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THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND LINUS TEACHERS TOWARD THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LINUS PROGRAM IN SCHOOL

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Abstract: *This study was conducted to examine the relationship between the support of the school administrators and the contribution of LINUS teachers towards the implementation of the LINUS program in Kota Kinabalu district for primary school. A quantitative approach using a survey method was carried out in all the 53 primary schools in the district of Kota Kinabalu. The instrument that was used in the survey was a set of questionnaires, where data was collected for analysis and evaluation. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used for the data analysis. The findings of this study show that there is a strong connection between the supportive roles of the school administrator and the commitment of the LINUS teachers towards the implementation of the LINUS program in their respective schools.*

Keywords: *School Administrators, LINUS Teacher, LINUS Program Implementation*

Introduction

The literacy knowledge is essential in the learning process of a students in order to succeed in education (A. Bordia and G. Carron 1985; Zinitulniza, 2011; Baroody, Alison, Diamond and Karen, 2012). It is believed that success in education can reduce poverty because through education we will gain knowledge, skills and confidence to plan for a better future (Richmond, Robinson and Sachs-Israel, 2008). Literacy skills can be acquired through a formal education in schools, where educational institutions play the important role in ensuring every student to master the basic literacy skills (White and Cranitch, 2010).

In addition to literacy, numeracy skills are equally important where a student can at least understand, give logical reasons, and apply basic numerical concepts, such as basic mathematical equations like addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Global Partnership for Education (GPE), who is dedicated to education in developing countries, said that both literacy and numeracy skills play important roles in determining a lifelong learning.

GPE supports through mobilising and investing financial aid to the underdeveloped countries that have the most numbers of children, and, or young adults who do have proper education, or have not been to a school at all, due to extreme poverty, or affected by the conflicts in their respective countries. Such countries have very high rates of low literacy and numeracy compared to the better income countries.

Knowing the importance of literacy and numeracy, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM) has taken several initiatives to cope with the problem of poor literacy and numeracy in schools. One of the initiatives is the LINUS program which targets lower elementary schools. Although the program involves all of the authorities of higher levels in their respective states in Malaysia, such as the LINUS Facilitators, the Head of Education at the respective District Education Office (PPD), and the Officers at the respective State Education Department (JPN), when it comes to implementing the program, only the school administrators and the LINUS teachers that play the major role in ensuring proper basic literacy and numeracy are taught to the target students. According to Mustari (2016) teaching and learning in schools involves all parties who are related to schools but person that clearly involved directly with students are school administrators and teachers which ensure them receive an appropriate education.

Problem Statement

The Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013-2015 has outlined the pathways for literacy and numeracy as a crucial basis in producing excellent and well-balanced students with the knowledge, thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual proficiency, ethics and spirituality, and national identity. According to Stromquist (2009), literacy skills are the basis for information, decision-making, self-empowerment and social involvement in the societies.

Despite that there have been many programs implemented to reduce the rate of illiteracy among students in the past, such as the Pilot Project (1967-1970), *Projek Pendidikan Imbuhan* (1972-1981), *Program Pemulihan Khas* (1986-present), *Tinjauan Kadar Celik Huruf* (1997) and *Kelas Intervensi Awal Membaca dan Menulis* (KIA2M , 2006-2008), the problem has yet to be solved. Considering the possibility of early childhood education, KPM has taken the initiative to cope the problem from the early stage of elementary school by implementing the LINUS program from Primary 1 to Primary 3. Kennedy et al., (2012), and the National Institute for Literacy (2008) stated that by mastering literacy and numeracy skills at early age, the children will gain interest in learning, and be motivated go the school.

