CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The study was designed to use a survey research methodology. The unit of analysis was a secondary school in Petaling Jaya. The main objective of the study was to determine the role of the principal as an instructional leader towards an effective school.

3.1 Research Location

Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Sultan Abdul Samad was chosen as the place of research because of the following reasons:

i. The ease of approval from the school principal to allow teachers to be respondents.

ii. The ease of obtaining response from respondents as the researcher is known to them.

iii. The researcher is a teacher in the school.

iv. The ease of follow up with respondents to obtain completed questionnaire.

Sekolah Menengah Sultan Abdul Samad, the research location is a fully aided government school, which was established in the year 1963. At that time the school shared its building with three other schools namely SMK, SM Jenis Kebangsaan and Sekolah Lanjutan. However in 1966, the school solely owned the school building and it was then known as SMK Petaling. Y.B. Datuk Hussein Onn, the Minister of Education at that time, officially opened it on the 27th May 1971. SMK Sultan Abdul Samad is situated in Section 12, Petaling
Jaya close to the University Hospital, University Malaya and International Islamic University. The school is a co-ed school with Remove, Special Class, Form one to Form six and a total enrolment of 2700 students. The teacher enrolment is about 120. SMK Sultan Abdul Samad is a double session school with Remove, Form One, Form Two and the special class in the afternoon. Form Three to Form Six are in the morning session.

The Ministry of Education appoints the Principal of the school. The Principal is Datin Norsiah bt Ariffin who took over from Mr Dharam Prakash who, retired late last year. Datin Norsiah is quite familiar to the school as she was the former Senior Assistant student affair in the late eighties and then became the Senior Assistant for two years. She was promoted to a Principal to another school in 1996 and then came back to SMK Sultan Abdul Samad in 1998.

Datin Norsiah is helped by her team of administrators that is the Senior Assistant – Puan Farida, Senior Assistant student affair is Mr Tune and the afternoon Supervisor Mr Kumaresan.

The respondents of this study were chosen at random from SMK Sultan Abdul Samad, Petaling Jaya. However, specific efforts were done to ensure that there would be representatives from the following categories.

i. Graduates and non-graduates.

ii. Age 34 years and below, 35-39 years and above 40 years.

iii. Years of experience in the school 10 years and below, 11-15 years and more then 16 years.
3.2 Research Instrument

The instrument for this study is questionnaire adapted from the Principal's Instructional Leadership Questionnaire (PILQ) adapted from a dissertation submitted by Manickavasagam (1985). Some of the questions in the original questionnaire were omitted and others added to suit the five dimension of an instructional leadership. The five dimensions are defining mission/vision, managing curriculum, supervising teaching/learning process, monitoring student achievement and promoting a conducive climate.


The questionnaire is divided into two sections.

i. Section I consist of 7 items designed to gather basic demographic data of the teachers. These items required teachers to identify their sex, age, academic qualifications, professional qualifications, teaching experience, and number of years teaching in the present school as well as the number of schools they had taught in.

ii. Section II consisted of 42 items, Likert type perception questions, designed to measure teacher's perception of tasks performed by the principal. These items were adapted from the Principals Instructional Leadership Questionnaire (PILQ). Teachers were required to respond to the statements on a 5-point scale of 1 to 5 denoting the degree of their agreement in the statements. The items were divided into five dimensions which are as below:
1. **Defining the mission and vision (items 1–8)**

The items in this dimension consisted of statements concerning the principal if he/she has a vision and mission for the school (1), specifies the vision and mission of the school through oral (2), documentation (3) and exhibiting it in strategic locations (4). The principal makes sure the vision and mission is in accordance with the National Education Policy, which emphasizes on basic skill (5) and student achievement (6). The vision/mission is accepted by the members of the school (7) and the school programs are suitable for achieving the mission and vision (8).

