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National Education Assessment System (NEAS): A Case Study on Approaches Developed by Schools in Malaysia

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Abstract

National Education Assessment System (NEAS) has been introduced into Malaysian educational structure in 2011 for primary schools and 2012 for secondary school. NEAS was introduced in order to improve primary and secondary education system in Malaysia with the purpose of implementation is to create a dynamic and intellectual human resource in the future. The system was also initiated to elevate teaching profession in Malaysia while at the same time focusing on the Philosophy of National Education. Since its implementation in 2011, diverse reaction and respond have been ascertained not only among the teachers, but also parents and students. The practice of NEAS requires teachers to consistently assess their students according to the guidelines set by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia. This research studies the educational change in Malaysia and examines the experience of reforming assessment since the implementation of NEAS. In order to assemble useful perception and insights towards the implementation of NEAS among teachers in Malaysia, qualitative case study method was employed as researcher stayed anonymous throughout the data collection and during observation of situation. A school in the urban area was randomly picked and it was found that with constant support and sustenance from school head, NEAS can be successful, though intensive trainings are needed in order to help teachers to become skilled at the newly implemented system.

Keywords: National Education Assessment System, school based assessment, reforming assessment

1.0 Introduction

The need to transform the education system in Malaysia is becoming more important in order to prepare the pupils for challenging future ahead. It is believed that most important objective of primary and secondary education system is to create students with as much as possible knowledge and social skills in order to flourish in their later stage of lives (United Kingdom Department of Education, 2014). The Malaysian educational system has been transforming itself since pre-independence and post-independence. According to Jawal (2013), at the early stage, there was no national education system in Malaysia (then was known as Tanah Melayu); instead each different race was schooled

based on their origins. Malaysia is dominated by three major races, namely Malays, Chinese and Indian immigrants brought by the English Colony. There were English education system, Chinese school and no Indian school during the colonisation of British people. The difference of education system has brought to vast disaster in nationalism and created distinctly dissimilar in individual quality of Tanah Melayu people. Particularly changes can be seen after Malaysia was established in 1957 where national education system in Malaysia was developed in order to prepare young Malaysians with education and sense on patriotism due to the racial differences.

Though education system has changed due to modernisation of economic local and internationally, there is similar vision which to produce excellent pupils with high patriotism and self-sufficiency for future undertakings. Malaysian education system aimed to provide accountability in its structure with the purpose of making sure that there is no child is left behind and disadvantaged. It is to ensure that the current education systems will effectively shaped pupils with high intellectuality, physical fitness, emotional stability and excellent attitudes. The implementation of National Education Assessment System (NEAS) is an advancement of the existing education system purposely to provide tools for school teacher to assess their students' performance not only academic, but in a more holistic approach. NEAS provides tools and guidelines for teacher to evaluate their students' performance and accomplishment in term of personality, latent potential, interests, tendencies to behave, personality, physical and emotional fitness (Jawal, 2013).

The change of educational in Malaysia faced by educational policy makers in Malaysia is to understand and comprehend the barriers that could interfere the implementation of newly developed policies among schools administration teams and teachers. In addition, it is also challenging to adequately educate and train teaching teams to bring new approaches to reforming assessment to students. According to previous studies by Fullan (1993), educational changes are often disputing especially among teachers because it is a complex process rather than only a blue print of a process changing. The manifestations of educational changes such as educational reforms occurs at multi-level dimension which requires depth understand of roles should be played by each individual at schools. Though educational change is aimed to increase effectiveness and improvement of education system in Malaysia, the process is very much dynamic since it involves teachers who are already handful with existing commitments. Teachers and parents are used to examination based education system although it is proven by Ong (2010) that the existing education system in Malaysia is dominantly focused on public examination to the extent of undermining the significant of individual potential of students.

During the implementation of NEAS, teachers are trained to the importance of education changes and how NEAS is become useful and more efficient in characterising each of their students towards knowledgeable human resource in the future. Even though NEAS was develop to enhance the meaningfulness of education assessment in school, the system indeed is relatively new and schools are struggling to adapt in order to successfully execute the structure. This research is aimed to provide insight on how schools in Malaysia reform themselves to familiarise the new system and achieved the desired objectives. It is also intended to get comprehensive insights on teachers' perspective and their attitude towards the implementation of NEAS. It is also important to subjectively measure the preparedness of teachers to apply NEAS and how NEAS could possibly affect their teaching routines and other daily responsibilities (Sidek & Salleh, 2013). Apart from teaching itself, teachers' responsibility includes teaching planning, marking and preparing for the next classes. To get their insights on the implementation of NEAS into educational system. There are five methods of NEAS assessment as described by Ministry of Education in 2010. The five methods include school assessment, central assessment, psychometric assessment, physical activity assessment and central examination.

