

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Malaysia is a developing country, in order to develop the country to face the challenges of the twenty-first century as well as to improve the quality of life for its people, on 28th February 1991 the Malaysia Prime Ministry, YAB Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, unveiled a vision that will see the country becoming a fully developed economy by the year 2020. It is also a vision of a united nation, with a confident Malaysian society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient

The important criterion that will help the country fulfil the vision is the development of human resource, and in order to achieve this purpose a Human Resource Development Fund has been registered in 1992 to pursue continuing education to meet the challenges of modernization.

One of the goals of the Government of Malaysia is quality education for all in the twenty-first century. A quality education system will educate its people to be more opened to new ideas, and the modern value will accumulate in them in order to confront the rapid change in this

challenging environment and high technology millennium. Therefore, the role of education for the development of a country is important.

Education system is often slower and difficult to change than other system in a developing society. UNESCO's survey (Adams and Chan, 1981) mentioned that change in educational organizations was not easy to attain and the process of educational reform was clearly a very complicated one (Educational Management & Administration 1990, p. 61). Nevertheless, education system needs to change in order to survive in a fast changing world. In fact, education in Malaysia is changing quite rapidly. Since 1970s, there were quite a number of changes in the Malaysian education system, such as the implementation of KBSR and KBSM; and Basic Economy in SPM curriculum as one of the elective subjects; History as one of the compulsory subjects for secondary schools; Moral Education as a compulsory subject for non-Muslim students; and recently, 90 pioneer secondary schools are implementing the new concept of instruction which is known as Smart School.

All of these changes in the education system would affect teachers. Teachers are one of the most vital components that contribute to the achievement of the education system. Due to the rapid change of our education system, teachers need to continually update their information on curriculum methodology, and technology to allow them to make

philosophical and programmatic, as well as practical changes. Actually, in-service training or in-house training provided information either on teaching methodology or subject matter as well as for staff development.

In Malaysia, all teachers must go through a pre-service training in order to become qualified teachers. There are three types of teachers pre-service training programs in Malaysia: Malaysian Diploma in Teaching (3 years); Post Diploma Certificate in Teaching (1year); and Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (1 year). Besides pre-service training, there are a variety of in-service courses conducted by the Ministry of Education to meet the needs of our schools. The main teacher in-service training programs are Special Degree Program for Non-Graduate Teachers (1year), and Professional Development Courses (14 weeks). Nowadays, in-service training has become a matter of deepest concern because of the rapid pace of change in our society. "The in-service education of teachers will be the major focus in teacher education for the next decade; this prediction will prove accurate because of the condition of the teaching profession, the state of education, the plight of teacher education, and the will of the public." In fact, until now teachers in-service or in-house training is inevitable in order to meet societal needs, and even gain more attention than previous years.

There are many teachers who did not attend any refresher courses after so many years of service. Actually, learning is a continuous process, so the teachers need to be refreshed after certain years of teaching in order to be more effective, and be able to confront new challenges in the classroom. A teacher's knowledge, effectiveness and efficiency in teaching could have impact on pupils' performance. Therefore, staff development/in-service, or in-house training which is now perceived as a professional responsibility of school managers is necessary in the new century.

In Malaysia, teachers' in-service training courses were planned by the central office, and the usual procedure is to assemble several hundred teachers in a hall or an auditorium to listen to a series of lectures on the new curriculum or improving teaching method. Normally, the project planner and the instructor for those training are not fully aware of the teachers needs and practice in schools. The department never gives any opportunity to teachers to participate in planning or to determine the content of the in-service training programs. As a consequence, the in-service training programs often been criticized as irrelevant to the real needs of teachers, and is a waste of money and time.

Due to these conditions, the school principal should play his/her role in conducting in-house training for his/her teachers. According to Wildy and Dimmock (1993), instructional leadership encompasses "those

actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning” and comprises the following tasks: defining the purpose of schooling; setting schoolwide goals; providing the resources needed for learning to occur; supervising and evaluating teachers; co-ordinating staff development programs; and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers. The school principal as the head of the school organization will be able to know the needs of his/her staff and provides most suitable courses for them, such as the most suitable content, delivery, or evaluation method.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study attempts to explore the role of the principal in the conduct of in-house training as perceived by teachers in Catholic Secondary School in Petaling Jaya. This study would explore the perceptions of teachers in four areas: planning, implementing, evaluating, and assessing teachers' need. Such findings could have direct implications on the planning of future staff development programs in secondary schools. Besides, this study also attempts to discuss the changing role of principal which does not only concentrate on meeting people, answering phone calls, and etc., but also involve in initiating in-house training programs as well as pre-service, and in-service training programs for teachers in school.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Education plans, implements, and evaluates most of the teachers in-service training programs. In-service training programs shouldn't be planned and managed by the central office alone, they should involve all parties concerned. In this respect, the principals and teachers have important roles to play. Many in-service training failed because the programs did not meet the needs of the teachers or the programs did not suit the school environment. Therefore, the school principal should play his/her roles in conducting in-house training programs that suit his/her own staff and environment. Gaitri Hena Mukherjee (1970) suggested that: (a) the principal can no longer be just the school executive; (b) the principal must be aware of his role as a staff leader, initiating improvements in the school; (c) the principal needs to communicate clearly to his teachers the role he will play in the school; (d) the principal needs to communicate to his teachers what he expects of them; and (e) the goals of the school will be more effectively met if principal and teacher expectations coincide.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

This study aims to explore how the secondary teachers perceive the role of principal in the conduct of in-house training in school. The study will be based specifically on the following questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of the role of principals in the conduct of in-house training programs in planning, implementing, evaluating, and teachers' need?
2. Are there any differences in teachers' perceptions of the role of principals in the conduct of in-house training in terms of gender, years of teaching experience, and options?

1.5 Limitations of the Study

This study will be limited to one secondary school in Petaling Jaya, Selangor, involving only 30 teachers. The study will be limited to four areas of in-house training program: planning, implementing, evaluating, and teachers' need. It is not possible to generalize from the study because it is conducted only in one of the secondary schools in Selangor.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Role

Standardized patterns of behavior required of all person playing a part in a given functional relationship, regardless of personal wishes or interpersonal obligations irrelevant to the functional relationship.

Principal

The officially appointed administrators of secondary schools. It also includes those who are acting as principals. Usually, education service officers are appointed as principals basing on seniority and qualifications. Principals are placed on either a super-scale "G" or a senior time-scale salary post. Principals are to see to the general administration of the school, which includes duties such as teacher service, curriculum and co-curriculum implementation, student welfare etc.

In-house Training

In-house training is organized, conducted, and implemented in school, and only the staff from the school itself can take part.

Secondary School

A school providing secondary education (lower and upper) appropriate for a pupil who has just completed primary education. The pupils are between the ages of 12 to 18 years and are placed in form 1 to form 5. In the context of this study secondary school is actually regular government- assisted school and do not include science, vocational or religious school. Therefore, private secondary school is not included in this study.

Teachers

That is persons employed in an official capacity for the purpose of guiding and directing the learning experiences of pupils or students in a school or educational institution. Teachers must have been trained or have completed a professional curriculum in a university or a teacher training college and whose training has been officially recognized by the award of an appropriate teaching certificate.