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Learning about teachers' resilience: Perceptions,
challenges and strategies of policy implementation in
two secondary schools in Malaysia

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor
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Abstract

Between 1996 and 2010 the Ministry of Education in Malaysia implemented several policies to ensure that the education system in Malaysia was able to fulfill current national and international demands. The Ministry argued that the policies being implemented had many potential benefits. However, changes in education also create new challenges for teachers because, while concentrating on teaching and learning, they are also required to focus on implementing the new policies.

These unavoidable challenges can influence the nature and quality of teachers' practice. To ensure the success of important policy changes, the Malaysian education system needs resilient teachers, who are able to face all the challenges successfully. In the school context, educational leadership is expected to play a key role in supporting teachers in this challenging situation.

The intent of this study was to explore educators' and parents' views and experiences in these areas, including educational leadership practices which aimed to ensure that teachers sustain their resilience in times of facing real pressure. Data was collected through interviews with (i) members of Senior Management Teams (ii) selected teachers and (iii) selected members from committees of Parent and Teachers Associations in two secondary schools in Malaysia. In total 46 participants were involved in this study. Data analysis was carried out through analytic categories based on hermeneutics philosophy. The findings indicated that teachers faced various challenges during the implementation of national education policy, but teachers' own inner strength, the role of PTA members, colleagues' collegiality and the location of teachers' schools in their hometown assisted them to sustain their resilience. All groups of participants claimed that educational leaders, as represented by members of Senior Management Teams at their schools, have played the main role in assisting teachers to face challenges and, indirectly, sustaining their resilience. Five approaches were utilised by the educational leaders: they provided a congenial working environment that did not place undue pressure on teachers, eased the burden for teachers in implementing the policy, provided encouraging monitoring, showed continuing appreciation; and promoted school success.

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List of commonly used acronyms and abbreviations

EPU	Economic Planning Unit
IAB	Institute Aminuddin Baki
IPS	Institute of Principalship Studies
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
MEPADC	Malaysian Education Principal and Executive Development Centre
MOE	Ministry of Education
MUHEC	Massey University Human Ethics Committee
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPQH	National Professional Qualification for Headteachers
NUTP	National Union of Teaching Profession
PLI	Poverty Line Income
PTAs	Parent Teacher Associations
SED	State Education Department
SMTs	Senior Management Teams

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study explores school staff experiences while trying to implement new educational policies, with a focus on the challenges they faced and the strategies they and their leaders may use to assist them at such times. The study is based largely on interviews carried out with members of Senior Management Teams (SMTs), teachers and Parent Teacher Association members from two secondary schools in Malaysia. It seeks to understand their perceptions about the challenges and strategies of translating policy to practice in these two schools. This study was carried out at National Secondary Schools in Malaysia and provides an overview of the situation at these schools. In this chapter I provide some background to the study, articulate the research questions and outline the structure of the thesis as a guide to readers in navigating it.

1.2 Background and introducing the rationale for the study

The discussion in this section is largely based upon my own experience in education in Malaysia and my observations of the system and practices in national secondary schools in Malaysia, although I did not have direct personal experience in the implementation of national education policies, the challenges presented by them and the approaches that school staff developed to cope with those. The findings of this study will elaborate upon school staff experience in the implementation of national educational policies and the ways they coped with the challenges presented by the implementation of these policies.

The education system in Malaysia is the responsibility of the Federal government (Kandasamy & Blaton, 2004). According to R. Ahmad (1998), educational development and reform in Malaysia have always been characterized by the government's efforts to adapt education to address the social, economic and political development needs of the country.

The Malaysian education system is a highly centralised and bureaucratic system where most of the important policy decision making occurs outside the schools. The Ministry of Education (MOE) decides on the allocation of funds to schools, prescribes and standardises what should be taught in schools, transfers teachers in and out of schools, and formulates top-down school reforms (M. Lee, 1999).

As the national schools are fully controlled by the government, many similarities exist and these will be elaborated on below.

Each school in Malaysia has a standard SMT. The team comprises a Principal and three different Assistant Principals, namely the Assistant Principal (Academic/Administration), Assistant Principal (Student Affairs) and Assistant Principal (Co-Curricular). Every secondary school in Malaysia has these four positions with each having responsibilities for different aspects of the school. For example, the role of the Principal is overall leadership of the school, but the Assistant Principal (Academic) focuses only on academic aspects such as teaching and learning and student assessment. The Assistant Principal (Student Affairs) focuses upon student discipline and welfare, including counselling and guidance, and the Assistant Principal (Co-Curricular) concentrates on sports, games and student associations.

The core business of teachers is teaching and learning. Despite this, teachers also have various other responsibilities, such as helping to manage the school through administrative duties, handling student discipline, being involved in co-curricular activities, preparing for school based-assessment and central national assessment, monitoring the daily attendance of students and compiling stock inventories, as well as assessing student homework, acting as a sports teacher, being involved in Parents-Teachers Association activities, furthering their study as a part

time student and fulfilling other conditions of their employment. Teachers also face pressures from supervision by the school inspectorate, and the requirement that they attend various staff development programmes.

Thus, in their working environment, teachers encounter many challenges relating both to teaching and learning, and the many other responsibilities they have. For example, student discipline is an issue in the Malaysian education system (Othman, 2006). Common problems include bullying (Khalid, 2007) vandalism, gang violence (Othman, 2006) and truancy (Zainudin Hassan, Mohamad Najib Abdul Ghafar, & Subramaniam., 2005). Illiteracy is another problem creating pressure for teachers (Dawi, 2002). This occurs both in rural and urban schools and particularly affects teaching and learning when teachers need to devote more time to a particular group resulting in other students being somewhat neglected (Radha Nambiar, Noraini Ibrahim, & Krish, 2008)

In addition, the education system in Malaysia encounters constant pressures from parents for their children to achieve high results in public examinations. At the end of Form 5, students are required to take the Malaysian Certificate of Education Examination. The emphasis is upon achieving the most A passes possible. These results form the entry requirements of Tertiary Education institutions in Malaysia. Furthermore, most parents in Malaysia have constraints on their time and there is an expectation on the part of the parents that teachers will not only educate their children but discipline them as well. Unfortunately there have been cases where parents have sued teachers in the belief that the discipline meted out was unjust or unwarranted.

Pressure derives also from the environment outside the schools. Demands come from private institutions and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). Private institutions require teachers to enhance teaching and learning by adapting to and using new technology. This is common in urban schools. NGOs also expect teachers to take on extra responsibilities whenever problems occur in the wider community. For example, when the country is engaged in a dialogue in relation to accidents, there is an expectation that teachers will educate students to avoid accidents.

Summarised above is the context within which secondary schools in Malaysia operate. In brief, issues that all teachers face in their daily work include those associated with government control, and both internal and external pressures that impact on the school environment. Internal pressures include students' discipline, teaching and learning problems, as well as the teaching environment itself. External pressures derive from parents' expectations and those of Private Institutions and NGOs. Thus, this study, which sought to investigate how teachers cope with such challenges during the implementation of new educational policy at school level in Malaysia, involves two main aspects - human aspects and teachers work conditions. My study of teacher resilience addresses both these aspects through interviews with namely members of SMTs, teachers and PTA members, exploring their views about their work within two schools.

It is important to note at the outset that the majority of researchers in Malaysia include the views of parents as an important variable in exploring the characteristics of school leadership (J. Ahmad & Boon, 2011; Marzuki & Razak, 2005). These researchers have justified the involvement of PTA members in order to obtain information from various perspectives and to contribute to more accurate data about the phenomenon of educational leadership and good practices leadership in schools. The views of parents are important also because in the education system in Malaysia, collaboration between schools and communities is seen as a major factor in ensuring that school goals can be achieved (Umat, 2000). In addition, researchers from the USA, for example, have identified the essential parent and community ties to local schools, which can have an influence on the efficacy of work within the instructional triangle of teacher, student, and subject matter (Scheurich, Goddard, Skrla, McKenzie, & Youngs, 2010). Furthermore, Shirley (Shirley, 2009) suggested that community organisations can have considerable influence on educational change, arguing that it provides an important repertoire of practices for change leaders. Considering the importance of the views of parent and community towards school situations, I therefore involved PTA members as a source of data in this study in order to obtain a wider range of perspectives and positions to assist the examination of the complex phenomena of educational policy changes, their effects on teachers and the ways teachers cope with the challenges as a result of the implementation of the policies.

1.3 A focus for the study

This study explores both teachers' and their leaders' perceptions about the challenges of implementing policy changes in classroom practices and investigates educational leaders' strategies for sustaining teacher resilience at such times. It researches these areas in two secondary schools in Malaysia in the context of the introduction of the Smart School Concept, the implementation of teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010.

The Malaysian Ministry of Education has argued that the implementation of these educational policies will be of potential benefit for students as individuals as well as for society as a whole. However, the implementation of the policies also creates challenges for teachers as they need to concentrate on teaching and learning in ways that fulfill the demands of the new educational policies.

As a result the implementation of these educational policies creates three main related issues. The first issue concerns the perceptions of teachers, members of SMTs and PTA members toward the implementation of these educational policies. The second issue addresses the challenges that teachers have faced. The third issue looks at how teachers cope with the challenges resulting from the implementation of these educational policies. To further examine these issues, the study will explore three main research questions.

1. How do teachers/SMT members/PTA members' perceive the implementation of the Smart School Concept, the implementation of teaching and learning of Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010?
2. What are the main challenges that teachers have faced and why do they believe that these challenges have arisen for them?
3. How do teachers develop strategies to cope with these challenges and how do educational leaders assist them in these situations?

1.4 Operationalising the research questions

This study explores people's perceptions of policy and processes of policy implementation. Deverson and Kennedy (2004, p. 840) state that a "perception is an interpretation or impression based on one's understanding of something". In this regard, then it was important to explore how the research participants interpreted the implementation of the Smart School concept, the implementation of teaching and learning of Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006 – 2010 as reflected in their own understandings. Mantilla (2001) also used an interpretive approach to examine how teachers perceive their role in the formation and appropriation of new educational policies" (p. 124).

The implementation of these three educational policies at secondary schools in Malaysia involves three main groups – SMT members, teachers and PTAs members. In order to find out how they interpret and understand this policy, an interviewing approach that involved these three groups in selected schools is used in this study.

The second issue focuses upon the perception of participants of the challenges of the implementation of these three educational policies. This research question also aims to find out how research participants interpret the main challenges that teachers face as a result of the implementation of these three educational policies.

The focus of the third issue in this study looks at how teachers cope with the challenges and how members of SMTs and PTA members define and enact their roles in assisting teachers. Deverson and Kennedy (2004, p. 283) state that to define is to describe or explain the scope. The meaning of enact is to perform or put into practice (p. 352) In this regard, this issue is focused upon how educational leaders describe their role and how they perform in assisting teachers to face the challenges presented by the implementation of these three educational policies.

1.5 The logic and content of the chapters

Having introduced the topic and purpose of this study, the next three chapters discuss issues that influenced the introduction of the national educational policies being enacted at the time this research began. Chapter Two discusses the development of government policy in general in Malaysia, focusing on the geographical, ethnic, and political context. This is followed by the identification of social, economic, cultural and political issues that have been significant in the introduction and the implementation of national educational policies in Malaysia.

In Chapter Three, the focus shifts to the educational policy context in Malaysia. This chapter discusses the educational policy changes during four historical phases of national policy, which are Pre-Independence and early Independence (before 1957 -1970), The New Economic Policy (1971-1990), The National Development Policy (1991-2000) and The National Vision Policy (2001-2010).

Chapter Four emphasises issues that have emerged from the development of Malaysian Smart Schools, the implementation of teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English and the introduction of the National Blueprint.

In Chapter Five, the concept of resilience is introduced through a discussion of the literature regarding teacher resilience including the various purposes of investigation into teacher resilience. The definition of teacher resilience for this study is his or her ability to cope with a new environment as a result of educational policy changes.

Chapter Six presents literature regarding educational leadership in Malaysia, beginning with a discussion that shows the relationship between educational leaders and teacher resilience. The chapter then explores some issues regarding concepts of educational leadership that have been used by Malaysian scholars in this area, and in educational leadership training in Malaysia. The discussion attempts to identify aspects of educational leadership practices in Malaysia that can be further explored in order to increase the effectiveness of leadership practices in aiding teacher resilience.

Chapter Seven presents the methodological issues in greater depth. The chapter begins by providing the refined rationale of the study explains the case study methodology and notes the ethical and permission procedures. The chapter then describes the research fieldwork processes, such as my role in gaining access to the selected schools, selecting research sites, negotiating research access and entering the field, applying data collection methods which follow Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) requirements and identifying a theoretical framework for analysing the data.

In Chapters Eight, Nine and Ten I present the findings of this study. In Chapter Eight, the discussion focuses on findings from teachers. Chapter Nine relates to the findings from members of SMTs and Chapter Ten concerns the findings from members of PTAs. The discussion in these chapters is based on the three research questions of the study.

In Chapter Eleven, I draw together the evidence from the previous data chapters to compare and integrate it with information described in the literature review in Chapters Two to Six and other relevant current literature. This chapter highlights and further examines the issues participants' described experiencing or observed during the implementation of the policies, the challenges that teachers faced and the way they coped with and were supported through those challenges. Finally, in Chapter Twelve, the study concludes by summarising the main points discussed in the previous chapters, noting the contributions and limitations of the study and providing recommendations and suggestions for further action.

Chapter Two

THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL POLICY IN MALAYSIA

2.1 Introduction

In order to provide a perspective for the study, this chapter begins by introducing the geographical, ethnic and political context in Malaysia. After a brief account of the physical and administrative characteristics of Malaysia, the ethnic composition of the Malaysian population and the distributions of occupational categories within each ethnic group are explained. Then a political analysis provides information on the political practices which contribute to government policy making.

The discussion of these four aspects leads to identification of social, economic, cultural and political issues in the country that influence national policy making in Malaysia.

The final part of the chapter provides a brief summary of the four recent phases in developing national policies in Malaysia. This includes a description of national policy during the pre independence and early independence phase (before 1957-1970), the New Economic Policy (1971-1990), the National Development Policy (1991-2000) and the National Vision Policy (2001-2010). A brief summary serves as a conclusion to the chapter.

2.2 Geographical Context

Malaysia is a country consisting of Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) and the northern portion of the island of Borneo (East Malaysia). Peninsular Malaysia, which lies between 2 and 7 degrees north of the Equator, is lapped by the Andaman Sea on its West Coast while its East coast and the island of Borneo are swept by the South China Sea. In total Malaysia spans a land area of 329,758 sq km. Malaysia's neighbours are Thailand in the north and Singapore to the immediate south of Peninsular Malaysia. On the island of Borneo, Malaysia's neighbours include both Indonesia and Brunei.

Malaysia is a tropical country with an equatorial climate. It is hot and humid throughout the year with mean daily temperatures ranging from 21° C at night and during the early hours in the morning to 32° C during the day. It experiences two monsoon seasons. The North East Monsoon, which usually occurs between Novembers and February, normally brings heavy rainfall. The South West Monsoon usually brings less rainfall. Except for monsoon seasons, the climate remains fairly stable throughout the year. Annual rainfall varies between 2000mm to 2500mm for the greater part of the country.

In terms of administrative structure, Peninsular Malaysia comprises 11 states and 2 Federal Territories. The states are: Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca and Johor. The Federal Territories are Kuala Lumpur (the capital city) and Putrajaya. East Malaysia, on the island of Borneo comprises 2 states- Sabah and Sarawak and 1 Federal Territory of Labuan. The geographical location of the States and Territories are shown in Figure 2.1.



Figure 2.1: Malaysian Geographical location of the States and Territories

Source: (Ministry of Education, 2006a)

These administrative states and territories have developed at different rates of urbanisation. Among higher levels of urbanisation rates are the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan and the states of Selangor (includes Putrajaya), Penang, Malacca, Johor, Perak and Negeri Sembilan. All these states and Federal Territories have urbanisation rates of over 50 per cent. Terengganu, Sabah, Sarawak, Pahang, Kedah, Perlis and Kelantan are example of states that have lower urbanisation rates. Table 2.1 shows the relative urbanisation rates.

Table 2.1: Urbanisation Rate by States and Territories in 2005

Ranking	States of Malaysia and The Federal Territories	Urbanisation Rate (%)
		2005
1.	The Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur	100.0
2.	Selangor*	88.4
3.	Penang	80.0
4.	The Federal Territories of Labuan	77.6
5.	Malacca	70.6
6.	Johor	66.5
7.	Perak	59.3
8.	Negeri Sembilan	56.3

continued

9.	Terengganu	49.8
10.	Sabah	49.8
11.	Sarawak	49.5
12.	Pahang	43.5
13.	Kedah	39.8
14.	Perlis	35.9
15.	Kelantan	33.4
<hr/>		
	Malaysia	63.0
<hr/>		

Source: Adapted from (Economic Planning Unit, 2006) and (Department of Malaysian Statistics, 2000)

Notes:*Includes Putrajaya

Different urbanisation rates are identifiable within each state and federal territory with the urban areas developing more rapidly than rural areas. The different rates of development are reflected in the poverty levels of their residents. Information provided by the Economic Planning Unit (2005) demonstrates,

Malaysia's poor are mainly concentrated in the states of Sabah, Kelantan, Kedah, Terengganu and Perlis, and in particular in the rural areas of those states. In 2002, the poverty rates for the poorest states were as follows: Sabah, 16.0 per cent; Kelantan, 12.4 per cent; Kedah, 10.7 per cent; Terengganu, 10.7 per cent and Perlis 10.1 per cent (p. 40)

These states are among those with the lower urbanisation rates as shown in Table 2.1.

2.3 Ethnic Context

Malaysia is unique in terms of its culture and ethnic composition. The densely populated Peninsular Malaysia is made up of three major ethnic groups, namely the Malays, Chinese and Indians. The indigenous (Orang Asli) are the minority who mostly live in the interior areas of Pahang, Perak, Kedah, Kelantan, Johor and Selangor. In Sabah and Sarawak, it is the reverse as Non-Malay Indigenous groups

make up more than half of the two states. In Sarawak, the largest indigenous tribe is the Iban followed by the Bidayuh, while in Sabah it is the Kadazan.

According to the Census from the Department of Malaysian Statistics (2000), the population of Malaysia is 23.27 million. In total, according to the Census Report 2000, racial composition in Malaysia is Malay and Indigenous (Bumiputera) (65.1%), Chinese (26.0%) and Indians (7.7%). Table 2.2 shows the relative racial composition of Malaysia by state.

Table 2.2: Racial Composition in Malaysia according to the Census Report 2000

States of Malaysia	Malay& Indigenous (Bumiputera)	Chinese	Indians
Penang	42.5	46.5	10.6
Selangor & Kuala Lumpur	51.1	33.8	13.8
Perak	54.7	32.0	13.0
Negeri Sembilan	57.9	25.6	16.0
Johor	57.1	35.4	6.9
Malacca	63.8	29.1	6.5
Pahang	76.8	17.7	5.0
Kedah	76.6	14.9	7.1
Perlis	85.5	10.3	1.3
Kelantan	95.0	3.8	0.3
Terengganu	96.8	2.8	0.2
West Malaysia only	62.4	27.4	9.3
Including East Malaysia	65.1	26.0	7.7

Source: Adapted from (Department of Malaysian Statistics, 2000)

The data from Table 2.2 shows that the Bumiputera represent the highest population group in Malaysia but the information in Table 2.3 indicates the percentage of employment in professional areas by Non-Bumiputera is higher than that of Bumiputera. Table 2.3 shows registered professionals by ethnic group in 2005.

Table 2.3: Registered Professionals by Each Ethnic Group in 2005

Profession	Bumiputera	Non-Bumiputera	Others	Total
Accountants	961	14,339	102	15,402
% of total	6.2	93.1	0.7	100.0
Architects	557	1092	4	1,653
% of total	33.7	66.1	0.2	100.0
Doctors	5,720	8799	1,055	15,574
% of total	36.7	56.5	6.8	100.0
Dentists	1,159	1400	49	2,608
% of total	44.4	53.7	1.9	100.0
Veterinary Surgeons	522	763	54	1,339
% of total	39.0	57	4.0	100.0
Engineers	3,326	8009	188	11,523
% of total	28.9	69.5	1.6	100.0
Surveyors	975	989	31	2,065
% of total	47.2	47.9	1.5	100.0
Lawyers	4,465	7188	97	11,750
% of total	38.0	37.1	0.8	100.0
Total	11866	18150	1255	31271
% of total	38	58	4	100.0

Source: Adapted from (Economic Planning Unit, 2006)

Table 2.3 demonstrates that of all professional occupations in Malaysia (accountants, architects, doctors, dentists, veterinary surgeons, engineers, surveyors, and lawyers) the percentage of Non-Bumiputera involved is 18150 (58%) much higher than Bumiputera 11866 (38%) and others 1255 (4%).

2.4 Political Context

Malaysia is ruled by a Parliamentary democracy with elections held every 4-5 years. The King is the Head of State. The monarchy is not an inherited monarchy but is an elected monarchy whereby the King is selected for single five-year terms from among the nine state Sultans which are from Perlis, Kedah, Perak, Kelantan, Terengganu, Pahang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Johore. The position of King was first established in 1957 with selection of the first King being based on length of reign amongst the Sultans who participated (Government of Malaysia, 2007). The remaining states Penang, Malacca, Sabah and Sarawak are headed by Governors and do not participate in selection.

Executive powers are vested in the head of Government, which is the Prime Minister. The legislative branch consists of a Parliament which is based on the British Westminster system. The bicameral parliament consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The King as the Head of State is the third component of parliament. Parliament is the legislative authority for the Federation, and in this capacity, the parliament enacts laws applicable to the Federation as a whole. It thus wields a considerable and far-reaching influence on the life of the Federation (Malaysia Parliament, 2007).

The Malaysian Government is a multi racial government, which comprises the Malay, Chinese, Indian and various East Malaysian ethnic communities. Each race is represented by a political party such as United Malays Nationalist Organisation (UMNO) for Malays, Malayan Chinese Association (K. Leithwood & McAdie) for the Chinese and Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) for Indians. Apart from these three major political parties, Malaysia also has other various political parties, especially from West Malaysia, that are based upon particular ethnic groups.

According to Funston (2001), the history of Malaysian politics began in the Malay community early in the twentieth century. It surfaced dramatically in 1946 when Britain attempted to introduce the Malayan Union. Objecting strongly to plans for abolishing the powers of the sultans, and extending citizenship to all, Malays

came together in the United Malays Nationalist Organisation (UMNO), and forced Britain to back down. UMNO also urged Britain to grant independence to the country. The cooperation between UMNO and MCA started in 1952 when a chance electoral pact with the MCA for the Kuala Lumpur municipal election in 1952 proved successful and MIC joined this group in 1955.