2.0 Literature Review

Malaysian education system has progressed from British model which was adapted post-independence with series of amendments took place throughout the 6 decades. The year of 1975 saw the major change for the instruction medium from English into Bahasa Malaysia. The system again

improved as in 2002 where the 1996 Education Act was reviewed and amended in order to make sure that each of every child in Malaysia goes to primary school making it is against the law to the failure of presenting a child to school prior their suitable age. It is stated in the National Education Philosophy that education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing individuals with potential and a holistic conduct.

2.1 Malaysian Education System

The essence of education system in Malaysia always revolve around to provide education in order to create human resource that meet the needs of politic, economic and social development of the country (Rahimah, 1998). The changes of curriculum took place with the purpose of adapting subjects' syllabus to the needs of nations and to accomplish the prerequisites of developing the nation, though the main objective of syllabus changing is towards national unity. English is the instruction medium in all schools in Malaysia until 1975 where Bahasa Malaysia was officially used as medium in schools. Primary schools consist of standard system throughout the nation, while secondary schools are semi-specialised at the upper level of secondary school.

Hence, at this point, in order to keep up with the industry revolutionary around the world and to meet the demand of science and technology knowledge and skills, technical and vocational schools were introduced. During 1990s when information technology (IT) and computer era has started in Malaysia, school students were inclined to the advancement of technology and started to curious on science and technology. This has led into the initiative development by the government of Malaysian Super Corridor (MSC) and schools are ought to be in line with MSC too (Rahimah, 1998). Inherent with technology advancement, teaching techniques also evolved from writings on books to learning from computers and audio visuals.

In general, Malaysia education system consists of four stages, namely pre-school, primary school, secondary school and higher education. During pre-school, the students may start their schooling at six years old, though it is preferably at five years old. There are government based pre-school such *Tadika Kemas* (Kemas Pre-school) and numerous renown private run pre-school such as Smart Reader Kids and Little Calips. Primary schools begin for children aged seven to twelve years old and referred to Standard 1 to Standard 6. Students are endorsed into the next level of class regardless their performance and grades. Primary school ends with *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah, UPSR* (Primary School Achievement Test).

Whilst, secondary schools start at thirteen and lasts to either seventeen or nineteen years old, though all students are expected to complete their secondary school at the age of seventeen. Secondary schools students are referred as Form 1 to Form 5. During these five years of studies, students are expected to sit for two major examinations namely *Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3, PT3* (Lower Secondary Assessment) at Form 3 and *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia, SPM* (Certificate of Malaysian Education) at Form 5. Students who excel during their *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* may get the opportunity to attend government of private pre-university college or go for A-Level in private colleges, or they may choose to stay for Form 6, which is equal to pre-university syllabus. Those who choose for Form 6 will finish their high school journey at nineteen years old with *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia, STPM* (Malaysian Higher School Certificate).

