PAPER PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FOR
**ASEAN SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

Title Of Submission: The Quality of School Development

Sub-theme: Conflict, changes and creativity in educational management

Presentation Format: Paper Sessions

Names Of The Authors: Dr. Suhaida Abdul Kadir
Lecturer, Department of Science and Technical Education,
Faculty of Educational Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia,
43400, Serdang, Selangor, MALAYSIA.
suhaida@educ.upm.edu.my
phone: 603 8946 8140
fax: 603 8943 5386

Dr. Jamaliah Abdul Hamid
Lecturer, Department of Foundation of Education,
Faculty of Educational Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, MALAYSIA.
aliah@putra.upm.edu.my

Dr. Samsilah Roslan
Lecturer, Department of Foundation of Education,
Faculty of Educational Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, MALAYSIA.
samsilah@educ.upm.edu.my

# THE QUALITY OF SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

**Authors:**
**Suhaida Abdul Kadir**
**Jamaliah Abdul Hamid**
**Samsilah Roslan**

## Abstract

School development consists of planning, implementation and evaluation process in order to improve the students achievement. School development is crucial because it provides a framework for schools to improve the quality of their education. In this study, school development represents eight core areas: curriculum development, staff development, student development, physical resources, school image, school finance, school administration processes, and continuous improvement. This paper reports on administrators' and teachers' evaluation of the quality of their school development. The study was conducted in 40 schools involving 782 respondents. Findings from the study indicated that overall school development attained was high average and schools tend to concentrate on curriculum development, physical resources, administration processes and continuous improvement areas compared to staff development, student development, school image and school finance. Study results also suggested that there were differences perception between administrators and teachers towards the quality of school development in all areas.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper reports part of the finding from research project titled "Knowledge Management Practices and School Development". School development consists of planning activities, the implementation and continous improvement in order to improve student achievement.

Davies and Ellison (1992) proposed three models of school development at different time. The earliest model represented the integration of several elements in school development plan. In that model, school vision, mission, and aims were defined in a form of activities within core elements; curriculum and curriculum development, human resources, and pupil welfare and pastoral care. The model also include activities in support elements; physical resources, pupil roll and marketing, management structure and approaches, and financial resources. The model also includes monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to be used in order to achieve effective education.

The second model was proposed to reflect future thinking in school planning. Instead of only having development planning over one to three years, schools need to take into account the impact of the trends on schools for three to five and five to fifteen years. Finally, Davies and Ellison (1998) reconceptualized the model and suggest that schools need to incorporate three types of planning activities which have to be planned simultaneously.

Another school development model was conceptualized by Broadhead, Cuckle and Hodgson (1999). The model represent three dimensions which are school-wide dimension, teacher-action dimension, and pupil- learning dimension. There were several areas of priorities in school-wide dimension which are school management and leadership, finance, premises, link with the wider community, curriculum development, and staff development.

Based on the review, the conducted study used the original model of school development by Davies and Ellison (1998) with a few modifications. There were eight core areas in school development in this study; curriculum development, staff development, student development, physical resources development, school finance development, administration process development and continuous improvement.

Reeves (2000) conducted the study to determine the relationship between development planning and school effectiveness in primary and secondary school. Based on a set of school development planning from each school, the quality of it was determined using seven criteria. The results of the study showed that the relationship existed for primary school, while for secondary school, the relationship seemed to be more complicated. The finding of the study indicated that there were other factors influencing the quality of school development.

School development is known as a management tool to improve the school quality. However, based on a content analysis study conducted on schools under probation revealed that school development was perceived as a blueprint in order to meet the requirement of educational authorities (Mintrop, MacLellan, and Quintero, 2001). Each school has a different stage of growth and different capacity building. It is important that school adopt different strategies for development (Hopkins, Harris and Jackson, 1997). Usually there were some areas become priorities in school development. From the study conducted (Cuckle and Broadhead, 2003), it was found that most of school development planning focused on curriculum, resources and equipment, and buildings and environment. Based on previous studies, this paper report the extent of the level of school development achieved in those areas.

