youths that live with single parent have higher rate of sexual activity than those living with both parents (Choe, Hatmadji, Podhisita, Raymundo & Thapa, 2004).

Based on studies conducted by Okonkwo, Fatusi, and Ilika (2005) indicate that many adolescents and youths in Nigeria initiate sexual intercourse at an early age and involved in high-risk sexual behaviors. Such behavior include having unprotected sex and several partners, with the resulting effects of high rate of not needed pregnancy, unlawful abortions and sexually transmitted infections to others (Okonkwo et al, 2005).

There are several factors that contribute to the premarital sex intercourse which are relationship status that defined by having a boyfriend or girlfriend, risky consumption behaviors, and peer influences (Ronny, 2007).

### **Lack of Knowledge Regarding Sex**

Numerous research studies have exposed that adolescent girls generally lack of sufficient awareness about contraception and sexual matters which results in early pregnancy, maternal morbidity and mortality, unsafe abortions, increased pre-marital sexual activity and increased risk of STD infections including HIV/AIDS (Mahajan and Sharma, 2005).

In addition, according to Surono (1997), inadequate sexual knowledge is more dangerous than having no idea at all, but ignorance is also dangerous. This kind of insufficiency does not only encourage teenagers to making an experiment, but also could lead to false perceptions (as cited in Dien, 2007, p.177 ). Mohamed Najimudeen (2011) agreed by stated that, contraceptive advice is important to prevent teenage pregnancy. Many teenagers engage in all forms of sexual activities without using contraceptives. They are not aware the availability and benefits of contraception as well as shy to buy from

pharmacies. Moreover, they are also not aware on properly used of condoms and forgetful to take the pills daily.

### **Lack of Knowledge Regarding Religion**

According to Mohamad Baharom, et al (2008), Islamic Education is one of the important channel in developing the attitudes as well as the students' thought. This is closely related with the efforts to create a Muslim identity which aligned with the Islamic values. Consequently, the students will try to avoid themselves from involving in any prohibited act such as fornication and any act that may create a harmful and shameful towards them and their family.

The low level of religious knowledge will create a potential towards the youth to involved in this inappropriate behaviour such as free sex which will at the end create another social problem such as baby dumping action. According to Prof. Dr. Azizan Baharudin, criminals act which involved the high educated individual at west have the relationship with their ignorance towards the important of religious. Therefore, human need religion to control their behavior regardless on what kind of religion they are (As cited in Adibah, 2008, pg.21).

Most of the social problems that arose nowadays are resulted from the lack of religious knowledge as the bases of preparation towards the youngster in dealing with the negative influences. In this issue, lack of knowledge regarding religious is another factor that contributes to the problem of baby dumping in Malaysia. This situation refers to the failure of the parents in providing an adequate and proper religious education to their children. Hashim Beddu et al., (2008) agreed by stated that the family institution is important to prevent the teenagers from falling into the social ills. One of the most important aspect that should be put into serious attention is the preparation of religious knowledge toward their children at early stage. With the strong religious principle, young people will not simply involve in the social issues that may harm their life. In this case, the role of parents is very important, especially as a model to the children. Busy is not an excuse to neglect the parental role towards their children.

### **Media Influences**

Although the primary purpose of mass media is to deliver a beneficial message as well as to create awareness and educate the people, but at the moment, the media has been greatly criticized as regard to their influences in varying the morality, principles and traditions of many developing countries. The contents neither in mass nor the electronics' media had become one of the factors that influenced both individual's mind as well as their behavior. Dien (2007) argued that the contents of mass media can be sometimes useful but also may become harmful to the society as well. The failure can be seen when they fail to inspire the society with the good values and thought. Thus, media electronic can be considered as one of the factors that contribute to the damage of teenager's social life.

In addition, Hart (2002) had explained that, "although family and social relationships also have an influence, teens learn about society and sexual relationships from visual media images portraying body types, clothing, and other cultural norms". Based on the reports made National Population and Family Development Board, between Malaysian adolescents aged 14-15, 50% of them have read pornographic materials and 44% of them have seen pornographic images from magazines or videos (Mary, 1999). According to Mary (1999), some of the teenagers have done it as early as age of nine. Moreover, based on research made by Samsudin (1994), about 40% of the youth knew that their friends had watched "blue films", 39% knew that their friends who had read pornographic magazines, and 18% of them have friends who had engaged in premarital sex (As cited in Mary, 1999, p.4).

