

## The feasibility of 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia from the perspective of B40 parents

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### ABSTRACT

Compulsory education in Malaysia is limited to primary education within 6 years compared to the international level (8 to 12 years). There is concern that because other levels of education are still optional, enrolment will fall. It is suggested to prolong compulsory education to a total of 12 years to ensure that students obtain preschool and secondary education. As a result, a survey of 278 B40 parents or socioeconomic parents with household income less than RM4850 in urban and rural primary schools was conducted to determine the level of understanding, readiness, and acceptance of the feasibility of implementing the 12-year compulsory education policy. A valid and reliable questionnaire instrument was administered online and subsequently analyzed using SPSS Version 26. The study's results revealed that the level of understanding ( $M=3.564$ ,  $SD=0.462$ ), readiness ( $M=3.529$ ,  $SD=0.491$ ), and their acceptance ( $M=3.568$ ,  $SD=0.495$ ) were very high and there were no significant differences for each dimension based on location. In principle, this indicates that B40 parents support the intention to expand our country's policy on compulsory education. Policymakers could employ this finding to modify the current compulsory education policy in the future.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Compulsory schooling has been implemented worldwide for centuries with the support of legal provisions in the respective countries. The length of compulsory education introduced in each country also depends on the determination of the Compulsory Education Act in each country. Internationally, the average compulsory education ranges from 8 to 12 years of compulsory education [1]–[7]. Not to be left behind and to prioritize education, Malaysia is also following in the footsteps of the international community by enacting a Compulsory Education Act under Subsection 29A of the Education Act 1996 (Act 550) effective 1 January 2003. However, the implementation of this compulsory education law is limited to a period of 6 school years, that is, only to the primary level. Preschool and secondary schooling are still not compulsory, despite the fact that such education has long been conducted and has established a habit among parents to enroll their children in school. The Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) is also doing its best to implement the initiative to introduce compulsory secondary education through the 1st Shift, Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) (2013-2025) [8].

Now, after more than a decade of implementing compulsory primary education policies, the increase in enrollment in primary education has accelerated year by year to successfully reach a global enrollment rate of 91.38% by 2020 [8], [9]. This indirectly increased the enrollment of students taking the Primary School

Achievement Test (UPSR) exam in 2019 [10] and in previous years before the UPSR exam was canceled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequently abolished in 2021. However, this increase in school enrollment does not apply to the pre-school and secondary school levels. In 2020, a total of 13.2% of 6-year-old children were not registered in a preschool or private kindergarten of the MOE or a kindergarten under the supervision of another ministry [9]. It is not known whether they have been registered in any Malaysian preschool education institution other than under government supervision or it is more worrying if they do not attend school at all. Meanwhile, secondary school enrollment is still at the old notch, which is in the range of 88% to 89% every year with a reduction in the transition rate of primary to secondary students [9].

Recently, the country was shocked to learn almost 25 thousand registered Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) 2021 candidates failed to sit for the examination [11]. This situation has a great consequence on the future of these children which will ultimately affect the development of skilled workforce. The situation became more acute and more worrying if the children at this advanced age have never been registered in the secondary school system. Did they spend such an age entering the field of employment? If this is true, this situation will become a threat to the development of national progress in the long term because of the development of the child labor population, the increment of labor force versus skilled labor, the widening gap in poverty, the increasing number of social problems which bring the increase of under-age marriages [3], [12], [13]. Previous research done globally has proved that the extension of the period of compulsory education succeeded to increase the enrollment rate of students and its authenticity is recognized in handling negative issues that existed because of which children are not required to attend school such as child labor, underage marriage and birth among adolescents [3], [14], [15].