Originally, cooperation among these parties was called the Alliance. Crouch (1996, p. 33) stated, in December 1970, a broad state-level coalition was formed in Sarawak, followed in 1972 by coalition with the Chinese-based Gerakan in Penang and small People's Progressive Party (PPP) in Perak. Then the main Malay opposition party, PAS joined the coalition on 1 January 1973. This network of separate coalitions, together with the ruling Sabah Alliance in Sabah, was consolidated in the Barisan Nasional (National Front), which was officially registered as a confederation of parties in June 1974, two months before the August 1974 national election, but in 1977 the main Malay opposition party PAS were expelled from the Barisan Nasional (National Front) because PAS refused to execute Act 192 (the Emergency Powers Act) which was introduced by the BN dominated Malaysian Government.

Since the first election in 1959 until 2007, the Malaysian Government has been dominated by the Alliance, later named Barisan Nasional. The cooperative formula between all the political parties in the Barisan Nasional has led to stable government through a process of negotiation and compromise. The top party leaders work together and cooperate closely in government. Even though, there is no shortage of political conflicts involving the interests of the racial communities, the coalition party arrangement facilitates their settlement through compromise within the Cabinet. Crouch (1996, p. 33) reported, "certainly UMNO's dominance was not doubted, but its leaders were usually sensitive to the interests represented by their MCA and MIC partners".

2.5 Issues Reflecting the Geographical, Ethnic and Political Context in Malaysia

This chapter has begun with an explanation of the geographical, ethnic and political contexts in Malaysia, the discussion of which has identified several relevant issues. These include differing levels of poverty between rural and urban areas, the differing needs of ethnic subgroups in a multi-ethnic country, and the various interests of different political parties. These issues are inseparable in the development of national and educational policies in Malaysia.

2.5.1 Poverty

This issue of poverty emerged from the discussion about the different urbanisation rates of the states and federal territories. In Malaysia, “the incidence of poverty has traditionally been determined by reference to a threshold poverty line income (PLI). This PLI is based on what is considered to be minimum consumption requirements of a household for food, clothing, and other non-food items, such as rent, fuel, and power” (Economic Planning Unit, 2005, p. 35). Table 2.4 illustrates this.

Table 2.4: Poverty Line Incomes (RM* per month per household) 1999-2002

	1990	1995	1999	2002
Peninsular Malaysia	370	425	510	529
Sabah	544	601	685	690
Sarawak	452	516	584	600

Source: (Economic Planning Unit, 2005, p. 36)

* RM 2.60 equal to NZ \$1.00

Malaysia's poverty has been a predominantly rural phenomenon. In 2002, just 2 percent of urban households were living in poverty compared to 11.4 per cent in rural areas (Economic Planning Unit, 2005, p. 37)

Substantially more poverty is prevalent in rural areas as opposed to urban areas due to limited employment opportunities. In rural areas the only two occupations currently available occur in agriculture and fishery. Both are low-paying occupations in Malaysia. Meanwhile, residents in urban areas have many more opportunities to become involved in various forms of employment such as industrial occupations, education and administration. Different geographical locations have a genuine influence on levels of poverty.

2.5.2 Multi-ethnicity

The previous discussion about ethnic context has provided information that the number of Bumiputera is higher than the number of Non-Bumiputera but information about professional occupations amongst ethnic groups in Malaysia demonstrates that the number of professional Bumiputera is only 38 per cent compared to 58 per cent Non-Bumiputera. (see Table 2.3)

Apart from the contrast of the less professional Bumiputeras than Non-Bumiputera, the other issue involving ethnicity relates to the Indigenous population. This subgroup within the Malaysian population is amongst the poorest and least educated. The Malaysian government faces the arduous task of integrating and assimilating them within the mainstream of society and also providing them with equal opportunities in education. The Ministry of Education (2004) has noted several issues related to indigenous groups affecting their level of education . They live in the remote interiors, have many dialects in conversation amongst each tribe and indigenous parents have negative attitudes towards their children's education, where their social and cultural make-up differs markedly from the ordinary Malaysian citizen.

Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country comprising Malay, Chinese, Indian and various indigenous groups. Consequently, it has been observed that given the multiethnic nature of Malaysia, when designing and implementing policies, the Government should ensure that ethnic groups, including indigenous groups, are not ignored and put at a disadvantage (Jamaluddin, 2011; Jamil, 2010; Victor Agadjanian & Liew, 2005).

2.5.3 Varying interests among political parties

This issue arises from the discussion of the research background relating to the political system in Malaysia. The Executive Authority is headed by the Prime Minister. Since 1957, all Malaysian Prime Ministers have originated from the Malay ethnic group but Cabinet Ministers have come from other races represented in Malaysia especially Malay, Chinese and Indian.

The function of Parliament is to enact federal laws, make amendments to existing federal laws, examine the government's policies, approve the government's expenditures and approve new taxes. Parliament also serves as the forum for criticism and the focus of public opinion on national affairs (Malaysia Parliament, 2007)

The situation in Parliament shows that all political parties can have their positions about policy implementation in Malaysia taken into account. Because of the multiracial nature of the Malaysian Government, all policies including national educational policies that are passed by the Cabinet have considered the interests of all ethnicities within Malaysia.

The examination of geographical, political, and ethnic factors raised several important issues. These issues, in turn, have become the foundation for understanding the background of national policy in Malaysia.

2.6 The National Policies

This section presents the discussion of all national policies in Malaysia. The discussion is divided into four phases which are pre and early independence (before 1957-1970), the New Economic Policy (1971-1990), the National Development Policy (1991-2000) and the National Vision Policy (2001-2010). Finally, the section concludes with a brief summary of issues arising from these policies.

The first phase in developing National policy took place in pre independence and early independence of the country. There is no specific name for the national policy at that time. During this period the Malaysian Government focused primarily upon building national unity.

The second phase of national policy was titled the New Economic Policy and reflected issues arising from poverty, unemployment and economic disparities among ethnic groups in the early 1970s. This policy emphasised achieving growth with equity as well as creating harmony and unity in a nation with many ethnic groups. To achieve these aims, the Malaysian government implemented two courses of action, the first of which was to reduce absolute poverty irrespective of race through increasing income levels and providing employment opportunities for all Malaysians. The second course of action was to restructure society to correct economic imbalances amongst ethnic group.

The third phase of national policy was the National Development Policy. This policy continued the basic strategy of the New Economic Policy which was equitable distribution amongst ethnic groups. In addition, the Malaysian government introduced several adjustments to policy focusing upon increasing the participation of Bumiputera in the modern sectors of the economy and emphasis was placed on human resource development as a primary instrument for achieving the objectives of growth and distribution (Economic Planning Unit, 2005).

The fourth policy is the National Vision Policy. This policy builds upon and maintains the efforts of the New Economic Policy and National Development Policy, and incorporates the Vision 2020 objective of transforming Malaysia into a fully

developed nation by 2020. The Economic Planning Unit (2005) stated that the Vision 2020 emphasises the need to build a resilient and competitive nation, as well as an equitable society to ensure unity and political stability.

2.7 A Brief Summary of National Issues

The discussion about these national policies demonstrates Malaysian Government efforts to overcome issues of poverty, the different needs of each ethnic group and the various interests of political parties. None of these policies have clearly stated gender equality opportunities. However a report by A. Ahmad (1998), showed that the Malaysian government's efforts and plans to improve the status of women are integrated and incorporated into the New Economic Policy, the National Development Policy and the National Vision Policy. In addition, A. Ahmad (1998) stated that the Malaysian government implemented the National Policy on Women in 1989. The objectives of the National Policy on Women are to ensure equitable sharing of resources and development opportunities between men and women and to integrate women into all sectors of development in accordance with their capabilities and needs.

More recently, Hussin (2002) reported that in all national policy developments, the Malaysian Government has explicitly addressed issues in ways that reflect the geographical, ethnic, gender and political context of Malaysia (Hussin, 2002).

The development of policies in Malaysia is based on Utopian and Incremental frameworks. Hussin (2002) stated that the Utopian framework emphasises long term comprehensive development to bring about economic, social, political, educational, cultural, religious, scientific and technological progress. This framework is based on the parallel theory that the target of the development has to come simultaneously with development in other aspects. For example, if a country intends to develop agriculture in rural areas, the government should also give their attention to other

relevant issues such as how to change the mentality of rural residents so that they are not only relying on government subsidies.

The Incremental framework emphasises gradual, cumulative change within specific areas. In practice, the Utopian framework was used in designing National Policy (the New Economic Policy, the National Development Policy and the National Vision Policy) and the Incremental framework focuses on the specific policy areas such as Educational Policy. The Utopian and Incremental framework can be observed at each phase of the development of both National Policy and Educational Policy overall.

Chapter Three

EDUCATIONAL POLICY REFORMS IN MALAYSIA

3.1 Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to discuss educational policy in context. The discussion concentrates on the details and the aims of the four phases of national policy. The final section of this chapter serves as a conclusion of this chapter.

3.2 The Evolution of Educational Policy

The implementation of educational policies in Malaysia is based upon Executive Policy. All of the policies are formulated by the Ministry of Education and are implemented only after full endorsement is obtained from the Federal Government.

In introducing policy, the Ministry of Education, as part of the Malaysian Government, has been required to develop policies that address the Government's objectives. There are four phases in the evolution of the policies in Malaysia which are:

- a. Pre-Independence and early Independence (before 1957 -1970)
- b. The New Economic Policy (1971-1990)
- c. The National Development Policy (1991-2000)
- d. The National Vision Policy (2001-2010)

3.2.1 Pre-independence and early independence (before 1957-1970)

In the pre-Independence period (before 1957), Malaysian education was focused on the provision of four types of school each catering to different races - Malay, English, Chinese and Indian. All the schools had a different curriculum, textbooks, language for instruction and teachers had differing training and points of focus (Ministry of Education, 2006c)

Such a disparate system did little to contribute to national identity. Two committees were established to study and make proposals about the school system. The Barnes Report (1951) studied Malay schools, and Fenn-Wu (1951) focused upon Chinese schools. An Education Committee Report 1956 (the Razak Report) built upon the ideas in these two reports (Gaudart, 1987). Hussin (2002) argued that, the 1956 Razak Report proposed that the core objective of education policy in Malaysia must be to bring together the children of all races under a national education system, in which the national language is the main medium of instruction. Since the Razak Report the need for unity in achieving and sustaining independence in Malaysia has remained a central focus in formulating educational policy.

In 1960, the Education Minister, Abdul Rahman Talib headed a committee to review the Razak Report. The National Education Policy, as enacted in the 1961 Education Act, was based on the 1956 Razak Report and 1960 Rahman Talib Report, which recommended the adoption of the Malay Language as the main medium of instruction at all levels of the education system and standardised the curriculum and examination for students. The aims of the policy were to emphasise national unity due to its high priority at that time.

3.2.2 The New Economic Policy (1971-1990)

While the 1961 Education Act emphasised national unity, in the early seventies the education sector was focused on producing and fulfilling manpower needs in the country. This focus was necessary in order to align it with the national and social needs as reflected in the objectives of the New Economic Policy to eradicate poverty and restructure Malaysian society.

Building on the 1961 Education Act, educational policy during this period changed the medium of instruction in English Schools from the English Language to the Malay Language and implemented the National Language Policy in public assessment in an attempt to bring about national integration.

The 1961 Education Act also led to the establishment of the Fully Residential Schools. The establishment of this type of school was based upon results reported in the 'Drop-out Report 1973' (Hussin, 2002). This report stated that the factors contributing to the high dropout rate among students in rural schools were poverty; the distance children have to travel to get to school and the low quality of transportation infrastructure. To overcome these problems, the Malaysian Government established Fully Residential School especially for students from rural areas. According to the Ministry of Education (2007a), one of the objectives of Fully Residential Schools is to increase the opportunities for Bumiputera students to receive a quality education in preparation for higher education.

During this period, the Government believed that changing the medium of instruction and the establishment of Fully Residential schools were necessary steps in fulfilling national needs.

3.2.3 The National Development Policy (1991-2000)

The phase of the National Development Policy (1991-2000) saw the implementation of Utopian and Incremental frameworks. The Utopian framework can be seen in the introduction of the National Development Policy that emphasised the use of technology in Malaysia typically for public administration efficiency but also in the education sphere. Meanwhile the Incremental framework was introduced when the Ministry of Education implemented several changes in the education system to fulfil the needs of human resource development in the phase of the National Development Policy. The changes in education policy reflected the rapidly changing technological environment.

In 1996 the Malaysian Government Parliament passed the Education Act (1996), which stated:

the purpose of education is to enable Malaysian society to have a command of knowledge, skills and values necessary in a world that is highly competitive and globalised, arising from the impact of rapid developments in science, technology and information (Government of Malaysia, 1996, p. 11).

One result of the 1996 Act was the emphasis on the advancement of Science and Technology and in turn the development of Malaysian Smart Schools. Early in 1996, the Ministry of Education was involved in intense discussions about Smart Schools focusing on the concept and its implications on the Malaysian education system. In January 1997, the Ministry of Education conceptualised the vision of the Malaysian Smart School in the document *Smart Schools in Malaysia: A Quantum Leap*. The Smart School's project team, comprising industry representatives, Multimedia Development Corporation officers, and officers of the Ministry of Education, was established to elaborate and refine the vision and its features. This project team worked at producing the *Smart School Conceptual Blueprint*. A set of rules was developed to guide the team. Despite representing various interests, the

team were united in working towards common national goals (Ministry of Education, 1997).

In 1999 the Ministry of Education created 90 pilot Smart Schools in Malaysia. These 90 schools were to serve as the nucleus for the eventual nationwide rollout of Smart Schools teaching concepts and materials, skills, and technologies. It was envisaged that by 2010 all 10,000 primary and secondary schools would be Smart Schools.

The objectives of the Malaysian Smart School are based on Malaysia's intention to transform its educational system to support the nation's drive to fulfil *Vision 2020*. This Vision calls for sustained, productivity-driven growth, which it is claimed can be achievable with a technologically literate, critically thinking work force prepared to participate fully in the global economy. At the same time, Malaysia's *National Philosophy of Education* calls for developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced and harmonious. Technology-supported Smart Schools were planned to be the catalyst for this massive transformation both improving how the educational system achieved the National Philosophy of Education, while fostering the development of a work force prepared to meet the challenges of the next century (Ministry of Education, 1997).

The Ministry of Education Conceptual Blueprint for Smart Schools (1997) provides guidelines for developing Smart Schools. The Blueprint covers the teaching and learning; management; process and scenarios; people, skills and responsibilities; technology enablers and policy implementation areas. The following discusses summarises the information given by the Ministry of Education in the Conceptual Blueprint for Smart School (1997).

The teaching and learning environment developed in Smart Schools built on international best practices in primary and secondary education. This entails aligning the curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and teaching-learning materials in a mutually reinforcing and coherent manner (p. 11).

The aim of Smart School management is to manage efficiently and effectively the resources and processes required to support the teaching-learning

functions. Management helps to reallocate skilled human resources to more valuable activities, save costs over the long term, improve the quality of decisions through better access to information and accelerate decision making (p. 12).

Processes and scenarios involving internal processes need to be coordinated. Ensuring coordination entails viewing these processes as a system: if the system is well designed, providing appropriate inputs will yield the desired outputs, namely students ready for higher education or active and productive participation in the work force. The Smart Schools initiative offers an ideal opportunity to reassess the current schooling system, identifying problems and finding potential solutions, many of which can be enabled and enhanced by technology (p. 12).

The higher degree of individualised attention for students at a Smart School will require new roles, skills and responsibilities for teachers, principals, Ministry of Education officers, support staff and parents. In fact, fulfilling these roles and responsibilities will require specialised training for each group (p. 13).

For example, teachers will need intensive training in the use of information technology and in its integration into classroom activities in ways that enhance thinking and creativity. Smart School teachers will also need to learn to facilitate and encourage students in taking charge of their own learning. In the long term, these teachers will need to augment their skills regularly, if they are to stay abreast of developments in their profession and remain confident in their application of the technology.

The principal's task of managing schools involves working with information and building on ideas collaboratively. The efficiency and effectiveness of this management task can be enhanced significantly through the use of technology. Principals in Smart Schools will need intensive training to equip them to manage the new facilities, technologies and methodologies deployed in their schools (p. 13).

Information technology has an important role to play in the process of transforming traditional schools into Smart Schools. Consequently, a nation-wide system of Smart Schools will depend on advanced information technology at the school, district and national levels (p. 14).

At school-level, The Ministry of Education has stated that equipping technology in a school might include providing computers in classrooms, libraries, teachers' rooms and administrative offices and providing each school with a computer laboratory, a multimedia development centre, studio/theatres, and a server room (Ministry of Education, 1997, p. 15).

Meanwhile, school districts will need to maintain a secure network for communicating with local schools and with state and national authorities. Districts will also need to maintain extensive databases for many different types of information, for example, assessment records of student and teacher performance, human resource records, teachers' administrative tools, governance records, financing and security and educational resources (p. 15).

At the national level, interconnecting Smart Schools and educational authorities will involve both open and secure networks. This will allow open access to educational resources, facilitate collaborative work, and maintain open communication channels with constituencies, while providing for the controlled distribution of sensitive information. In addition, there will need to be a national repository centre that is accessible to all education sites and maintain expedient access to the Ministry of Education and the federal government administration (p. 15).

Implementing Smart Schools successfully in Malaysia will be a complex task, requiring changes to existing policies, procedures, and practices. It may also require formulating entirely new policies and regulations. A few of the important issues to be addressed include those in the areas of the teaching-learning processes, management functions, people, skills and responsibilities and technology (p. 16).

The discussion about the Conceptual Blueprint for Smart Schools demonstrates that the Malaysian government was providing a comprehensive plan for implementing this project including the development of relevant policy and in service education for both teachers and principals.

Turning now to considering a different policy emphasis as mentioned earlier the National Development Policy focused upon increasing the participation of Bumiputera in the modern sectors of the economy. At the post secondary school

level, the Ministry of Education established the Matriculation Programme in 1998. The Ministry of Education (2007b) states that the Matriculation Programme is a preparation programme for Bumiputera students to enable them to further their studies to first-degree level. The mission of the programme was not only to produce more Bumiputera professionals but also to develop and provide high quality courses which are recognised locally and internationally.

Students enter the Matriculation Programme upon successful completion of the Malaysian Education Certificate and success in the programme qualifies them for study at degree level. The programme takes two semesters and its curriculum gives equal emphases on academic and co-curriculum aspects. This is to equip student with knowledge and also to develop the personal qualities appropriate for future leadership roles. Students who graduate from this programme, and fulfil the requirements specified by the Matriculation Centre Division and higher learning institutions, will have the opportunity to pursue degree programmes in all public universities and also identifiable overseas universities. Students who take the Matriculation Programme can apply to enrol in public and overseas universities in fields such as: medicine, science, computer science, architecture, chemistry, pharmacy, technology/information technology, engineering, accountancy, business administration, business management, human resource management, economy and information management. This policy is directly aimed at increasing the number of Bumiputera in these areas.

The Matriculation Programme produced successful Bumiputera students. According to the Ministry of Education (2007b), the implementation of the Matriculation Programme has proved its success by overseas universities accepting the Matriculation Programme graduates to enrol at their universities. In the United Kingdom alone, 18 matriculated students were enrolled at three universities in 2006 and 20 were accepted by five universities in 2007.

3.2.4 The National Vision Policy (2001-2010)

In essence, the National Development Policy (1991-2000) was the education policy focused on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) that culminated in the introduction of Smart Schools into the Malaysian education system. Conversely, in the early stages of the National Vision Policy (2001-2010) which reflects its Utopian framework, the Ministry of Education has emphasised the fostering of English language proficiency amongst students. The policy for implementing teaching and learning Science and Mathematics in English, demonstrates that the Ministry now gives increased attention to English language proficiency.

Implementation of this policy started on November 27, 2002, with the Minister of Education in Malaysia informing schools in a Circular Letter to all schools, that from January 2003, Science and Mathematics would be taught in English in Primary Year One, Form One (Secondary Schools Year One) and Lower Six (A-Levels Year One) in all fully aided government schools (Ministry of Education, 2002)

The Ministry changed the language medium of instruction for Mathematics and Science because most Science and Mathematics-based courses are highly dependent on reference materials published in English. Hence, it was essential for these subjects to be taught in English to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills for accelerated access to, and mastery of, these fields of knowledge without having to await the translation process. Furthermore, it was claimed that attaining competency in the English language would enable students to contribute effectively in the international arena (Pillay & Thomas, 2004).

The Ministry of Education prepared some of the necessary programmes and infrastructures to facilitate successful implementation of the policy in schools. The Ministry provided in-service training courses to enhance English proficiency among Science and Mathematics teachers. The programme is conducted by the Teacher Education Division of the Ministry and is known as English for Teaching and Learning of Mathematics and Science (ETeMS).

The Ministry of Education has also provided specific programmes in an effort to support the implementation of this policy. For example, at the school level, the Buddy Support System was introduced as a continuous support for the teachers. It was a cooperative and collaborative effort between English teachers or Science and Mathematics teachers who are competent in English and other Science and Mathematics teachers in schools who are not as competent in English. The competent teachers of English were appointed to act as a “Critical Friend” (CF) to Science and Mathematics teachers who were less competent in English on a ratio of one CF to two or three teachers (buddies). The CF and the Buddies would meet on a regular basis to discuss issues involving the use of English in the teaching of Science and Mathematics. A course to train CFs in helping skills was developed by the Ministry in 2003. The course involves a series of stages and implementation had commenced (Pillay & Thomas, 2004).

Since 2003, all National Assessments for Science and Mathematics have been conducted bilingually (Malay and English). Students are allowed to answer the questions in either Malay or English. It was stated in 2002 that by 2008, all National Assessment related to Science and Mathematics should be carried out in English (Ministry of Education, 2002). However on 29 October 2007 the Ministry of Education announced that National Assessment in Science and Mathematics in 2008 would remain bilingual and that the introduction of testing in English would be delayed by 2-3 years. This decision was based on the research done by the Ministry of Education that students especially in rural areas were not fully competent to answer the questions in English (Zakaria, 2007).

Education policy at the National Vision Policy level (2001-2010) has undergone further refinement with the publication of the National Education Blueprint 2006-2010 launched by the Ministry of Education on January 16, 2007. According to the Ministry, the implementation of the National Blueprint represents a major move by the Malaysian Government to ensure that all citizens get equal opportunities in education irrespective of race or socio-economic background, and that the potential of individuals will be developed in a holistic and integrated manner. In addition the Blueprint aims to develop students who are creative and innovative, value knowledge, culture, and have the skills and attitudes to engage in lifelong

learning and to provide an effective and efficient education system. The ultimate aim is to ensure that the population have the ability to face the future challenges of an increasingly globalised and inter connected world. The blueprint is a comprehensive and integrated document focusing upon six main strategies to further strengthen the national education system:

- a. Building the nation and people
- b. Developing human capital
- c. Strengthening the National Schools
- d. Narrowing education gaps
- e. Highlighting teaching as a prestigious profession
- f. A focus on culture in educational institutions.