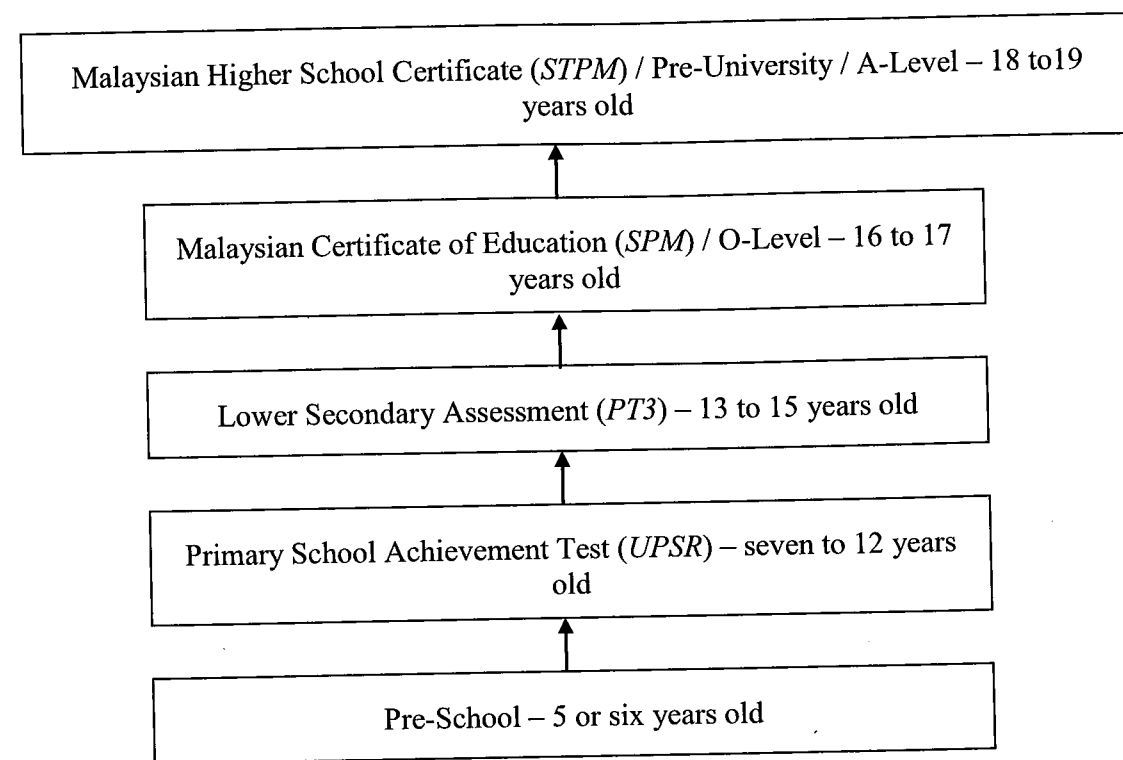


Figure 1: Malaysian Education system from Pre-school to Pre-University

2.1 National Education Assessment System (NEAS)

NEAS which stands for National Education Assessment System was introduced into Malaysian education system with the intention to reform educational assessment system in Malaysia. It is vital to progressively introduce a reliable and appropriate school-based assessment system so that Malaysia education system does not bound solely to examination only. United Kingdom Department of Education (2014) assert that new assessment system will reflect challenging and more complex national curriculum. With the implementation of NEAS, teachers, schools and parents can celebrate students' challenging intakes and appreciate students' afford as they develop new interest and want to polish their potential. With the continuous advancement of assessment system in education, teachers will have clearer vision for their students and focused more on the improvement of new curriculum and students' performance.

NEAS focuses on holistic assessment techniques which emphasizes on the developing the right potential in each individual of students. This includes exploratory learning among students and experiential exposure that are intended to enhance students' awareness and comprehension towards stimulating their creativity sense and innovation. Creativity and innovativity factors are very much important in the real life workforces which are the essential pre-requisite for an advance economic and sophisticated technology developing industries. The holistic assessment of NEAS consists of four aspects namely i) what to assess, ii) who to assess, iii) how to assess, and iv) what to report. NEAS which is envisioned to promote the significance of students assessment consists of five types of assessment namely i) school assessment, ii) central assessment, iii) central examination, v) psychometric tests, and vi) physical activity assessment. The assessment standards are provided diligently by the Malaysian Examination Syndicate (MES).

According to Sidek and Salleh (2013), the implementation of NEAS which is relatively new is tricky due to lack of training among teachers. The study also revealed that without proper training and briefing prior the implementation of NEAS, many teachers are reluctant to apply the assessment technique. However, with intensive training and explanation of the NEAS relevance into today's education system, teachers are more willing to work extra miles operating the assessment. In the other hands, Boon and Shahrudin (2011) argued the role of head mister of school. In the study which focused on primary schools in Malaysia. Boon and Shahrudin (2011) stated that with the support and understandings from Head Master of the school, teachers would not hesitate to implement the assessment technique. This proved that training and knowledge are two factors that could help to the success of the implementation of NEAS. Teachers already bound to their daily teaching routines and other co-curriculum activities, since NEAS require more effort and times, Head Masters should be more supportive and encouraging during the early and later stage of the assessments.

3.0 Research Methodology

In order to gather useful insights on approach developed by school towards NEAS implementation, the researcher applied case study method. According to Shaban (2009), case study method is a profound and intensive observation method intentionally to gain subjective insights and to understand a phenomenon that is new or not yet well-understood. Case study research technique permit researcher to comprehend the reason of *how* and *why* certain situation occurs in a way that does not require any direct involvement or control between researcher and the condition. The school was selected based on purposive sampling method which can provide the researcher more result on the researched topic. Mutalib and Ahmad (2012) stated that during case study research methods, the implementation of purposive sampling can provide researcher reliable information and data as needed intentionally for a better understanding and useful data analysis.