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this study are as follows:-

- 1) To identify the relationship between the factors (Family Problem, Premarital Sex Intercourse, Lack of Religious Knowledge, Lack of Sexual Knowledge, Mass Media influences) towards baby dumping problem.
- 2) To identify the most influential factor that contributes to baby dumping problem.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The researcher was using descriptive research (quantitative research method) to acquire the information need for the study. For this research, the researchers used primary and secondary data. For the primary data, the researchers use questionnaires as a data collection method. Whereas for the secondary data, the researchers had used the data from books, journals, online articles from the internet, newspaper articles etc in order to collect information.

### **Unit of analysis**

According to Sekaran and Roger (2009), unit of analysis refers to the level of aggregation of the data collected during the subsequent data analysis stage. In other words, it is the main entity that the researcher analyzes in their study. Thus, the unit of analysis that will be measured is the KEWAJA's trainees. The trainees are selected by using the Judgment sampling where the information is provided from the specific groups which have knowledge or experience regarding on the specific issue.

### **Sample Size**

70 trainees had been taken from the total 85 trainees in KEWAJA as the sample size in this research. The researchers used the model introduces by Krecie and Morgan in determining the sample size, where there is certain portion from the total of the population which will be taken as the respondent of the research.

### **Sampling Technique**

In this research, the researchers use one of the non-probability sampling which is purposive sampling. Purposive sampling offers an information that obtained from a specific group which have a specific criteria determined by the researcher (Sekaran & Roger, 2009). Purposive sampling can be divided into two types, which are judgment and quota sampling. In this research, the researchers choose the judgment sampling.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

**Research Questions 1: What are the relationships between the factors (Family Problem, Premarital Sex Intercourse, Lack of Religious Knowledge, Lack of Sexual Knowledge, Mass Media influences) with the baby dumping problem?**

### Correlation Analysis

**Table 1: Correlations**

	Family Problem	Premarital Sex Intercourse	Lack of Religious Knowledge	Lack of Sexual Knowledge	Mass Media Influence
<b>Spearman Correlation</b>	.576**	.490**	.272*	-.072	.415**
<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.000	.000	.023	.555	.000
<b>N</b>	70	70	70	70	70

Based on the table above, it is indicate that family problem, premarital sex intercourse and mass media influence has significance positive moderate relationship between baby dumping where ( $r = .576$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), ( $r = .490$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and ( $r = .415$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) respectively. Meanwhile, lack of religious knowledge shows significance positive low relationship where  $r = .272$ ,  $p > 0.05$  but for lack of religious knowledge, it indicated that there is negative relationship with baby dumping where  $r = -.072$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . Therefore, these four factors, i.e. family problem, premarital sex intercourse, mass media influence and lack of religious knowledge contributed to the baby dumping problem in Malaysia.

**Research Questions 2: What is the most influential factor that contributes to baby dumping problem?**

**Table 2: Coefficients**

	Model	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)		-1.429	.158
	Family Problem	.445	3.631	.001
	Premarital Sex Intercourse	.155	1.313	.194
	Lack of Religious Knowledge	.014	.146	.884
	Mass Media Influence	.280	2.900	.005

Based on the above table, it shows that the highest mean refers to the family problem which is 0.445 then followed by mass media influence at 0.280, premarital sex intercourse contributed by 0.155 and lack of religious knowledge is at 0.014. Due to that, family problem and mass media influence are significantly or influential in relation to baby



dumping problem by indicated that  $r=.000$ ,  $p<0.05$  respectively. On the other hand, premarital sex intercourse and lack of religious knowledge indicated no significant relationship to the baby dumping problem in Malaysia. Therefore, the assumptions was assumed that multicollinearity correlation exist is significantly when two of the independent variable, i.e. family problem and mass media influence has a perfect relationship to the dependent variable which accounted increased in baby dumping problem.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The KEWAJA's Trainees sampled in this study had updated viewpoint about the baby dumping problems in Malaysia. Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the most of the respondents agreed that family problem, premarital sex intercourse, lack of religious knowledge and mass media influence contribute to the baby dumping problem. However, the most influential factor that had been identified contribute the most on baby dumping problem is family problem. Besides that, the respondents are strongly disagreeing on lack of sexual knowledge which is not contributed towards baby dumping problem. Thus, government with the hand of society need to cooperate in order to curb this problem from increasing over the years. Government have to make sure that they have to be effective and do correct implementations of any programs towards reducing on baby dumping issues from become more serious.

For the recommendations, there should be some control towards certain contents in the magazines, television, and radio especially for the teenagers. Teenagers should also have a sense of self-awareness to create a wall that hinders them from being involved in immoral behavior.

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