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Reconstructing Sustainable Outdoor Learning Environment in Malaysia from the Understanding of Natural School Design and Approaches in Indonesia

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Abstract

With current development in the pedagogy of teaching and learning approaches in the world, not many studies have been done on outdoor learning in Malaysia. Most of the study was focusing on the development of curriculum and the delivery of knowledge but not many writing and approaches has been done to see outdoor learning as one of the alternative methods of learning in school design. This paper tries to briefly explain the philosophy and approaches of one of the alternative school in Indonesia which is the Natural school or *Sekolah Alam* which grow tremendously fast in Indonesia. With its unique methods and learning philosophy, this Toto Chan's style of learning has been considered one of the fastest growing alternative school in Indonesia. With its successful attempt in grooming ordinary children this school has proofed to be the most effective implementation of outdoor learning study methods in Indonesia. The discussion itself will consist of four (4) main parts First part will discuss on the current problem and situation in teaching and learning in Malaysia, while the second part will try to explore and review on the definition of outdoor learning with its importance and character in learning environment. The third part will focused on the lesson from Natural School approaches and philosophy of learning while the last part will do some analysis and comparison which result on the suggestion and recommendation for outdoor learning facilities design in Malaysia.

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Keywords: Outdoor Learning, Natural School, Indonesia.Introduction;

1. Introduction

The tendency of Malaysia to achieve their vision '1 Malaysia' has produced an understanding and ideology of 1 change or reform, 1 achievement. In keeping of Malaysia desire to achieve the 2020 Vision, Malaysia tries to find a new breath in their education system. This vision is aim to produce stability, appearance, wisdom on the growth productivity through the nature surrounding, technology and five senses. The new learning system such as the outdoor learning is believed to help a lot in producing better generation. Therefore, Malaysia government tries and

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asks all the schools to initiate themselves in enhancing their performance in term of learning and teaching. Hopes this paper will help a lot in succeeding the Malaysia’s education project, so called *Permata Pintar* Project.

2. The problems of Pre-school Learning System in Malaysia

As we know, most of the preschool learning system has been used in Malaysia is using the indoor learning system. The system that focusing on memorizing all the information. This type of system has been used almost at all the government and private preschool institution around Malaysia. The most critical learning and teaching problem is the system based on the value (total marks, grade) and the position in the class. It is caused the damage in our education in term of appreciation and the benefit of learning in daily life to position and grade value basis by memorizing, not appreciate, understand, feel and take the benefit of the knowledge.

There are curriculum standard for all the preschool institutions provided by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia that should be followed by all the preschool institution all around Malaysia. Below was the example of preschool curriculum module issued by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia.



figure: Example of preschool curriculum module standard and Core Theme Module, Pre-school Curriculum Standard in Malaysia by Ministry of Education Malaysia.

Based on this curriculum, all institutions should provide adequate teaching material in order to fulfil the standard issued by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. This very own issued curriculum is not a deterrent to variable the teaching and learning method, but this the pathway to variable the method of teaching and learning. One of the theme core modules has been analyzed is the third theme ; Living Things with the sub-theme; *Alive or Not, How do I Stay Alive, My Body Parts, Why Do We Have..?,Do We Look Same?,Who I am ?,Nice to Know You plants, Wonderful Animals, and Simillar But Not Same*. Most of the preschool institutions in Malaysia using the indoor learning method by showing a video visual, photo visual, picture visual and imagination visual. However, from this very early research on certain preschool students showing the increase of interest and understanding up to 40% by using the outdoor learning and teaching methods. An example of sub-theme module; *Nice to Know You Plants* using the audio visual as a method of teaching and learning and its might be attracting student interest for a moment with the memorize technique on those plants will paste some small effect to the student memory rather than using the outdoor learning technique with the use of the senses - audio, visual, taste, touch, and smell. With this approaches we can see the different between seeing the torn flowers in the visual shape and the real torn flower, taste with your tongue, touch with your fingers, and smell with your nose which in other words an outdoor learning.