Nevertheless, for now, the implementation of compulsory education in Malaysia which is very limited at the primary level is often a hotly debated issue at the national level as there is no law that can keep children in the school system [16]–[18] such as global compulsory education. Readiness and acceptance of a policy implementer especially among B40 parents, that is those with a household income less than RM4850 [19]. This is crucial to ensure the successful implementation of this desired policy. It is feared that the lives of this B40 group who comes from 2.91 million households in Malaysia [19] may be affected if there is a policy change. Therefore, if the compulsory education policy is intended for an extension of up to 12 years, the commitment and concern of parents are very important to ensure the success of this policy to prevent the occurrence of educational dropouts for children [6], [20], [21]. A comprehensive study involving parents in this group should thus be implemented to avoid policy changes being made without the support of empirical data evidence [22]. The researchers suggest that a thorough examination is executed by taking into consideration the aspect of understanding, readiness, and acceptance of the change of policy as had been done in the previous study on the feasibility of the policies [23]–[26]. Consequently, this study is being conducted to examine the following research questions: i) What is the B40 parents' level understanding, readiness, and acceptance of the intention to implement the 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia?; and ii) Are there any significant differences in the B40 parents' level of understanding, readiness, and acceptance on the intention to implement the 12-year compulsory education policy based on location?

## 2. THEORITICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The feasibility study for this policy is conducted using several theories that relate to the study's central subject. The Theory of Compulsory Education [27], Sociocultural Theory [28], and Theory of Social Mobility [29] are a few of the theories that this study supports. All these theories are very relevant to the policies studied and it is important to understand as the relevant theories can influence the understanding of the policies studied as well as being able to determine the success of the implementation of the policy [30]. The Theory of Compulsory Education emphasizes about the compulsory education given to children within the period established through the provisions of the law. In the context of this study, this theory can indirectly help in understanding the extent of the B40 parents' understanding of the law of compulsory education and subsequently be able to know the extent of their acceptance and willingness to deal with the policies implemented through this law. On the other hand, Sociocultural Theory explains that the development of an individual is a consequence of the process of socialization and the culture in which a person is located. This theory believes that the attitudes of parents and society can influence a child's learning. Based on the theory, the B40 parent attitude about the readiness and acceptance towards the basic wishes of compulsory education 12 years is measured based on the location in which they are, i.e., urban and rural.

While the Theory of Social Mobility explains that the process of change or movement from one social class to another can occur over time. Social mobility can provide specific hierarchical value to a community. This is because the movement of an individual or a group in the community results in a change in a social structure [31]. The change in the educational aspect is a factor that leads to the mobility of a community. This theory is important in identifying the acceptance of B40 parents to the 12-year compulsory

education policy that can drive the change of social class of a community to a better social class. This is because, the achievement of education derived from formal education especially through compulsory education can not only change the mobility of an individual but also the individual community [32]. Thus, the results of the adaptation of all these theories are formulated in a theoretical framework of this study as shown in Figure 1.

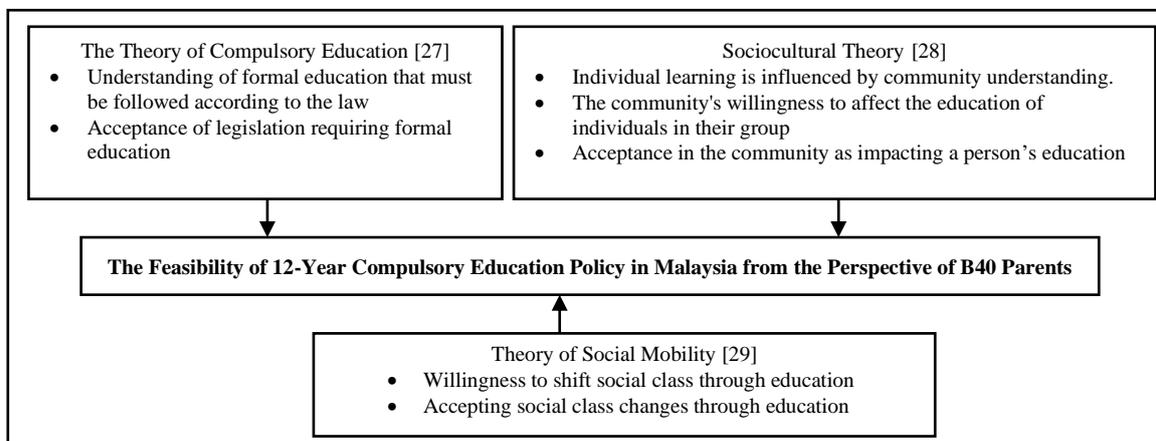


Figure 1. Theoretical framework of this study [27]–[29]