In effective school development, all keystake holders were involved and were considered as important factor to improve the school (O'hara & McNamara, 2001). However, it was found out that teachers' participation were varied in decision making for school development (Midthassel, Manger, & Torsheim, 2002). Among factors that contributed to the teachers' involvement were attitude toward school development activities and teachers' perception on innovation activities and principal's involvement Midthassel (2004). However, teachers' involvement could also be influenced by school decision making approach. A study was conducted to identify teachers' (N=137) and administrators' (N=84) perception towards the impelmentation of collaborative decision making in school curriculum management processes (Noor Hasliza, 2004). The finding indicated that teachers' opportunity to involve themselves in collaborative decision making was limited although they have the capacity to be involved.

In Malaysian context, each school is required to prepare a blue print that reflects its school development for the next few years. Based on this requirement, it would seem relevant to

study the quality of school development. Perception on school development could be different between administrators and teachers due to the practice of school decision making. The purpose of this paper also to determine the differences in perception of school development between administrators and teachers.

## METHOD

### Participants

The study was conducted in the state of Terengganu. Based on Krejcie and Morgan's table of sample size, a population of more than 10,000 requires a minimum sample size of not less than 414. Accordingly, the sample size for this study was fixed at not less than 500. Based on the assumption that each school in Terengganu will be represented by at least 15 respondents, we selected 40 schools, thus bringing the sample size to at least 600.

A total of 782 respondents participated in the study. From this figure, 282 respondents were school administrators, and 500 were teachers. School administrators comprised of principals, senior assistants, heads of department, and school counselors. Teachers on the other hand comprised of both expert subject teachers, and ordinary teachers. Out of 282 school administrators, 37 were principals, 103 were senior assistants, 136 were heads of department, and 6 were school counselors. These position holders have the authority to influence the school's development directions. There were 9 expert teachers and 491 ordinary teachers who responded to our survey, but for analysis purposes, these two groups of teachers will be categorized as teachers.

### Instrumentation

Perception on School Development measures the perception of the level of school development in the areas of curriculum, staff development, student welfare, physical assets, school image, financial management, school administration, and performance. The same instrument is used for two groups of respondents; school administrators and teachers. The instrument contained 39 items. The scale of measurement used a 5 point Likert scale. In interpreting the scores, a scale of 1 to 2 described a very low occurrence of the phenomenon in question; 2 to 3 as low; 3 to 4 as average; and 4 to 5 as high. The alpha for perception of school development is .973.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall perception of school development was 3.85 (SD=.57) This was a high average overall perception of the level of school development attained by schools in all eight core areas. This means that the schools still need to improve their development planning. The overall mean scores for each of the core areas is shown in Table 1. The study showed that most of the schools have concentrated towards curriculum development. It is clear that this is due to curriculum management is important to improve students achievement.

Development of school's finance, student development, school's physical resources, improvement of school's administrative processes and continuous improvement also perceived at high average. However, it seems that schools do not pay much attention to the development of school image, and staff development. Those areas were perceived as average by the respondents. This finding indicated that schools need to balance the priority of each areas of school development planning.

There were differences in the level of perception between administrators and teachers. Administrators perceived school development attained at high level (M=4.04, SD=.51), while teachers perceived the development at average level (M=3.74, SD=.58). The difference is significant, $t(646.74) = 7.57$, $p < 0.01$. The different level of perception reflected that there is an information gap between administrators and teachers. This also reflected that there is a different expectation between administrators and teachers. The finding showed that in each of the core areas, adminstrators scored higher than teachers and the differences were also significant. This paper will discuss the differences in perception between administrators and teachers towards the level of school development planning.

