

Development of Indigo Check List: The Concern of Malaysian Society for Needs of Indigo Children

Author's information

Yuan Meng Yong, Mohammad Aziz Bin Mohamed Arip,

Abstract

The intention behind this study is to reveal the characteristics of Indigo children in Malaysia and their needs in depth. The first part of the study drew an intention to invent a check list of Indigo children's characteristics. Based on Masters (2008) research, a check list of characteristics will be reviewed and modified according to Malaysian culture. Based on testimonies given by a researcher who carry out a six-year experiment of handling a suspected Indigo child and innovations taken to help his care takers deal with him, a further analysis was carried out in this study to identify Indigo children's needs throughout their development process.

Keywords: Indigo, children, awareness

1. Introduction

Introduction

The phrase "Gifted Children" has drawn the attention of Malaysia's Ministry of Education in recent years. In 2014, the ministry offered scholarships to Malaysian teachers to further their studies related to "gifted children" (LD_B387). It shows the concerns of Malaysian society towards this group of children. The examples of gifted children referred by researchers such as Locke, Jane & Edwin (2001), Carroll and Tober (1999) are Rainbown children, Crystal Children, Indigo children etc. Nancy Ann Tappe published her first book entitled 'Understand Your Life Through Colour' in 1982 and introduced the concept of Indigo Children (Whedon, 2004; Trotta, 2012). She described Indigo Children as a special group of children surrounded by the Indigo aura who seem to be forerunners of a wonderful time and place in the future (Tappe, 2009). However, her proclamation at that time was described by many researchers and educators as 'mental illness' or mental disorder. The way people look at the issue has changed massively recently. Research shows that people like hers exist one time in every twenty-three individuals (Tappe, 2009).

The idea of Indigo was later popularized by Lee Carroll and Jan Tober in 1998 before an international conference on Indigo was held in Hawaii in 2002 (Carroll and Tober, 1999). Since then, discussions about Indigo have been transformed into several films, journals and books. James Twyman (film producer), Sarah W. Whedon (Journalist) and Doreen Virtue (author) are some big names who debate on the existence of this group of children (Hyde, 2009). In her journal, Whedon

(2004) believes that American parents prefer to replace the term ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) or ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder) with 'Indigo' after they found that the use of medical treatment failed to help their children's developments. On the other hands, individuals like Leland (2006) disagreed with the statement. For him, labelling a disruptive child an Indigo may delay proper diagnosis and any treatment that could help the child. The existence of the term "Indigo" I still not that popular among ASEAN countries. Brief interviews of educators in Malaysia show that most of them do not understand the meaning of this term. The interviews also show that most of the teachers, psychologists or counsellors will label this group of children with special characteristics as ADHD or other mental disorder.

Problem Statement

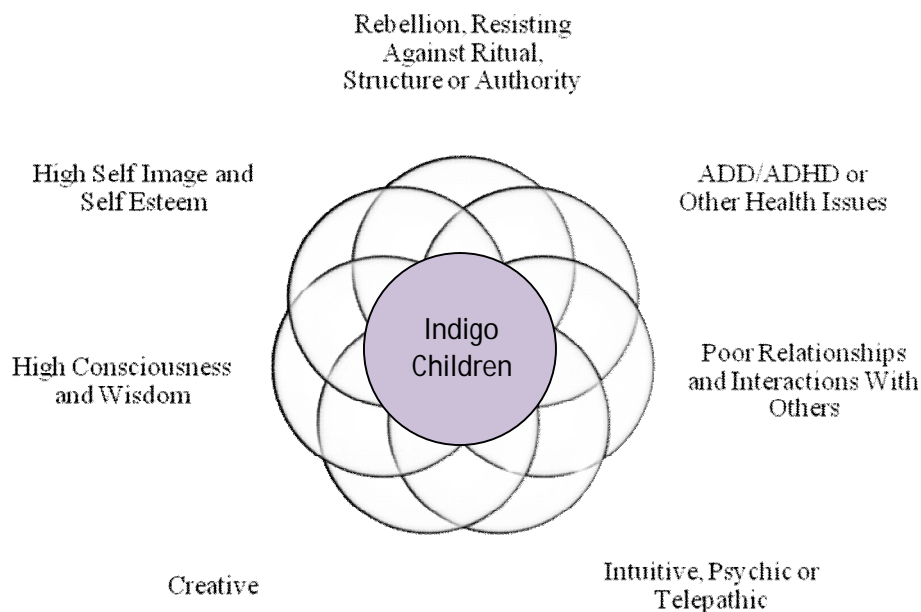
Understanding each other is one of the most important elements in communication to retain a healthy relationship. People feel upset with others because they don't understand them. As a result, some of them will start labelling others with special characteristics as disabilities or disorders. However, if they can understand them, they can then make a choice of accepting, negotiating, or eliminating their perception towards others. (Tappe, 2009). People without synaesthesia ability like Tappe usually set people up to do things either in the way that we think will bring the best outcome for them, or else, they will not do anything at all (Tappe, 2009). This is the natural behaviour of human beings which will always think that other people will drop the ball if they are not the ones who plan or carry out the planning (Murnighan, 2012).