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was implemented using a cross sectional survey design to provide information using descriptive, inference, and explanatory on issues examined besides collecting data with short time from a large and scattered population effectively [33]. Furthermore, the researchers was able to collect prime data through this approach to describe the knowledge and perspective of the population towards the issue being studied [34]. Thus, this design is reasonable and highly suitable to be employed in studying a comprehensive policy and involves a bigger group in a short time to collect the massive information needed about the policy. The collection of quantitative data was carried out using a survey instrument designed and administered online using Google Form using Likert scale 4 points without neutral points, i.e., 1 (Very disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree) and 4 (Very agree). A validated survey instrument with stable feasibility [35]–[37] was built to measure the feasibility of 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia covering the dimension of understanding the intention for 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia (0.893), readiness on the intention for 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia (0.908) and acceptance of the intention on 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia (0.963). This instrument was also validated to be able to measure all the three dimensions after reaching the experts' agreement between 82% to 100%, that is >75% [38] with a threshold value,  $d < 0.2$  [39], after experts' agreement analysis was done using Fuzzy Delphi Method.

This study was implemented by involving a research sample which were selected using stratified sampling from among B40 socio-economic parents determined by household income less than RM4850 and have children studying at a government primary school in urban and rural areas. The research sample comprises six states representing every zone, that is North Zone, Middle Zone, Southern Zone, East Zone, and East Malaysia Zone which are acceptable and adequate to represent Malaysia [40]. A total of 278 sampled B40 parents with detail of 61.2% (170 people) parents from primary schools in urban schools, and 38.8% (108 people) parents from rural schools were chosen to be involved in this study. The sample from the urban schools was selected more than rural schools based on the higher proportion of the urban schools in this country rather than rural schools. This number is sufficient to represent the group of parents in Malaysia who have a high percentage of parents in urban primary schools in addition to covering the number of B40 parents which is a large group of the total estimated 2 million parents in government primary schools.

This study uses descriptive statistics and inferential statistics through SPSS Version 26 to analyze data. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to describe the demographic profile of the respondents and measure the value of mean score (M) and standard deviation (S.D) of the dimensions of understanding, readiness, and acceptance of the intention to implement the 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia. Next, the level of understanding, readiness, and acceptance of the intention to implement the 12-year compulsory education was then determined using the interpretation of the mean scores in Table 1 which was modified from the interpretation of the mean score of prior researchers [35] and highlights five levels of

interpretation of the mean score by combining the computation of the mean score range based on the difference of maximum value and the minimum value in accordance with the number of mean score interpretative levels required by the researcher.

Meanwhile, for inferential statistical analysis, a t-test of independent samples was used to test the hypothesis on the difference in the level of understanding, readiness, and acceptance of B40 parents on the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia based on location at a significant level of  $p < 0.05$ . The quantitative data obtained show that they are normally distributed because they meet the conditions of skewness and kurtosis values, which are in the random  $\pm 1.7$  and  $\pm 2$  [41] respectively for each dimension of understanding, readiness, and acceptance of the implementation of 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia.

**Table 1. Mean score interpretation [35]**

| Mean score (M) | Mean score interpretation |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| 1.00–1.60      | Very low                  |
| 1.61–2.20      | Low                       |
| 2.21–2.80      | Moderate                  |
| 2.81–3.40      | High                      |
| 3.41–4.00      | Very high                 |

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Level of understanding on the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia

Table 2 illustrates the items used to determine the level of understanding of the intention of implementing a 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia. According to the table, the highest mean score was from item 4: “I understand if secondary school education is compulsory, parents with Malaysian citizenship must register their children to continue schooling to secondary school”, which is 3.6906. This showed that most respondents which is 69.8% (194 people) strongly agreed and 29.5% (82 people) agreed and understood the primary responsibilities that they must carry out as parents when education is legally required. However, when compared with the item that obtained the lowest mean score (3.1619), which was item 8: “I understand if 12-year compulsory education is implemented, parents with Malaysian citizenship who fail to register their children for preschool at the age of 6 until the end of secondary school education, may be subject to legal action”, it was found that only 44.6% (124 people) respondents strongly agreed and 31.7% (88 people) agreed that they understood the legal action they were going to face if they failed to register their children to follow compulsory education. This resulted in only a high level of the mean score interpretation compared to the rest of the item, which were very high.