Table 1: Perception of the school development attained

| Core Areas in School Development | Overall N = 782 | | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | | Differences | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | M | SD | T | Df | P |
| Overall PSD | 3.8488 | .57452 | 4.0421 | .51033 | 3.7397 | .58043 | 7.566 | 646.743 | .000 |
| Curriculum Development | 4.0417 | .63638 | 4.1986 | .57169 | 3.9531 | .65428 | 5.266 | 779 | .000 |
| Staff Development | 3.6825 | .68062 | 3.9333 | .61473 | 3.5407 | .67569 | 8.269 | 629.998 | .000 |
| Student Development | 3.7749 | .68851 | 3.9972 | .62816 | 3.6496 | .68999 | 7.168 | 629.431 | .000 |
| Physical Resources Development | 3.9565 | .66664 | 4.1057 | .59203 | 3.8724 | .69175 | 4.973 | 659.986 | .000 |
| School Image Development | 3.7236 | .66071 | 3.8729 | .59232 | 3.6393 | .68261 | 5.008 | 653.242 | .000 |
| School Finance Development | 3.7922 | .70630 | 4.0479 | .60976 | 3.6480 | .71668 | 8.256 | 662.853 | .000 |
| Administration Process Development | 3.9386 | .65795 | 4.1340 | .62274 | 3.8284 | .65223 | 6.395 | 780 | .000 |
| Continuous Improvement | 3.9047 | .72385 | 4.0922 | .65494 | 3.7990 | .73989 | 5.733 | 643.401 | .000 |

Overall, a majority of the respondents believed that their schools had achieved great improvements in curriculum development ( M=4.04, SD=.64). Table 2 shows the results of individual item's mean score in curriculum development for administrators and teachers. Both administrators and teachers scored high/high average for curriculum development attained. Administrators scored high all the items except "the use of teaching aids is sufficient and relevant". Teachers also scored lower for the same item. This study showed that the quality of curriculum development has been improved. Nevertheless, schools need to give more priority to the usage of instructional aids. The differences in perception between administrators and teachers suggest that teachers' perception on the level of curriculum development attained were made within the organisation, while the administrators' perception were based on taking into account the comparison with other schools and receiving positive external feedback from authorities.

Table 2: Perception of the curriculum development attained

| Items | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| The management of the curriculum fulfills the requirements of the Ministry of Education | 4.4729 | .62278 | 4.2698 | .72898 |
| The use of teaching aids is sufficient and relevant | 3.8845 | .77156 | 3.7103 | .86884 |
| Curriculum development in this school had helped to increase students' achievement | 4.2635 | .70135 | 3.9603 | .74504 |
| Curriculum development in this school has helped to overcome the problem of at-risk learning | 4.1733 | .68547 | 3.8929 | .80037 |
| The climate for teaching and learning has improved | 4.2022 | .73396 | 3.9425 | .81649 |

For staff development (Table 3), the overall mean scores for all items was average at 3.68. (SD=.68) This was a moderate average score, suggesting only moderate perception of the success achieved in staff development. The highest scored by administrators and teachers is for the item "teaching competence of teachers in their school continue to improve" . The perceptions of increased levels of staff competence appeared to be more in comparison to perceptions of improved management of staff development programs and staff appraisal. Competence could be due to an individual teacher's initiative, or personal experience, or training received but management of staff development is an issue of effective monitoring of, and sensitivity to, staff issues.

Although administrators perceived high for item that more teachers in their schools were now competent in using ICT for various transactions, on the other hand, teachers indicated that they are moderate competent. This means that schools overlooked the level of teachers ICT skills. As a result, schools do not identify improving ICT skills for teachers as one of important topics for training. This reflected the difference in perception between both groups for item " on that the topics offered in staff development programs are spot-on the needs of

the staff". These findings suggested that administrators were not involved with teachers in staff development decision making.

Administrators and teachers also perceived differently that "staff appraisal was more objective and fair because it was based on real information" and "the distribution of work amongst staff members is accurately based on their work load and expertise". The lack of sensitivity to staff issues could be a direct result of the low initiative to obtain real information on staff needs. Teachers perceived it as low average because it reflected their situation in the workplace. It also suggested that teachers do not have complete information on staff appraisal, and work load for all staff to enable them to make comparisons.