2. **Managing Curriculum (items 9 –14, 19, 24, 25)**

The items in this dimension was based on the role of the principal in providing guidelines for the preparation of school schedules (9), keeps the staff informed on recent developments in education (10) and is involved with planning and implementation of the curriculum (11). The principal encourages the staff to take up in service courses (12), helps in developing long term plans for the school (13) and makes informal classrooms visits (14). The principal explains the rationale behind the school policy to pupils, teachers and parents (19), organizes school based workshops on professional needs for teachers (24) and encourages teachers to develop new teaching strategies at meetings or during informal discussions (25).
3. **Supervising teaching-learning process (items 15,16,27,29 and 31)**

The items in this dimension consisted of statements concerning the principal’s role in observing teachers in the classroom when necessary (15), monitors the effective implementation of the instructional program (16) and takes steps to reduce class interruptions during lesson time (27). The principal offers useful suggestions to teachers after classroom observation (29) and monitors the use of instructional resources (teaching aids) with the aid of resource teacher (31).

4. **Monitoring student achievement (items 17,18,20,21,23,28,30,32,33,34)**

The items in this dimension was based on the role of the principal in monitoring and encouraging pupils to do well in their studies (17) and advises teachers to implement educational guidance strategies for pupils (18). The principal leads the staff members to work as a team to improve the school program (20) and sets the school tone by emphasizing high standards of work (21). The principal advises teachers to adopt a firm but encouraging and supportive approach to teaching (23) and determines academic targets for subject areas on the basis of examination result (28). The principal makes a periodic review of students written assignments (30), works with teachers to assist academically weak students gain proficiency in the basic subject (32) and seeks expert help to assist students with learning problems (33). The principal uses assembly talks to motivate students to perform well in examination (34).
5. **Promoting conducive climate (items 26,35-42)**

The items in this dimension consisted of statements concerning the role of the principal in taking steps to promote a conducive classroom and school atmosphere (26). The principal encourages open communication with teachers (35), emphasizes on the physical aspects of the school (36) and on student achievement (37). The principal finds time to listen to teachers problems (38), is friendly and approachable (39) and gives freedom to teachers in running their daily work (40). The principal is willing to accept ideas/opinions from teacher’s (41) and practices empowerment in the running of the school (42).

A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A, the Bahasa Malaysia version can be found in Appendix B. The questionnaires were distributed to all the respondents that had been chosen at random. A brief explanation on the objectives of the questionnaire and survey was done with the respondents. The respondents indicate the degree to which they perceive the principal has performed particular tasks. Respondents choose their answers from a five-point Likert scale:

1- Do not know, 2- Never performs the task, 3– Sometimes performs the tasks, 4- Frequently performs the tasks and 5 – Very frequently performs the tasks.

3.3 **Distribution and administration of questionnaire.**

A pilot study to test the questionnaire was carried out in early October 1997. An early version of the questionnaire was administered to 20 teachers from both the morning and afternoon sessions. The researcher to gather comments on the items
of the questionnaire then interviewed the teachers. The researcher also made constant observations discreetly in the school to gather more information.

Based on the teacher's recommendations, certain items of the original questions were eliminated and items considered to be vaguely worded were improved upon.

To ensure authenticity, the teachers were given both the English and Bahasa Malaysia versions of the questionnaires to work with.

Administration of the questionnaires was performed personally by the researcher. Care was taken to ensure validity of the questionnaire. The researcher explained all the items / statement in the questionnaire before the teachers was asked to respond.

The researcher has taken care to obtain permission from the Educational Planning and Research Unit before proceeding with the research.

The questionnaire was distributed mainly during school recess or when the targeted respondents were having free periods. 100 questionnaire were distributed to the respondents during a period of one week. A great proportion of the questionnaire was returned to the researcher within a week.

There were no major problems in the administering of the questionnaire. There was cooperation from the respondents as the respondents were familiar with the researcher.

However, 15 questionnaires were not returned to the researcher. The reasons for this could be the following:

i. The respondents were not interested in participating in the survey.
The respondents were too busy with existing duties. Questionnaire were distributed on the last week of the school year. The response could have been better if the researcher has chosen another more appropriate time.

3.4 Method of Analysis

The data were analyzed by utilizing the SPSS computer software. The percentages were derived for each item of instructional leadership tasks and the background of the respondents. The percentage, mean score and mean percentage was further analyzed by grouping the instructional leadership tasks into five dimensions as specified earlier on (defining mission/vision, managing curriculum, supervising the teaching-learning process, monitoring student achievement and promoting positive climate).

One-Way Analysis (ANOVA) and t-test was used to see the perception of teachers on the role of the principal as an instructional leader towards an effective school.