**Table 2. Understanding of the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia**

| No. | Item   | M      | S.D     | Level     |
|-----|--|--------|---------|-----------|
| 1   | I understand the intention of 12-year compulsory education consists of preschool education at the age of 6, primary school education, and secondary school education.  | 3.6007 | 0.52614 | Very high |
| 2   | I understand if preschool education is made compulsory, parents with Malaysian citizenship must register their children for preschool or kindergarten at the age of 6.   | 3.6043 | 0.56516 | Very high |
| 3   | I understand if preschool education is made compulsory, parents with Malaysian citizenship must ensure their children who are at the age of 6 go to preschool throughout the one-year preschool education.   | 3.5324 | 0.61629 | Very high |
| 4   | I understand if secondary school education is compulsory, parents with Malaysian citizenship must register their children to continue schooling in secondary school.   | 3.6906 | 0.47840 | Very high |
| 5   | I understand if secondary school education is made compulsory, parents with Malaysian citizenship must ensure their children at secondary school continue schooling throughout secondary education.  | 3.6475 | 0.49347 | Very high |
| 6   | I understand if 12-year compulsory education is implemented, parents with Malaysian citizenship must register their children as school students, starting from the age of 6 at the preschool level until the secondary school level.                       | 3.6727 | 0.49259 | Very high |
| 7   | I understand if 12-year compulsory education is implemented, parents with Malaysian citizenship must ensure their children continue schooling from the period of one year at preschool at age 6 until the end of the period of secondary school education. | 3.6007 | 0.53296 | Very high |
| 8   | I understand if 12-year compulsory education is implemented, parents with Malaysian citizenship who fail to register their children for preschool at the age of 6 until the end of secondary school education, may be subject to legal action.             | 3.1619 | 0.89466 | High      |
|     | Overall  | 3.5638 | 0.46234 | Very high |

Besides, this result also due to the rest of 23.8% (66 people) disagreed with the items that revolved around the legal action that would be imposed if it failed to perform the responsibility for this policy. Indirectly, the percentage of disagreement shows that there are still a handful of B40 parents who have little understanding of the legal action that can be imposed even though Malaysia has been implementing compulsory education for a long time at the primary level. This contributed to the decreased value of the mean score for item 8 compared to other items under the dimension of understanding on the intention to implement the 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia. However, overall, most of the respondents had a high level of understanding the requirements of the 12-year compulsory education policy and their responsibilities as parents if the secondary school and preschool levels were also compulsory as applied to primary compulsory education. They fully understand their responsibility to register their children and ensure they remain in the schooling system to the end of preschool and secondary education.

#### 4.2. Level of readiness on the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia

Table 3 shows the items for readiness to implement 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia. Based on Table 3, item 4: "I am ready to register my child to continue schooling to secondary school level if it is made compulsory" obtained the highest mean score compared to other items in other dimensions of readiness on the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education, that was as much as 3.6906. There were 62.2% (173 people) of parents of B40 who chose to very agree and 36.0% (100 people) of parents chose to agree with this readiness item compared to only 1.8% (5 people) of remaining respondents who did not agree with this item. These findings portrayed that the parents were willing to abide by the law by ensuring their children who have been registered for schooling will be attending school throughout the period stipulated by the compulsory education law.