However, Tappe (2009) doesn't agree with this opinion. Even though she has the ability to detect aura, she doesn't believe that a particular individual needs to know what the energy or aura around him is doing. For her, seeing aura only gives her a more complete understanding about the person she is trying to help. In fact, the person can be helped more effectively if he realises the actual reason for him to do the things that he is doing. In other words, educators can modify the ways they handle a child and a person who faces a problem can be helped if we can understand his needs.

Until now, from the perspective of a researcher, I have not found any journals or books which discuss Indigo Issues in Malaysia. My own early preview shows that people in Malaysia are not interested to discuss this issue because they do not have much awareness off this group of children. Besides, some educators, psychologists and counsellors stated that they can't do anything to help the children because they don't have any reference to identify them. Therefore, I intend to work out an Indigo Children Check List (ICCT), which can be used to help the local community in understanding Indigo children's characteristics. Besides, I humbly hope that this check list will lead us to more information about Indigo children and their needs, so that researchers and educators can use the correct ways to communicates with them in future.

2. Theoretical Framework

Indigo Children Personality Traits Model



The Indigo Children Personality Traits Model was pioneered by Masters (2008). This model was built based on characteristics of Indigo found in several books. There are seven main personality traits of Indigo: creative (CR), high consciousness and wisdom (CW), high self image and self esteem (IE), rebellion, resisting against ritual, structure or authority (RR), ADD/ADHD or other health issues (AA), poor relationships and interactions with others (RI), intuitive, psychic or telepathic (IP). The seven main personality traits are not entirely separated from one another because in some situation, these personality traits may overlap with each other. As figure 1 demonstrates, the Indigo Children Personality Traits Model by Masters (2008) consists of,

Creativity

Although only 6 entries of the 129 characteristics relate to creativity, all authors except Carroll and Tober list creativity as being an Indigo characteristic. Chapman and Flynn report that non-Indigos may share the characteristics with Indigos, but Indigos often display characteristics to the extreme. For instance, they describe Indigo Children as wildly creative. They describe Indigo creativity as not being based on previous parameters, societal expectations or prior experiences

Higher Consciousness and "Wisdom beyond Their Years"

Reviews of the various authors reveal this small grouping, where there is total agreement among the authors. A summary of the entries in this group presents an image of an Indigo Child or adult searching for the meaning of life with a strong desire to help the common good. Chapman and Flynn describe higher consciousness as the defining characteristic for Indigos.

High Self-Image and Self-Esteem

One of the larger categories of characteristics can be broadly defined as self-image and self-esteem. The preponderance of the listings in this category demonstrates a strong self-image. For example, Carroll and Tober report, “They come into the world with a feeling of royalty (and often act like it).” Every author with a list of Indigo characteristics in this study has an entry that is similar in nature to Carroll and Tober’s descriptive listing.

Rebellion, Resisting Against Ritual, Structure or Authority

The main personality trait of Indigo children discussed by most of the authors in their books is resistance to authority, structure and ritual. This grouping is epitomized by Gill’s entries of “question everything” and “are non-conformists and rebel against structure and authority.” The issues of anti-authority and anti-ritual identified by the authors as characteristics of Indigo Children have transformed into adult Indigo issues. According to Chapman and Flynn, “You have strong opinions about the validity and effectiveness of society’s institutions, such as the political systems, school, health and courts.”

ADHD, ADD, and Autoimmune Disorders

All the Indigo characteristic lists by the authors include attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), attention deficit disorder (ADD) and autoimmune disorders. As Chapman and Flynn caution, not all Indigo Children have ADHD or ADD and not all children that have ADHD or ADD are Indigos. However, the tendency of Indigos to be highly energetic, highly sensitive to sensory stimulation from sight, sound, taste, touch, smell and their unique way of learning create an environment that is conducive to being diagnosed with the attention disorders. In addition, Virtue reports that Indigo Children are very sensitive to chemicals, dyes, pollutants and certain foods that can lead to autoimmune disorders.

