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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i4/4028>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v8-i4/4028

**Received:** 03 Feb 2018, **Revised:** 25 Mar 2018, **Accepted:** 16 April 2018

**Published Online:** 23 April 2018

**In-Text Citation:** (Zakaria, Ahmad, & Awang, 2018)

**To Cite this Article:** Zakaria, Z., Ahmad, A. R., & Awang, M. M. (2018). Teachers' Environmental Support in the Implementation of History Subject. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 8(4), 494–500.

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**Vol. 8, No. 4, April 2018, Pg. 494 - 500**

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## Teachers' Environmental Support in the Implementation of History Subject

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### Abstract

This study aims to determine teachers' environmental support towards the implementation of history teaching in classrooms. Teacher's environmental support is reviewed for the aspects of infrastructure and administrative management. This survey study was conducted using a questionnaire instrument. Respondents were selected using a random sampling technique involving 800 primary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia with various demographic background (gender, teaching experience and option). The results of pilot study showed that all constructs are at a high level of validity and valid to be used in actual study with 0.987. Data were analysed using SPSS version 23.0 to analyse descriptive data (mean and standard deviation). The results showed that the level of teachers' environmental support on the aspect of administrative management was at moderately high level, while teachers' environmental support for infrastructure facilities was only at moderate level. In enhancing the implementation of history teaching in classrooms, school administrations are ought to provide support and preparation in terms of adequate facilities and proper management that meet the teachers' need and may facilitate them in conducting history lessons.

**Keywords:** Teachers Environmental Support, Infrastructure Facilities, Administrative Management.

### Introduction

History is the core subject in the Integrated Curriculum for Primary School (ICPS) which must be studied by all students on a regular basis. Year 2003 is the last year for the old History curriculum. The Curriculum Development Centre has revised the History curriculum and strives to further improve the effectiveness of these subjects according to current requirement. The process of teaching and learning History should be something lively and can attract students' attention towards the subject. The review of the Primary School History curriculum is aimed at strengthening the Education Act 1996, fulfilling the spirit of National Education Philosophy and preparing Malaysians for the 21st century education challenge (Ahmad, 2011).

### **History of Education in Malaysia**

An important goal of national education policy is to create the identity of a nation or as a tool for nation building. History Education can play a vital role as a tool for building nation when used effectively and responsibly (Hazril, 2003). In this regard, History subjects can be a medium to educate students on pure values through reflection and examples gained from learning about past events. History Education aims to nurture and strengthen the spirit of the nation and our identity as a citizen of Malaysia as well as a citizen of the world (Fadzillah, 1992). Through the knowledge and appreciation of the country's history and the related external history, students can understand the condition of a society and the country as well as and its relations with the world history. This effort is aimed at creating the spirit of unity and belonging towards Malaysia nation. History Education can also create a common memory of History as a framework for national awareness and international understanding.

History Education is an imperative foundation in the construction of the Malaysian nation. Studying History is not merely to gain knowledge but can also act as a guidance and give a lesson towards nation about what has happened. What is happening needs to be re-evaluated for the purpose of planning future changes as history provides many lessons related to the fall and rise of a nation (Hazril, 2003). Hence, history should be a guideline for the rebuilding of the nation's position and strength. History Education has been a major platform in the Malaysian education system to achieve the above goals. The goal of education in relation to nationalism is to instil a sense of patriotism into the students' soul, the sense of readiness and the willingness to sacrifice for the nation.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aims to determine the level of environmental support for the aspect of infrastructure facilities and administrative management in the implementation of History subject in primary school curriculum from teachers' perspectives.

### **Methodology**

The design of the study is an important planning aspect in conducting a study. According to Wiersma (2000), the design of the study is a procedure of processing collected data based on the specific and systematic planning towards the concept of relationship construction between between the variables involved in a study. This study is in the form of survey using descriptive method through the use of 5 Likert scale questionnaires as a research instrument. This study contains 16 items involving four main constructs namely, 4 items for demography, infrastructure facilities (5 items) and administrative management (7 items). The questionnaire was adapted from several previous researches and was referred to 3 experts in this field. The pilot study showed that all constructs are at high level of reliability with 0.987. A sample of 800 respondents was selected using a stratified random system involving primary schools History teachers from Peninsular Malaysia. The schools selected in this study represent four zones - the northern zone, the southern zone, the central zone and the eastern zone. The overall results of the constructs from pilot study are at a high level of validity and are valid to be used in actual studies. Data were analysed using SPSS version 23.0 which refers to only descriptive analysis.

**Table 1 : Mean Score Interpretation**

Scale Range	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.80	Low
1.81 – 2.60	Moderately Low
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	Moderately High
4.21 – 5.00	High

Source : Jamil (2003)

### Results and Discussion

Descriptive analysis involving mean and standard deviation is conducted to determine the level of environmental support of History teachers in Malaysia. The results of the descriptive analysis are as follows.

**Table 3 The Overall Level of History Teachers Environmental Support in Malaysia**

Item	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
Infrastructure Facilities	3.25	0.69	Moderate
Management	3.61	0.58	Moderately High

Descriptive analysis in Table 3 reveals that environmental support for teachers on the aspect of infrastructure facilities is at moderate level with mean score = 3.25 and sd = 0.69. While on the aspect of management on the other hand is on moderately high level with the mean score = 3.61 and sd = 0.58. This is due to the fact that schools have yet to play a role in providing infrastructure facilities to carry out effective teaching and learning. However, schools provide a variety of teaching aids such as maps, globes and charts to help teaching and learning. Marzano et.al (2003) notes that the preparation and arrangement of a complete infrastructure facility will affect the classroom management system. A conducive environment will have a positive impact on students' attitudes towards learning.