Discussion of the implementation of these six strategies was focused at the macro rather than the micro level because the policy is still at an early stage of development. The Ministry of Education (2007c, p. 9) placed emphasis on one particular strategy each month in 2007 as illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Month	Activities focused upon by Ministry of Education
January	Launching the National Blueprint
February	Narrowing education gap
March	Focus on culture in educational institutions
April	Smart School
May	Highlighting teaching as a prestigious profession
Jun	Developing human capital-Progress Report Card 1
July and August	Building the nation and its people
September	Special education and Vocational education
October	Religious, Private and International schools
November	Strengthening National Schools
December	Strengthening National Schools and provide Progress Report Card 2

Figure 3.1: Ministry of Education focused Activities in 2007
Source: (Ministry of Education, 2007c)

Due to the gradual implementation of these six strategies, there is no comprehensive outcome in relation to its progress at a micro level. However, to ensure these strategies will succeed, the Ministry of Education have prepared Key Performance Indicators to measure progress in achieving these goals (Ministry of Education, 2007c). The Ministry also summarizes progress in implementing strategies by publishing a Progress Report Card each six month. These six strategies are now considered in further detail.

The first strategy of the National Blueprint explicitly focuses on the building of the nation and people through education. The Ministry's stated aim is to develop in its citizens, from the earliest ages, an appreciation of their role as global citizens whilst at the same time being patriotic about a unified country where upholding the nation's cultural traditions has a high priority. This strategy is argued to be crucial to maintaining a successful multi racial country. Unity among all races is seen as a crucial factor for ensuring continuous development of the country and the Ministry's stated belief that this can be developed through education (Ministry of Education, 2006c). However, in an earlier policy text, the Ministry of Education (2004, p. 19), cautioned that "education as means to unite the races remains a major challenge in the country's efforts to achieve *Vision 2020*".

The second strategy is developing human capital. The Ministry stated that they want to develop students' character, morality, resilience and value systems. It will implement a disciplinary policy aimed at encouraging such learning to take place. This aims to produce students who are of good character and who are also competent in Science and Technology and are innovative, creative and marketable (p. 53).

In 2006 the Malaysian Cabinet approved the allocation of considerable financial resources (RM 6,114,00.00 = NZD 249108.20) to develop clear instructions for teachers about managing student discipline. In addition, the Ministry of Education also established Special Committees at state and district level for supervising student discipline in Malaysia.

The third strategy involves the Ministry strengthening the National Schools so that they become the schools of first choices for almost all citizens. To implement

this, National Schools will be adequately equipped with facilities, including ICT facilities and sufficient trained teachers. As part of this strategy, teachers will be encouraged to further develop professionally so that they are able to contribute more to developing excellent National Schools.

The importance of National Schools is stated in the National Blueprint 2006-2010. Baki (1981 cited in Ministry of Education, 2006c, p. 76), stated that

The National Schools will be a place of social and co-operative living of future generations of Malaysians and a place where they will be trained and educated to be worthy and loyal Malaysian citizens. It aims at establishing a system of education, which can serve as a real meeting place of the children of different races. It aims at training its multi-racial pupils in the art of “living, learning, working and thinking together”, thus giving them the opportunity to know and understand each other right from childhood. The fault of the existing educational structure with its multi-vernacular system has been, and is, that it encourages segregation. Both males and females of different races tend to be antagonistic to one another and are not provided with the opportunity of meeting one another on equal and friendly terms. Baki (1981 cited in Ministry of Education, 2006c, p. 76)

The above statement shows the important role of all the National Schools and for this reason the Ministry aimed to make National Schools premier schools that will be the preferred choice of society. In the Malaysian context, this strategy needs to be implemented carefully since the country still has 1287 National Type Chinese Primary schools, 525 National Types Tamil Primary Schools, 17 Government-Assisted Religious Primary Schools (Ministry of Education, 2006c, pp. 22-24). The data from Ministry of Education (2006b) also shows Malaysia has 60 Chinese Private Secondary Schools and 302 Government-Assisted Religious Secondary Schools.

The fourth strategy focuses upon providing equal educational opportunities for all children whatever their gender, parent's socio-economic level, the type of school they attend and whether they are in a rural or urban school. In Malaysia males and females have equal access to educational opportunities. The Ministry of Education (2004, p. 21), states

In Malaysia, male and female children have equal access to education. There is no discrimination against female students in terms of legislation, policy, mechanisms, structure or allocation of resources. Each child receives education as an individual and not according to gender. They are all taught the same curriculum and sit for the same public examinations. All curriculum, textbooks and teaching materials are carefully evaluated to ensure that the contents do not stereotype females as inferior to males, or females are incapable of receiving higher education, or incapable of holding important posts either in the private or public sectors. This is important in nurturing positive values in children (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 21).

The Ministry emphasises this strategy because clearly gaps still exist between educational infrastructures in urban and rural schools. Schools in urban areas have more developed infrastructures compared to rural schools.

The fifth strategy focuses on highlighting teaching as a prestigious profession. The strategy aims to ensure the profession is respected and held in high regard in line with the trust and responsibility placed in it to build future generations. The Ministry is attempting to ensure that this strategy will achieve its aims by improving teachers selection systems requiring all candidates to pass the Malaysian Teacher Selection Test (MTeST), enhancing teacher training by increasing the number of Teacher Education Institutions training teachers, and improving the career structure of teachers by introducing new positions such as Excellent Teacher, Expert

Teacher and Main Positions in Civil Service that are equal with Senior Managers in the Public Service (p. 107) .

The Ministry of Education is trying to enhance teaching as a prestigious profession because the Ministry needs quality teachers to achieve the best outcomes in education. In an effort to enhance their quality, teachers are required to have global knowledge and not just rely on their own subject matter expertise. However statistical data from the Ministry based upon interviews for promotion in 2005, showed that 1156 out of 26432 teachers failed the interview. Most of the failures were weaknesses in general knowledge and current issues (Mahat, 2006, p. 5). The challenge for these teachers is to focus not only upon their subject matter expertise but also upon current issues in education and the ever-changing world around them.

The last strategy in the National Blueprint is to develop a culture of excellence in educational institutions. Efforts to develop a culture of excellence have focused upon creating ‘School Cluster of excellence’ based on academic and co-curricular achievements. Initially, the Ministry created 30 such School Clusters. The School Cluster concept was introduced to give schools autonomy to select and advertise for teachers and support staff; to develop courses and training programmes for teachers and to select curriculum materials according to their needs. The schools are also given permission to offer alternative subjects not in the national curriculum. This concept aims to maintain school excellence along with enhancing the quality of education (Ministry of Education, 2006c).

3.3 Conclusion

The implementation of these new education policies attempts to fulfil various requirements. These policies aimed for numerous advantages for Malaysian society but they also presented new challenges for teachers. According to Hashim (1999, p. 48), ‘changing times require that schools become learning enterprises for teachers and students. Today’s teachers have to meet demands from various quarters as more

concern is shown towards higher standards and improved performance for all students’.

As a centralized education system, policies are made at the national level. All these policies are then implemented at various levels of education, culminating in the classroom. These, therefore, present shifting challenges for teachers particularly during the transition from one policy to another.

Chapter Four

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES IN A SCHOOL CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes educational issues in the school context and their effect upon the implementation of educational policy in Malaysia. The discussion focuses upon three main issues - the development of Malaysian Smart Schools, the implementation of teaching and learning Science and Mathematics in English and assisting schools in implementing the National Blueprint. The final section summarises the issues discussed in this chapter.

4.2 Issues related to the development of Smart Schools

The Ministry of Education has prepared a very detailed and comprehensive plan for Smart Schools but a crucial question remains - are the teachers ready to adopt their teaching and learning to computer usage? The Federal Inspectorate Report (1998 cited in Abu Bakar, 2007, p. 35) “reports that computer usage in education remains low. Teachers are not keen to utilise computers in their lessons, and now with the implementation of the new school concept (the smart school), it is a challenge for schools and teachers to incorporate computer use into their lessons and at the same time maintain the syllabus and have students perform well in the examination”.

A study done by Kong Siew (1997 cited in Abu Bakar, 2007) also identified that teachers were reluctant to include computers in their teaching. The study was done with primary school teachers and the findings listed the factors that inhibited the teachers’ use of computers in the classroom. The three key factors preventing computer use in the classroom were limited time for teachers to incorporate

computers into teaching and learning, very limited numbers of computers in the schools and also limited computer knowledge or skills among teachers.

The challenges for teachers in rural areas are different from those in urban schools. They have been facing numerous issues in schools that are still lacking adequate infrastructure, and teaching facilities. In 2005, Malaysia had 5,077 (66.8%) primary schools and 792 (39.0%) secondary schools in rural areas. Table 4.1 below indicates this.

Table 4.1: The Number Schools in rural areas with inadequate public and teaching infrastructure

Insufficient	Number of the schools
Electricity supply	28 schools
Water supply	68 schools
Classrooms	748 schools
Computer laboratory	138 schools
Science laboratory	25 schools
Local Secondary School	26 schools

Source: Ministry of Education (2006c, p. 92)

It is clear that the implementation of the Smart Schools Policy would further challenge teachers in rural schools, some of which lack basic infrastructure needs.

4.3 Issues related to the implementation of teaching and learning Science and Mathematics in English

The Ministry of Education has prepared some of the necessary programmes and basic infrastructure requirements in an effort to ensure the successful implementation of this policy. But a study by Mohd Noor et al. (2006) showed that the training programme still did not fulfill teacher's needs. The study was conducted with 71

participants teaching either Mathematics or Science at Form One level from all states in Malaysia. Table 4.2 demonstrates the relative level of the various needs of teachers in Mohd Noor and his colleagues' studies and this Table is not about the respondents in my current study.

Table 4.2: The Frequencies and percentage for various training needs of the teachers teaching Science/ Mathematics in English

Aspects of training	Not needed	Less needed	Needed	Very needed
Training on speaking In English	5 (7.1%)	5 (7.1%)	23 (31.5%)	38 (54.3%)
Training on understanding Science/Mathematics reading materials in English	10 (14.1%)	10 (14.1%)	21 (29.6%)	30 (42.3%)
Training on writing Science/Mathematics instructional Materials in English	7 (9.9%)	9 (12.7%)	28 (39.4%)	27 (38.0%)
Training on constructing test items in English	4 (5.6%)	10 (14.1%)	29 (40.8%)	28 (38.0%)
Training on delivering instruction of Science/Mathematics in English	5 (6.9%)	7 (9.9%)	27 (38.0%)	32 (45.1%)
Training on conducting question and answer session with students in English	5 (7.0%)	6 (8.5%)	31 (43.7%)	29 (40.8%)
Training on various strategies to teach Science/Mathematics in English	3 (4.2%)	11 (15.5%)	27 (38.0%)	30 (42.3%)
Training in guiding students to use English in learning Science/Mathematics	4 (5.7%)	5 (7.1%)	26 (35.8%)	36 (51.4%)

As shown in Table 4.2, most teachers reported that they need tuition in the English language (85.7%); training on understanding Science/Mathematics and

reading materials in English (71.9%), training on writing Science/Mathematics instructional materials in English (77.4%), training on constructing test items in English (78.8%), training on delivering instruction of Science/Mathematics in English (83.1%), training on conducting question and answer session with students in English (84.5%), training on various strategies to teach Science/Mathematics in English (80.3%) and training in guiding students to use English in learning Science/Mathematics (87.1%). Results from Table 4.2 shows that teachers need training on all aspects of teaching Science/Mathematics in English. The information from this study provides the evidence that the implementation of teaching and learning Science and Mathematics in English has resulted in increased challenges for teachers.

A case study done at a school in Sarawak by Idris et al. (2006) shows how teachers tried to implement the Buddy Support Systems (following the Ministry's requirements) in their school. All English teachers were assigned a Mathematics or a Science teacher under this programme. These English teachers assisted teachers in the pronunciation of mathematical and scientific words and phrases. Schools were provided with guidelines on the implementation of the system. Figure 4.1 shows the monitoring form used in the Buddy Support System.

		Activities					
Critical Friend-English Teacher	Buddy-Math or Science Teacher	Pronun-Ciation	Grammar rules	Check-ing of daily lesson plans	Proof-Reading of exam questions	English in 20 minutes a day	Others
Sharon Low	Chai C.H						
Pauline Teo	Fatimah						
Trisha	Hajjah						

Figure 4.1: Monitoring form used in the Buddy Support System
Source: Idris et al (2006)

The English teacher had to meet with the Science or Mathematics teacher assigned to him or her regularly and a record of each meeting was kept. Figure 4.2

shows the Meeting Record of an English and Science teacher meeting between July and August in 2005. During the meeting, the English teacher checked on the Science teacher's daily lesson plan and edited and proofread the Science examination questions developed by the Science teacher.

Meeting Record of Critical Friend with Buddy

Critical Friends name: Trisha
 Buddy : Hajjah

Date and time	Activities
4.8.05	Editing and proofreading the question papers for Science Paper I and Science Paper II
11.8.05 3.20 pm	Pronunciation- fuel [fju:əl]
12.8.05 1.00 pm	Grammar
28.7.05	Checking the daily lesson plan
25.8.05	Checking the daily lesson plan

Critical Friend's Comment

My buddy is quite competent but still needs assistance with her pronunciation and grammar. She often consults me regarding the above matters.

Figure 4.2: Meeting record of Critical Friend with Buddy

Source: Idris et al. (2006)

These two figures suggest that the Buddy Support System implemented by this school succeeded in guiding and helping the Science and Mathematics teachers in overcoming the difficulties and challenges in using English to teach Science and Mathematics. Nevertheless, it also seems apparent that the implementation of the Buddy Support System increased the burden on teachers of English as well as on Science and Mathematics teachers. English teachers as Critical Friends have to gain new knowledge and understanding in the curriculum areas they are assisting as well as carrying out their English teaching. Meanwhile, Science and Mathematics teachers must continue to focus on the Science or Mathematics content but at the same time try to improve their English language proficiency. Both groups of teachers may be said to face new, but slightly different, demands and challenges (Lan & Tan, 2008; Wha, 2003).

The implementation of this policy generated intense debate among the general public, parents and even teachers as to its prospects for success, citing reasons such as the poor English language proficiency of teachers. For example, according to Pillay and Thomas (2004), one of the major challenges in implementation was the teacher's ability in English. Pillay and Thomas pointed out that the teachers who will be involved have varying levels of competency in English as most of them completed their education in the Malay Language from the primary level right up to the tertiary level. Starting from 1970, all Government-aided English Medium schools were replaced by Malay-Medium schools, and by 1982, all national secondary schools and university education was conducted in the national language (Mauzy, 1985 cited in Idris et al. 2007). Therefore teachers who went through that education system had limited opportunities to develop proficiency in English.

As well as the challenge of using the English language for instructional delivery, Science and Mathematics teachers are required to master the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills required to operate the CD provided by the Ministry of Education for classroom instruction. In their study, Idris et al. (2007).

Through informal interviews with the Science and Mathematics teachers from rural and urban schools, it was found that many of these teachers seek longer training in preparing themselves to teach Mathematics and Science and using ICT tools. Teachers who are veterans may have mastered the English Language and are competent to deliver Science and Mathematics lessons in English. However, these teachers are not fully computer trained, thus hindering the use of ICT tools during Science and Mathematics lesson. As a result, though some Science and Mathematics teachers had undergone the training, they did not utilize the ICT tools in executing the Science and Mathematics lessons. Conversely, some teachers who are from the younger generation may be computer literate but may not be conversant in English. This leads to lack of self-efficacy in handling day-to-day lessons and the feeling of

inferiority in handling students who have difficulty in learning Mathematics and Science. As a result, teachers who believe they lack professional preparation will opt to teach Science and Mathematics in English alternately with other languages (Idris, et al., 2007, p. 6).

The transition in the medium of instruction from the Malay language to the English language and the usage of computers in teaching Science and Mathematics has placed teachers in a demanding situation. In addition, they have to cope with students who have limited proficiency in the English language and who also fail to comprehend Science and Mathematics.

Consequently, the role of teachers in both urban and rural areas has become increasingly more challenging. Not only do they need to master Science and Mathematics, but they also have to master the English language as well as acquire computer literacy for delivering knowledge. Given the scope of these challenges it would not be surprising if the quality of teaching is affected. An important question arises also in regard to what kinds of support is being given to teachers by Principals and educational leaders in their schools.

4.4 Issues related to the implementation of the National Education Blueprint

A number of issues have emerged from the implementation of the National Education Blueprint. In the implementation of the strategy for building the nation and its people, the Ministry of Education originally imposed the Malay Language as a means of creating a sense of unity among students, but the Ministry also needs students to improve their English language. These competing demands create a problem for teachers in communicating with their students. Which of these two languages should teachers' use in their communications with students? This applies to social communications as well as those directly related to teaching.

A principle aim of the policy strategy to develop human capital is to produce well-mannered students, but in reality schools in Malaysia have been shown to face problems with students' attitudes (Berita Harian, 2011; Othman, 2006). The Ministry of Education has been forced to allocate considerable financial resources and to develop special programmes to address the situation. The existence of such allocations and programmes demonstrate that student discipline is perceived as one of the major problems in Malaysian education (Ministry of Education, 2007c).

These discipline issues naturally affect teacher's duties. Teachers are forced to deal with disciplinary matters while simultaneously carrying out their normal duties. In addition, parents in Malaysia expect teachers not just to impart knowledge, but also to take responsibility for the child's behaviour. In meting out punishment to students, parents will often leap to the defence of the child and threaten to sue or expose the issue in the national press and the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) has raised concerns about the problem (New Strait Times, 2007).

Issues have also arisen in implementing the strategy for narrowing the gaps in educational opportunity. To ensure this strategy achieves its aim, the Ministry must provide sufficient infrastructure to schools in rural areas, but the Ministry has a genuine problem in providing experienced teachers, especially female teachers, in schools in rural areas. As a result, most schools in rural areas have less experienced teachers who have had less teacher training (Ministry of Education, 2001).

In an attempt to solve this problem, the Ministry is endeavouring to transfer quality teachers to schools in rural areas. However, teachers who are married and have their own families tend to ignore any transfer letter because they are reluctant to relocate. Examples of reluctance to transfer to schools in rural areas amongst female teachers in Malaysia were cited in NUTP (2005b). For example a 42-year-old teacher said, “I have four children, including a two-year-old baby. We have bought a house here and have so many commitments. How does the Ministry expect us to feel about being parted from our family?” Another 35-year-old teacher said, “If I had known this would happen, I would not have upgraded my qualification”. Obviously this situation many affect the quality of teaching and learning in rural schools. If teachers are unwilling to transfer to schools in rural areas but have to comply with this decision, they will not be passionate about teaching. Distance from their families may also affect their performance in the classroom.

The implementation of the National Education Blueprint also involves the establishment schools being granted the status of “School Cluster of Excellence”, presenting teachers with significant new challenges. The teachers in the existing list of cluster schools have to struggle to maintain their School Cluster position. The teachers in schools not on the list yet, have to commit themselves to ensuring that their school becomes a cluster school. As a result, they face various new responsibilities in addition to their primary duties.

4.5 A brief summary of educational issues

The implementation of new policies creates new challenges for teachers whether they be in urban or rural areas. The challenges in the implementation of Smart Schools are that teachers need to adopt computer usage in teaching and in rural areas schools still lack basic infrastructure needs and teaching facilities.

Meanwhile the challenges for teachers in the implementation of teaching Science and Mathematics in English are that many teachers have limited competency in English and this affects the quality of their interactions with students and their

ability to guide students in their use of English. In addition students with limited proficiency in English have great difficulty comprehending Science and Mathematics taught in English. Furthermore the implementation of this policy has also increased the English, Science and Mathematics teachers' responsibility to ensure the success of the Buddy System. The policy also places new demands upon senior teachers who are not fully computer trained, since the policy requires teachers to use computers in their teaching and learning.

Teachers also face new challenges in the implementation of the National Blueprint due to problems with student discipline, parents' attitude, the range of schools currently functioning, insufficient infrastructure, the expectation that some teachers will need to move to rural areas and challenges in implementing the school cluster concept. These challenges will inevitably affect the quality of education.

A limited number of Malaysian and other studies were found that indicated links between teacher workload and stress. For example, one study by S. K. S. Ali (2005) found that the frequency of the educational policy changes was also a factor contributing to the increased level of stress among teachers in Malaysia. Two recent studies about teachers' working conditions in Malaysia reported that teachers have high levels of stress in their work (Mukundan & Khandehroo, 2010).

The issue of teachers who feel pressured in their work, especially during policy change in education does not only happen in Malaysia, but also in other countries. According to Vidovich (2002) there was a clear consensus amongst respondents that they were feeling pressure due to changing curriculum policy in a case study of a Chinese High School in Singapore. One of Vidovich's respondents complained that "it is stressful and challenging. Breathless is one word to describe it" (p. 11).

Another study by Jones and Barkhuizen (2011) described how teachers in Kenya were caught in the middle of a complex web of tensions created by the implementation of a new policy, the Kenyan language-in-education policy.

These studies have suggested that the implementation of new educational policies may increase stress and pressure for teachers. It is significant, therefore that a report from the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) (2005a) in

Malaysia shows there is a connection between work stress at schools and the number of teachers falling ill. In particular young teachers were suffering from burnout, with female teachers reporting incidences of cancer and the males from heart-related illness. NUTP said they don't have quantitative data to back up these claims, but they believe such illnesses are connected to the work stress based on their verbal interviews with teachers. The report states that teachers face considerable work stress with their current duties, and the NUTP believes that the implementation of the new policy will increase challenges for them (NUTP, 2005a).

These unavoidable challenges can influence the nature and quality of teaching practice. It is important to ensure that teachers are sufficiently resilient to confront the challenges. Educational leaders can play a key role here. Research by Blumberg and Greenfield (1986) stated that the principal's leadership influences the school staff culture, innovation, reformation, development, paradigm shift, morals, professionalism and satisfaction. Educational leaders are needed who can, through their own knowledge, behaviour and action, encourage teachers to develop resilience. A resilient teacher has the capacity to use and continually renew their strengths (physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual) in confronting the pressures that they are bound to face in adverse conditions while trying to achieve educational policy goals. In the next chapter, these ideas will be further explored.

Chapter Five

TEACHER RESILIENCE

5.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the research literature which is relevant to studies in teacher resilience. The chapter contains the following main sections: (1) definitions of key concepts; the purpose of investigating teacher resilience; (3) identifying and describing adverse conditions requiring teacher resilience; (4) the relationship between demographic factors and teacher resilience; (6) protective factors in sustaining teacher resilience; and (7) theories of teacher resilience. The rationale and key characteristics of the present study are then introduced and the chapter concludes with a brief summary.

5.2 Definitions of key concepts

5.2.1 Conceptualisation of resiliency

There are several key concepts that were used in this study that need to be defined in order to establish an understanding of the context for the study.