Relationships and Interaction with Others (Includes Sexuality)

This grouping contains contrasts. On the one hand, Indigos are characterized by the authors as being antisocial, isolationist and potentially cold and callous. The same group of authors’ list characteristics for Indigos to include being empathetic, easily bonding with plants and animals and seeking deep long lasting relationships. This dichotomy of Indigo relationships and interactions can even be seen within a single entry by Jaffe and Davidson when they wrote, “They can be deeply empathic yet intolerant of stupidity.” While sexuality does not appear in any list involving the Indigo Children, both Jaffe and Davidson and Chapman and Flynn note that Adult Indigos may be sexually expressive and explore alternate forms of sexuality. Chapman and Flynn theorize that the Indigo may deviate from the traditional laws of sexual attraction because of their desire for spiritual attraction and the Indigo tendency toward rejection of institutions and government.

Intuitive, Psychic, or Telepathic

While the category has the fewest listings, each author addresses the characteristics in the text. For instance Carroll and Tober do not list the category in their original list of ten characteristics but have numerous anecdotal reports in the text of *An Indigo Celebration: More Messages, Stories and Insights from the Indigo Children*.

Objective

Objective 1

To create an Indigo Children Check List which can be use to identify Indigo children from a Malaysian perspective.

Objective 2

To identify Indigo children's needs throughout their development process.

Methodology

The quantitative research method interprets information or research data in a systematic, logical and empirical method (Creswell, 1994). This section describes the research process which encompasses three main phases. Phase I consists of construction on construct, sub-construct of Indigo Children Check list's (ICCL) item based on library research. Phase II focus on comparison of Indigo personality traits to the needs of Indigo children based on empirical record of the primary investigator (PI). Phase III of the research concentrates on validity by experts while Phase IV centralises on the reliability of the items based on participants randomly selected from secondary school teachers.

Phase 1:

Phase I mainly focuses on the construction of construct/sub-construct of ICCL items based on library research. Selection of theories for ICCL based on book, journal, researches and articles in libraries as well resources online such as personality traits of Indigo (Masters, 2008), Theories of Developments, The Law of Hierarchy of Needs and Theories of Counselling.

Indigo Children Personality Traits Model designed by Masters (2008) was referred as the main resource for designing ICCL. The items in the subscale of ICCL was selected and modified from statements found from the book related to Indigo development. For example, item no.1 for sub-scale *Creative* - "Often see better ways of doing things" is adopted from Masters' research which she codes from a book by Lee Carroll and Jan Tober.

The original items in Indigo Children Personality Traits Model are statements by researchers or authors about Indigo characteristics based on specific personality traits. It can be used as an overall assessment to help in the process of diagnosis of the Indigo children. The aim of ICCL is giving an opportunity to care-takers or educators to access their children. From the result of ICCL,

early assessment of the children can be done before further steps are taken to identify this group of children.

Phase II

PI empirical record will be referred to identify Indigo children's needs. This phase will give a clear picture of the needs of children Indigo and how their needs affect their personalities. Other references such as comments from teachers, peers, authorities in school, parents and people around them gathered by PI are considered as important sources in the effort to understand this group of children.

Phase III and Phase IV

The focus of this research is only on Phase I and Phase II; the remaining two phases will not be discussed in depth in here. Phase III and phase IV will involve a careful selection of experts and participants to help to improve the validity and reliability of the check list.

4. Findings

Research Finding #1

Based on the library research that was carried out, ICCL was built based on Indigo Children Personality Traits Model (2008) and another research by Trotta (2012). The original ICCL has 71 items for seven sub-scales which are creative (CR - 9 items), high consciousness and wisdom (CW - 10 items), high self image and self esteem (IE - 10 items), rebellion, resisting against ritual, structure or authority (RR - 11 items), ADD/ADHD or other health issues (AA - 11 items), poor relationships and interactions with others (RI - 11 items), intuitive, psychic or telepathic (IP - 9 items). All ICCL items are positive items that have 5 points of Likert scale (Almost Never True, Usually Not True, Occasionally True, Usually True, and Almost Always True).

Research Finding #2

The second part of the research is based on the author's own experience of dealing with suspected Indigo children over 6 years since 2009. Discussions and negotiations between PI, suspected Indigo children's care-takers, educators, psychologists, social workers and counsellors are also taken into consideration in this research.