The LINUS program has been carefully examined and upgraded in 2013, which costed KPM millions of ringgit in producing modules, printing the instruments for screening, conducting trainings for teachers, and carrying out special courses for the school leaders. Despite all the efforts, the main purpose of LINUS has yet to be met. KPM has received many complaints from the Primary Four teachers about ex-LINUS students who do not seem to be ready to proceed with the lessons of the Primary Four level, even though they have passed the twelve basic constructs in LINUS screening. According to the teachers, these students have difficulties to answer simple and direct comprehension questions. They are unable to construct compound sentences, as is required in the writing papers (Amrullah, et al., 2018). Besides literacy, the teachers have also discovered that some of these students are unable to solve Mathematical problems at least at moderate level, not to mention those of High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) types of questions. The literacy and numeracy inadequacies are due to that students have been taught and drilled at the very basic level just to meet at least the minimal requirements in order to pass the LINUS screening, such as constructing at least

simple sentences, filling in the blanks (partially guided), and reading a few familiar words. Whereas in numeracy, the students have merely been taught the basic Mathematical equations which involve 2-digit numbers only.

The district and state education officers (PPD and JPN respectively) who are assigned to monitor the LINUS program in schools, have been putting a lot of pressures on the teachers by emphasising that they must carry out the lesson by integrating the LINUS module into the curriculum's syllabus. The teachers, then, begin to find it too difficult to balance between using the module, and at the same time to complete the syllabus in the textbook. There have been no proper trainings for the teachers on how to incorporate the module into their lesson plan along the syllabus. Furthermore, there has been no guidelines provided as each chapter in the module does not corelate to the contents and the levels of any chapters in the textbook. According to Shanmugam and Balakrishnan (2018) without a particular syllabus, proper guidelines of teaching, and consistent educational standards, teachers can have difficulties to design and carry out their teaching and learning process in their class effectively.

Other than teaching, teachers have been assigned to other important responsibilities in school as well. This situation has managed to increase the stress level amongst the teacher as they struggle to not just to complete the LINUS module but the syllabus in the textbook too. Due to the increasing of loads of responsibilities, the teachers feel dissatisfied towards their works (Yen and Abdullah @ Jerrry, 2017). The lack of help or advise from experts in this field manage to add to their frustrations. The stress problems can only lead them to various misconduct issues in schools because of depression (A. Maulod et al., 2016).

Another problem concerning the implementation of LINUS program in school is the lack of funds or allocations to acquire proper equipment or facilities. One of the reasons is that the lack of awareness amongst the school concerning the importance of literacy and numeracy in the acquisition of a successful lifelong education. They have failed to realise that early intervention is vital to cope illiteracy at the later stage of elementary. They are more concern about the students readiness to sit for the Primary School Assessment Test (UPSR). According to Deraman et al., (2017) the financial aspect is one of the factors that the training program cannot be carried out properly because the required equipment in the training program is incomplete due to insufficient funds.

Objectives

There are two objectives of this study. They are:

1. To identify the correlation between the supports of school's leaderships towards the implementation of the LINUS program at school.
2. To identify the correlation between the contributions of the LINUS teacher towards the implementation of the LINUS program at school.

Literature Review

LINUS Program Structure

LINUS screening is carried on the following subjects: Bahasa Melayu, English and Mathematics. During the literacy screening, the students will be given a reading test and a writing test for both languages. Each screening consists of 12 questions for every twelve constructs. The screening will be able to tell whether the students will need help to overcome illiteracy or not. In Primary Three, if a student was not able to answer the first and the second constructs questions, either reading or writing screening, their parents will be advised

to refer the child to a doctor or a medical specialist in order to get professional advice. On the other hand, students who have successfully completed all the constructs correctly will be categorized as Premier Students. However, they will still be involved in the next LINUS screening until they reach Primary Four. The flow chart below shows the process of the LINUS program screening.