Table 3: Perception of level of staff development attained

| Items | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| The topics offered in staff development programs are spot-on the needs of the staff | 3.9025 | .77171 | 3.5575 | .82256 |
| The distribution of work amongst staff members is accurately based on their work load and expertise | 3.8231 | .86881 | 3.2321 | .94568 |
| Staff appraisal is more objective and fair because it is based on real information | 3.7798 | .79757 | 3.3512 | .86095 |
| More teachers in this school are competent in using ICT in various transactions | 4.0325 | .73403 | 3.6766 | .82972 |
| The teaching competence of teachers in this school continue to improve | 4.1227 | .66981 | 3.9087 | .74048 |

For student development, the respondents perceived it as high average (M=3.77, SD=.69). Administrators scored high/high average on all of the items. Both groups perceived high that "Remedial classes in this school continue to produce students who can be successful". This finding showed that schools are giving their best to help students to succeed in the examination. The rest of the other items were average mean scores, suggesting a moderate perception of the level of development achieved in student welfare by teachers. Table 4 shows the results. The difference in perception between administrators and teachers towards student development suggested that either the administrators tend to give better picture about the school or teachers have higher expectation on what it should achieve. However, this finding indicated that school also need to pay close attention to student development in other aspects such as disciplinary problems, student development in all aspects, monitoring sytem for student learning and providing career guidance.

Table 4: Perception of the level of student development attained

| Items | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| The level of disciplinary problems in this school is decreasing | 4.0036 | .81427 | 3.5604 | .92626 |
| Student development plans have been based on the analysis of individual student's interests and strengths | 3.8123 | .77609 | 3.5030 | .83124 |
| The supervision of students' learning and achievement is done systematically | 3.9531 | .72329 | 3.5980 | .82544 |
| Remedial classes in this school continue to produce students who can be successful | 4.2635 | .74153 | 3.9545 | .77913 |
| The career guidance aid that is offered by the school has been helpful to students after they leave secondary school | 3.9422 | .79645 | 3.6554 | .84286 |

The overall mean score for perception of development of school physical resources was 3.96 (SD=.67). This was a high average score, and suggested that the respondents were quite confident and quite satisfied with the level of attainment. See Table 5. Most of the items are scored high/high average by both groups except for item "the development of the school physical resources is well planned and systematic". Teachers scored average for the item also suggesting that teachers perception is made based on within organisation. Meanwhile, administrators' perception is based on comparison with other schools. Although there are different levels of perception between both groups and it is significant, the study showed that there were consistencies in the scores by administrators and teachers. This is due to the impact of development of school physical resources is visible and easy to identify compared to other areas that are more subjective. The findings also seemed to reflect that although the general perception was that the development of school physical resources has improved, the improvement was only moderately perceived as a result of careful and systematic planning.

Table 5: Perception of the development of physical resources attained

| Items | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| The development of the school physical resources is well planned and systematic | 3.8484 | .74608 | 3.6594 | .81091 |
| The use of school physical resources such as the classrooms and laboratories have been intensified for the purpose of teaching and learning | 4.1264 | .74352 | 3.8495 | .81718 |
| The school physical facilities in this school continue to improve | 4.1805 | .73960 | 3.9208 | .82955 |
| The teaching and learning process is more and more aided by the latest technology | 4.1552 | .70280 | 3.9030 | .76667 |
| The school is safe and comfortable | 4.2274 | .67746 | 4.0356 | .81328 |

