

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In the United States, the significance of textbooks in education was recognized as early as in the 1930's. According to Whipple (1931):

The significant position of textbooks in the program of American education is so generally recognized It is the textbook that in thousands of classroom determines the content of instruction as well as the teaching procedures. (p.1)

In the 1980's, textbooks were still being mentioned as one of the important source of students' learning. (Harms and Yager 1981) Even though with the creation of computers and compact disc are made popular and available to schools, textbooks still remain as one of the important tools widely used in the classrooms. (Lehr,1979; Gopinathan,1983; Tanner,1983)

Situation is crucial in the developing countries, Beeby (1986), pointed out that in the developing countries, the textbook is ' the only rock to cling to' for students and teachers.

The central role of textbooks in the third world, as Albatch(1983) stressed the importance of textbooks as one of the key issues in educational reforms especially in the countries which faced the shortage of teachers.

Albatch (1983) stated that,

Nothing has ever replaced the printed work the key element in the educational process and as a result, textbooks are central to schooling at all levels. Yet textbooks are seldom taken into account by those who plan the educational reform or expansion of the school system in situation where there is a shortage of teachers and where teacher training is sometimes limited in scope. Textbooks are crucial in maintaining standards or quality and giving direction to curriculum (p.7)

According to the National Survey and Assessment of Instructional Material in the United States of America in 1974, textbooks were used as much as 65% of the teaching time in the class (Komoski, 1978).

The importance of textbooks in the classroom is further emphasized by Goldstein (1978), Gwynn (1960), Farr, Tulley and Powell (1978) and Tanner (1988). Textbooks should be seen as functional in the curriculum. The basic function of the textbooks is to provide knowledge and information to the students (Guthrie 1981). The school textbook continues to embody the authorized version of society's valid knowledge (Olson 1980 p.192)

Spiegel and Wright defined that the teachers' perception on the role of textbooks in the curriculum and learning process of the students as:

The most important function of textbook is to provide content input to the students if the content is accurate, up to date and attractively presented, learning will occur (p.627)

In one of the research regarding the school curriculum in the United States of America, the headmasters and principals of the primary and secondary schools chose the textbooks as one of the main resources which is worthy in the planning and constructing of teaching programs (Gwynn,1961).

2.2 Textbooks Quality, Evaluation and Publication

In Malaysia, there have not been many research undertakings carried out to assess the content quality of textbooks and workbooks. Therefore only a few literature can be used to illuminate this issue. The Textbook Division of the Malaysian Ministry of Education used a criteria which included content, exercises and reinforcement, illustration, language and terminology, presentation, sensitivity and incorporation of moral values and technical aspect to evaluate the textbooks.

Nageswerarav (1989) found that the Moral Education textbook of the primary school had irrelevant content and inappropriate cognitive frame work, a lot of unstructured knowledge content and irrational judgment values.

Lee and Chew (1990) pointed out that in General Science, textbook was less frequently used than workbooks. The textbook was mainly used to teach theory lessons. Halijah Harun (1991) on the evaluation of the content

of Bahasa Malaysia textbooks found that the short essays and excerpts of various titles were not standardized in their content and did not have a proper theoretical scheme and literary value. Kartini Baharum (1991), in her study of evaluation of Geography textbooks, contended that the content quality was rated as satisfactory. The low cognitive level of content and activities were of memorizing and comprehension types instead of the application, synthesis and critical evaluative types.

Cheok Teng Se (1994) examined the Science Textbooks for Form One and found out that generally the standard was good or average only. Some were inadequate in several aspects such as the end-of-chapter exercises and the layout.

However, Koo Se Choon (1996), in his study regarding the program of publishing of KBSM science textbooks, remarked that the system of quality control introduced and implemented by the Ministry of Education proved to have received positive response from the authors of textbooks as well as from the publishers.

Based on the above research findings, we can derive several weaknesses on the quality of the textbooks used in Malaysian public schools as detected by findings of Sufean Hussin (1997) as below:

- a) Experienced teachers and academicians were not consulted when writing textbooks by writers and editors. Critical inputs and feedback could be given to facilitate the suitability level and cognitive content of textbook manuscripts.

- b) The cognitive and affective levels of knowledge were ignored by writers, editors and textbook evaluators.
- c) The fact that there were low and high achievers in school which needed sequential content in the mastery learning of skills were ignored by the writers, editors and textbook evaluators. This amounted to the inability of effectiveness of progressive learning by the low achievers.
- d) Publishers should engaged evaluation panels of experienced teachers and editors of every subject in schools to evaluate and improved critically on the content quality of the textbooks.
- e) Refusal to pretest manuscripts in schools due to higher cost of production and lower profit of the publishers were reasons which resulted that changes could not be made to the contents, activities and problem-solving exercises in the manuscripts.

The quality of textbooks in use in the secondary schools in Malaysia could be classified as good but various steps should be taken to improve and to upgrade periodically to achieve higher standard. Consultation from experienced teachers is an invaluable input which will enhance content, illustration and other aspects for production of better quality books.

2.3 Management of the Policy

a) Ministry Level

The Textbook Bureau was established in 1967 and placed under the Educational Planning and Research Division (EPRD). The purpose of the Textbook Bureau is to provide loan textbooks to students of lower income group in the country and to ensure students of poorer families will not slack or be left behind in the process of providing education as defined by the various Education Acts.

The establishment of the Bureau was to perform two important roles, namely:

1. To control the usage, sale and purchase of textbooks in all government schools in Malaysia.
2. To control the quality of textbooks used in all schools.

(Cabinet Committee Report, 1979)

When the Textbook Loan Policy was launched in 1975, the Bureau was assigned the responsibility of implementation. At this time, the autonomy of selection of textbooks was in the hands of the teachers. A panel of teachers was allowed to choose the various textbooks from the approved list of textbooks in all subjects recommended by the Ministry. Schools then placed their orders to the Textbook Bureau through their respective State Education Department. The Bureau then sent the books accordingly based

on the quantity required by each school. This open-system was monopolized by big publishers.

In 1988, the Bureau became the Textbook Division of the Ministry of Education. Its main functions were to ensure quality control and checking of textbooks, approval of textbooks, price control of textbooks, revising and updating content of textbooks and monitoring the use of textbooks in schools. Most importantly, the Division was responsible for implementing the textbook loan scheme in all primary, secondary, vocational and technical and Islamic schools throughout the country.

In 1996, The Textbook Division implemented the internal or closed system where the Division commissioned a panel of writers to write textbooks. The writers were paid for the copyright title by the Division and the publishers paid annual royalties to the Division so as to generate income for its development and expenditure.

b) District-School level

Since 1975 until 1995, schools were allowed to select their own textbooks from the list of titles provided by the Textbook Division. Distribution of books were then conducted by appointed distributors based on the orders received by the Division through the State Education Department. The textbooks teacher of each school would check the quantities of titles and the condition of books, certify a receipt voucher, record down the titles and quantities of books in a stock book, keep them in the storeroom and later distribute the books to the students of various forms.

In 1996, schools had no more autonomy in selecting their desired titles of textbooks and workbooks when the closed system was enforced. The state textbook officer and the district education officer were in-charge of coordination and distribution of textbooks to all the schools. Each school textbook teacher became a member of the district committee where meetings were conducted to monitor the surplus and deficit of books in all schools in the district. Some of the problems of shortages and surpluses in schools in a particular district were resolved through the encouraging coordination between the members in a particular district. Decisions for disposal, exchanges and application of various forms of assistance and procedures could be made at district level and thus red tape was minimized to granting to a faster system of distribution and control.