Indigo children have different and extraordinary experiences since young. One of the parents of a suspected Indigo child claims that his child could arrange planets around the sun correctly since 2 years old. Besides, this child can speak proper English and is able to write poems and novels, with bombastic' vocabulary, before he reached the age of 12 years old. Besides, his knowledge and capability to illustrate his feelings through drawing is above his peers'. This situation complies with Masters' Model (2008) in the category high consciousness or wisdom and being creative in their daily life.

This suspected Indigo child went to secondary school with an arrogant attitude. He seldom involved himself in group discussion. The class teacher always claimed that he refused to get along with other children and preferred to do things alone. Sometimes, the children themselves would complain about his friends and teachers in class don't understand his feelings. As a result, he always segregated himself even he felt sympathetic about other's feelings. According to Masters (2008), Indigo children have poor relationships and interactions with others

The other suspected Indigo child tells PI that she can communicate with angels or her ancestors. She claims that they are her guidance and will help her when she is in danger. When she was about 12 years old, she had nightmares, which shows that she and her family were involved in a serious car accident. These nightmares made her alert whenever her family or she needed to travel. However, the precautions that she took did not manage to save her family from the misfortune. While travelling from Miri to Bintulu, her mother had an accident resulting in a broken hand for her mother while her sister crashed her head against the front windshield of the car. She knew exactly how to give necessary first aid to her family members on the spot and told the paramedic who rushed them to hospital about what to do next along the way to nearest hospital. Even though Masters' (2008) research later on did not indicate such a personality trait, her model reveals that Indigo children are intuitive, have psychic power or are telepathic. This personality trait is seconded by other authors and researchers such as Nancy Ann Tappe, Lee Carroll, Jan Tober and Doreen Virtue.

Masters (2008) in her model also shows that Indigo children are rebellion, resisting ritual, structure or authority. They refuse to follow school' rules. According to both children, adults like teachers always ask them to do things that they not like or understand why they need to do so. They are bemused by people who do things without asking questions. The authorities, such as teachers, normally get irritated with them and the efforts to help them "grow up" normally end up with failure. Indigo children are always labelled as naughty or stubborn children in school.

Some of the specialists or counsellors in school will label Indigo children as ADHD. Masters (2008) does not deny that Indigo children have some similarities to ADHD children. In her research she states that the Indigo children may have trouble focusing on assigned tasks and may jump around in conversations. PI found that Indigo children did try to pay attention in class but they just could not sit still for some reason. Interviews with Indigo children found that they felt bored in class because the methods used by teachers in class did not attract their attention. They preferred lesson with hands-on activities or something that could challenge their minds.

PI doesn't found any statement, throughout my own experiences and testimonial by other sources within the researchers' time frame, which can be used to prove that this group of children has high self image and self esteem. Characteristics like "Strong-willed" and "Not shy in letting you know what he needs" are not strong enough to describe the characteristic with in this

personality. Children in the range of 7 to 18 years old showing these characteristics are normally influenced by their parents' parenting style. PI cannot find any child that tells his parents or anyone around them about how and why they come into this world as mentioned in Masters' Model (2008).

5. Discussions

Research done by Masters (2008) and Trotta (2012) compares the characteristics of Indigo children with previous authorities in this issue. Their research brings us closer to this group of children. However, PI cannot find any specific instrument that can be used to help educators, parents or the children themselves to identify the Indigo child. Each item of the instrument invented by PI compares specifically with previous researchers and has been identified based on characteristics of Indigo children through research method #2. The inventory consists of 71 items for seven sub-scales which are creative (CR - 9 items), high consciousness and wisdom (CW - 10 items), high self image and self esteem (IE - 10 items), rebellious, resisting ritual, structure or authority (RR - 11 items), ADD/ADHD or other health issues (AA - 11 items), poor relationships and interactions with others (RI - 11 items), intuitive, psychic or telepathic (IP - 9 items).

The finding #2 of this research is to review Indigo's needs from various aspects identified based on their observations throughout the years. The interviews and data collected shows that this group of children tends to show their specific research value because there is a lack of trust between adults and themselves. They always think that people around them do not care about them and do not bother to understand their feeling (Masters, 2008). Furthermore, they always feel that they are alienated by others. As a result, they will normally drop out of school and become withdrawn from society. The situations become hazardous when they misuse their knowledge on something bad like public killing (Whedon, 2004).

The Indigo children feel that mainstream education is not suitable for them. They get bored easily when they are asked to things that do not challenge them. Besides, because of their high consciousness and wisdom, they need something which can keep them focused in their studies. Thus, this group of children should be identified and specific syllabi planned so that their mind can be challenged based on their level of creativity.