The early research about resilience was led by psychologists (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007). In their comments on this approach Day and Gu (2010, p. 156) summed up that “resilience is defined as the capacity to continue to ‘bounce back’ to recover strengths or spirit quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity, is closely allied to a strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy and motivation to teach, which are fundamental to sustaining a commitment to promoting achievement in all

aspects of students' lives". Smith and Prior's (1995) view is an early example: they considered resilience to be the capacity to maintain healthy functioning in an unhealthy setting, or the maintenance of mastery under stress. They further stated that resilience presumes a capacity of the individual to recover, bounce back, or remain buoyant in the face of adversity, life stresses, illness, misfortune, and the like.

A decade later Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) agreed, stating that psychological resilience is defined as the capacity to move on in a positive way from negative, traumatic or stressful experiences. They also noted that Bonanno (2004) believed that resilience can be differentiated from recovery, in that recovery from an event indicates that there is a period in which normal functioning is suspended, whereas resilience involves maintenance of equilibrium, with no loss of normal functioning.

Thus these researchers from a psychological perspective emphasised resilience as the *personal* characteristics or traits that enabled an individual to overcome stress and sustain their performance when they are facing stressful situations. As Wild, Wiles and Allen (2011, p. 3) recently noted "the first wave of this psychology-based resilience research tended to focus primarily on the personality characteristics or traits of individuals that enable them to survive hardship". Day and Gu (2010, p. 156) also pointed out, however, that resilience is not only the capacity to continue to "bounce back" to recover strengths or spirit quickly and efficiently in the face of adversity" but is also "closely allied to a strong sense of vocation, self-efficacy and motivation to teach, which are fundamental to sustaining a commitment to promoting achievement in all aspects of students' lives".

Given that my study did not set out to explore just individual characteristics of resilience, but wider issues related to educational policy changes, the challenges that may result from such changes and the ways that members of a school community, especially teachers, face such challenges, it was important for me to investigate also studies of the *social* aspects of resilience.

According to Adger (2000, p. 347) “social resilience is the ability of communities to withstand external shocks to their social infrastructure”. In addition, Adger, Kelly, Winkels, Huy and Locke (2002, p. 358) claimed that “social resilience is the ability to cope with and adapt to environmental and social change mediated through appropriate institutions”. It is interesting here to consider how social resilience has been conceptualised within studies of environmental change. Cutter, Barnes, Berry, Burton, Evans, Tate and Webb (2008, p. 599) maintained “resilience is the ability of a social system to respond and recover from disasters and includes those inherent conditions that allows the system to absorb impacts and cope with an event, as well as post-event, adaptive processes that facilitate the ability of the social system to re-organize, change, and learn in response to a threat”. Another article from this area defined resilience as “the amount of change a system can undergo and still retain the same function and structure while maintaining options to develop” (Nelson, Adger, & Brown, 2007, p. 396)

Thus, while definitions of resilience from a psychological aspect emphasise resilience in terms of personal characteristics, definitions that encompass a wider social view focus on the processes through which people attain those characteristics that involve the ability to adapt and cope with challenges (Wild, et al., 2011).

My study included investigation of the challenges that teachers may face as a result of the implementation of new policies and attempted to find answers as to how educational leadership might assist teachers to sustain their resilience under these conditions. Thus it focused less on the personality characteristics that enable an individual to survive hardship and more on social processes that may help to maintain and build resilience in a context of change.

Consequently the definition of resilience utilised in my study concentrates on social resilience as meaning the ability of school communities (specifically teachers, SMT members and PTA members) working together to cope with a new environment resulting from educational policy changes. I included an investigation of the role of educational leaders here because, as Pike et al. (2010, p. 68) stated,

social “resilience underlines the need for intelligent institutional leadership with a heightened sensitivity and/or preparedness for rapid and pervasive changes”.

An important area to consider for my study involved the question of whether and how resilience can be built. I was particularly interested in exploring the role educational leaders can play in developing resilience in teachers. Some researchers, such as Foster (2007, p. 6) argue that “resilience is not simply an inherent personal trait, but also a set of capacities, behaviours and external resources one can develop and draw upon to deal with difficult challenges”. Bonnell, Copestake, Kerr, Passy, Reed, Salter, Sarwar and Sheukh (2011) and Riolli and Savicki (2003) also claimed resilience can be built. Foster’s study was on building regional resilience. Bonnell and colleagues studied teaching approaches that help to build resilience to extremism among young people and Riolli and Savicki focused upon the “organizational structure and processes including human resource management practices and organizational culture that could serve as foundations to build organizational resiliency” (p. 231). Aspects of their findings were potentially useful for my study’s investigation of how educational leaders can help teachers to build their resilience in facing challenges of the educational policy changes. Some strategies that can be applied by educational leaders in assisting teachers to become or maintain their resilience such as they attempt to identify factors that are present in the lives of teachers who thrive in the face of adversity as compared to those who do not (Luthar, 1991). In addition, according to Gu and Day (2007, p. 1304) “over the following two decades, the focus of resilience research has developed from identifying personal traits and protective factors to investigating underlying protective processes”. Gu and Day also found from their study that resilience was also “subject to influence by environmental, work specific and personal context” (2007, p. 1305). Therefore, based on the protective factors and processes, work conditions and teachers relationship amongst their colleagues, members of SMT and parents in their school, educational leaders can assess and apply resiliency theory and methods for the benefits of teachers at different levels of intervention and improvement (Prince-Embury, 2008).

The definitions of social resilience discussed thus far resonate with the theory of resilience as a multidimensional, socially constructed concept as stated by Day and Gu (2010, p. 158) “The social construction of teacher resilience acknowledges the importance of such combinations of personal, professional and situated factors on their capacities to sustain their emotional wellbeing and professional commitment”. The theory of resilience as a multidimensional, socially constructed concept will be discussed in the next section.

5.2.2 Teacher resilience

The definition of resilience chosen for this study also reflects the findings of previous studies into teacher resilience. Researchers in this field have provided a wide range of interpretations of the concept of teacher resilience. Patterson, Collins and Abbott (2004), defined teacher resilience as using their energy productively to achieve school goals in the face of adverse conditions. Henderson and Milstein (2003, p. 7) define teacher resilience as “the capacity to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social, academic and vocational competence despite exposure to severe stress or simply to the stress that is inherent in today’s world”.

Gordon and Coscarelli (1996) and Masten, Best and Garmezy (2008) define teacher resiliency as the ability to adjust to varied situations and increase one’s competence in the face of adverse conditions. Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1994 cited in Waxman, Gray, & Padrón, 2004) also explained educational resilience as the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite personal vulnerabilities and adversities brought about by early and ongoing environmental conditions and experiences.

The various definitions of teacher resilience or educational resilience that have been presented by different scholars suggest resilient teachers or educators have an ability to contribute toward the achievement of the goals of their schools even when they are facing challenging situations. Even though the researchers used

slightly different definitions, there is agreement that resilience comprises two pivotal aspects - adversity and positive adaptation.

Adversity is the state of hardship or suffering associated with misfortune, trauma, distress, difficulty, or a tragic event (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Rutter, 1999; Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Adversity, which is also referred to as risk, typically encompasses negative life circumstances that are known to be statistically associated with adjustment difficulties (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2001).

Positive adaptation is usually defined in terms of behaviorally manifested social competence, or success at meeting stage-salient development tasks (Luthar & Zigler, 1991; Masten, et al., 2008).

In this study, the adverse conditions are related to the implementation of the three educational policies in Malaysia: the Malaysian Smart School (1996), the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English (2002) and the implementing of the National Blueprint (2006-2010). The study focuses on these three educational policies because they all present teachers with major challenges that have been described in more detail in Chapter Four.

The main focus of this study is to explore how educational leaders can assist teachers in sustaining their resilience. In addition the study also attempts to explore the strategies that teachers in Malaysia use for sustaining their resilience during the implementation of these policies.

5.3 Previous studies of teacher resilience

This section discusses the previous purposes and findings of studies into teacher resilience. The aim is to clarify the objectives for the present study. I will look at the research methods employed in these studies in more detail in Chapter Seven.

Patterson et al. (2004) carried out descriptive research aimed at identifying concrete strategies used by classroom teachers and teacher leaders in urban schools to build their personal resilience. Teachers and teacher leaders identified as

successful and resilient by their peers or supervisors were asked what keeps them in urban schools. Findings from this research showed that these teachers believed that the strategies they used to maintain their resilience contributed to their continuing work in urban schools.

In the opinion of the author these findings do not fulfill all the objectives of this research. The researchers stated that the research aimed to examine strategies used by classroom teachers and teacher leaders in building resilience in a large urban environment. However, despite having two groups of respondents - teachers and teacher leaders - the researchers only provided findings related to the teachers' strategies, not what was being done by the leaders to assist them.

Research in teacher resilience was also carried out by Howard and Johnson (2004), whose was to investigate resilient teachers' strategies for coping with stress in day-to-day teaching in some very disadvantaged Australian schools. The findings of this research identify that a sense of agency - a strong belief in their ability to control what happens to them (the opposite of which is fatalism or helplessness), a strong support group (including a caring network of family and friends outside school as well as a competent and caring leadership team), pride in achievements and competence in areas of personal importance, were all major protective factors identified by the participants.

The findings provided in the conclusion of this study do not demonstrate that all the purposes of this study have been fulfilled. The aim of this study was to investigate resilient teacher strategies for coping with stress in day to day teaching but the researchers only provided a list of protective factors for building teacher resilience; they failed to identify specific coping strategies in the sense of actions and planned approaches. The researchers argued however that the results of this study suggest that protective factors that can make a real difference in teachers' lives are often relatively simple to organize, easy to support and / or are learnable.

More recent research in teacher resilience was carried out by Day, Stobart, Sammons, Kington, Gu and Smees (2007). They examined the role of teacher resilience in enabling teachers to respond positively to challenging circumstances, which they may meet over the course of a career. The results of their research

suggest that the role of teacher resilience appears to be crucial, in that if teachers are to be able to assist students to become resilient, they have to be resilient themselves.

Day et al.'s (2007) research found that teachers' capacities to sustain their resilience were moderated by their professional life phase and their identities, and that these were mediated by the contexts or "scenarios" in which they lived and worked. The mediating influences were found to consist of three dimensions: the personal (related to their lives outside school); the situational (related to their lives in school); and the professional (related to their values, beliefs and interaction between these and external policy agendas). These dimensions were not static and change in one would affect teachers' abilities to manage the others. Portraits of three resilient teachers outlined in this study help demonstrate the range of internal and external protective factors impacting on teachers' lives which, together, contribute to the positive role that resilience plays in enabling them to thrive, flourish and sustain their effectiveness.

The findings from this research demonstrated that teacher's ability to sustain their resilience is dependent on three aspects - personal, situational and professional and that these three aspects are not static. The concept of these changeable, interrelated aspects has motivated me to study how educational leadership can assist teachers to become more resilient.

Cox (2004) carried out a single case study of a school district describing how school leaders created educational programs and practices that feature elements of a caring environment within which students were frequently offered choices in their learning experiences. The study determined that a caring environment existed in the district and that its programs and practices were consistent with the literature on resiliency. The environment that had been developed through several critical events over eighteen years, translated a vision in the organizational mission and belief. The leadership role was characterized by commitment to vision, mobilization of structure, a superintendent's stable tenure and a proliferation of programs in a small school district size.

Research by Brunetti (2006) also discussed how leadership factors enabled the teachers' resilience to overcome difficult challenges and recurring setbacks and

to persist vigorously in their work. Brunetti's study identified that among the most important factors that motivated a group of these teachers to remain teaching for more than 12 years, despite the number of challenges they faced, was the support that they received from leaders. This finding provided further evidence that the role of leaders is a significant aspect in sustaining teacher resilience.

In summary, the previous studies in teacher resilience by Patterson et al. (2004), Howard and Johnson (2004), Day et al. (2007) and Brunetti (2006) focused on teachers. The research by Cox (2004) focused on the role of leaders in fostering resilience in students. In this study I will focus on leaders fostering resilience in teachers.

5.4 Identifying and describing adverse conditions that require teacher resilience

Researchers in teacher resilience argue that teachers need to become resilient when they are facing difficulty in carrying out their duties. The previous discussion of key concepts demonstrated that the majority of researchers used the term ‘adverse’ to describe such difficult conditions for teachers. The literature reviewed here utilized Article Databases – ERIC and British Education Index – using the keywords ‘resilience’ and ‘teacher resilience’ and analysis of the studies identified that almost all were carried out in urban schools with only one study focusing on suburban schools and no study of rural schools.

5.4.1 Studies in urban and suburban schools

Patterson et al. (2004) carried out descriptive research in four urban districts in the United Kingdom. They argued that teachers in urban schools face considerable challenges in maintaining their vitality in an era of nonstop change and struggle to remain resilient. They noted that urban schools suffer from far greater complications than rural or suburban schools because of high teacher and student absenteeism, high teacher turnover, high numbers of uncertified teachers and large numbers of inexperienced teachers, all of which contribute to stress for urban teachers. Outside the school, the environment is more complex as teachers are called upon to confront social issues that many believe belong in the home or larger community (Darling-Hammond, 1998 cited in Patterson, et al., 2004). Consequently, they stated, many urban teachers become skeptical, cynical and ‘burn out’. Burn out can result in isolation and caring less about the students and other aspects of the teacher’s work or it may lead to working harder, sometimes mechanically, to the point of exhaustion (Farber, 1991 cited in Patterson, et al., 2004).

According to Reed and Davis (1999), urban schools in the United States also are places where one often finds low test scores, a high number of discipline

referrals, a high dropout rate, little safety, and high levels of stress among teachers. They believed that the problems in urban schools are the result of their location in low socio economic areas.

In addition Alkin (1992 cited in Sachs, 2004) argued that the urban school context may affect teacher retention and success. Urban schools in the United States have unique factors that differentiate them from schools in suburban and rural settings. Urban schools are generally large, high-density schools in metropolitan areas that serve a population subject to social, economic, and political disparities because of population mobility, diverse ethnicity and diverse cultural identity. Dejnozka and Kapel (1991, cited in Sachs, 2004, p. 178) noted that, “the impacts of population diversity on urban education have resulted in racially segregated schools, old school buildings with large student populations, significant teacher turnover, and violence”.

Brunetti (2006) also investigated teachers’ working in inner city high schools in the United States and found that they face enormous challenges. In this research the term ‘inner-city’ refers to a particular kind of urban high school: one that serves largely poor and minority students. The ethnic composition of the student population comprised Hispanic (Latino), Asian (mostly Filipino, Chinese and Vietnamese) and Others (including white). The students, most of whom came from economically disadvantaged minority families and often did not speak English as a first language, presented a daunting array of educational needs for teachers and schools. Brunetti noted that resources and school structures are seldom sufficient for the task. Despite the daily challenges that they faced in providing meaningful education for these students, some inner city teachers continued to successfully pursue their careers and experience success and satisfaction in their work. Brunetti (2006) discussed how teacher resilience enabled them to overcome difficult challenges and recurring setbacks and to persist vigorously in their work.

Research in teacher resilience was also carried out by Howard and Johnson (2004) because, in Australia, the incidence of teacher stress and burnout has caused serious concern. Howard and Johnson’s study was set in the northern suburbs of Adelaide, South Australia, a highly disadvantaged area where issues of unemployment, poverty, family breakdown and interpersonal violence are common.

It is unsurprising then, that the schools in this area faced significant challenges from students and their families on a daily basis and that the teaching environment presented teachers with many potentially stressful experiences.

Adverse factors affecting teachers identified in these studies or urban and suburban schools, originate from students, teachers and society. Among the student factors are low test scores, a high number of discipline problems, a high dropout rate (Reed & Davis, 1999), student absenteeism (Patterson, et al., 2004), students from economically disadvantaged minority families and not speaking English as a first language (Brunetti, 2006). Teacher factors include; high levels of stress among teachers (Patterson, et al., 2004; Reed & Davis, 1999). Factors related to society are high population, diverse ethnicity and diverse cultural identity (Alkin & American Educational Research Association., 1992; L Darling-Hammond, 1998). The adverse factors in suburban areas were more related to family background such as family breakdown, unemployment and poverty.

The studies by Patterson et al. (2004), Alkin and American Educational Research Association (1992), Brunetti (2006) and Howard and Johnson (2004) were carried out in industrialized countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. There are differences, however between the problems teachers face in industrialized and developing countries. In the industrialized world, which appears to have an international culture of teaching, the majority of teachers work in urban and suburban areas and the research reflects this (A. Ross & Hutchings, 2003). On the other hand, developing countries face a different set of issues, including poor working conditions, lack of access to education and high demographic growth (Halperin & Ratteree, 2003; Kloep & Tarifa, 1994). Because Malaysia is a developing country, this study will attempt to find similarities or differences in the challenges faced by teachers at both an urban and a rural school in comparison with studies of mainly urban schools in industrialized countries.

5.5 The relationship between demographic characteristics and teacher resilience

In this section, I discuss the relationship between demographic characteristics and teacher resilience. In the discussion, I relate the discussion of teacher resilience to teacher retention because teacher retention demonstrates that teachers can continue successfully even when facing challenging situations in their duties. Bernshausen and Cunningham (2001) in their study about the role of resiliency in teacher preparation and retention, noted that resiliency development must become a major goal of pre-service programs to ensure teacher retention in a time of attrition, high stress levels and burnout in education.

Rinke (2008) argued has recently that research on the attributes of individuals with respect to teacher retention draws connections between the characteristics of individual teachers and their decision to stay, move, or leave the profession. Many of these studies are quantitative in nature and conducted retrospectively, after teachers have already made their career decisions. They typically use large-scale survey methods to predict which demographic and personal characteristics explain the variance in teacher retention. A number of empirical studies investigated teachers' career decisions by looking at their individual characteristics, such as gender, age, and race. For example, several studies explored the relationship between gender and teacher retention. Heyns (1988 cited in Rinke, 2008) found that men left the profession in greater numbers than women after 5 years of teaching. However, Bobbitt et al. (1991 cited in Rinke, 2008) found that more women teachers left public schools each year than men. Murnane et al. (1988 cited in Rinke, 2008) found young women stayed an average of 5.7 years and young men of 10.8 years, whilst older women and older men stay more than 12 years. Therefore, the relationship between gender and teacher retention is not entirely clear.

In teaching, age is an important characteristic that influences teachers' perceptions of their job. Older teachers are often respected by younger teachers because their age is normally equated with their experience. A number of studies have also looked at the relationship between age and teacher retention. Boe et al.

(1997 cited in Rinke, 2008) found that teachers over 50 years old and under 30 years had the highest departure rates. Teachers aged 40-49 years had the lowest departure rate followed by the 30-39 groups. Bobbitt et al. (1991 cited in Rinke, 2008) also found that public school teachers under 30 and over 50 years of age have the highest rates of attrition.

Along with age, race also appears to be an important demographic predictor of teacher retention. Rinke (2008) noted in her research about the current teacher retention crisis in the United States that white public school teachers had higher rates of attrition or planned attrition as compared with other racial groups such as African Americans, Asians or Pacific Islanders and Hispanics. She has not provided any discussion of the reasons for these differing rates of attrition.

Teaching experience is also an important demographic characteristic in teacher retention and is an important indicator of teacher resilience (Rinke, 2008). It is normally defined as the number of years a person has been in the teaching profession, both teaching and administering. In Day's et al. (2007) research, teachers were found to have common characteristics and concerns according to their years of experience. Three groupings were identified which were:

i. Early-year teachers (professional life phase 0-3 and 4-7):

These teachers' original motivation for entering teaching contributed to their high level of commitment. Support and promotion played a significant role in their perceived identities.

ii. Mid-year teachers (professional life phase 8-15):

This is the key watershed of teachers' long-term perceived effectiveness. These teachers were at the crossroads of their professional lives, deciding whether to continue pursuing career advancement or to remain in the classroom fulfilling the original "call to teach".

iii. Mid-late year teachers (professional life phase 16-23, 24-30 and 31+):

Excessive paperwork and heavy workload were key hindrances to their perceived effectiveness. However, a distinctive group of

teachers in the final phase of their teaching continued to demonstrate a high level of motivation and commitment.

Within all three groups there were those whose perceived commitment was being sustained and others whose commitment was declining. External policy contexts, heavy workload and work-life tensions appear to have had stronger influences on teachers' self-efficacy and sense of effectiveness in the middle and later professional life phases (from 8 to 15 years) than in the first and third groups.

A finding from this research is that teachers in their mid-year teacher professional phase face challenges of significant stress. This contrasts with other researchers who found that teachers in the early years faced much greater challenges (Bullough, 1995; Flores, 2001; Freiberg, 2002). In addition Hanushek, Kain and Rivkin (2004), noted that the difficulty that schools serving academically disadvantaged populations have in retaining teachers applies particularly to those early in their careers.

In addition to individual backgrounds, several studies have looked at the relationship between school background and teacher retention. For example, Buckley et al. (2005 cited in Rinke, 2008, p. 5) found that, "the quality of school facilities, such as lighting, temperature, air quality, and noise level, is positively correlated with teacher's decisions to stay". Other studies have demonstrated a link between the size of the school or school district and teacher retention. Bobbitt et al. (1991 cited in Rinke, 2008, p. 5) noted that, "large schools have better teacher retention". Additionally, Theobald (1990 cited in Rinke, 2008, p. 5) found that "a teacher would continue working in the same district following a decrease in the student-staff ratio".

Across these studies, it is clear that individual characteristics are important for teacher retention. These include demographic factors such as gender, age, race and teaching experience. School factors, including the quality of the facilities, size and student-staff ratio also influence retention. These studies are significant as it has been argued that teacher retention is one of the most reliable indicators of teacher resilience (Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001).

5.6 Protective factors in sustaining teacher resilience

The capacity for resilience varies from individual to individual, and it may grow or decline over time, depending in part on protective factors within a particular person that might prevent or mitigate the negative effects of stressful situations or conditions (Henderson & Milstein, 2003). Luthar and Cicchetti (2001) noted that the resilience researcher is typically interested in identifying protective factors that might modify the negative effects of adverse life circumstances and, having accomplished this, in identifying mechanisms or processes that might underlie associations found.

Protective factors are those that modify the effects of risk in a positive direction. Examples include an internal locus of control or having a positive relationship with at least one individual (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2001). In addition, Smokowski, Reynolds and Bezruczko (1999, p. 426) argued that, “protective factors are often given the credit for facilitating the process of overcoming adversity. The defining feature of protective factors is a modification of the person’s response to a risk situation”. This requires some form of “protection of the reaction to a factor that in ordinary circumstances leads to a maladaptive outcome” (Rutter, 1987 cited in Smokowski, et al., 1999, p. 426). An array of factors has been identified as having important roles in facilitating positive adaptation.