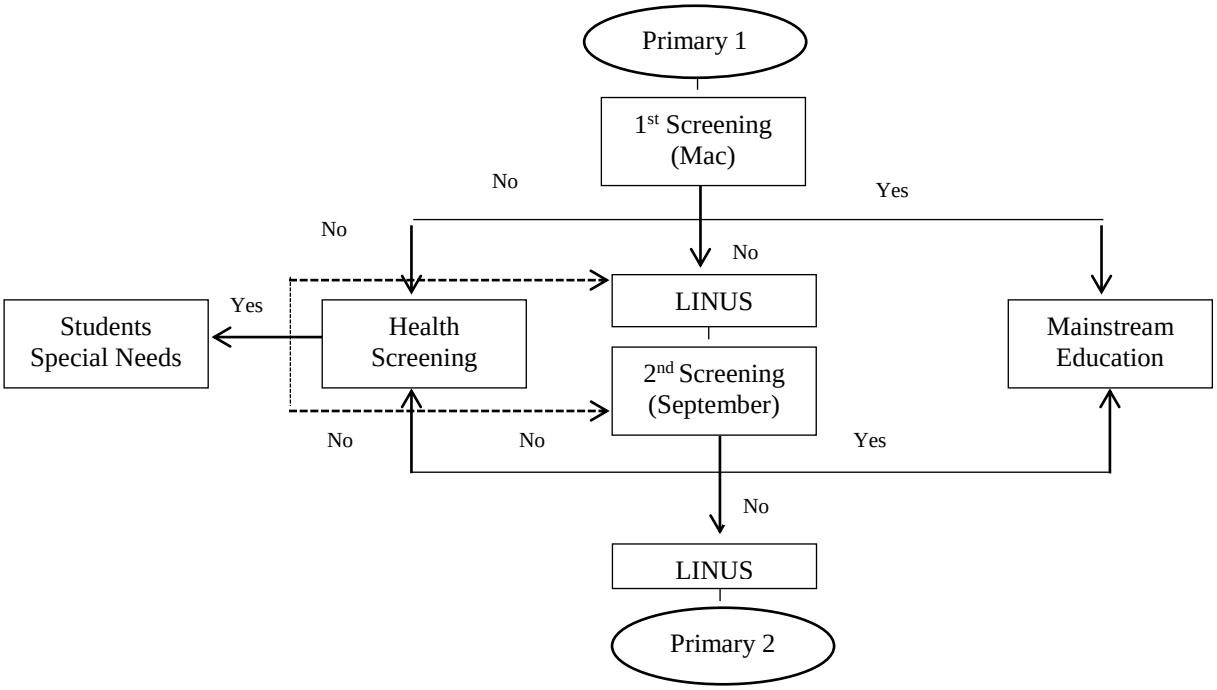

Figure 1: The Process of the LINUS Program Screening

Support from The School Administrators

According to Peretomode (2012), leadership can be defined as an art, or a process of an individual in the organisation persuading, inspiring, influencing the attitudes and the actions of the others, and giving command to their activities so that each member of the group or organisation works willingly, cooperatively and enthusiastically in order to achieve the established goal, and improving the weakness. Lusier and Achua (2013) defined leadership as a process to influence the leader and the followers to achieve the organisation's objectives through transformation.

School leadership has become a top priority in the agenda of the International Education Policy, because school leaders play crucial roles in improving the school's achievement, motivating and encouraging their teachers, as well as developing their school's right climate and environment (OECD, 2008). Traditionally, the school leader resembles a manager but in this reformation era, the school leaders should not act like a building manager who could only give rules and try to avoid mistakes. They need to be leaders of learning who can be a team builder or work together as a group in planning and carrying out effective teaching and learning process.

Leadership in the education system is often conceptualized as a solo activity that focuses on the individual leadership of the principals and the senior assistants (Crawford, 2012). Huber (2014) illustrates the school leadership as a company with a variety of uses, shared responsibilities, participate actively, and knowledgeable. The school leader in this study also known as school administrators will be referred to headmaster and the senior assistant

teachers, who bear the responsibilities together in order to ensure the school's quality and the student's performance continue to improve.

According to Hallinger and Murphy (2013), the success of a school depends on the ability of school leaders to link routine activities with their overall perspectives on the school context. Their routine and practical actions to aspire the students will enable the school leaders to assess the status of their school's progress. This can be compared to the long-term goals that they have outlined to improve their students' discipline, improvise teaching methodology, enhance the students' performance, gain support and cooperation from the teachers and communities for any programs that have been planned, and create awareness towards organizational changes that will take place in the future.