School image have important roles today. With good image, schools can attract contribution from community and develop good networking with other schools and agencies. The overall mean score for the development of school image was 3.72 (SD.66). This was an average score, which suggestsed that the respondents were only satisfied moderately with the level of image development attained by the school. This shows that schools do not focus on developing a good image. Table 6 shows the individual item mean scores. Administrators scored high/high average for most of the items except for "development of ICT in this school has increased the school image" and "the involvement of parents in school development has increased". Meanwhile, teachers scored only average for all the items and the same items were scored the lowest. The study showed that schools do not use ICT to improve school image can be interpreted either to mean that due to the restricted access to use computers in schools, respondents were less inclined to believe in the impact of ICT on the school image or simply that the respondents rarely use computers. Parents commitment also do not improve significantly. The difference in level of perception between administrators and teachers also suggested that administrators receive positive feedback from authorities compared to teachers who do not get that information.

Table 6: Perception of the level of school image developed

| Items | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| The image of this school is good because of its excellent academic records | 4.0830 | .82332 | 3.7901 | .89504 |
| The image of this school is good because of its achievements in non-academic performance. | 3.9783 | .80728 | 3.7347 | .84097 |
| The development of ICT in this school has improved the school image | 3.6173 | .76480 | 3.4614 | .86085 |
| The teachers' commitment to the school continue to increase because of the reputation of the school | 4.0253 | .69892 | 3.7822 | .80430 |
| Students are more interested to participate in the school activities | 3.9567 | .76490 | 3.7188 | .82625 |
| Parental involvement in the school development is increasing | 3.5596 | .84328 | 3.3723 | .91722 |

Development in school finance is important because it supports the implementation of other areas in school development. In overall, the respondents perceived the development of school finance at high average level (M=3.79, SD=.71). Table 7 show that there was a big gap between administrators' perception and teachers'. The administrators scored high for the acountability of school finance. The administrators also agreed that their schools have enough information about expenditures so that three years planning can be done and financial resources were spent according to the school development priorities. The administrators perceived average only for the availability of enough funds for students activities. However, teachers scored average for all the items. This finding showed that most probably what happened was that the information about school finance was not disclosed to

the teachers. The findings also showed that teachers perceived differently how the administrators managed the funds. The item that both administrators and teachers agreed was schools do not have enough funding for school activities. This mean schools have to be more reactive to generate more funds. Administrators also should be more open and have discusion with teachers about managing the financial resources.

Table 7: Perception of the level of development attained in school finance

| Items | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| The management of school finance is responsible | 4.2635 | .66964 | 3.7901 | .84955 |
| Full developmental planning for the school finance for the period of the next three years is made possible because of complete records of expenditure are available. | 4.0144 | .71714 | 3.6277 | .81651 |
| This school spends its fund allocations guided by the priorities defined in school development plans | 4.2094 | .69119 | 3.7129 | .82540 |
| This school has sufficient funds to run activities for the students | 3.7004 | .90115 | 3.4792 | .88195 |

On administrative processes, the overall mean scores showed a high average of 3.94 (SD=.66). Indeed all items showed a high average to high mean scores. The respondents showed high average perception of the level of development attained in the school administration. See Table 8. The administrators perceived high for all the items. While teachers scored high only for “school have clear mission and goals about school development”. Teachers scored average for “schools committee understand their function and the scope of their responsibilities, the availability of information about policy and work procedures and the availability of information about the latest education development in Malaysia”. This finding also showed that in terms of school administration structure, teachers do not get enough information in order to implement school development.

Table 8: Perception of the level of development of administrative processes

| Items | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| Every committee in this school understands its function and scope of responsibilities | 4.0578 | .73494 | 3.7723 | .78277 |
| This school has clear mission and objectives for its school development | 4.2744 | .71513 | 4.0752 | .71705 |
| The relationship and communication between the school administration and teachers, and with students | 4.2924 | .69500 | 3.9050 | .81093 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| are genial | | | | |
| Information regarding policies and work procedures are easily accessible by teachers | 4.0469 | .73817 | 3.7149 | .79799 |
| Information regarding the latest development of education in Malaysia is increasingly accessible to teachers | 4.0144 | .73214 | 3.6812 | .78890 |

In school development, schools have to develop some kinds of measurement or indicators to evaluate the activities that have been implemented. On development for continuous improvement (Table 9), it was found that all items scored a high average mean of 3.90 (SD=.72). This showed a high average perception that the school has attained, or developed strategies to ensure continuous development. For most of the items, administrators scored high except for doing post-mortem after conducting activities which scored high average, while teachers scored most of the items high average except the same item which scored average. This finding suggested that schools conduct post-mortem only at administrators level and teachers were not involved in post-mortem processes.