**Table 4 The Level of Environmental Support for History Teachers on the Aspect of Infrastructure Facilities in Malaysia**

Statement	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
The school provides LCD and "software" to ease teaching and learning History	3.38	0.99	Moderate
Various History reference materials fully provided at the school resource centre	2.93	1.01	Moderate
The school provides a variety of teaching aids such as maps, globes and charts to aid teaching and learning History	3.57	0.82	Moderately High
The school provides audio-visual room that can be used for teaching and learning History	3.22	1.02	Moderate
The school provides ample spaces for History corner to display various activities related to History	3.16	1.03	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.25	0.69	Moderate

The descriptive analysis in Table 4 shows that the environmental support for History teachers on the aspect of infrastructure facilities as a whole is at a moderate level with mean score of 3.25 and  $sd = 0.69$ . The highest point is that "The school provides a variety of teaching aids such as maps, globes and charts to aid teaching and learning History" and followed by "The school provides ample spaces for History corner to display various activities related to History" with mean = 3.56 to 3.57 and standard deviation 0.82 to 0.88. However, the "The school provides audio-visual room that can be used for teaching and learning History" is moderate with a mean score of 3.22 and a standard deviation of 1.02. This is shown by the lack of discussions made by the History school committee to improve the quality of teaching and learning History in schools. Lack of discussion by school administration management will lead to failure of teachers in carrying out efficient teaching and learning. This failure will lead to the failure in achieving educational goals outlined in History subject. Hence, the implementation of the History curriculum in the classroom requires a new form of transformation and innovation in line with the change and development of education in Malaysia. This statement is supported by Ahamad (2012) which stated that the process of teaching and learning History in the classroom is still considered to be conservative, traditional, inactive and failed to be attractive in teaching and learning and leads to negative implications towards the students.

**Table 5 The Level of Environmental Support for History Teachers on the Aspect of Management in Malaysia**

Statement	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
The school administration encourages me to attend History course organized by other parties	3.98	0.80	Moderately High
The school often support programs and activities conducted in schools	4.22	0.70	High
The school provides insentives for History teachers when joining a competition or organising a filed trip relating to History outside school compound	3.55	0.96	Moderately High
The school conducted observation on classroom teaching and learning session	3.84	0.77	Moderately High
Administrators provide fund to conduct History-related programs or activities in school	3.76	0.84	Moderately High
History committee always conduct discussions in improving the quality of teaching and learning History in school	2.73	0.46	Moderate
The school provides regular observation schedule to monitor the teaching of History subject	3.25	1.001	Moderate
Overall Mean	3.61	0.58	Moderately High

Descriptive analysis in Table 5 shows that overall environmental support for History teachers on the aspect of management is at moderately high level with a mean score of 3.61 and  $sd = 0.58$ . The highest mean is for the item "school often support programs and activities conducted in schools" and are followed by "The school administration encourages me to attend History course

organized by other parties " with a mean score of 3.98 to 4.22 and a standard deviation of 0.70 to 0.80. However, the " History committee always conduct discussions in improving the quality of teaching and learning History in school " had a mean score of 2.73 and a standard deviation of 0.46. Additionally, it was found that the school did not provide regular observation schedules to monitor the teaching of History subject. The role of school administrators is significant as a primary influencer to motivate teachers' commitment towards their task and thus ensure their job satisfaction is sustainable (Ismail & Rosadah, 2013).

### **Implications and Suggestions**

This study revealed that environmental support from the aspect of facility and management at school level in history learning and teaching is still at unsatisfactory level. The aspect of physical support is really vital in improving teachers' lesson and students' interest in learning History. Hence, the school administration need to provide history laboratory, adding more reading materials in library, providing various teaching materials with graphics and visuals as well as online teaching resources as the secondary source. These aspects are of students' interest particularly in primary school level. If this can be done, it would certainly improve students' interest in learning History at primary school level.

As for the aspect of management support, the school administration need to give support either by providing trainings (pre-service training) for history teachers, giving incentives and encourage them to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching and learning process of history to be in line with students' needs, interest at this era. Other than that, the administration need to deal with the history teachers by conducting numerous activities outside of the classrooms to enable the students to comprehend more about history via primary resource.

### **Conclusion**

This study revealed that environmental support from the aspect of facility and management at school level in history learning and teaching is still at unsatisfactory level. Therefore, schools should take into account learning ecological factors to ensure the effective teaching and learning of History. At the moment, facilities for teaching History in schools are not adequate to the needs for effective teaching. Strategic collaborations with various agencies such as museums and archeological department may help schools to have better learning environment for students to learn History. In addition, effective history learning needs holistic support from many sidea specifically in physical environmental support that can facilitate teachers and students' interest in learning History. Apart from that, the management support should always be in continuous form to ensure every activities and programs planned are not only focusing on classroom but also the outside of the classroom and learn through secondary source. This kind of learning gives great impact to improve the students' knowledge and understanding in History. Overall, this paper suggests the improvement and innovation of school management in order to support learning environments for better Historical learning.

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