3. Outdoor Learning Definition

There are many definition in order to express the meaning of the outdoor learning. The definition are classified into two(2) categories, 'Psychosocial definitions' and 'Environmental Definitions'. Based on C. A. Lewis, 1975, The Administration of Outdoor Education Programs. Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt, the outdoor learning in term of 'Psychosocial definitions' is- **"appeals to the use of the senses - audio, visual, taste, touch, and smell - for observation and perception."** For the other side definition- 'Environmental Definitions', the outdoor learning have been defined as - **"an experiential method of learning by doing, which takes place primarily through exposure to the out-of-doors. In outdoor education, the emphasis for the subject of learning is placed on RELATIONSHIPS: relationships concerning human and natural resources."** Priest, S. (1988). Another definition can be find below:

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4. Outdoor Learning Curciulum in Indonasia

Several preschool institutions in Indonesia especially in Jakarta, has been used as early stage research for the outdoor learning method or so called "*Sekolah Alam*". These institutions has been succeeds of practically the outdoor learning and teaching technique by using five sense and life experience. These successful showing the rapid growing of "*Sekolah Alam*" in urban and sub urban area and strongly push the wish to extend the research on the outdoor learning. As the space for discussion is very limited, the following short discussion only covers five (5) natural school in Indonesia which are Bogor, Bekasi, Ciganjur, Depok and Natur Islam Bekasi.

4.1. Sekolah Alam Bogor (Bogor Nature's School)

Sekolah Alam Bogor located in Jakarta and using three (3) nature's concept which are Nature as learning space, Nature as a media and teaching material and Nature as a learning object. With this three concept students are introduce to a holistic understanding of nature by experience it through out their senses. In term of teaching and learning process, *Sekolah Alam Bogor* are based on these four (4) columns basically which are Learning by '*Qudwah*' (model of life), Logic and creativity expansion through 'Experiential Learning', Leadership expansion through 'Outbound Training' method and Ability expansion- 'Entrepreneur' which develop their very early understanding of learning in the very fun manner.

4.2. Sekolah Alam Bekasi (Bekasi Nature's School)

Sekolah Alam Bekasi which located in the suburban Jakarta on other ways are using three (3) similar approaches for their curriculums which are moral expansion through the learning method of "Model of life", logical expansion through the learning process of "Action Learning" and leadership expansion, through the learning method of "Outbound Training".

The learning and teaching process of this school is based on these three bases: mould the SPIDER WEB method. With the theme base or project, learning process will be expanded totally to all field of knowledge with the final purpose of knowing the creator of the Nature-Allah S.W.T, through the process of 'Accelerated Learning'. The students have to expose all their self potential and mould the Active Learning method. the students will be asked for 'Fun, Fresh and Friendly' in learning and actively observing and exploring.

4.3. *Sekolah Alam Ciganjur (Ciganjur Nature's School)*

Sekolah Alam Ciganjur also located in Jakarta and because of the location is in the middle of metropolitan town, the rumors of this school famously spread and become a desire to all parents to send their kids to the best preschool institution. This nature school using 3 concepts in learning and teaching which are Akhlaqul Karimah (teach the child to have an excellent moral with the main method based on Qur'an and Hadith), Knowledge Philosophy (teach the child having a manner logical thinking, respect the nature and surrounding and use it as learning media with the action learning and discussion), Leadership (teach the child to have an excellent leadership spiritual through the 'Out Bound' and 'Dynamic Group').

The learning and teaching process in this nature school is using the Spider Web method, not per chapter of the text book as usual and by this method the students able to link the education with their real life and able to relate between one subject to another subject they had received. In this school not only student learned something, even teachers learn from the student and parent also learn from teachers and students. The students are not only learning inside the class but they learn everywhere and from anyone. They are not only learning from the books but there are learning from the natures surrounding. They are not learning to achieve or to catch up the position in the class or the grade value, but they are.