Many studies have found there are also protective factors that buffer risk factors, (Garmezy, 1993; Masten, et al., 2008; Masten & Reed, 2002; Rutter, 1987; Wyman, Cowen, Work, & Kerley, 2009). Werner (1989 cited in Smokowski, et al., 1999, p. 426) clustered protective factors into three major categories: “personal attributes of the individual, affectional ties within the family and the existence of external support systems, which arise at school or within the community”. Alternatively, Russo and Boman (2007) clarify the protective factors identified into just two categories, the attributes of the individual and the supportive factors in the environment that are seen to promote successful development. Howard and Johnson (2004) also divide the protective factors into two groups observing that a common theme in the research on resilience has been the breaking down of protective factors into internal and external aspects. Both internal and external aspects are necessary in

varying degrees for resilience to develop. Resilience is a dynamic process involving interactions between risk and protective processes – internal and external to the individual – that act to modify the effects of adverse life events (Rutter, 1999). The following sections discuss the characteristics of internal and external protective factors for sustaining teacher resilience.

5.6.1 Internal factors

Benard (1995 cited in Russo & Boman, 2007, p. 18) noted that, “the term ‘internal’ involves an individual’s personal attributes and qualities. Internal assets are intrinsic, inherent or generated from within an individual and include biological and psychological factors. These aspects include an individual’s health, genetic predisposition, temperament, intellectual capacity, social competence, problem-solving skills, autonomy and a sense of purpose”.

Studies that have been done in the 1990s and early 2000s showed that educational researchers into resilience also placed emphasis on individual characteristics (Alva, 1991; Gonzalez & Padilla, 1997; V. Lee, Winfield, & Wilson, 1991; Murray Nettles, Mucherah, & Jones, 2000; Reyes & Jason, 1993; Waxman, Huang, & Padron, 1997; Waxman & Huang, 1996; Waxman, Huang, & Wang, 1997)

The following discussion of characteristics of resilient teachers focuses upon three categories commonly identified by researchers - their emotional, social, and intellectual characteristics. The emotional characteristics of teacher resilience include: easy temperament (E. Werner & Smith, 1982); having a sense of humour to generate comic relief, reduce stress, and find alternative ways of looking at things (Masten, 1986); optimism, and a strong sense of purpose and future (Sagor, 1996; Stipek, Recchia, McClintic, & Lewis, 1992); risk taking and perceived efficacy (Sachs, 2004); stress-resistance, being hardy and having autonomy (Benard, 1995; Williams, Newcombe, Woods, & Buttram, 1994); maintain healthy expectations (Benard, 1991); coping skills (Clark, 1995); a high intrinsic motivation (Reed & Davis, 1999); self-esteem and self-efficacy (Garmezy, 1993; Luthar, 1991; Masten,

et al., 2008; E. E. Werner & R. S. Smith, 1992); patience, determination, commitment, self-reliance and hope (Janas, 2002); a sense of agency - a strong belief in their ability to control situations what happens to them (the opposite of which is fatalism or helplessness) (Benard, 1991; Gerber, Ginsberg, & Reiff, 1992; Howard & Johnson, 2004).

The above discussion shows that self-esteem and self-efficacy are two important characteristics in the emotional category for teacher resilience. Self-esteem is an individual's experience of his or herself as being competent to cope with the basic challenges of life and confidence in their ability to rationalise the issues. By extension, it is this confidence in their ability to learn, make appropriate choices and decisions, that enables them to respond effectively to change (Wheeler, Thumlert, Glaser, Schoellhamer, & Bartosh, 2007). On the other hand, according to Bandura (1997 cited in Evers, Gerrichhausen, & Tomic, 2000), self – efficacy is the beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments.

The second category is social. Among the characteristics of resilient teachers are increased responsiveness, flexibility and adaptability (E. E. Werner & Smith, 1989); social competence (Benard, 1995; Sagor, 1996; Stipek, et al., 1992; Williams, et al., 1994); sociocultural awareness, contextual interpersonal skills (Sachs, 2004); having strong interpersonal and social skills, responding well to others (Benard, 1991; Clark, 1995; Garmezy, 1993; Luthar, 1991; Masten, et al., 2008; M. E. P. Seligman, 1992; E. E. Werner & Smith, 1989); being caring (Benard, 1995) and tolerance and responsibility and compassion (Janas, 2002).

These research findings show that social competence and social skills are important aspects for teacher resilience. Siperstein (1992) refers to social competence as the marriage of social knowledge and social action. Reschly and Gresman (1981) suggest that social competence is comprised of adaptive behavior (independent functioning skills, physical development, academic competencies, and language development) as well as social skills (interpersonal behaviors, self-related behavior, and task-related behaviors). Social competence has also been examined in relation to outcome (success in social roles), and behavioral traits that are thought to be predictive of positive social behavior (Greenspan & Granfield, 1992). On the

other hand, social skills are often defined as a complex set of skills that include communication, problem-solving and decision making, assertion, peer and group interaction, and self-management (Haager, Watson, & Willows, 1995; Sugai & Lewis, 1996). “These skills are competencies necessary for individuals to initiate and maintain positive social relationships with peers and other community members” (Quinn & Jannasch-Pennell, 1995, p. 27).

The third category is intellectual. Teacher characteristics in this category have been identified as good intellectual skills, self insight, a commitment to ongoing learning and a philosophical stance or moral purpose (Sumsion, 2004); problem solving ability (Benard, 1995; Clark, 1995; Sagor, 1996; Stipek, et al., 1992; Williams, et al., 1994); self-understanding (Sachs, 2004); a sense of future (Benard, 1995; Williams, et al., 1994); high expectations and strong goal direction (M. E. P. Seligman, 1992); seeking additional education, for example going on to higher education (Miller, 1995); and creativity (Garmezy, 1993; Luthar, 1991; Masten, et al., 2008; E. Werner & R. Smith, 1992).

In the previous studies regarding intellectual category, the researchers found that problem solving and creativity are two pivotal aspects for teacher resilience. Problem solving is focused on generating solutions that will make a change for the better (Davis, 2003). On the other hand, Runco (1993 cited in Mann, 2006, p. 238) described creativity as a multifaceted construct involving divergent and convergent thinking, problem finding and problem solving, self-expression, intrinsic motivation, a questioning attitude, and self-confidence.

5.6.2 External support factors

The term ‘external’ refers to an individual relationship with their school and community which can either protect against, or exacerbate, the negative impact of stress on his or her life (Kumpfer, 1999). According to Borman and Overman (2004, p. 179), “resilience researchers have noted that school environments may provide protective factors that mitigate against school failure. Most often, when discussing

the features of schools that foster resilience, these researchers have listed such school characteristics as strong principal leadership and a clear school mission”.

Bernard (1995 cited in Bernshausen & Cunningham, 2001, p. 6) identified three factors that can assist resilience which are, “a caring relationship with at least one person, high expectations and support to meet them and opportunities for participation that are meaningful and involve increased responsibility”. Benard (2004 cited in Bondy, Ross, Galligane, & Hambacher, 2007) argued school environments provide critical protective factors for fostering resilience. Critical school environment factors identified by them are, developing caring relationships with adults and peers (e.g. establishing unconditional positive regard, creating a culture of care and respect, consistently providing care and support), and setting high and clear expectations for academic performance and classroom behavior (e.g., teaching cooperation and conflict resolution, consistent implementation of rules and procedures). The following discussion of external support factors concentrates on two aspects – personal support for teachers and the quality of the school environment.

Personal support for teachers is important because teachers need to be empowered with the tools to become resilient. Fullan (1999, cited in Mohr, Wickstrom, Bernshausen, Mathis, & Patterson, 2003, p. 2) argued resilient teachers also tend to have multiple support systems, and these connections help them avoid feelings of isolation. Among supportive actions that can assist teachers to be resilient are providing a strong support group (including a caring network of family and friends outside school as well as a competent and caring leadership team (Howard & Johnson, 2004; Murray Nettles, et al., 2000; Vanterpool, Lipman, & Presseisen, 1994); leaders reducing stressors and also increasing available resources in schools (Masten, 1994); leadership characterized by commitment to vision (Cox, 2004); supportive principals (Patterson, et al., 2004); and supportive administrators, fellow teachers, organisers and managers of the school (Brunetti, 2006).

It is clear that a strong support group and a caring environment are two important characteristics in personal support for teacher resilience. Strong support groups have been defined as the presence of others, or the resources provided by

them, prior to, during and following a stressful event (Nichols & Jenkinson, 2006). On the other hand, according to Thayer-Bacon (1993) ingredients of caring include: people developing openness and receptiveness to others and their ideas; people listening to the opinions of others more fairly; and people respecting others as separate and autonomous, and worthy of caring. It is this attitude that gives value to others by acknowledging that others are worth taking seriously. Intrinsically, valuing the opinions of others in an atmosphere of trust, inclusion and openness is vital in establishing caring relationships.

School environments also are an important factor in fostering resiliency. The characteristics of supportive school environments include schools providing opportunities for participation in the school (Murray Nettles, et al., 2000); a caring environment, mobilization of structure and a proliferation of programs in a school (Cox, 2004); high levels of teacher influence on school curriculum and instructional decisions and providing opportunities for professional development as identified by the teachers themselves according to their individual needs (Patterson, et al., 2004); good teacher pupil relationships and acceptable behavior of pupils (C Day, et al., 2007); high levels of collegiality (C Day, et al., 2007; Patterson, et al., 2004); devotion to students and teacher pursuit of personal and professional fulfillment (Brunetti, 2006); and adequate cognitive appraisal of the situations and one's own response, a realistic appraisal of one's capacity for action and their consequences (Miller, 1995).

These researchers found that staff collegiality is an important aspect for teacher resilience. According to Villani (1996 cited in Marzano, 2003, p. 61), "collegial behavior is demonstrated by teachers who are supportive of one another. They openly enjoy professional interactions, are respectful and courteous of each other's needs". Fullan and Hargreaves (1996 cited in Marzano, 2003, p. 61) noted that "collegial behaviors include: openly sharing failures and mistakes, demonstrating respect for each other, and constructively analyzing and criticizing practices and procedures".

In conclusion, the results from resiliency studies provide compelling evidence that many factors may help individuals at risk of failure to become resilient in the face of adversity. These results also provide evidence that resilient individuals

interpret stressful life experiences and trauma differently. The major theme that connects all of the previously mentioned results is the emphasis on both individual characteristics and supportive factors that may contribute to resilience. There has also been evidence that the resiliency process may differ for men and women (Waxman, et al., 2004).

From the previous discussion it is clear that it is possible to identify two sets of factors contributing towards sustaining teacher resilience: (1) internal or personal factors, which encourage resiliency in individuals and external factors, which can create adversity or alternatively provide support and protection. These two sets of factors (internal and external) have the potential to counteract possible negative outcomes for teachers and to promote the development of their personal resilience.

5.7 Theories of teacher resilience

Howard et al. (1999) and Luthar et al. (2000) articulated the importance of theory in taking into account teacher resilience. They argued that research in the area of resilience will be seriously constrained if a theoretical basis for resilience continues to be missing in most studies. There are two theories put forward to explain how teachers become resilient when facing challenges in their school duties. The following sections summarize the two theories and examine the differences between them.

5.7.1 Resilience as a psychological construct

Fredrickson develops a ‘broaden-and-build’ theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001, 2004) which provides a useful psychological conceptual framework. Fredrickson (2004) observes that a subset of positive emotions (joy, interest, contentment and love) promote the discovery of novel actions and the

development of social bonds, which serve to build on an individual's personal resources. These personal resources range from physical and intellectual resources to social and psychological resources, and "function as reserves that can be drawn on later to improve the odds of successful coping and survival" (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1367). In other words, positive emotions fuel psychological resilience. Most importantly Fredrickson suggested that,

the personal resources accrued during states of positive emotions are durable, (outlasting) the transient emotional states that led to their acquisition, and that through experiences of positive emotions...people transform themselves, becoming more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated and healthy individuals (Fredrickson, 2004, p. 1369)

In addition, Gu and Day (2007) state that Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, from a psychological perspective, contributes to a conceptual basis for understanding the resilient qualities of teachers who are doing a job that is, itself, emotional by nature and that it mirrors the work of a range of educational researchers on the nature of teaching (Fried, 2001; Nias, 1989; Palmer, 2007). Hargreaves (1998 cited in Gu & Day, 2007, p. 1304) for example, posits that emotions are at the heart of teaching:

good teaching is charged with positive emotions. It is not just a matter of knowing one's subject, being efficient, having the correct competences, or learning all the right techniques. Good teachers are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy (Hargreaves, 1998, cited in Gu & Day, 2007, p. 1304).

Moreover, Nieto (2003) in her study of American high school teachers, found that what had kept teachers going in the profession was 'emotional stuff'. She describes teaching as an intellectual endeavour which involves love, anger and depression, and hope and possibility. Nieto (2003) argued that in the contemporary

contexts for teaching a learning community is an important incentive that keeps teachers going. In pursuit of learning in ‘communities of practice’ Wenger (1998, cited in Gu & Day, 2007, p. 1304) stated that,

teachers will consolidate a sense of belonging and shared responsibility, enhance morale and perceived efficacy, develop aspects of resilient qualities, and thrive and flourish socially and professionally. More importantly, in this developmental progression, their resilient qualities do not merely serve the developmental progression; indeed, at the heart of the process, they interact with negative influences and constraints and develop in strength together with teachers’ professional qualities (Wenger, 1998, cited in Gu & Day, 2007, p. 1304).

In conclusion, this theory focuses on the inner strength of teachers to be resilient. This theory shows that the resilience of individuals is dependent on their personal traits.

5.7.2 Resilience: a multidimensional, socially constructed concept

Gu and Day (2007) state that while the concept of resilience elaborated on in the discipline of psychology helps clarify the internal factors and personal characteristics of trait-resilient people, the notion of resilience that is presented by social work literature advances a perspective that views resilience as multidimensional and multi-determined and is best understood as a dynamic within a social system of interrelationships (Benard, 1991; Gordon, 1995; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Luthar, et al., 2000; Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, & Kumpfer, 1990; Walsh, 2006).

Benard (1995 cited in Gu & Day, 2007, p. 1305), proposed that “we may all be born with a biological basis for resilient capacity, by which we are able to develop social competence, problem-solving skills, a critical consciousness, autonomy, and a sense of purpose”. However, the capacity to be resilient in different negative circumstances, whether these be connected to personal or professional factors, can be

enhanced or inhibited by the nature of the setting in which we work, the people with whom we work and the strength of our beliefs or aspirations (Benard, 1991; C Day, et al., 2007; Henderson & Milstein, 2003; Luthar & Cushing, 1996; Oswald, Johnson, & Howard, 2003). In addition, Luthar stated that

distinguishes between ego-resiliency and resilience, which also calls attention to the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of resilient qualities. She argues that the former is a personality characteristic of the individual and does not presuppose exposure to substantial adversity whereas the latter is a dynamic development process and does presuppose exposure to significantly negative conditions (Luthar, 1996 cited in Gu & Day, 2007, p. 1305) (see also Luthar, et al., 2000)

This theory implies that resilient qualities can be learned or acquired (Higgins, 1994) and achieved through providing relevant and practical protective factors, such as a caring and attentive educational setting, positive and high expectations, positive learning environments, a strong supportive social community, and supportive peer relationships (Benard, 1991; Oswald, et al., 2003; Pence, 1988; Wang, 1997).

To Gu and Day (2007), resilience is not an innate quality. Rather, it is a construct that is relative, developmental and dynamic, connoting the positive adaptation and development of individuals in the presence of challenging circumstances (Howard, et al., 1999; Luthar, et al., 2000).

The previous discussion demonstrates that a theory of resilience as a psychological construct emphasizes traits of resilience but a theory of resilience as a multidimensional, socially constructed concept emphasizes that resilience can be developed in individuals. This current study draws primarily upon the theory of resilience as a multidimensional, socially constructed concept, because this theory emphasizes that resilience can be developed in individuals whereas the theory of resilience as a psychological construct focuses only on the current individual characteristics of resilient teachers.

5.8 Conclusion and implications for my current study

This chapter has presented a literary review of studies relevant to teacher resilience. The discussion began with definitions of key concepts to providing a clear context for the research. The chapter also described the various purposes for which studies in teacher resilience have been carried out, adverse conditions requiring teacher resilience, the relationship between demographic factors and teacher resilience, protective factors in sustaining teacher resilience and theories of resilience. This elaboration provided a further foundation and direction for the study of professional practice by educational leaders in developing and sustaining teacher resilience.

Previous studies have investigated the conditions that teachers face in teaching and learning. These included the greater complications faced in urban schools (Patterson, et al., 2004), very disadvantaged areas where issues of unemployment, poverty, family breakdown and interpersonal violence are common (Howard & Johnson, 2004), school situations with largely poor and minority students, varying ethnicities among students, students who are economically disadvantaged and often do not speak English as a first language and resources and school structures that are seldom sufficient for the task (Brunetti, 2006). One study (C Day, et al., 2007) investigated the responses of teachers to the challenges they faced over the course of a career.

This current study set out to investigate whether there are differing challenges teachers face in rural and urban secondary schools in Malaysia. I was interested to explore whether different locations and situations trigger different levels of resilience and what conditions and challenges teachers may deem easy to respond to and which ones do they rate as the most difficult. The research in a rural school is a new context of study in teacher resilience because I could find no studies carried out in this area. The previous studies reviewed in this chapter were only carried out in urban and suburban areas.

However, the main issues of interest in investigation are related to the challenges that teachers may face during the implementation of new educational policies and the role educational leaders play in assisting them. Researchers have

identified a number of protective factors for building teacher resilience. Their studies suggest that protective factors that can make a real difference in teacher's lives are often relatively simple to organize, are easy to support and / or are learnable.

The previous discussion demonstrates that the protective factors are a result of both internal and external factors. However, the majority of the researchers have focused their studies on internal factors which addressed the role of teachers in building or sustaining their own resilience. Only research by Cox (2004) has focused the role of leaders in creating resilience. Cox however looked at resilience in students rather than teachers. The scope of this current study includes the role of educational leadership in sustaining and developing teacher resilience, an area that has not previously been addressed. Administrative support is influential for teachers' career decisions. Bobbitt et al. (1991 cited in Rinke, 2008, p. 6) found "administrative support to be the primary reason teachers cite for their dissatisfaction and defection from the profession". Weiss (1999) found teacher perceptions of school leadership and culture were the strongest factors associated with teacher effort, and commitment. Rosenholtz & Simpson (1990) also found principal support in the form of buffering, or reducing interferences, was one of the most powerful effects. Day et al. (2007, p. 224) noted that 'strong personal support, humane professional leadership or a combination of these, would result in teachers sustaining resilience'. The question is then, how can leaders assist teachers to sustain their resilience in the Malaysian Secondary School Context?

This is an important research area because, as Day et al. (2007) notes, commitment and resilience have been found to be crucial to teachers' abilities to sustain effectiveness. According to Milstein and Henry (2000, p. 53),

fostering educator resiliency should be a priority if we expect to have a positive impact on students and communities. Educators who are not resilient will probably be dissatisfied and frustrated. More importantly, they will be poor role models for their students. In fact, they are likely to be roadblocks rather than pathways for the development of students' resiliency Milstein and Henry (2000, p. 53).

Thus, resilience - the ability of an individual to withstand or recover quickly from difficult conditions-may be said to be a necessary quality for all, and especially those who experience changing or challenging circumstances. However, as Day et al., (2007) have argued, resilience is an unstable construct. The nature of resilience is determined by the *interaction* between the internal assets of the individual and the external environments in which each individual lives and grows. Thus, the manifestation of resilience varies from person to person and fluctuates over time.

While individuals can develop individual strategies that can strengthen their personal abilities to ‘bounce back’ and be resilient in times of challenging policy changes, they are only one side of the coin. The other side is the role of educational leadership in providing resources, strategies and support. Thus, positive relationships with school leaders and colleagues’ support are important factors in helping teachers to sustain their commitment, resilience and effectiveness. Indeed, it has been argued that a key mediating factor here is supportive educational leadership. So what are the current expectations of the work of school leaders in Malaysia?

The next chapter discusses these by examining Malaysian literature on these topics, including the educational leadership theories that are currently commonly espoused and taught in Malaysian training and professional development programmes for principals and senior leaders in schools. I will then discuss the wider international leadership literature that has increasingly focused in recent years on the nature of educational leadership for improving student learning, as well as literature on the leadership of change.

Chapter Six

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE MALAYSIAN CONTEXT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an examination of the literature on relevant aspects of educational leadership that provide the basis for the present study of professional educational leadership practices in sustaining teacher resilience in two secondary schools in Malaysia. The discussion in this chapter is divided into four parts. First, it discusses issues of educational leadership and teacher resilience during educational policy changes in Malaysia. Second, it reviews how concepts of educational leadership have been used and adopted by Malaysian scholars. Third, it describes educational leadership training in Malaysia. Fourth, the chapter then focuses on the essential role of educational leadership as a source of influence on teachers in implementing educational policy changes in their work in classrooms, particularly in assisting students to raise their achievement.

The literature review in this chapter utilised Google Scholar and two article databases, ERIC and British Education Index – using the keywords ‘educational leadership/leaders in Malaysia’, ‘school leadership/leaders in Malaysia’, school administrators in Malaysia, educational leadership/leaders/administrator and teacher resilience/resilient teacher/teacher resiliency in Malaysia. The articles found in this search are in either the English or Malay Language. A number of books relevant to educational leadership training in Malaysia were also used in this literature review. I uncovered a chapter by Bajunid (2004) which is relevant to educational leadership training in Malaysia because it provided a comprehensive description of educational leadership training in Malaysia following the establishment of the Institute Aminuddin Baki as the main body for educational leadership training in Malaysia in 1979 (further explanation about the IAB will be discussed in the sub-section, educational leadership training in Malaysia). I faced several constraints in

conducting a literature review about educational leadership in Malaysia due to the small number of references that can be found in the Article Databases or library. To deal with these constraints staff from the IAB and also the Institute of Principalship Studies at the University of Malaya were contacted to enquire about educational leadership training in Malaysia. I also referred to the web pages of these two institutions to get up-to-date information about educational leadership training in Malaysia.

6.2 Issues of educational leadership and teacher resilience during educational policy changes in Malaysia

As explained in Chapter Three, the Malaysian Government, through the Ministry of Education, has been implementing several changes to educational policy in Malaysia during the period 1996-2008 with such changes to be completed by 2010. Such changes are part of a continuous effort to enable the education system in Malaysia to fulfil local and international demands. Among the changes are the development of the Malaysian Smart School, the introduction of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English and the implementation of the National Education Blueprint 2006-2010.