Simons (2015) stated that case study method can be done with incorporation of structured or semi-structured questionnaire survey and experimental evaluation design. Yin (2013) indicated that inadequacy of common qualitative and quantitative research methods in providing human-based perception towards researched topic may affect the results and findings of the research. For example, the quantitative data gathered during interview and survey may be analysed using statistical methods and results are confirmed statistically. However, human views are very subjective and often, statistical method fail to adequately noticed this aspect. This study implemented purposive sampling case study method in order to engage to the real situation and gather data for analysis. Constructive and qualitative data are documented using structured form previously developed suited to captive the information during case study observation and interviews. The school that was randomly chosen is a school that was involved during NEAS pilot test since 2009 by The Ministry of Education, Malaysia. Permission to visit the school was granted and researcher introduced himself as solely a researcher in order to avoid bias and tendency to cover the real perception and opinion during the interview and document browsing. Teachers interviewed were involved and have executed NEAS for the few years, thus deemed as experienced as NEAS is relatively new to the education system in Malaysia. Interview with Head Mister also been done and documents related to NEAS have been observed purposely for researcher to gain humane insight and documents' insight per se.

4.0 Case Study Observation and Discussion

Case Study: Saga Primary School

Saga Primary School is a pseudonym given by researcher in order to protect privacy and confidentiality. The school is a public school which is situated within a city in the south peninsular Malaysia. The school comprised of 60 teachers and 992 students whom based on the enrolment

record, most of the students are from middle income families. The school is partially government aided and the decisions in regards to schools' matter are made by the Missionary Committee of the school. Saga Primary School was selected to be a pilot test school prior the implementation of NEAS in Malaysia. Based on NEAS Report in 2012, Saga Primary School is one of the most successful and highly recommended school to become benchmark for the implementation of NEAS in Malaysia due to the positive results and improvement of students' achievements and accomplishment in line with the new education system.

Based on the observation of the case study, it is proven that involvement and support from Head Teacher during the execution of NEAS greatly contributed to the success of the system. This success factors was verbally told by teacher of the school to the researcher. In addition, the teacher stated that the Head Teacher was always in great help and physically available which have made teachers feel more encouraged to implement the system. Although it is noticed that the implementation of NEAS has greatly increased teachers' responsibility and job tasks, they understand that NEAS is indeed useful and can contribute to the improvement of students' achievement and performance. This is because, instead of focusing on achieving good grades in examination, the students realised that they are assessed from the perspective of emotional and potential too. These actually encourage the students to become more active and get involved to activities organised by schools and teachers.

Other than that, the Head Teacher realised that teachers are burdened with clerical work especially during reporting the assessment reports which takes long time and is a slow process. Thus, in order for teachers to be fully prepared and equipped with NEAS, the Head Teacher encouraged teachers to attend NEAS training provided by the Ministry of Education and being greatly supportive and accommodating. It is also revealed during the case study that among the teachers themselves, they are very supportive to each other and willing to help each other during the difficulties and the school also possess excellent working culture where job tasks are diligently been accomplished at a planned time period. It is concluded that, Saga Primary School's approach to the implementation of NEAS is very much indeed a training in order to equip teacher on the purpose of NEAS itself. The school's Head Masters also being prominently supportive to the teachers and put less stress during NEAS employment. This in return offer teachers conducive working situation despite the work load caused by NEAS and the performance expected by the system.

Discussion

Based on documentation analysis, it is noted that the exceptional working culture of Saga Primary School has significantly enabled the school to employ NEAS because the teachers are committed, confident and resourceful. The teachers interviewed expressed their grateful and fortunate from this great working culture that has cultivated by the Head Master and cascaded to the staff members which in return resulting to the successful of NEAS implementation.

Based on the verbal interviews, it is also found that the performance of students have increased dramatically since the practice of NEAS and their examination results have improved, besides their progress in co-curriculum activities. Further observations and interviews among teacher have disclosed that the Head Teacher is always well prepared in informing the necessary guidelines that culture of the schools, especially the great working condition. The Head Teacher also was prepared with NEAS knowledge and always referred by the teacher regarding the guidelines and information about NEAS. Though Head Teacher does not directly execute the NEAS reports and assessment, the teachers agree that the Head Teachers always motivate and also knowledgeable on NEAS information. Credits are often expressed by Head Teacher to the teachers whom perform very well and always give supports to the teachers to perform and increase their knowledge and skills in NEAS. The leadership of Head Teacher has always been the source of spirit and excitement among the teacher and their relationship between superiors is prodigious.

