

## STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND QUALITY OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA

**Shahril @ Charil Bin Hj Marzuki, Ph.D**

Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policies  
Faculty of Education  
University of Malaya

**Sharifah Norul Akmar Syed Zamri, Ph.D**

**Rohaida Bt Mohd Saat, Ph.D**

**Lee Siew Eng, Ph.D**

Department of Mathematics and Science Education  
Faculty of Education  
University of Malaya

**Juliana Othman, Ph.D**

Department of Language and Literacy Education  
Faculty of Education  
University of Malaya

**Lihana Borhan, Ph.D**

**Mariani Binti Md Nor, Ph.D**

Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling  
Faculty of Education  
University of Malaya

**Rahmad Sukor Ab Samd**

**Ong Chon Sooi**

**Ahmad Zabidi A. Razak**

Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policies  
Faculty of Education  
University of Malaya

This study is aimed at identifying the implementation of educational policy and also the quality of primary education in Malaysia for the past ten years based on recommendations in the Education Development Plan (2001 – 2010).

### Objectives

This study attempts to investigate the implementation of educational policy and the quality of primary education in Malaysia in terms of school management, teaching and learning of subjects such as Mathematics, Science, English and Bahasa Malaysia, preschool, co-curricular activities and the PTA's role. In school management, areas investigated are related to the management of school safety, physical facilities and school infrastructure, school culture and school climate, school finance, and the involvement of PTAs. Seven sets of questionnaires were administered to explore the perceptions of headmasters and teachers regarding the various aspects mentioned above.

### Methodology

Two methods of data collection are used in this study, namely survey method and qualitative method. For qualitative method observation and interview technique are used. A total of 162 primary schools in the following zones in Peninsular Malaysia were identified as the sample for the study: East-Coast Zone, Southern Zone, Northern Zone, and Central Zone. The questionnaire

return rate was 71.6%; some 116 schools returned the questionnaire out of the total 162 schools. A total of 116 headmasters and 1,231 teachers are involved in this study: 213 Science teachers, 211 mathematics teachers, 215 English Language teachers, 213 Bahasa Malaysia teachers, 55 preschool teachers, and 208 co-curricular teachers. The research instrument consists of seven sets of questionnaire designed specifically for headmasters, mathematics teachers, science teachers, English Language teachers, Bahasa Malaysia teachers, co-curricular teachers and preschool teachers.

### Findings

The study found that headmasters in general complied with the implementation of educational policy and quality management procedures of primary school in areas such as safety management, school finance, physical infrastructure, school culture and climate as well as involvement of PTA in school, as specified by the MoE and State Education Department.

Regarding policy and quality in the teaching of Mathematics, it can be concluded that students learn better given the opportunity to interact and learn together with students of similar ability; Mathematics teachers generally reported that they were happy with teaching Mathematics in primary schools. The study also shows that the majority of teachers would focus on topics which were likely to appear in public examinations. Hence not all topics in the curriculum were given equal emphasis. On preparation, mathematics teachers would give due importance to nurture an interest in mathematics among students. However, some teachers are still lacking in their readiness in the use of ICT in the teaching of mathematics.

On the execution of teaching and learning of mathematics, the majority of respondents would diversify the methods of instruction. However, on the application of reading in mathematics, it has not been very popular among the teachers. Most teachers report that they do not face many problems in the acquisition of teaching aids and they are given plenty of opportunity to attend relevant in-service courses in the teaching of mathematics. Other related issues such as interests of students, class size, and discipline do not pose much problem. Mathematics teachers are inclined to use constructivism in their approach to encourage active learning, and more meaningful learning in the classroom.

In the teaching of science, it is found that not all science teachers are trained to teach the subject and this does not give augur well for the teaching of science as science teachers require specific training to handle the teaching of the subject. With regard to teaching method, most science teachers employ the following approaches: inquiry, constructivism, contextual and Science-Technology-Society (STS). Most of the respondents reported that they found that they did not have the necessary facilities to carry out science experiments and the classes were usually too large to do so. However, most science teachers incorporated ICT in the teaching of Science and conduct teaching and learning of Science in line with curricular requirements.

In the teaching of English language, it is found that most of the English language teachers are diploma holders. Most of the responding English language teachers employ strategies focusing on comprehension followed by methods fostering group learning and cooperative approaches. Teaching strategies based on multiple intelligences are seldom used. On policy and quality of co-curricular activities in primary schools, it is found that the lack of equipment, poor physical facilities and the lack of quality teachers in this area are contributory factors to the state of co-curricular activities in primary schools. Besides, financial allocation is another problem in the conduct of co-curricular activities.

The study found that preschool teachers planned their lessons very well; however, preschool teachers lacked motivation in the conduct of learning based activities for children. Preschool teachers are aware of the need to plan and choose approaches suitable for the level of preschoolers' ability, but level of awareness towards the knowledge of pre-schoolers is very low. The study also found that the quality of instruction has been given top priority particularly at the preparation stage. Various recommendations for further improvement have been put forward.

In conclusion, it is appropriate to note that policy and quality of management and teaching-learning for the core subjects and pre-school education have all been executed in line with policy and procedures formulated by Ministry of Education. However, there is room for improvement in policy and quality of management.