As described in the objectives for each of these policies in the third chapter, the Ministry of Education noted that the implementation of these policies will be of potential benefit for students as individuals as well as for society. Such policy changes also create new challenges for teachers however. Chapter Four showed that teachers face problems in fulfilling the aims of the development of Smart Schools because of the limited time provided for them to incorporate computers into teaching and learning and insufficient infrastructure and teaching facilities, especially at schools in rural areas. The implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English also created new challenges for teachers because many of them have limited competency in English. This in itself can create difficulties for students, but they also may have limited proficiency in the English language and

consequently may fail to comprehend Science and Mathematics. As also explained in Chapter Four, in implementing the National Education Blueprint, teachers face challenges associated with the discipline of students, parent's attitude towards education, the range of schools currently functioning, insufficient infrastructure, and challenges in implementing the school cluster concept. Furthermore, according to Malakolunthu (2007), there are a number of studies which demonstrate that teachers face problems in implementing new ideas and improving instructional practices as prescribed in the changes. For example, one study on the teaching of higher order thinking skills in the language classroom revealed that the teachers felt they were not prepared to successfully implement this innovative idea in their daily lessons. The teachers noted that the short-term in-service training with which they were provided was not very helpful in infusing higher order thinking skills in their teaching (Nagappan, 1998 cited in Malakolunthu, 2007).

If these changes are to be successfully implemented, given the importance placed on these policy initiatives by the Malaysian government, the education system needs resilient teachers who are able to face all challenges successfully. Research has shown that resilient teachers have the ability to contribute toward the achievement of their school's goals even when they are facing challenging situations. Several studies carried out by international researchers have identified teachers' strategies to build their personal resilience in adverse situations (Brunetti, 2006; C Day, et al., 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Patterson, et al., 2004).

Some of these international studies also showed that educational leadership has an important role in assisting teachers to become resilient when facing challenges. For example, according to Day and Saunders (2006), the practices of school leaders and their relationships with teachers significantly influence commitment and resilience. Day et al. (2007), believe that in developing positive, resilient identities, key mediating factors for teachers are supportive school/department leadership, colleagues and family. Even though Day and his colleagues suggested three supportive aspects, which are leadership, colleagues and family, their study also indicated that the main factor which contributes positively in building teachers' resilience, is school/department leadership. They maintained that support by leaders which focuses upon creating and maintaining a learning climate and

providing professional learning opportunities for teachers, assists teachers in becoming resilient. Waxman et al. (2003) emphasized that educational resilience should not be viewed as fixed, individual attributes but as something that can be promoted by focusing on alterable factors that may impact on an individual's success in school. Leadership in all schools is able to support staff in both professional and personal issues (Howard & Johnson, 2004) and can play an important role in reducing stress by providing the support needed by teachers in adverse conditions.

Conner (1997, p. 9) earlier argued that “leaders are capable of reframing the thinking of those whom they guide, enabling them to see that significant changes are not only imperatives but achievable.” That is, educational leaders may be able to encourage colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader (Wasley, 1991). Making a different point, Elmore (2002 cited in Holloway, 2003) noted that teachers feel more empowered and satisfied when the work itself is rewarding and when external rewards support and reinforce the work. And Holloway (2003) mentioned that providing support throughout teachers' careers can ensure a sustainable pool of high-quality teachers for all students.

Thus educational leadership has an important role in building and sustaining teacher resilience when they are facing challenges or adverse conditions. In the Malaysian context the role of educational leadership is also anticipated by academics to play a key role in ensuring that teachers can be supported in this complex situation. R. Ahmad (2000), as Director of the Institute of Principalship Studies in Malaysia, noted that school leaders in these times of uncertainty and change also need to have compassion, care and include everybody to enable them to accept and feel they own the change. She argues that as far as possible everyone should be made to feel they are wanted as part of the team. Further explanation is provided in the discussion of how concepts of educational leadership have been used and adopted by Malaysian scholars. In addition, according to Jantan and Khuan (2004), (both are lecturers at Institute Aminuddin Baki) the fast social change and rapid economic development in Malaysia demands strong school leaders. Malakolunthu (2007) stated that educational leadership has to be able to assist teachers learn and adapt to face such changes by providing time and opportunities for professional development.

International researchers' studies suggest that educational leaders are able to facilitate teacher resilience when facing challenges. While researchers from Malaysia have also emphasized the important role of educational leadership in ensuring teachers can be supported in complex situations of educational change, they have not focused on investigating teacher resilience. In a search for studies about the role of educational leadership during educational policy changes in Malaysia from various sources such as the Article Database, ERIC, Google Scholar, and data about research in every Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia, and the Educational Research Division of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, I found only the following studies. A study by Malakolunthu (2007) focuses on the role of educational leadership in supervising teachers during the implementation of educational reform. Jantan and Khuan's (2004) study addresses educational leadership's characteristics and strategies in facing changes. H. Ahmad (2004a) suggests strengthening school-based management as a way towards sustainable education reform. That is, I have not found any research that has focused on educational leadership for sustaining teacher resilience. The only study about resilience has been carried out by Abdullah (2002) in the University of Malaya and this was a study of Malaysian school counsellor resilience.

6.3 How concepts of educational leadership have been used and adopted by Malaysian scholars

This section focuses on the concepts of educational leadership that have been used and adopted by Malaysian scholars in this area. The main scholars involved are Bajunid and R. Ahmad. The discussion begins with a brief explanation of their background as scholars in educational leadership and then considers concepts utilised by them in their academic writing.

Bajunid was appointed by the Ministry of Education as the third Director of the IAB from 1992 to 1998 (Ministry of Education, 2008a). He also was selected as President of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration in 1996

(Bajunid, 1995). At the Institute of Principals Studies in the University of Malaya, R. Ahmad is well known as a scholar in educational leadership. She has been appointed by the Ministry of Education as Director of this institute from its establishment in 2000 until May 2008. In this section, I attempt to discuss how concepts of educational leadership have been used and adopted by Bajunid and R. Ahmad as Malaysian scholars in this area.

Through my search of the databases, Malaysian libraries and the Educational Research Division of the Malaysian Ministry of Education, several articles by Bajunid discussing educational leadership in Malaysia were found. Bajunid led a group of researchers including five senior staff at the IAB in a study investigating the Malaysian Educative Leadership Project (MELP) (Bajunid et al., 1996) which intended to produce an indigenous theory of educative leadership in Malaysia. They defined this as the forms of leadership that help improve the quality of teaching and learning. They argued that practical theory was needed to develop leadership considered appropriate in the Malaysian context, because educational policies always change due to their being heavily influenced by the social, political and economic environment within which they occur (Chapters Two, Three and Four have discussed this scenario). The purpose of their study was also to develop educative leadership practices in Malaysian schools that fulfill national priorities. The study involved 140 secondary school leaders and used the Malaysian Educative Leadership Questionnaires, which they designed and validated on the assumption that the leaders in a school may include the principal, the senior assistants, senior subject teachers and members of PTA boards. These school leaders were asked to respond to open questions such as what leadership services improve the quality of teaching and learning? The purpose of their study was to build theory from educational leaders' own views and practices in their schools. They used grounded theory approach to examine the types of activity implied by each response and clustered the responses into forms of service activity. Their findings showed that six categories could be used to describe the activity of educative leadership in Malaysia: philosophical, strategic, political, cultural, managerial and evaluative.

From a philosophical viewpoint, they suggested that it was important for leaders to develop a collaborative philosophy within schools. They suggested that

collaboration in problem solving would encourage the growth of knowledge about teaching and learning.

From a strategic viewpoint, they suggested that leaders need to identify strategic options for problem solving, analyse the consequences of options, make informed strategic decisions and make longer-term plans. They also suggested leaders need to provide strategic analyses of the policy context in Malaysia and apply these to their schools.

From the viewpoint of political leadership, they found that respondents of their study suggested that leaders had to find ways of accommodating the views of legal stakeholders (Ministry of Education and IT Divisions) and to gain support for school policies in the broader context such as support from PTAs. They noted the need for leaders to lobby for the resources needed to achieve school purposes. They also recommended that political leaders in school should empower staff with the freedom to innovate in teaching and learning and should encourage collegial teaching and learning.

Relative to cultural leadership the suggestion was made that leaders in school relate local aspirations to national education goals when creating a sense of identity in each school. The need to build a school culture that features collegiality, respect, trust and rapport between teachers, students and community was noted.

In terms of managerial service, leaders needed to make sure that schools operate smoothly, that they are firm in implementing decisions and that they distribute workloads fairly. Other management services include the leaders' capacities to maximize the use of limited resources and to promote the growth of knowledge about teaching. Special reference was also made to managerial services through which leaders in schools encourage collegial teaching and promote co-operative learning about teaching.

The evaluative aspect referred to the need for leaders to monitor student achievement and the quality of individual teacher's personal teaching. Leaders also need to collect information about the quality of teaching from students and or

parents, and similarly, collect information from teachers about the quality of leadership services.

Bajunid et al. (1996) concluded that educational leadership requires a collaborative philosophy, strategic, political and cultural leadership and effective managerial and evaluative processes.

In describing concepts of educational leadership discussed by R. Ahmad, I have chosen her writing in her Professorship Inaugural Lecture (R. Ahmad, 2000) entitled “Effective school leadership for the twenty first century”. She emphasised the key role of distributed leadership for effective school leadership. Similarly to Bajunid et al. (1996), she stated that, educational leadership occurs at all levels of the school and to refer to school leadership as merely enacted by the principal is inadequate. School leadership should be looked at holistically, and should focus upon distributive leadership, which allows for all school staff to be truly involved in a collaborative manner.

More specifically, to practise educational leadership, R. Ahmad concentrates on instructional and transformational leadership. She described educational leadership in Malaysia as basically instructional leadership, since the main focus of the school is instruction, the core business of the school. In terms of behaviour or approach it should be transformational, the main function of school leadership is to transform the school to make it an environment conducive to and facilitative of learning for all. Transformational leadership is to enable teachers to realise their potential and ultimately to enable the students to achieve what is achievable.

In other writing R. Ahmad (2004b) noted that in the context of the Malaysian society that is very examination oriented, school effectiveness is largely measured by how well students succeed in national examinations. This emphasis on measuring student achievement is not surprising because the Malaysian education system is highly examination oriented. According to Y.C. Chan and Wong (2004, p. 178),

the Malaysian Education System, being the by-product of British colonisation is very much examination oriented. Examination results are used as the primary means of placement in jobs and

selection for advancement to higher colleges and universities. These examinations have a great impact on the education system. Schools are judged successful by the number of students passing public examinations (Y. C. Chan & Wong, 2004, p. 178).

According to Bajunid (1995), the results of the performance of students and individual schools are compared by district, state, national norms and against performance in previous years. These examination results are made public and reported by the mass media. Special press conferences are held and the Minister of Education makes statements pertaining to the results. Leaders in the formal educational system and public opinion leaders are usually called upon to comment on the results. School heads take immediate action to ensure measures are taken to remedy poor achievement and maintain excellent individual and institutional results.

In conclusion, Bajunid and R. Ahmad have suggested different approaches in describing educational leadership in Malaysia. Based on their study of a wide range of school leaders' views, Bajunid et al. (1996) suggested that educational leaders need to practice collaborative philosophy, strategic, political and cultural leadership, and also implement managerial and evaluative services. The aim of educational leadership for them is to improve the quality of teaching and learning. R. Ahmad (2000) has focused upon the role of distributive, instructional and transformational leadership in producing effective schools as measured by student achievement in public examinations.

6.4 Educational leadership training in Malaysia

The purpose of the discussion in this section is to provide background information regarding the establishment of educational leadership training institutions in Malaysia and to discuss training programmes for educational leadership in Malaysia. The intent of this discussion is not to critique the approach to or models of educational leadership training in Malaysia but to describe how these have been developed in order to illustrate local priorities in provision. The section concludes

with a summary of the most important aspects of educational leadership development that have been emphasised by Educational Leadership Training Institutions in Malaysia.

6.4.1 The establishment of the Aminuddin Baki Institute and the formalization of educational leadership training in Malaysia

The main institution in the country responsible for the development of educational leadership knowledge, as well for as implementing training programs for educational leadership in Malaysia is the Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB) or, in English, the National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership (Institute Aminudin Baki, 1997 cited in Bajunid, 2004).

The establishment of the IAB in 1979 resulted from the Cabinet Committee Report on the implementation of education policies in 1979 (Ministry of Education, 2008a). The report stated that, up to 1979, the Malaysian education system did not have any single education institution to provide training for school leaders to further develop their level of professionalism. School leaders who needed further training were sent abroad. This practice was expensive and meant that only a limited number of officers could be sent for such further training.

In the early stages of its establishment, from 1979 until 1987, this institution, was called the Malaysian Education Staff Training Institute (MESTI). In 1988 the name was changed to Institute Aminuddin Baki as a recognition of the contribution of Aminuddin Baki (First Director General of Education, Malaysia).

The purpose of the IAB is to develop and increase educational leadership and management expertise with the aim of improving the national education system in Malaysia. To fulfill this purpose, the IAB provides training programs and consultancy services as well as publishing journal and research reports about educational management and leadership.

Since its establishment, the IAB has been led by eight directors. Among them was Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid (the third IAB Director) who is recognized both in within Malaysia and internationally as a leading scholar of educational leadership in Malaysia. According to Hallinger (2003), in 1992 there was relatively little interest in school leader preparation and development in Asia, although he noted that there was nascent interest among scholars in several countries including Bajunid in Malaysia. According to Bajunid (2004), however, during the period 1979 to 1993, the training of school leaders had been on-going and there has been an expansion in the range of courses offered and in the opportunities offered for almost every school leader. He further noted that typically, a school leader received training for at least three weeks. In addition to such mandatory training, school leaders were also invited to attend other short training programs from a wide range of course offerings by the IAB throughout the year such as office management, school discipline, General Orders from the Malaysian Government and Professional Circulars. Most of the programs were, however, not award-bearing although school leaders received attendance certificates.

6.4.1.1 The Diploma in management and leadership

From 1993, school leaders were awarded the Diploma in Management and leadership by IAB, after candidates completed a program of study which included educational leadership principles and practical experience related to the work of school leaders (Bajunid, 2004). This diploma programme ran for a period of six months, during which time candidates were exposed to various theoretical and conceptual frameworks of educational management and leadership.

In the Diploma programme, focus was also placed upon analysing local conditions. According to Bajunid (2004), there were also specifically designed programs provided for those working in isolated and small schools, particularly, in Sabah, Sarawak, Pahang, and Perak. Small schools are those “under-enrolled” schools with less than 150 students. Isolated schools are those in remote areas,

usually inaccessible by road. Such schools may be “under-enrolled” or may have more than 150 students.

Further, in larger cities, particularly in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Johor, there are several schools considered difficult to manage because of the transient nature of the population, demographic changes brought about by immigration and environmental conditions. Usually too, in such changing environments, many of the students have parents who are in the lower economic strata of society. Often, students from culturally disadvantaged environments are exposed to varying types of negative influences which in turn affect their academic performance in schools. These schools demand different styles of management and leadership (Bajunid, 2004).

Consequently, specially designed training programs have been offered for educational leaders working and leading in such areas. These special programs are designed to address the specific needs of these institutions and their environment. A continuing education program has been designed to provide participants with the relevant professional and academic framework with which to be able to practise in line with the needs of their locations and situations. They have been given training in knowledge, skills, and attitudes deemed necessary for leadership therein.

Kandasamy and Blaton (2004) have stated that the participants involved in the Diploma also need to do the Practicum, which provides participants with opportunities to go to schools, other than their former schools, to observe practices related to educational management and leadership, for a period of three weeks. The practicum enabled participants to make pertinent observations in the schools that they were attached to, so that they could reflect on these observations in the light of theories and principles they have been exposed to in the continuing educational programs.

After the Practicum has been completed, any subsequent training is called the period of internship where candidates are attached to their own school to study the incumbent principal as well as to apply their theoretical knowledge to bring about changes and/or continuous improvement in areas of concern in their schools. The internship phase for prospective school leaders provides them with the opportunity to

acquire the competencies necessary to enable them to use relevant information in school situations. The transfer of knowledge is promoted when participants have the opportunity to apply it to relevant problems. The situation in which these participants encounter a problem in real life is typically different from the classroom conditions in which they learnt new information or skills (Kandasamy & Blaton, 2004).

Kandasamy and Blaton (2004) also stated the IAB has identified seven areas, called the National Standards in School Management and Leadership, that need to be continuously addressed by school leaders in the school context. They are: setting directions for schools, management of organizations, interpersonal relationships, community relationships, instructional (focus on teaching and learning) leadership, curriculum (focus on courses content or syllabus) leadership and professional development. Participants in internship programs are required to select six areas to work on and to prepare portfolios for each of the chosen areas. These areas are called Standards because in 1994, the Malaysian Government introduced Accountability Standards in Malaysia and, because the Education Service is part of the Civil Service, all references made to accountability in the Civil Service therefore also apply to the education sector. Every subsystem and institution within the education system has to meet specific accountability standards (Malaysian Government, 1994 cited in Bajunid, 1995). According to Bajunid (1995), the provision of standards ensures that quality is promoted in the Malaysian education system and such standards become the basis of norm driven improvement throughout the country.

Each of the participants is assigned supervisors who are lecturers from the IAB, who visit the candidate every month to provide supervision, support and mentoring. At the end of the internship programme, participants present their six *Assessment of Achievement* portfolios. They are also required to prepare a *Personal Development* portfolio. This portfolio includes background information, duties and responsibilities which the participant held before the programme, curriculum vitae, published articles, book reviews, objectives for self-development and letters of recommendation. This development portfolio is useful as a point of reference for

future placement in schools as the general aim is to place the candidate with the most suitable background in the right type of school (Kandasamy & Blaton, 2004).

6.4.1.2 The National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH)

In the early 1990s, IAB required its lecturing staff to acquire proficiency in the philosophies, methods, contents, and strategies for implementing Principal Assessment programs. During this period, materials were gathered from many sources such as the IAB actively seeking international input to develop the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH). Foreign institutions and experts who contributed to the formulation of NPQH include Harry Tomlinson and other academics in the field in the professional network of Malaysian educators (Bajunid, 2004). Harry Tomlinson was a scholar in the United Kingdom and he was responsible for the National Professional Qualification for Headship for the Yorkshire and Humber Region Training and Development Centre (Tomlinson, 2003).

The program for NPQH was seen as a further development of the program of training conducted by IAB since its establishment. The planning for the NPQH program was undertaken in the early 1990s.

There were six major areas of concepts and materials developed for NPQH: Health Fitness and Wellness Measures; General Knowledge; Educational Management Knowledge; Human Resource Skills; Computer Skills and ICT skills; and Personal Knowledge.

The aim of the NPQH programme was to meet the perceived needs of educational leaders for developing effective leadership at schools. The program also provided experiences which enable participants to gain and improve their knowledge and skills in educational leadership, as well as opportunities for participants to develop professional networking as a further aid to fostering school improvement (Institute Aminudin baki, 1997b cited in Bajunid, 2004).

In order to implement NPQH, the Malaysian Education Principal and Executive Development Centre (MEPADC) was established as part of IAB (Institute Aminudin baki, 1997b cited in Bajunid, 2004). At the policy level, the MEPADC

and NPQH received the support of the Ministry of Education. In order to ensure acceptance and ensure success of NPQH, the widest range of participation of significant interest groups and individuals with expertise was encouraged. These included union and professional leaders and people from the Civil Service bureaucracy (Bajunid, 2004). As Bajunid (1995) explained earlier, there were many pressure groups making all kinds of demands pertaining to service offered by the education system, and to the aspirations of the teaching profession. Education bureaus of political parties, social activist groups, professional organizations, trade union organizations, (specifically, teachers' unions), parents' group, parent-teacher organizations, the mass media were all part of the wider range of participants in the policy-making and policy influencing constituencies. These various groups and their representatives were regularly invited to articulate and present their views and preferred choices regarding the various aspects of educational development. According to Bajunid (1995), to the extent that such opinions and demands were seriously considered and addressed, it could be said that the political accountability of the system was comprehensive.

The 1999-2000 academic session was the first year of implementation of NPQH. It was the emphasis of the program to develop a battery of assessment instruments which included assessment of general Intelligence Quotient (Hagino, Hiryu, Fujioka, Riquimaroux, & Watanabe), and measures of multiple intelligence, emotional IQ, leadership IQ, adversity IQ, executive IQ, and spiritual IQ. The major role assigned to measure intelligence, reflects the emphasis the National Cultural Policy and other Development Policies were placing on the role of intellectual leadership and their role in articulating to their staff the nature and purpose of the reforms (Bajunid, 1999).

Apart from the Diploma, NPQH and several service programs, as another aspect of more recent contemporary training, the IAB has also developed "a think-tank group" to facilitate school leaders in facing educational policy changes, particularly the national Blueprint 2006-2010. In this regard, the IAB appointed four former excellent school leaders as senior consultants with the IAB to help train incumbent school leaders and under-performing schools (New Straits Times, 2007). From my analyses of the various writings by these senior consultants, they have

produced a substantial amount of material about effective leadership and effective schools.

6.4.2 Institute of Principalship Studies in Malaysia

The Institute of Principalship Studies (IPS) was established at the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya in January 2000 to fulfil the Malaysian Ministry of Education's objective of providing high caliber leaders for educational institutions. The Institute was established to enable school leaders to equip themselves with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to lead and manage schools effectively, as well as to perform related research and supervision activities (Institute of Principalship Studies, 2008).

The Institute led by R.Ahmad as Director, offers Doctor of Philosophy and Masters Programmes. For these two programmes, there are several coursework components that students (educational leaders) need to accomplish and in the area of leadership, students are required to take two courses, School Leadership and Instructional Supervision and School Improvement and Effectiveness: Theory and Research. Other courses include Statistics and Research Methods, Financial Management, Law and School Management. To be admitted to this Institute, the student must have attended the NPQH course successfully at the Institute Aminudin Baki, and have had a minimum of five years experience in educational management and leadership. Since its establishment until 2008, the Institute had produced 400 graduates (Institute of Principalship Studies, 2008).

Apart from formal academic programmes, this Institute also offers professional development programmes in educational management and leadership. The programmes are presented in a variety of formats including conventions, seminars, workshops, symposiums, forums and discussion. These programmes also involve international scholars in educational management and leadership such as John Pisapia in aspects of strategic leadership and Tony Townsend in the area of school effectiveness and school improvement (Institute of Principalship Studies,

2008). Even though this Institute offers various courses, it concentrates primarily on the role of educational leadership for school effectiveness. The Director's welcoming address (Institute of Principalship Studies, 2008) stated that "the institute strives to be a one stop center for the principalship preparation, in-service professional development programmes as well as a research center in instructional leadership, focusing on school effectiveness and improvement". She adds, "to help realise our mission of becoming a leading national research centre in school effectiveness and improvement, and principalship studies, we seek to strengthen our links and collaboration with other national and overseas institution through joint research projects". The Institute of Principalship Studies focuses primarily on improving school effectiveness in preparing school leaders.

6.4.3 Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy

One example of a University programme is that provided through the University of Malaya. The stated objective of the University of Malaya Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy is to become the center of excellence in the field of educational management and planning (Department of Educational Management, 2011). The main strategy towards this objective is to increase the practical knowledge and skills of school management, leadership, social, creativity, problem solving and decision making skills. These aspects are integral to all the offered programmes. Also, managers and administrators are given structured opportunities to enhance their knowledge, skills and experiences by exploiting information technology and conducting research projects.