Leadership aspect of working culture is very important as discussed by Bolden (2011). The study stated that good leadership is indeed very desirable especially in a working culture where there are huge amount of tasks to be done and stressful. Hallinger and Heck, (2010) specified that collaborative leadership involves the good leadership, not just by the traditional leader or superior, but also other staff. In this research case, collaborative leadership was shown during the involvement of the Head Teacher in knowing the challengers of NEAS employment among the teachers and the afford made by the head Teacher to prepared herself in gaining knowledge and mastery on NEAS itself. Leadership of the Head Teacher also shine up during the NEAS assessment report where many teachers faced problem with the website provided by the government for teacher to key in their assessment marks. The Head Teacher did not really push the teachers as she realised that the problem was not sourced from them, instead out of their control.

5.0 Conclusion

Education is indeed plays very important facet in today's lives. It is imperative to ensure that every child is provided with education opportunity in order to be equipped with skills and knowledge needed to survive in today's world. This research has proved that, NEAS can significantly improve the performances of students. However, further consideration on providing better platform for teacher to accomplish their NEAS job tasks are needed, in order to speed up the reporting process and procedures. NEAS can be successfully implemented throughout the country if all teachers are well educated and informed about the importance of it.

It is also observed that, before a massive educational system changes being implemented, teachers must be well prepared and trained by the Ministry of Education so that they understand the purpose and benefit of the education system advancement. People are changing, so does the environment and economy. It is imperative to progressively adapt the Malaysian education system in order for human resource in Malaysia to keep up the technological advancement and science and technology. By adapting and implementing NEAS, young Malaysian can be more sourceful and skilful as they will be facing difficult times and struggles in the future.

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Ekosistem Keusahawanan Digital Dalam Kalangan Pelajar Jabatan Perdagangan Politeknik

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Abstrak

Keusahawanan digital telah melalui fasa revolusi dalam atmosfera dunia perniagaan. Keusahawanan digital merupakan satu bentuk ekosistem keusahawanan di mana konsep keusahawanan dibincangkan dalam pelbagai aktiviti. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengenalpasti tahap penerimaan pelajar terhadap kursus keusahawanan digital dan ciri-ciri usahawan digital yang ada dalam kalangan pelajar Politeknik Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah. Kaedah kuantitatif telah digunakan dengan mengedarkan borong soal selidik kepada responden yang terdiri daripada pelajar-pelajar Semester 5 program Diploma Pengajian Perniagaan (DPM) dan Diploma Pemasaran (DPR) Politeknik Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah. Data dianalisis menggunakan perisian SPSS bagi menghasilkan data deskriptif iaitu profil demografi dan perbandingan min. Dapatan kajian akan menjurus kepada penerimaan yang baik terhadap kursus keusahawanan digital dalam kalangan responden. Responden juga mempunyai ciri-ciri usahawan digital yang sangat diperlukan untuk melahirkan usahawan yang berupaya menjalankan perniagaan secara atas talian. Ini adalah sejajar dengan peranan Institusi Pendidikan sebagai pemegang kepentingan dalam meningkatkan daya keusahawanan dalam kalangan pelajar dan mengarusperdanakan pendidikan keusahawanan untuk memacu pertumbuhan ekonomi Negara.

Kata Kunci : keusahawanan digital, ekosistem keusahawanan, ciri-ciri usahawan digital

1.0 Pengenalan

Pendedahan budaya keusahawanan kepada pelajar adalah menepati hasrat dan objektif kerajaan untuk mewujudkan masyarakat berdaya saing dan berdaya tahan dalam pembangunan modal insan negara. Kuratko & Hodgetts (2004) mendefinisikan keusahawanan sebagai suatu proses inovasi dan penciptaan melalui empat dimensi iaitu individu, organisasi, alam sekitar (*environment*) dan proses, kerjasama rangkaian di dalam kerajaan, pendidikan dan perlembagaan (*institutions*). Usahawan merupakan seorang yang berusaha mengatur, mengurus dan mengambil risiko dalam perniagaan (Kuratko & Hodgetts, 2004). Usahawan juga merupakan pemangkin kepada perubahan ekonomi yang menggunakan carian dengan maksud tertentu, perancangan teliti dan pertimbangan yang sesuai apabila membuat sebarang aktiviti perniagaan.

Menurut Histrich dan Peter (2008), keusahawanan adalah suatu proses dinamik untuk mencipta kekayaan. Kekayaan dicipta oleh individu yang menanggung risiko besar di dalam ekuiti, masa dan komitmen kerjaya atau menyediakan nilai untuk sesuatu produk atau perkhidmatan. Dalam mengejar pembangunan ekonomi negara, pendedahan dalam pendidikan keusahawanan adalah perlu