4.4. *Sekolah Alam Depok (Depok Nature's School)*

This nature school is based on concept of education should be bounded towards the basic purpose of man's creature on earth, as Khalifatullah Fil Ardh (earth's leader) with conditions to understand how to respect the nature creator-Allah SWT, creature and the universe belong to Allah SWT.(sunnatullah)and how to lead others creature/ the universe following Allah laws. The above prerequisite was adapted by three concepts Moral curriculum (effective) which covering: memorize and appreciation of Qur'an and Sunna, honesty, trustworthy, humility, courage, patience, thankful, independent, expression, knowledge lover ,emotional stability, forgive and forgiven, sympathy, willing to give and share, able to cooperate, high motivation, discipline, happy, responsible, knowing yourself and ability to interacts with nature and surrounding, logical knowledge curriculum(cognitive)-learning process based on thematic in Spider Web, covering the common knowledge, Ad-Din, nature's knowledge, mathematic, creativity and art and leadership curriculum (Psychomotor) which covering: Outward Bound, Life skill, swimming, and business. The curriculum application was supported by three (3) main columns for teaching and learning process basically which are Teacher as a role model, Fun and Active learning.

4.5. *Sekolah Alam Natur Islam (Natur Islam Nature's School)*

All the advantage and education concept in this school's curriculum are more less are same with the other nature's school in Indonesia. That was Islamic and Qur'an intensive learning, learning through the open nature space and the application, freedom of expression and independence. Those concepts were combined into one in the Sekolah Natur Islam education system. All in a single curriculum that combine all aspect of knowledge require by student, and in all subjects teach the Qur'an and Hadith Value was acceptance. However, this nature school still follow the standard by Diknas(Ministry of Education, Indonesia).

The standard was adapted and applied in this nature's school curriculum in order to graduating all the students with well prepared facing the other worlds instead of the nature school. This nature's school curriculum also provided the moral teaching and life skill to the students. Including the outbound that teach the child to overcome any problem and responsibility and 3 types of sport teaches by the prophet, Rasullullah SAW which are swimming, horse riding and shooting (using wood).



Figure 2. Outdoor learning environment in natural School in Indonesia, the student learn from nature as teacher and source of inspiration

5. Conclusion

Sekolah Alam is one of the rapid growing education systems in Indonesia. This nature's school systems are different with the current and formal school generally. The adapted curriculum was prepared by the education staff to match the student ability. Learning and teaching process in Sekolah Alam combining the theory and adaptation. The learning and teaching process in this nature school is using the Spider Web method, not per chapter of the text book as usual and by this method the students able to link the education with their real life and able to relate between one subject to another subject they had received. In this school not only student learned something, even teachers learn from the student and parent also learns from teachers and students. The students are not only learning inside the class but they learn everywhere and from anyone. They are not only learning from the books but there are learning from the natures surrounding.

They are not learning to achieve or to catch up the position in the class or the grade value, but they are learning to apply their knowledge into their daily life. Therefore, the understanding of the learning becomes integrative, comprehensive, and applicative. Those Sekolah Alam also come out with the understanding of growth up basic ability in each student such as the soul of curiosity, observation, hypothesis, and academic thinking. Using the Spider Web concept, the students are not only learning through the teacher's explanation but they 'see, touch, taste' and follow the whole learning process for each. In these Sekolah Alam, students are asking to understand their own basic ability.

Each of the child advantage will be appreciated and the lack will be understood even. Therefore, it will not call a taboo for having a different thought with the teacher but it was reform in generation formation to be more intellectual and outspoken. This is a stepping stone for a new preschool's teaching and learning system and module in Malaysia in order to produce more intellectual, critical, outspoken, independence and expression generation. In keeping with the government's desire in succeeding the Permata Pintar Project, the starting point to reform and achievement was here.

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