Table 9: Perception of the development for continuous development

| Items | Administrators N = 282 | | Teachers N = 500 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD |
| This school has specific committees to monitor the school development | 4.2022 | .78176 | 3.8455 | .86138 |
| This school is always sensitive to the views and recommendations regarding the school development given by various parties | 4.1877 | .75718 | 3.8079 | .84088 |
| This school conducts post mortems after a school activity has been carried out | 3.9495 | .82377 | 3.7327 | .93107 |
| The staff members of this school understand that evaluation and supervision are actually opportunities to learn, and not a penalty. | 4.0109 | .73238 | 3.8337 | .80182 |

## CONCLUSIONS

Results from this study suggested that consistently high mean on perception of all eight core areas in school development by administrators indicated that school development planning and implementation is very much decided by administrators. Teachers are less involved hence the frequent scoring of low to moderate reporting of perception with the relevancy and quality of development achievement. The other reason to explain the difference in mean could be because administrators get favourable feedback from external parties such as State Education Department and District Education Office. With that kind of feedback, administrators have a wider range to make comparisons. The finding also indicated that

school development is very much centred around administrators' knowledge. Based on previous studies, it is suggested that teachers should be encouraged to be more involved in school development activities.

REFERENCES

Broadhead, P., Cuckle, P., & Hodgson, J. (1999). Promoting pupil learning within a school-development framework. *Research Papers in Education*, 14(3), pp. 275-294.

Cuckle, P., & Broadhead, P. (2003). Developments in development planning in English primary schools: 1994-2001. *School Leadership & Management*, 23(2), pp. 229-240.

Davies, B., & Ellison, L. (1998). Futures and strategic perspectives in school planning. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 12(3), pp. 133-140.

Hopkins, D., Haris, A., & Jackson, D. (1997). Understanding the school's capacity for development: Growth states and strategies. *School Leadership & Management*, 17(3), pp. 401-411.

Midthassel, U. V. (2004). Teacher involvement in school development activity and its relationships to attitudes and subjective norms among teachers: A study of Norwegian elementary and junior high school teachers. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 40(3), pp.435-456.

Midthassel, U. V., Manger, T., & Torsheim, T. (2002). Community effects on teacher involvement in school development activity: A study of teachers in cities, smaller towns and rural areas in Norway. *Research Papers in Education*, 17(3), pp. 293-303.

Mintrop, H., MacLellan, A. M., & Quintero, M. F. (2001). School improvement plans in schools on probabtion: A comparative content analysis across three accountability systems. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 37(2), pp.197-218.

Noor Hasliza Hamid (2004). Persepsi guru dan pentadbir terhadap pembuatan keputusan kolaboratif dalam pengurusan kurikulum di sekolah. Unpublished project paper masters. Universiti Putra Malaysia.

O'hara, J. & McNamara, G. (2001). Process and product issues in the evaluation of school development planning. Evaluation. 7(1), pp. 99-109.

Reeves, J. (2000). Tracking the links between pupil attainment and development planning. *School Leadership & Management*, 20(3), pp. 315-332.

Dr. Suhaida Abdul Kadir is in Department of Science and Technical Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Email: suhaida@educ.upm.edu.my
Dr. Jamaliah Abdul Hamid is in Department of Foundation of Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Email: aliah@putra.upm.edu.my
Dr. Samsilah Roslan is in Department of Foundation of Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Email: samsilah@educ.upm.edu.my.