The Department offers the Master of Education (Planning and Administration), and the Master of Educational Management. The Doctor of Philosophy is offered in two modes: (i) research only; and (ii) coursework and research (Department of Educational Management, 2011).

Reference to the Handbook Postgraduate Programmes, Session 2010/2011, shows that in the Master of Education (Planning and Administration) there is only

one paper that equals to three credit hours for the programme as a whole focused upon 'leadership' which is Leadership and Human Relations in Educational Organisations. This paper introduces students to the various types of theories and definitions of leadership, with a particular emphasis on the educational context. Specific topics for discussion include: curriculum development, social and human development, cultural development and staff welfare. The paper also covers leadership effectiveness, political sensitivity in leadership, and the ethics of leadership. Students are expected to evaluate selected research works and cases. Teaching approaches include the Problem-Based Learning and role simulation methods (p. 190).

The Master of Educational Management also has only one paper that focuses on leadership which is Educational Leadership. This paper examines various types and theories of educational leadership. Leadership is defined and analysed in terms of traits, behavior, personality, and behavioural outcomes of leaders. The scope of the paper also encompasses some paradigms, theories, metaphors, principles, ethics, and research on educational leadership. The suitability and relevance of a particular type and theory of leadership are considered in terms of several contexts, which include knowledge maturity, culture, locality, condition, change, and time. Discussion also includes cases and typical research methods on leadership (p. 226).

An examination of the Handbook for the Doctor of Philosophy Programmes, Session 2010/2011, shows that this department also offers an educational leadership paper for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the area of Educational Management and Policy. This paper focuses on types of leadership in educational organizations such as schools, colleges, universities, education departments and the Ministry of Education. It includes the characteristics of appropriate leadership in educational organizations. Cases cover the variations in attempts to improve the prevailing leadership styles that exist in educational organizations. The results of analysis are related to theories and concepts of leadership of educational organizations. This paper also discusses important concepts in change and management of change in educational organizations, leadership culture, leadership values and principles. Issues and challenges in human resource development that occur in organizational leadership are also discussed. This paper places emphasis upon the study of multiple

case studies in educational organizational leadership and the analysis of organizational leadership in various situations and environments (p. 143).

All the above papers comprise various aspects of educational leadership. However their main objective is to evaluate the contemporary research agenda in the field of leadership and to conceptualize new topics for continued research. The emphasis of these higher degree programmes is to produce worthwhile research in educational leadership of particular relevance to the Malaysian education system.

Ironically, the previous discussion in sub-topic 6.3 also showed that Malaysian scholars have not been unanimous in their assessments of how educational leadership concepts should be applied in Malaysia. For example, Bajunid et al. (1996) and Ahmad (2000) emphasise the relative importance of quite different aspects of educational leadership. Arguably, the main objective of educational leadership programmes in the Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy, Faculty of Education, University of Malaya is to increase the quantity and quality of research the area of educational leadership to provide better evidence and guidance for policy-makers and practitioners.

6.5 Educational leadership as a source of influence on teachers' work and students' achievements

To summarise the discussions in this chapter thus far, it began with relating educational leadership and teacher resilience during educational policy changes in Malaysia. Briefly, the discussion on this issue showed that the key issues of teacher resilience in times of significant policy changes and the role of educational leadership in developing and sustaining such resilience have received little attention from researchers in Malaysian education, justifying the focus of this current study.

In addition, the previous discussion also showed that Malaysian scholars have not been unanimous about how educational leadership concepts should be applied in Malaysia. Bajunid et al. (1996) and R. Ahmad (2000) focus upon different aspects of educational leadership.

The IAB provides three types of training which are the Diploma in Educational Management and Leadership, the NPQH and contemporary training by the “think-tank group of former Excellent school leaders”. In the Diploma, training strategies within the programmes tend to be action-oriented and to actively engage participants. The Diploma also emphasised the study of local conditions in educational leadership training. The NPQH training emphasises measures of intelligence and the main objective of NPQH is to develop effective leadership at schools. I referred to the Course Content Courses of papers in the Diploma in Educational Management and Leadership Leading to the NPQH Programme, I found one course related to effective schools which is “Strategic Planning Towards Effective Schools” (Bajunid, 2004). The IAB also tries to assist school leaders adapt and adopt educational policy changes by the introduction of a senior consultant programme emphasising school effectiveness. The previous discussion about Institute of Principals Studies also indicates that this institute emphasises effective leadership and effective schools. Briefly, the two main educational leadership training institutions in Malaysia which are the IAB and the Institute of Principals Studies, in preparing educational leaders emphasise the role of effective leadership in developing effective schools.

So what has emerged in the recent wider international literature about the roles, work and purposes of educational leadership? In New Zealand, as one example, policy makers focused during the 1990s on teachers’ and school leaders’ accountability for improving students’ learning. Educational researchers and theorists in that country investigated whether and how leaders could either directly or indirectly impact on improving student achievement. There was evidence that supporting teachers’ development in professional learning communities can be most effective here (V. Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2009).

Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization (Yukl, 2006). According to Nahavandi (2006) and Leithwood (2011), leadership always involves the exercise of interpersonal influence. In addition Clawson (2010, p. 219) argued that, “leadership eventually comes down to influencing others. Even with

strategic vision and skills in managing change, leaders must know how – and be willing-to influence others”. The majority of educational leadership scholars state that leadership processes are related to influence. This is an important point to remember in terms of this current study’s investigations of how teachers can be supported during the implementation of new educational policies. In addition, according to Firestone and Riehl (2005),

since most of the research focuses mainly on building-level educational leaders, we know very little about how leaders in other roles impact student learning. A vigorous research agenda is needed to help educational leaders maximize their contributions to achieving the twin goals of educational equity and increased student learning (p. 6).

As described in Chapter Three, the educational policies that were being implemented at the time of this research in Malaysia (and which proved to be most challenging for many teachers) were planned to benefit students as a result of different teaching and learning activities in classrooms. Therefore studies of the role of educational leadership in providing strategies, resources and support for teachers to ensure that student learning outcomes are raised are discussed here.

6.5.1 The role of educational leadership in providing support for teaching and learning

In discussing this aspect of educational leadership, I relate the discussion to several issues that have emerged in the international literature. Among the issues are the role of educational leadership for change, for supporting teachers’ commitment and finally to raise student outcomes.

6.5.1.1 Educational Leadership for Change

This section discusses the strong relationship between leadership and learning to show the importance of leadership in translating policy initiatives into practices. This connection would signal the end purpose of the policy reform agendas which were my impetus for the thesis topic. Considering the roles of educational leaders in providing support for learning during educational policy changes, I commence my discussion of leadership of change by considering three aspects; theories, issues and strategies.

Fullan (1999) suggested two theories are relevant to facing and managing changes which are complexity theory and evolutionary theory. He claimed that “complexity theory is about learning and adapting under unstable and uncertain conditions” (p. 6) and that the “evolutionary theory of relationships raises the questions of how humans evolve over time, especially in relation to interaction and cooperative behavior” (p. 6). An understanding of these two theories can help educational leaders particularly when facing and managing educational policy changes. The use of both these theories in managing change was also recognized by Gutierrez (2000) as he claimed that theories of complexity and evolution were required to explain what is happening in schools and how to continue to improve working condition at schools. He added that “Fullan correctly advocates that complexity and evolutionary theories guide our thinking about schools and, most important, refresh and invigorate our strategies to recommit to our moral purpose in public educations, its reforms, its restructuring, and its renewal” (p. 219). Fullan (1999, p. 4) explained what forces are at schools and how complexity (chaos) theory assists our acuity as he claimed that “the link between cause and effects is difficult to trace, that change... unfolds in nonlinear ways, that paradoxes and contradictions abound and that creative solutions arise under conditions of uncertainty, diversity and instability”. Therefore, this theory as suggested by Fullan emphasised on the capabilities to be creative at the edge of chaos. Fullan also discussed on how theory of evolutionary can apply to schools and their development. He emphasised that the evolutionary theory insight recognizes that the essential aspect of successful schools cultures and communities is their members’ ability to cooperate. That capacity has

long been recognized as a strong support for learning and productivity in general. In my view the discussion about complexity and evolutionary theories indicated that in managing change educational leaders need to be creative at the edge of complex situations and at the same time, able to create a condition that teachers can work together.

This is argued on the basis that leaders need to consider several issues of educational change that have been predicted to characterize the next 10 years (A. Hargreaves, 2009) in education. Hargreaves has identified seven issues. First, “standardization will go into decline and innovation will emerge in its place” (p. 97). The second issue is about “changing goals in education [to] embrace the forms of innovation and creativity that are essential for advanced knowledge economies” (p. 97). Third, “professional learning communities (PLCs) will come to have an essential role in the education system. A learning society requires schools that can connect with and learn from other schools beyond the confines and bureaucratic controls of their own districts. Without these developments, school will become increasingly isolated and anachronistic - ill equipped to prepare their students and themselves with flexible learning and adaptation to change” (p. 98). Fourth, “the greater proportion of effects on student achievement will come from outside the school” (p. 98). Fifth, “management that assists the delivery and implementation of policies will give way to leadership that can build innovative professional communities” (p. 98). Sixth, Hargreaves refers to the appearance of what he calls “the millennial generation. It is a generation that is already introducing ideas and incorporating technologies that are closer to the culture of today’s children and youth. A key research priority in the coming years should be on the nature and needs of the millennial generation in teaching and leadership within our school” (p. 99). Last, “global conditions of economic collapse call for greater prudence in education spending” (p. 99).

Applying these to the context for this research study, only the issue of the existence of the millennial generation in education happened in the Malaysian Education System via the implementation of the Smart School. Some of the issues do not yet affect the Malaysian education system such as the issues of Professional Learning Communities, the decline in standardization, increasing creativity in

education, the effects on student achievement coming from outside schools and policy makers giving way to leadership that can build innovative professional communities. Because there may be different local, context specific issues in Malaysian Education System in the implementation of educational policy, such changes in this study may be seen in the participants' answers to questions about participants' perceptions of the implementation of the national educational policies.

The discussion also focuses upon the strategies that can be used by educational leaders in assisting teachers to face changes. Referring to Fullan (2003), the leader's job is to help change context - to introduce new elements into the situation that are bound to influence behavior for the better. Fullan emphasized two aspects for leaders to focus upon which were the context of the changes and ways of influencing behavior in that context's communities. On this analysis, at school level, during educational policy changes, educational leaders need both to create a context where personnel become familiar with new policy implementation and influence school staff to agree to be involved in the changes. As he commented, "change the situation and you have a chance to change people's behavior in the short run as well as beyond" (p. 2). In addition, Gladwell (2000 cited in Fullan, 2003, p. 2) claimed that "you need to create a community around them, where these new beliefs could be practical, expressed and nurtured". Fullan (2003) added that selecting and supporting good leaders is a crucial starting point for beginning to change the context in powerful, new ways. The leader's job description, then, is to help change immediate context. In order to help this kind of change, Kotter and Cohen (2002) argued that leaders need to consider working through a process that:

1. Helps people see [new possibilities and situations]
2. Recognises that being confronted with something new hits the emotions
3. Recognises that emotionally charged ideas change behavior or reinforce changed behavior.

Fullan (2002) further stated that a principal requires a new mind and action set for leading complex change. To manage change successfully principals need

personal characteristics of energy/enthusiasm, hope, moral purpose, and skills in understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing and coherence making.

According to Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000), almost all school reform and restructuring initiatives assume the need for significant changes in classroom practice. Therefore, to ensure that educational change is beneficial for students, it needs to be ensured that such changes can be implemented smoothly in the classroom by committed teachers.

6.5.1.2 Educational Leadership and Teachers' Commitment

Leithwood et al. (2000) believed that leadership practices can help to foster teachers' commitment to change. According to them "empirical evidence has demonstrated the impact of such leadership on organizational members' willingness to exert extra effort and most probably, on their sense of self-efficacy. Both of these psychological states are closely related to commitment" (p. 135). They believe leadership practices that would contribute to fostering teacher commitments to change are: Identifying and articulating a vision and fostering the acceptance of group goals by encouraging the personal adoption of organizational goals and increasing goal clarity and the perception of such goals as challenging but achievable; providing individualized support; creating intellectual stimulation to draw teachers' attention to discrepancies between current and desired practices and to understand the truly challenging nature of school restructuring goals; providing an appropriate model to enhance teachers' belief about their own capacities and their sense of self-efficacy; providing high performance expectations in order to help teachers to see the challenging nature of the goals being pursued in their school and providing contingent reward by giving informative feedback about performance in order to enhance teachers'

capacity beliefs, as well as emotional arousal processes makes this set of practices potentially transforming too. (pp. 143-144).

6.5.1.3 Educational Leaders work to raise student outcomes

The discussion in this section focuses upon a stronger connection between leadership and learning to argue the importance of leadership in translating policy initiatives into practice. According to Hallinger (2011), increasingly, educational systems throughout the world are holding the leadership of primary and secondary schools accountable for student performance results. My conclusion is in line with Leithwood (2011) who stated that “the effects of such influence on student learning are mostly indirect” (p. 42). Leithwood and Mascall (2008, p. 530) found that collective leadership has significant indirect effects on student achievement. They argued that the influence of collective leadership on students is through its influence on teacher motivation and work setting. Hallinger and Heck (1996), reviewed more than forty studies published between 1980 and 1995 about the principal’s role in the school. The general pattern of results drawn from these two reviews support the belief that principals exercise a measurable, though small, indirect effect on student achievement.

Leithwood (2011) identified four distinct paths along which the influence of successful leadership practices flow in order to improve student learning. These are the rational, emotional, organizational and family paths. Each path is populated by distinctly different sets of variables, each having a more or less direct impact on students’ experiences. Variables on the rational path are rooted in the knowledge and skills of school staff about curriculum, teaching and learning. The exercise of a positive influence on these variables calls on school leaders’ knowledge about relevant leadership practices. The emotional paths are much more tightly connected than many leaders believe. According to Zaccaro, Kemp and Bader (2004) exercising influence on variables located along the emotional paths depends fundamentally on leaders’ “social appraisal skills” (p. 116). The organizational path

is influenced by structure, culture, policies and standard operational procedures. Collectively, they constitute teachers' working conditions which, in turn, have a powerful influence on teachers' emotions (K. Leithwood & McAdie, 2007). The family path considers the influence upon successful school leadership practices of home environment, parent involvement in school and visits to the home by school personnel.

Hallinger and Heck (2011) also state that school leadership appears to achieve an effect on students through strategic actions that focus on changing a constellation of sociocultural, structural and academic processes that directly impact student learning outcomes. Crawford (2011) related the essential aspects of emotion to leadership in developing or established leaders in schools. She stated that "emotion is viewed as a key part of the work that leaders do with staff, governors, students and the wider school community" (p. 203). She relates emotions with the social constructivist approach which views the social context of emotions to be crucial to how people create meanings and the social context of a school as a place where emotion is deeply involved in daily life. "Emotion is a key part of that social reality in which leadership is exercised" (p. 203). In order to recognize and acknowledge emotions and how to help teachers work through these feelings when they are under pressure and to change their practices, Crawford suggested that educational leaders need to understand and apply emotional intelligence, emotional labour and emotional regulation as well as emotional contagion. For example, she believed that knowledge of interpersonal and intrapersonal experiences are the two important components of emotional intelligence in understanding and helping teachers to face challenges. In addition, she also believed that "emotional regulation for school leaders concerns their own emotions and the emotions the organization needs its workers to display to be effective at the tasks allotted them. Leaders may want to control this latter aspect of organizational life through the social norms" (p. 207). Furthermore she added that emotional contagion is a process by which emotions are shared across a group in a social context. Some people are also more likely to be more influenced because of either their own emotional disposition or the particular group was functioning well as a team. Therefore leaders have to be able to lead their group to create a condition to work as a team. Positive emotion is an enhancer of performance at individual and organizational level (p. 209).

It is important to know what approaches educational leaders can utilise in order to influence teachers' teaching activities. The Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES) by Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) could be used to argue that raising student achievement is a worldwide concern and therefore the need for closer attention to the role of leadership in that endeavor. This in turn could be applied to the Malaysian context where exam results matter. Therefore, leaders need to understand and apply an approach such as pedagogical leadership as suggested by the BES in order to assist teachers in conducting their teaching and consequently assist students to achieve good result. The question arises here as to what is pedagogical leadership? Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009, p. 88) argued that, "in search for links between school leadership and student outcomes, the notion of pedagogical leadership has undergone more scrutiny than most". They defined pedagogical leadership as "close involvement by leadership in establishing an academic mission, monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning, and promoting professional development" (p. 88). Thus Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) directly linked the role of educational leaders in pedagogical leadership to teaching and learning. While Southworth (2011) also linked pedagogical leadership to "defining a school's academic mission and fostering capacity for professional learning" (p. 74), he and Hallinger (2009) also drew attention to the importance of educational leaders understanding the culture of their school. Southworth (2011) emphasised that leaders could influence teachers' practice if the leader was contextually sensitive, citing a statement from Hallinger (2009), that:

Leadership for learning incorporates an awareness that instructional leadership practices must be adapted to the nature and needs of school's specific context: there is no "one size fits all" model available for quick dissemination and implementation (P. Hallinger, 2009, p. 16)

Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) identified eight educational leadership dimensions or strategies that can support teachers in teaching by

establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically; planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum, promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; ensuring an orderly and supportive environment; creating educationally powerful connections; engaging in constructive problem talk; and selecting, developing, and using smart tools (p. 40-44).

They provided further detail about each of the eight dimensions of pedagogical leadership. When establishing goals and expectations, they state that it is important that goals are specific and that they believe the indicators of leadership vision/inspiration are that the leader: specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose; talks enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished; talks optimistically about the future; articulates a compelling vision for the future; expresses confidence that goals will be achieved; and talks about their most important values and beliefs (p. 97). In addition they state that, in the context of goal setting, this means that leaders need to focus not only on motivational and direction-setting activities but on the educational content of those activities and their alignment with desired student outcomes and that they have maximum impact on students when they are embedded in organisational and classroom routines (p. 98).

Second, concerning leader's role in resourcing strategically, they argue that the use of resources strategically is about securing and allocating resources that are aligned to pedagogical purposes, not securing resources per se (p. 98).

Third, the discussion focuses upon planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and the curriculum. According to them, this dimension has four interrelated sub-dimensions which are: (i) leaders are actively involved in collegial discussion of

instructional matters, including how instruction impacts on student achievement; (ii) leaders actively oversee and coordinate the instructional programme. School leaders and staff work together to review and improve teaching and are also more directly involved in coordinating the curriculum across year levels; (iii) leaders were more likely to carry out classroom observations and provide subsequent feedback; and (iv) leaders placed greater emphasis on ensuring that student progress was systematically monitored and test results were used for the purpose of programme improvement (p. 99-100).

Fourth, they focus upon educational leaders who were promoting and participating in teacher learning and development. They claimed that the descriptor for this dimension includes the word 'participating' to make it clear that the leader does not stop at supporting or sponsoring their staff in their learning. They actually participate in the learning themselves - as leader, learner, or both. They do this in structured situations, such as staff meetings and professional development workshops, and in informal situations such as corridor discussions about specific teaching problems (p. 101).

Fifth, pedagogical leadership also involves creating an environment in which important academic and social goals can be pursued and achieved. In an orderly environment, teachers can focus on teaching and students can focus on learning. There were several indicators for this dimension which included a focus on cultural understanding and a respect for difference; provision of a safe, orderly environment, with a clear discipline code; minimal interruptions to teaching time; protection of faculty from undue pressure from parents and officials, and effective conflict resolution (p. 101).

Sixth, pedagogical leadership is enacted through the creation of educationally powerful connections designed to improve teaching and learning. The authors claimed that connections between individuals, organisations, and cultures can contribute to enhanced student achievement by ensuring a closer pedagogical and philosophical match between what happens at home and at school. Pedagogical match is also enhanced when schools provide continuity of content and teaching approach for students as they move from one programme or class to another. In addition they state that their analysis showed that leaders create educationally

powerful connections when they establish continuities between student identities and school practices, develop continuities and coherence across teaching programmes, and ensure effective transitions across educational settings (p. 116).

Seventh, Robinson, Hohepa and Lloyd (2009) focus upon the role of pedagogical leadership in engaging in constructive problem talk. They define ‘problem talk’ as being able to name, describe, and analyse problems in ways that reveal possibilities for change. Leaders who engage in constructive problem talk describe problems in ways that invite ownership and commitment. They are also able to respectfully examine the contribution that they and others might be making to the problem situation. In addition, they claimed that the use of ‘engage’ in this context is significant because it signals that leaders need the ability to inquire into theories behind the practices they wish to change. In summary they argued that to engage in constructive problem talk, leaders must be able to engage teachers’ theories of action (p. 128)

Last, they focus upon the role of pedagogical leadership in selecting, developing, and using ‘smart tools’. The authors emphasised that leadership is not only an interpersonal activity. It is also exercised in impersonal ways as leaders shape the situations in which people learn how to do their jobs. One of the most powerful means for doing this is to develop or introduce tools and associated routines that assist teacher learning. The tools that were introduced by leaders incorporate useful knowledge that can help teachers improve their practice in relation to a specific task. In addition they stated that for leaders, it is not just a matter of selecting or developing tools but of ensuring that any tools they introduce assist the users to achieve the intended purposes. They call tools that meet this criterion smart tools (p. 133).

While these authors identified eight educational leadership dimensions, Southworth (2009), citing a report from the National College for School Leadership (2004), argued that school leaders can influence teachers through three related strategies which are modelling, monitoring and dialogue. Southworth argued that in the modelling aspect educational leaders have to show good examples for teachers because they “watch their leaders to see if they do as they say because teachers do not follow leaders who cannot ‘walk the talk’” (p. 95). In implementing the

monitoring approach, educational leaders have to analyse and act on “student’s progress and outcome data (evaluation data, school performance trends, parental opinion surveys, student attendance data and student interview information)” (p. 96). In addition, Southworth also noted that educational leaders need to create opportunities for dialogue: “opportunities for teachers to talk with their colleagues and leaders about learning and teaching” (p. 97). All these actions can assist school leaders to “make a difference to the quality of teaching and learning (Southworth, 2009).

In summary, the above discussion emphasises that educational leaders have an important role in teaching and learning if high levels of student achievement are to occur; and this is the major goal underpinning educational policies in Malaysia. The discussion also shows a productive connection between leadership and learning and the importance of leadership in translating policy initiatives into practice. According to my reading of the literature, if educational leaders are able to assist teachers in developing effective teaching strategies it will make it easier for them to implement teaching and learning in ways required by the educational policies, resulting in teachers becoming more ‘resilient’.

Chapter Seven

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 The refined rationale and purpose of the study

This research builds on the literature reviews regarding issues of educational leadership and teacher resilience during educational policy changes in Malaysia, and how concepts of educational leadership have been used and adopted by Malaysian scholars, and in educational leadership training in Malaysia. This study investigates whether and how educational leadership can sustain Malaysian teacher resilience during the implementation of new national educational policies.