However, compared with item 10: "I am not burdened to provide for my child's need during the 12-year of schooling" which obtained the lowest mean score (3.3417). This resulted because of only 48.9% (136 people) strongly agreed and 38.5% (107 people) agreed to this item. While the remaining 12.6% (35 people) of the parents very disagreed and disagreed that they would not be burdened in providing their children's schooling needs throughout compulsory education. This means that there were a few B40 parents who felt burdened in providing for their child's schooling needs and seemed to believe they might still face challenges in providing for their children's school needs even though in general, the B40 parents were ready with the intention of this compulsory education policy. To examine the challenges, researchers believe that a qualitative study can be conducted in the future. This is to avoid such a situation in some countries where there are still parents who fail to send their children to school due to poverty issues despite the country has been implementing compulsory education for up to 9 to 12 years for a long time [42], [43].

Table 3. Readiness on the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia

| No. | Item  | M      | S.D     | Level     |
|-----|---|--------|---------|-----------|
| 1   | I am ready if preschool education level at the age of 6 to secondary school level is made compulsory.                                 | 3.5504 | 0.55328 | Very high |
| 2   | I am ready to register my child for preschool education at the age of 6 if it is made compulsory.                                     | 3.5755 | 0.51656 | Very high |
| 3   | I am ready to ensure that my child at the age of 6 continues schooling throughout the one year of preschool if it is made compulsory. | 3.5576 | 0.57812 | Very high |
| 4   | I am ready to register my child to continue schooling to the secondary school level if it is made compulsory.                         | 3.6007 | 0.53969 | Very high |
| 5   | I am ready to ensure that my child continue schooling throughout the secondary school level if it is made compulsory.                 | 3.6079 | 0.53154 | Very high |
| 6   | I am ready to provide for my child's needs throughout preschool education.  | 3.4892 | 0.63436 | Very high |
| 7   | I am ready to provide for my child's needs throughout their secondary school education.   | 3.5072 | 0.61710 | Very high |
| 8   | I am ready to provide for my child's needs throughout 12 years of schooling starting from preschool to secondary school.              | 3.5000 | 0.59934 | Very high |
| 9   | I will always strive to provide for the needs of my child over the 12-year of schooling.  | 3.5360 | 0.54786 | Very high |
| 10  | I am not burdened to provide for my child's needs during the 12-year of schooling.  | 3.3417 | 0.75174 | High      |
| 11  | I am not worried if education is made compulsory starting from preschool to secondary school level.                                   | 3.5576 | 0.55258 | Very high |
|     | Overall   | 3.5294 | 0.49118 | Very high |

#### 4.3. Level of acceptance on the intention on implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia

Table 4 illustrates the items of acceptance on the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia. The highest mean score was from item 2: "I agree if secondary school education is compulsory" and item 6: "I support the intention of implementing the 12-year compulsory education". Both items 4 and 6 obtained a mean score of 3.5971. This demonstrated that majority of the respondents had strongly agreed and agreed for item 2 (98.6%) and item 6 (97.8%) which resulted to very high level of acceptance to the intention of 12-year compulsory education. As opposed to that, item 10: "I agree to share the benefits of the intention of 12-year compulsory education with other people" obtained the lowest mean

score which was 3.5144. However, this still resulted to the very high level of acceptance due to only 2.9% (8 people) of the respondents did not agree to share the benefits of sharing the intention of 12-year compulsory education with other people. It was also found that most items in this dimension had mean scores that were close to each other. In general, the study findings depicted that most respondents had a very high level of acceptance of the intention of the 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia.

Table 4. Acceptance of the intention on implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia

| No | Item  | M      | S.D     | Level     |
|----|---|--------|---------|-----------|
| 1  | I agree that preschool education at the age of 6 is compulsory.   | 3.5360 | 0.56728 | Very high |
| 2  | I agree if secondary school education is compulsory.  | 3.5971 | 0.51992 | Very high |
| 3  | I agree that education is compulsory for 12 years starting at the age of 6 at the preschool level until the end of the secondary school level.                        | 3.5647 | 0.55178 | Very high |
| 4  | I agree the intention to make education compulsory for 12 years is a worthwhile endeavor.   | 3.5827 | 0.54275 | Very high |
| 5  | I agree that the government can execute the intention of implementing compulsory education starting at the age of 6 at the preschool level up to the secondary level. | 3.5755 | 0.53036 | Very high |
| 6  | I support the intention of implementing the 12-year compulsory education.   | 3.5971 | 0.54699 | Very high |
| 7  | I agree that the 12-year compulsory education is in line with current developments in education.  | 3.5863 | 0.54218 | Very high |
| 8  | I am confident that the government can implement the intention of the 12-year compulsory education policy in the best possible way.                                   | 3.5719 | 0.58273 | Very high |
| 9  | I agree to work with all the parties in the process of implementing a 12-year compulsory education policy.  | 3.5576 | 0.54600 | Very high |
| 10 | I agree to share the benefits of the intention of 12-year compulsory education with other people.   | 3.5144 | 0.58081 | Very high |
|    | Overall   | 3.5683 | 0.49467 | Very high |

#### 4.4. The overall level of understanding, readiness, and acceptance on the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education in Malaysia

The result of the descriptive analysis of the three dimensions is displayed in Table 5. According to Table 5, the study of overall items in each dimension revealed that the value of the average mean score for all dimensions is between 3.41 to 4.00 giving the interpretation that the level of understanding, readiness, and acceptance of the intention of Implementing 12-year Compulsory Education was very high. Analysis of the standard deviation for all dimensions of understanding, readiness, and acceptance on the intention to implement the 12-year compulsory education depicted that the scattered scores in Malaysia showed that the scattering of scores in distribution was in a similar range and small size. The largest data distribution was for the dimension of acceptance of policy intentions (S.D=0.49467) followed by the dimension of readiness towards policy intentions (S.D=0.49118) and the dimension of understanding of policy intentions (S.D=0.46234). This indicated that the majority of B40 parents understood, were prepared for, and accepted legally supported compulsory education policies. They were also in line with the compulsory education policy and law set by the policymakers. However, the extent to which they would be able to comply with this law if it were implemented later required further research because there could be many other factors or challenges that they would have to face to ensure that their children attend compulsory education.

Table 5. Descriptive analysis of B40 parents on the intention of implementing 12-year compulsory education

| Dimension                             | M      | S.D     | Level     |
|---------------------------------------|--------|---------|-----------|
| Understanding the intention of policy | 3.5638 | 0.46234 | Very high |
| Readiness to the intention of policy  | 3.5294 | 0.49118 | Very high |
| Acceptance of the intention of policy | 3.5683 | 0.49467 | Very high |

#### 4.5. Differences in the level of understanding of the intentions for the implementation of the 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia based on location

The results of data analysis conducted using the Independent Sample t-test method on the dimension of understanding of the intentions of the 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia showed a value of  $t(278)=0.371$ ,  $p=0.711$  ( $p>0.05$ ) is not significant. Thus, the findings indicated that there was no significant difference between these dimensions based on urban and rural locations. The results of the study also displayed the mean score and standard deviation for B40 parents in urban ( $M=3.5721$ ,  $S.D=0.47511$ ) and rural parents ( $M=3.5509$ ,  $S.D=0.44336$ ). The mean score and standard deviations for the two locations were nearly identical, with a small data scattering range resulting in no significant differences in the data obtained. This indicated that B40 parents' location had no bearing on their understanding of the

intentions of this 12-year compulsory education policy. As highlighted by the Theory of Social Mobility, this promotes social change in B40 families through education regardless of their location [29]. Details of differences in the level of understanding of policy intentions based on location are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Analysis of the different levels of understanding of the policy's intention based on location

| Dimension                                 | Location | N   | M      | S.D     | Df  | Value-t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|----------|-----|--------|---------|-----|---------|-----------------|
| Understanding the intention of the policy | Urban    | 170 | 3.5721 | 0.47511 | 276 | 0.371   | 0.711           |
|   | Rural    | 108 | 3.5509 | 0.44336 |     |         |                 |

#### 4.6. Differences in the level of readiness for the implementation of the 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia based on location