6. Implication to Research and Practice

Authors such as Chapman & Flynn (2007) have estimated that the population of Indigo children has increased significantly between 1970 and 1990 and Flynn & Chapman (2007) suggest that an understanding of human behavior will be more extensive and complete if research on this group of children been carried out because this group will include most of the human population of the world in the future (Chapman & Flynn, 2007).

Besides, this study can serve as a reference to parents who have children with characteristics of Indigo children. They can assess their children by comparing the characteristics of the Indigo children listed in the interventions. Such conditions can be expected to develop the potential of their children while avoiding the adverse effects arising from labeling them as children with ADHD.

7. Conclusion

Indigo children still remain as one of the most mystery term for researchers now a day. Many of us are still not familiar with their characteristics and the power within this group of children. To review the mist, a lot of effort still needs to be taken. For PI, the first step is to create an Indigo Children Characteristics List (ICCL) so that they can be identified and diagnosed correctly before future steps are taken to understand and help them to develop themselves.

8. Future Research

This research intends to draw attentions of educators and researchers toward Indigo children. Future research will identify the reliability and validity of the inventory so that it can be used to help educators and researchers when they need to identify Indigo children. Future research will also help reduce the level of misdiagnosis among this group of children.

Future research should also focus on more appropriate action taken to help Indigo children overcomes issues that they facing. This will help Indigo identify their strengths and weaknesses and develop themselves so that they can get along with others. Their creativity and wisdom surely will help improve the quality of life for future generations.

Tables

Category	Caroll & Tobel	Virtue	Dosick & Dosick	Gill	Chapm an & Flynn	Jeffe & Davids on	Total of Entries
Rebellious, Resisting ritual, structure or authority	4	1	1	12	3	7	28
ADD/ADHD or other health issues	0	4	4	7	5	5	24
Self image/self esteem	5	4	4	5	4	2	24
Relationships and interactions with others	1	3	2	10	3	1	20
high consciousness and wisdom	0	2	2	3	3	3	13
Creative	0	1	1	2	1	1	6
Intuitive, physics or telepathic	0	1	0	1	1	3	6
Miscellaneous, such as diet preference, being sensitive to electronic device and affinity for bright colour	0	1	0	3	0	3	7
Total of Entries	10	17	14	43	20	25	129

9. Bibliography

- Dahlia Diane Masters (2008), Comparison of Self Actualization and Psychic Ability Between Self-identified Indigos and Matched Control As Measured By The Personal Orientation Inventory, The Rhine Cards and Demographic Data, Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Holos University Graduate Seminary in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Theology, Holos University, USA
- Don C. Locke, Jane Myers, Edwin L. Herr (2001), The Handbook of Counselling, United State of America: SAGE Publications
- Hyde, J. (2006), Little Boy Blue. Dallas Observer. Retrieved 16 March, 2014, from <http://www.dallasobserver.com/2006-03-09/news/little-boy-blue/full>
- Lee Carroll & Jan Tober. (1999). *Indigo Children: the new kids have arrived*. United State of America: Hay House Inc.
- Lelang, J. (12 January, 2006). Are They Here to Save the World? New York: The New York Times. Retrieved 16 March, 2014, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/12/fashion/thursdaystyles/12INDIGO.html?ei=5088&en=277fb750ad762ed9&ex=1294722000&partner=rssnyt&emc=rss&pagewanted=all>
- Murnighan, J. K (2012), *DO Nothing!: How to Stop Overmanaging and Become a Great Leader*, London, England: Penguin Group (USA) Inc.
- Nancy Ann Tappe (2009), *Understanding your life through colour*, 2nd edition, United State of America: Aquila Libris Publishing Company.
- Patrizia Trotta (2012), THE INDIGO PHENOMENON AND THE NEW GENERATIONS – ARE THEY SYMBOLIC OF AN EMERGING CONSCIOUSNESS AND PARADIGM?, *International Journal of Arts & Sciences* 5.3 (2012)

Sarah W. Whedon (2004), The Wisdom of Indigo Children: An Emphatic Restatement of the Value of American Children, CESNUR 2004 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
http://www.cesnur.org/2004/waco_whedon.htm

Wendy Chapman and Carolyn Flynn (2007), The Complete Idiot's Guide to Indigo Children: An Enlightened Approach to Nurturing an Indigo Child, United State of America: Penguin Group (USA) Inc.