An effective school leader would lead all staffs to meet the vision and mission of the school (Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond, 2007). Huber (2014) agreed with this argument by stating that the school leaders are regarded as important persons who are responsible in safeguarding and coordinating individual activities, creating a conducive learning environment that ensures continuous progress, developing the right school culture, and upholding teaching professionalism.

Contributions of the LINUS Teachers

Education is a great future investment because it provides knowledge, teach practical skills and enforce the right attitudes when the students are ready to serve in the society, socially, economically and politically. It aims to create in a person, an active lifelong learning skill. The students will be able to learn new skills and improve them, particularly in accessing and handling information. Teach the art of the lesson so that the students can enjoy learning, and they will become as a knowledge producer (J. Huber et al., 2011).

According to Huber et al., (2011), teachers are the key manager in the education. They play an important role in the process of incorporating the government policies into daily practice, which is the teaching and learning process (PdPc). Likewise, LINUS teachers are responsible to transform the Malaysian government education policy into their PdPc to ensure the main objectives of the policy are achieved.

Teachers have to handle the young people from various societies every day for years. Huber et al., (2011) also states that teachers essentially contribute to the future development of a country because the students learn through experiences in school that provide them hope and opportunities to participate actively in social type of interactions, such as discussions, and to make decisions about all aspects in their lives.

Learning experience will not be a wonderful experience for the students if they are not able to master the basic skills of learning at an early age (Westbrook et al., 2013). This is because the rest of the curriculum would be inaccessible to them, thus, encourages them to leave school early. Students who dropped out from the school early are more likely to engage into social problems and have lower socioeconomic status than students who attended high schools because, according to Huber et al., (2011) and Forte (2010), schools and teachers affect and leave great influence on student's performance as well as the individual's ability to engage in social, political and economic changes throughout their lives.

The applications of instructional social skills in classroom can help students learn to interact positively with friends and adults (Stanton-chapman, 2014). In addition, teachers play an

important role in making sure the interactions occur in order to achieve successfully the desired learning outcomes, that are the skills and the knowledge the students have earned as a result from the interactions between students and teachers throughout their schooling years (J.J., 2012).

The statement by Fagimovich and Rafagatovich (2014) stated that the teachers can raise public awareness among the students as they not only have a comprehensive level of knowledge but also a certain life experience as well as the ability to convince the students. In the aspect of teaching LINUS students, LINUS teachers will able to raise the students' confidence by teaching them consistently and diversify the teaching methods so that the students are interested to continue learning.

According to Biesta et al., (2015) teachers' responsibilities are not necessarily limited to the students only, but also in establishing good relationships with the parents. This is important so that they feel that they are welcomed to participate in ensuring their child's success. Therefore, it is the teacher's responsibilities to make sure that there is an excellent working relationship between them. The results of studies conducted by John (2012), Creemers and Kyriakides (2008) have shown that the teachers and their innovative teaching practices are the major factors affecting the students' achievement from time to time.

Conceptual Framework

This study intends to investigate about the correlation of the two independent variables (IV) toward the dependent variable (DV). The variables that involved in this study are shown as the figure below.

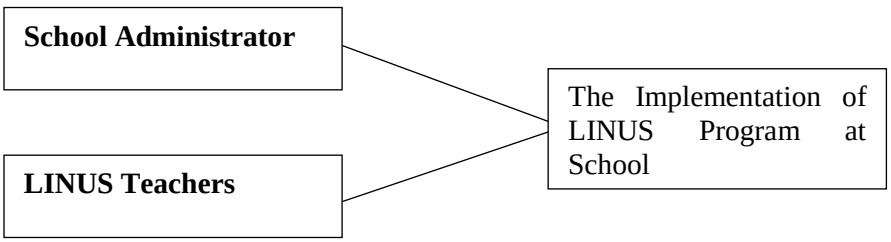

Figure 2: The Conceptual Framework

Methodology / Measurement

This observation-descriptive study using the quantitative approach which involved 350 teachers as a respondent from 53 primary schools in the Kota Kinabalu district. The sampling technique that was used was a random sampling. According to Rubin and Bobbie (2010) the size of the sample should be maximized so that the sampling error can be minimized and has a higher level of validity to make a general conclusion on the population. The value of the reliability index was high which is 0.96. The Instruments of the questionnaire submitted to the respondents consist of 35 items that divided into three sections which are Part A, Part B and Part C. The Part A consists of 5 items covering the gender, the options, the academic qualifications, the teaching experience and type of school. The Part B contains a statement about the support of school administrators. The questionnaire for this section contains 10 items modified from the *Manual for the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* developed by Bass and Avolio (1997) and adjusted according the responsibilities of school's leaders as