The findings of the data analysis using the Independent Sample t-test method revealed that the values of  $t(278)=0.340$ ,  $p=0.734$  ( $p>0.05$ ) were also found to be insignificant. As a result of the findings, there was no significant difference in the dimensions of readiness for policy intentions based on urban or rural location. The results of the study also displayed that the mean score and standard deviations for B40 parents in urban ( $M=3.5374$ ,  $S.D=0.50290$ ) and rural parents ( $M=3.5168$ ,  $S.D=0.47420$ ) were obtained at almost the same level so there was no significant difference. This result revealed that location variables did not affect B40 parents' readiness for the intentions of the 12-year compulsory education policy. The dimension of readiness is important to examine before the policy is implemented so that it does not happen as in foreign countries, according to [44] study, which found that 41% of households in the country are still unprepared for compulsory education policy even though it has been implemented for a long time. Details of the differences in the level of readiness for policy intentions based on location are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Analysis of the differences in the level of readiness for policy intention based on location

| Dimension                                | Location | N   | M      | S.D     | Df  | Value-t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|--|----------|-----|--------|---------|-----|---------|-----------------|
| Readiness of the intention of the policy | Urban    | 170 | 3.5374 | 0.50290 | 276 | 0.340   | 0.734           |
|  | Rural    | 108 | 3.5168 | 0.47420 |     |         |                 |

#### 4.7. Differences in the level of acceptance of intentions for the implementation of the 12-year compulsory education policy in Malaysia based on location

For hypothesis testing on the dimensions of acceptance of the policy intentions, the results of data analysis also conducted using the Independent Sample t-test method. The results also showed a value of  $t(278)=0.841$ ,  $p=0.401$  ( $p>0.05$ ) is not significant. Thus, the findings of the study indicated that there was no significant difference in the dimensions of B40 parents' acceptance of policy intentions based on their location. The results displayed that the mean score and standard deviation of the dimension obtained for both locations were at a close to small data scattering range, i.e. for urban B40 parents ( $M=3.5882$ ,  $S.D=0.49552$ ) and rural B40 parents ( $M=3.5370$ ,  $S.D=0.49400$ ). This indicated that location factors did not influence B40 parents in accepting the intentions of this 12-year compulsory education policy. As evidenced by [45] study on the occurrence of social mobility changes due to education transformation among the estuary community in Terengganu, Malaysia, the openness of B40 parents' acceptance of the intentions of 12-year compulsory education policy is predicted to influence the positive change in social mobility among B40 families. Details of the differences in the level of acceptance of policy intentions based on location are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Analysis of the differences in the level of acceptance of policy intentions based on location

| Dimension                             | Location | N   | M      | S.D     | Df  | Value-t | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---------------------------------------|----------|-----|--------|---------|-----|---------|-----------------|
| Acceptance of the intention of policy | Urban    | 170 | 3.5882 | 0.49552 | 276 | 0.841   | 0.401           |
|                                       | Rural    | 108 | 3.5370 | 0.49400 |     |         |                 |

## 5. CONCLUSION

Compulsory education in Malaysia which has been implemented since 2003 is limited to only six years of primary schooling. In line with the global development of compulsory education, which establishes a period of 8 to 12 years of schooling, Malaysia also intends to extend the existing period of compulsory education. In principle, through this study, the intention to implement the 12-year compulsory education policy was found to have the approval of the majority of B40 parents who are one of the implementers of the policy. Consent is obtained through three dimensions, namely understanding, readiness and acceptance of the basic intentions of compulsory education 12 years. This agreement is a positive step forward for Malaysia's

educational development. The findings of this study may be used by policymakers in the future if they want to make changes to the existing compulsory education policy. However, the implementation of a policy should be emphasized in various angles and not limited to quantitative consent only because the success of the actual implementation still depends on various other challenges. Therefore, a comprehensive qualitative study to deepen the challenges faced by B40 parents in Malaysia is proposed to be made in the future to ensure that this group is not left behind and must face the burden of legal action due to its inability to comply with the 12-year compulsory education law if gazette later.

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