stated in *Buku Pengoperasian LINUS 2.0* which focuses on the function of the school administrators in terms of the implementation of the LINUS program at school only. While the statement in the Part C is about the contributions of the LINUS teachers using the instrument developed based on *Sources of Stress Among British Teachers: The Contribution of Job Factors and Personality Factors* (Kyriacou, 1980) and *Accuracy of Teacher Reports of their Classroom Behavior* (Hook and Rosenshine, 1979) which were adjusted with the responsibility of teachers in the implementation of the LINUS program as stated in *Buku Pengoperasian LINUS 2.0* as well. There are also 10 questions in Part C about the task of teachers in implementing the LINUS program. Part D is a set of questions about the LINUS program adapted from the open questions conducted by Nazariyah Sani (2014) in her research titled *"Literasi dan Numerasi (LINUS): Satu Analisis".* This section also has 10 questions. The questionnaires used in this study are from Likert Scale. The collected data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

Findings and Discussion

Respondents' Information

The table below shows the personal information of the respondents who were involved in this study. The information on the respondent collected were on gender, options, academic qualifications, teaching experience and types of school.

1) The Respondents' Information by Gender

Table 1: The Frequency and the Percentage of the Respondents' Information by Gender

Gender	Frequency(N)	Percentage (%)
Male	101	28.9
Female	249	71.1
Total	350	100.0

The table shows that the female respondents (N = 249, 71.1%) is higher than the male respondents (N = 101, 28.9%).

2) The Respondents' Information by Options

Table 2: The Frequency and the Percentage of the Respondents' Information by Options

Options	Frequency(N)	Percentage (%)
BM	130	37.1
BI	125	35.8
MT	95	27.1
Total	350	100.0

The table above shows that respondents who have Malay Language as their teaching option (N = 130, 37.1%) has the highest rate followed by the respondents who have English option (N = 125, 35.8%). The lowest frequencies and percentages are the respondents who have Mathematics as their option (N = 95, 27.1%).

3) The Respondents' Information by Academic Qualifications

Table 3: The Frequency and the Percentage of the Respondents' Information by Academic Qualifications

Academic Qualifications	Frequency(N)	Percentage (%)
Diploma	141	40.3
Degree	190	54.3
Master	19	5.4
Total	350	100.0

The above table shows that the respondents who has a degree (N = 190, 54.3%) have the highest percentage followed by respondents with a diploma (N = 141, 40.3%). The lowest frequency and percentage are the respondents who have master's degree (N = 19, 5.4%).

4) The Respondents' Information by Teaching Experiences

Table 4: The Frequency and the Percentage of the Respondents' Information by Teaching Experiences

Teaching Experiences	Frequency(N)	Percentage (%)
< 5 year	12	3.4
6 – 10 year	56	16.0
11 -15 year	88	25.1
> 16 year	194	55.5
Total	350	100.0

The above table shows that the respondents with teaching experience of more than 16 years (N = 148, 52.5%) are the highest follow by the respondents with 11 - 15 years teaching experience (N = 65, 23.0%) and follow by the respondents with experience teaching of 6 - 10 years (N = 57, 20.2%). The lowest frequency and percentage are the respondents with teaching experience of less than 5 years (N = 12, 4.3%).

5) The Respondents' Information by Types of School

Table 5: The Frequency and the Percentage of the Respondents' Information by Types of School

Types of School	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
SK	209	59.7
SK (M)	54	15.4
SJK	87	24.9
Total	350	100.0

The table above shows that the respondents who were teaching in SK (N = 138, 48.9%) are the highest followed by the respondents who teach in SJK (N = 92, 32.6%). The lowest frequency and percentages are respondents who were teaching in SK (M) (N = 52, 18.4%).

The Correlation

1) The School Leaders Support toward the LINUS Program Implementation

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation the School's Leader Support and The LINUS Program Implementation

Variables	N	Mean	Std.Dev
School Administrators	350	4.23	.570
LINUS Program	350	4.20	.535

Table 8: Correlation Analysis for the School's Leaders Supports

		LINUS Program Implementation	School's Leaders Supports
Implementation of LINUS Program	Korelasi Pearson	1	.707**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
School Administrators Supports	Korelasi Pearson	.707**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350

** Correlation was significant at 0.01 (2-tailed)

Based on the table above, on the sample (N = 350), the correlation between the school administrators supports (M = 4.23, SP = 0.570) and the implementation of the LINUS

program (M = 4.03, SP = 0.535) shows a strong correlation where r = 0.707 and p = 0.000. By referring to the significant level of 0.01, if p <0.01, there is a significant correlation between the two variables. The r value which is positive indicates that the relationship between the school administrators support and the implementation of the LINUS program. This means there is a significant correlation between the school administrators supports towards the implementation of the LINUS program at school.

2) The LINUS Teachers Contributions toward the LINUS Program Implementation

Table 9: Mean and Standard Deviation the LINUS Teachers Contributions and the LINUS Program Implementation

Pemboleh Ubah	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
LINUS Teachers	350	4.20	.535
LINUS Program	350	4.46	.498

Table 10: Correlation Analysis for the LINUS Program Contributions

		LINUS Program Implementation	LINUS Teachers Contributions
LINUS Program Implementation	Korelasi Pearson	1	.744**
	Sig (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
LINUS Teachers Contributions	Korelasi Pearson	.744**	1
	Sig (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350

** Correlation was significant at 0.01 (2-tailed)

Based on the table above for the sample (N = 350), the correlation between LINUS teachers contributions (M = 4.46, SP = .498) and the implementation of the LINUS program (M = 4.20, SP = .535) shows a strong correlation where r = 0.744 and p = 0.000. By referring to the significant level of 0.01, if p <0.01, there is a significant correlation between the two variables. The value of r is positive indicates that the correlations between the LINUS teachers contributions and the implementation of the LINUS program is also positive. This means that there is a significant correlation between the LINUS teachers contribution towards the implementation of the LINUS program at school.

Implications and Suggestions

The findings of this study show that the school administrators support has a significant correlation with the implementation of the LINUS program at school. The LINUS program is one of the academic programs that ensure the student's development. Many studies have been done to examine the relationship between the leadership of the school and the performance of the students, and all studies show the same result that the leadership has a positive relationship towards the student performance, such as studies conducted by Saini, Shahril-

Charil, and Jamal-Nordin, (2015) that state that the school success is closely related to the leadership style of the school leader. Same goes with the summary of the study made by Agustina (2016) who stated that the leadership of school leader and the school's climate have significant relationships and influence on the academic performance at school.

The findings of the previous study are consistent with the findings of this study, that there is a significant relationship between the LINUS teachers' contributions to the implementation of the LINUS program at the school. In other words, whatever the academic program involving the students will relate directly with the teachers because according to Stronge (2018) "*it seems that more can be done to improve education by increasing the effectiveness of the teachers rather than devoting every other relevant factor*". This shows that teachers contribute significantly to student learning in their classes and their academic performance.

LINUS students are categorized as weak learners because they have not mastered the basic skills. Therefore, LINUS teachers should plan methods or techniques that suit the students' interests and abilities to acquire information or knowledge at their own rate. Each students have their own way of accepting and understanding the lessons in order to enjoy the teaching and learning process (Chin and Yusoff, 2017).

Therefore, the LINUS program should be highlighted by all parties and not to be underestimated at school, because this program has many long-term impacts, including the improved performance of the school generally, as well as shaping the student's future. All the drawbacks that set in while implementing this program at school should be properly and carefully discussed in detail so that the problems arise can be effectively solved.

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