Previous discussions of educational leadership and teacher resilience during educational policy changes indicated that educational leaders were able to support teachers in becoming resilient when facing challenges. Several studies had been carried out by international researchers addressing this issue (Brunetti, 2006; C Day, et al., 2007; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Patterson, et al., 2004), and researchers from Malaysia had also emphasized the important role of educational leadership in ensuring teachers could be supported in this complex situation of educational change (H. Ahmad, 2004a; Jantan & Khuan, 2004; Malakolunthu, 2007). However they had not focused on teacher resilience. In addition, I have not found any research that has been carried out in Malaysia regarding the role of educational leadership in sustaining teacher resilience. Even though there were several studies that had already been carried out by international researchers investigating teacher resilience, studies about this matter still need to be carried out in Malaysia because it is a different culture and context. The argument further holds that what we currently know about leadership may not be applicable in future years due to the emergence of a new educational environment created by the introduction of the many changes in educational policies in Malaysia.

The previous discussion about how concepts of educational leadership have been used and adopted by Malaysian scholars' showed two different emphases. A study by Bajunid *et al.* (1996) that focused on developing educative leadership practices in Malaysian schools to fulfill national priorities, found that educational leaders needed to possess a collaborative philosophy, practise strategic, political and cultural leadership and apply managerial and evaluation processes. All these aspects needed to be implemented by educational leadership to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Meanwhile, in a publication issued in conjunction with a Professorship Inaugural Lecture, R. Ahmad (2000) emphasised that educational leadership in Malaysia should be distributive, instructional and transformational in order to produce effective schools. However, Malaysian scholars have not been unanimous about how educational leadership concepts should be applied in Malaysia. Two prominent scholars (Bajunid and R. Ahmad) in educational leadership in Malaysia focus upon differing styles of leadership. This situation has provided a vacuum for further exploration of educational leadership practices in Malaysia. Moreover the educational leadership practices that could assist teachers to sustain their resilience during educational policy changes have received little attention from Malaysian researchers.

In making changes to practices in educational leadership, the education system in Malaysia also faces challenges resulting from its high level of centralisation (R. Ahmad, 1998; Kandasamy & Blaton, 2004; M. Lee, 1999). Centralization of the education system, results in all educational leaders having identical leadership training through the IAB and the Institute of Principalship Studies. They also have to follow the national agenda in education set by the government. Educational leadership training provided in Malaysia by the IAB and Institute of Principalship Studies emphasises the role of effective leadership in developing effective schools. As an effective school in Malaysia is measured by student achievement in public examinations, in leadership training there is emphasis on leaders understanding the role of teachers in producing students who score highly in their examinations as the main indicator of effective teachers and schools.

Thus, three significant factors have implications for the present study. Firstly, findings from international researchers showed that educational leaders were

able to help teachers develop resiliency when facing challenges. Researchers in Malaysia have also indicated the important role educational leadership could play in supporting teachers in the complex situation created by the introduction of such major educational policy changes. However, I have not found any research that has been carried out regarding educational leadership for sustaining teacher resilience by Malaysia researchers. Secondly, Malaysian scholars in educational leadership have not been unanimous about educational leadership practices. Thirdly, the main objective of the educational leadership training at two main institutions in Malaysia is to produce student who achieve good results whereas the issue focused on this study is how educational leaders could assist teachers to face challenges of the implementation of national educational policies while also doing their best to teach students well. Based on these three issues, suitable practices for educational leadership considered appropriate in the Malaysian context of changes in educational policy need to be further explored in order to be able to assist teachers in sustaining their resilience.

7.2 Selecting a research methodology

In this section I outline the methodologies that previous researchers have used in their studies of teacher resilience that I reviewed in Chapter Five. Based on discussion of their strength and weaknesses, I will draw conclusions about the methodology most appropriate for use in this study.

Patterson et al. (2004) used a qualitative methodology in their study of eight teachers and eight teacher leaders, who were selected from a pool of possible candidates nominated by local district and school staff. . Two criteria guided the selection of participants: (1) having been an educator in an urban school setting for a period of at least three years, and currently working in schools where poverty and other indicators of chronic adversity are present. For the data collection, a three-cycle interview process was used with each of the 8 teachers and 8 teacher leaders during 2002 to increase the validity of responses as recommended by Seidman (1998 cited in Patterson, et al., 2004). Interviews conducted by the researchers were audio

taped and transcribed prior to analysis. Interviews with teachers and teacher leaders were the primary source of data. Secondary sources were archival data provided by schools and observations by the researchers while present at the schools.

The Howard and Johnson research (also carried out in 2004) was a qualitative study using semi-structured interviews. They asked the principals to identify teachers who were 'at risk' of stress and burnout due to the nature of their work, but who were 'resilient' (i.e they persistently and successfully coped with stress). To assist them Howard and Johnson provided a screening device that they had developed. Ten teachers were identified in this way and they were invited to participate in the study. Of these 10 teachers, 9 were female and 1 was male. While this gender breakdown is less than desirable in research terms, these numbers reflect the heavy gender imbalance in the schools approached. The participants were interviewed individually using a semi-structured interview schedule. Interviews took place in a quiet place in each school and lasted up to 45 min in length. The interviews were audio-taped for later analysis. The tapes were transcribed for analysis using NUDIST (QSR 1995), a data management software tool. In the researchers' analysis of the interview data, they looked for themes across the transcripts, for similarities and differences and for absences and silences.

Brunetti's (2006) study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. For the quantitative section, he asked teachers to complete an Experienced Teacher Survey (ETS). He distributed this questionnaire to each teacher in this school in a packet with a letter explaining the study, a letter of support from the school principal, and a pre-paid addressed envelope for returning the survey by a specified date. Of the 61 surveys distributed, 32 teachers returned completed surveys. The teachers rated their level of satisfaction with teaching and the extent to which various factors contributed to their decision to remain in the classroom. In addition, nine of the teachers who returned the survey were interviewed (Brunetti, 2006). Brunetti did not explain the criteria he used to select the 9 teachers. In the interview, the researcher further explored the teachers' motivation for remaining in the classroom as well as their perspectives on various aspects of their practice.

Cox's (2004) study used a mixed method qualitative approach for triangulation, expansion and complementary methods of analysis. The collection of

data was carried out through a survey, school observations, interviews and formal documents were analysed also.

While the previous studies had their own strengths, most of them (such as Brunetti, 2006; Howard & Johnson, 2004; Patterson, et al., 2004), focused on teachers, whereas my study aimed to include Senior Management Teams members, Parent Teacher Associations members as well as teachers. Even though Cox's (2004) study investigated the role of leadership, her study focused upon the role of educational leaders in sustaining student resilience, whereas my study was planned to focus on the role of educational leaders for sustaining teacher resilience. Most of the previous studies were conducted in urban and sub-urban areas, and did not look at rural schools.

In contrast, the design of the study by Day et al. (2007) was significant because it involved a much larger number of participants from various school locations and the data collection was carried out by utilising mixed methods in a longitudinal study. This study was carried out over a four-year period and involved a total of 150 teachers from 75 primary schools, and 150 Mathematics and English teachers from secondary schools in 100 schools located in different geographical and socio-economic environments. The teachers, who were representative of the national teacher profile in terms of age, experience and gender, were sampled from seven local authorities in England. These varied from large shire to small city local authorities. The conceptualizing of resilience as a multi dimensional socio-cultural construct and the findings from this study have been very useful for thinking about the design and methods for my own research. However, my study could not utilise such large numbers of subjects over an extended period of time because of the limited scope and time available for my Doctoral study.

Analysis of the methodologies that previous researchers of teacher resilience utilized in their studies indicated that the majority adopted qualitative approaches. I also applied qualitative methodology in this study because the aim, the natural setting, collection and analysis of data about reported experiences and perceptions in my study were consistent with the characteristics of qualitative methodology.

For example, Creswell (2008) argued that a qualitative methodology can be used when a researcher seeks to establish the meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants. My study intended to collect information regarding participants views about the implementation of particular educational policies, the challenges that teachers faced as a result of the implementation of educational policy changes and the approaches that they used for coping with the challenges in the implementation of these educational policies. I wished to keep a “focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research” (Creswell, 2008, p. 175).

In order to investigate a phenomenon in the context of the implementation of educational policy changes, the challenges that teachers faced and approaches that have been used for coping with such challenges, this study aimed to draw on three data sources of personal experience of the changes, namely the accounts and perceptions of SMT members, teachers and PTA members. Such accounts could only be obtained within a secondary school setting because the implementation of these educational policy changes only involved secondary schools. In order to get a detailed understanding of this phenomenon, about which there has been little research interest in Malaysia, this current study needed to be conducted in its natural context. This choice of research setting is also characteristic of qualitative methodology as described by Creswell (2008, p. 175) in that “qualitative researchers tend to collect data in the field at the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. They do not bring individuals into a lab, nor do they typically send out instruments for individuals to complete”.

Furthermore, according to Creswell (2008), qualitative researchers typically collect data themselves through interviewing participants, and do not tend to use or rely on questionnaires or instruments developed by other researchers.

However, there are potential limitations in the use of qualitative compared with quantitative methodologies. As stated by Gay and Airasian (2000) a quantitative approach entails using large enough samples of participants to provide statistically meaningful data. Gay and Airasian identify three strengths of the quantitative approach which are that: (i) the method allows the involvement of large numbers of participants, (ii) the data are relatively stable; and (iii) that quantitative

analysis can promote effective generalization. I did not consider these potential strengths were most appropriate for the purposes of my study because my intention was to interact with and understand the experiences of the study participants whereas “quantitative researchers generally have little personal interaction with the people they study, since most data are gathered using paper and pencil, structured and non-interactive instruments” (Gay & Airasian, 2000, p. 9). In addition, my study did not aim to generalize from the data. Instead it set out to develop a greater depth of understanding of the issues about educational policy changes in Malaysia and the role of educational leadership in assisting teachers to face challenges as a result of the implementation of educational policy in two different secondary school sites. It was an exploratory study, conducted in one rural and one urban school setting. Therefore, it did not need to involve large number of participants. Consequently, I invited participation from members of SMTs, teachers and selected PTA members from two schools. This sampling allowed me time to collect data from a range of participants within two schools and to compare data across the two schools. According to Gay and Airasian (2000) “in qualitative research the number of participants studied tends to be small, in part because time-intensive methods like interviews and observation” (p. 9)

Even though Gay and Airasian claim that the data obtained by using a quantitative approach represent a stable, coherent and uniform world and that the analyses of data using reliable statistical methods are able to provide meaningful data, the issue that arises here is are the data able to meaningfully describe what occurs in a particular context, since individuals and groups often have different perspectives that are affected by the context in which they work. For this reason I concluded that using a qualitative approach would be better suited to finding the meaning of data relevant to the purposes of my study. During data analysis, I tried to identify categories that described what happened within and across the groups of participants and the two schools as well as general themes appearing repeatedly in the data (Johnson & Christensen, 2000).

In summary, the chosen qualitative methodology focused upon the views of participants’ (i.e. SMT members, teachers, PTA members) to describe, explain or evaluate particular social phenomena (national education policy implementation). It

also allowed me to interpret participants' reported experiences (perceptions of challenge and response) in the context of the implementation of educational policy (the school site). A qualitative methodology was judged to be appropriate for a thesis topic that aimed to understand a phenomenon in the context of the practical implementation of major educational policy changes, the challenges that teachers faced in implementing required policy change, and the approaches that were reportedly used for coping with such challenges.

7.2.1 The discussion of personal ontological and epistemological positioning

Because my study involved people, I selected an approach that was more suitable for the interpretation and understanding of human experiences and the meanings these had for people. The data that I collected from my participants was largely in the form of their words as they described and commented on those experiences, and not numerical or statistical representations of those experiences as in, for example, the quantitative results of survey questionnaires. I therefore conducted this study in the interpretive paradigm. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 19) in this paradigm "qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry". This approach focuses on what the respondents view as reality within their context. Reality is portrayed in the form of individual experiences. As Lee (1991), puts it

The interpretive approach to organizational research maintains that people create and attach their own meanings to the world around them and the behavior that they manifest to the world. The same human action can have different meanings for different human subjects. The qualitative researcher must interpret this empirical reality in terms of what it means to their research participants. In accepting these

intersubjectively created meanings as an integral part of the subject matter that he or she is studying, the qualitative researcher must collect facts and data describing not only the purely objective, publicly observable aspects of human behavior, but also the subjective meaning this behavior has for the human subjects themselves (p. 347).

In order to explain in more detail the interpretive paradigm, below I discuss my personal ontological and epistemological positioning with this research approach. According to Grix (2004, p. 59) ontology is the study of “claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up and how these units interact with each other.” Meanwhile, Crotty (1998, p. 3) defines epistemology as “the theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thereby in the methodology”.

According to Mack (2010, p. 8) the main epistemological and ontological assumptions of the interpretivist paradigm are summarised in the table that follows below.

Ontological Assumptions	Epistemological Assumptions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reality is indirectly constructed based on individual interpretation and is subjective • People interpret and make their own meaning of events. • Events are distinctive and cannot be generalized. • There are multiple perspectives on one incident. • Causation in social sciences is determined by interpreted meaning and symbols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge is gained through a strategy that “respects the differences between people and the objects of natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Grix, 2004, p. 64). • Knowledge is gained inductively to create a theory. • Knowledge arises from particular situations and is not reducible to simplistic interpretation.

The discussion of the aim and focus of this study (above) demonstrates that it was situated in the interpretive paradigm. The study constructed a social reality (or ontology) from data based on individual, subjective and intersubjective interpretations of particular situations. In this study my positioning as a researcher was that there are multiple possible perspectives on one incident. Therefore I gave opportunities to my participants to interpret and make their own meanings of events in their own words.

In order to develop understanding of different participants' views and experiences in my study, I respected the different views of my participants as they tried to make sense of an implement education policy change in their own secondary school setting. I attempted to grasp the subjective and intersubjective meaning of their social action by involving different levels of participants from the schools (i.e. SMT members, teachers and PTA members). Moreover, the aim of this study was to gain knowledge inductively in order to create understanding of situations involving the implementation of educational policy changes in a small sample of Malaysian secondary schools, one urban, one rural.

In the next sections I provide an explanation of the reasons for selecting a case study approach for my research, and a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of case study.

7.2.2 Rationale for the case study method

The case study investigates a particular phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Sarantakos, 1998; Yin, 1994). In this case, it is a phenomenon was the implementation of educational policy changes in secondary schools, the challenges that teachers faced and approaches that were reportedly used to support teachers in coping with such challenges. This phenomenon has rarely been investigated by Malaysian researchers and little information about this phenomenon can be found in the Malaysian context.

Therefore, this study attempted to explore the link between national educational policy change, and the challenges of implementation within secondary schools. Case study is claimed to be particularly useful when the researcher is endeavoring to discover a link between phenomena, as in this instance, rather than seeking confirmation of its existence (Merriam, 1998).

The case study design is particularly well suited to situations where it is impossible to separate the phenomenon's variables from their context (Yin, 1989). This study aimed to discover the accounts and perceptions of SMT members, teachers and PTA members about the experience of implementing national policy change. These accounts could only be obtained within a secondary school setting because the implementation of these educational policy changes only involved secondary schools. In order to get a detailed understanding of this phenomenon, this current study needed to be conducted in its natural context. These research purposes and focus are in line with the purpose and characteristics of a case study. According to Gall, Gall and Borg (2005), researchers conduct case studies in order to describe, explain or evaluate particular social phenomena in their natural contexts (Denscombe, 2007; M. D. Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

A case study was the preferred method in this research because this study aimed to investigate individual responses and meanings given to events. A case study approach provided the opportunity to look in detail at views of those who were involved with the implementation of the educational policies within the school setting. A case study is conducted to shed light on a particular phenomenon (M. D. Gall, et al., 2007) and thus it involves review and collection of a substantial amount of data about the specific case (Denscombe, 2007; M. D. Gall, et al., 2007). Survey methods have been used widely in Malaysia; a case study approach in this research therefore had the potential to contribute new and original knowledge about education policy implementation.

Within a case study the researcher does not seek to establish the authenticity and transferability of the data, but rather, the rightness and worthiness of the data (Goodman & Elgian, 1988). Referring to this study, this meant that the description of each participant's self-knowledge of his or her values needed to be rich, comprehensive and accurate. Consequently, I did not set out to test or justify this

self-knowledge, nor was it measured against that proposed by other SMT members, teachers and PTA members.

In the next section, I discuss case studies in more detail, looking at various definitions of a case study, types of case studies and some reported limitations and strengths of the case study approach in order to explain and justify its suitability for use in this particular study.

Creswell (2008, p. 476) refers a case study as an “in-depth exploration of a bounded system, (e.g. an activity, event, process, or individuals), based on extensive data collection”. Berg (2009, p. 283), argues that case study is “a method involving systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions”.

According to Yin (1989) a case study methodology employed as an empirical inquiry technique has the following features which are; it investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context and the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. These two important features are evident in this empirical case study.

Various definitions have been given of a case study. According to Yin (1994 cited in Merriam, 1998), “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 27). Bromley (1990 cited in Bruce L. Berg, 2009) saw a case study method as an attempt to systematically investigate an event or a set of related events with the specific aim of describing and explaining the phenomenon. Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p. 54), defined case study as “a detailed examination of one setting, or a single subject, a single depository of documents, or one particular event”. Similarly, Creswell (2008, p. 476) described a case study as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, (e.g. an activity, event, process, or individuals), based on extensive data collection. Berg (2009, p. 283), summed up that case study is “a method involving systematically gathering enough information about a particular person, social setting, event, or

group to permit the researcher to effectively understand how the subject operates or functions”.

These definitions of case study strongly suggest that this approach is ideally suited to address the research questions in the present study because the study aims to explain and describe a contemporary phenomenon in a natural setting in where it is not yet fully recognized or understood.

7.2.3 Types of case studies

Patton (1990 cited in Joyce P. Gall, et al., 2005) described the procedures that case study researchers use to select their cases as purposeful sampling. Case study research can be based on either a single case or multiple cases (Bruce L. Berg, 2009). Single case studies are conducted in order to get an in-depth understanding of one particular case or situation or phenomenon. Multiple cases are used when the purpose of the study is to strengthen the understanding of a broader context within which a particular phenomenon is occurring (Stake, 1995) or to enhance the generalisation of findings, which is made possible by comparing several cases, rendering the researcher a more compelling interpretation of the phenomenon of study (Merriam, 1998).

Since an interpretation based on evidence from several cases can be more compelling than results based on a single instance (Merriam, 1998), I decided to interview people in two different secondary schools to enable me to collect richer data and cross-case analysis of what may assist educational leaders in supporting teachers to face challenges. Each case was treated as a comprehensive case in itself. Data has been gathered to learn as much as possible about the contextual variables.

7.2.4 Some limitations and strengths of the case study approach

Several authors such as Berg (2009), Denscombe (2007) and Merriam, (1998) argued that there are two limitations of case studies. They stated that firstly a case study may lack rigour and objectivity in its findings, relating to the issue of subjectivity brought in by the researcher, and secondly that case study results render little basis for scientific generalizations.

In order to overcome the first issue, I have used strategies suggested by Merriam (1998) which are: triangulation particularly focusing upon data triangulation that involves different groups of participants for data collection (N. K. Denzin, 1989), member check, involvement of participants in the research process and being explicit about researcher biases. To overcome the issue of generalizations of case study findings, the features that have been suggested by Denscombe (2007) have been used. Denscombe has advocated four significant factors in comparing cases and they are the physical, historical, social and institutional locations. Considering the importance of school location, this study has chosen schools in very different settings with one in an urban area and one in a rural area. The adoption of Denscombe's significant factors for comparing cases means that more confidence can be placed in generalisations made from the findings.

Even though case studies have some limitations, they also have advantages. A case study allows a researcher to investigate complexities, consisting of many variables which are of significance in understanding the phenomenon in question (Denscombe, 2007; Merriam, 1998). The holistic descriptions that a case study offers can illuminate practitioners' and policy makers' understanding and experience (Denscombe, 2007; Joyce P. Gall, et al., 2005; Merriam, 1998). The case study approach also allows the use of a variety of research methods and in parallel with the use of multiple methods, the case study approach fosters the use of multiple sources of data. This, in turn, facilitates the validation of data through triangulation (Denscombe, 2007).

The above discussion shows that the qualitative case study approach is suited for this study which aims to explore a contemporary phenomenon in-depth in a real setting and ultimately provides a detailed explanation and description of the phenomenon.

7.3 A careful procedure to understand teacher resilience

This section discusses procedures I have utilised in the study. These include ethical and research permission considerations, the researcher's role in gaining access, selecting research sites, selecting research participants, data collection methods, data management and data analysis.

7.3.1 Ethical and research permission considerations

Before commencing the study and in order to understand the phenomena of teacher resilience in secondary schools, I knew that this study would involve ethical issues, because some intrusion into the personal professional lives of others would be involved. Firstly, I therefore adhered to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC) code of ethical conduct for research, teaching and evaluations involving human participants, to provide protection for all participants, the researcher and the institution (HEC: Southern B Application – 09/03) (see Appendix 1). I describe later how the MUHEC principles were adhered to throughout my research processes. Secondly, I sought and received permission from the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) to conduct research in Malaysian schools (see Appendix 2 for permission letter from the EPU. The consent from the EPU, Prime Minister's Department in Malaysia was obtained, as the fieldwork was to be conducted in Malaysia and it was a requirement that all Malaysian Nationals domiciled overseas who intended to conduct research in Malaysia obtain prior permission from the Malaysian Government. A researcher is only permitted to start the research after he/she has

received approval from the Economic Planning Unit (Economic Planning Unit, 2008). The necessary written approval was then sought from the University of Malaya (UM), my employer, to travel to Malaysia to carry out the research in March 2009.

7.3.2 The researcher's role in gaining access

In the first week in Malaysia, a research pass was obtained from the EPU which enabled me to enter schools to conduct fieldwork. Permission was sought from the Kedah State Education Department (SED) (see Appendix 3) to study and to access secondary schools in that state. Before approaching the SED, I had contacted some school principals, the potential gatekeepers, to talk about the study because, as Bogdan and Biklen (2007) have noted, “even if permission is granted from up high without first checking with those below, it behoves you to meet those lower on the hierarchy to seek support” (p.75). Furthermore, such contact will “lay... the groundwork for good rapport with those with whom ... (I would) be spending time ...” (P. 75).

Permission was obtained from the Kedah SED to access secondary schools in that state. They provided a list of all the schools in the state. With the permission letters from EPU, MUHEC and the SED, I then identified the schools that could fulfill the criteria of the study.

7.3.3 Selecting research sites

Since the current study attempts to develop an in-depth understanding about current educational leadership practices in sustaining teacher resilience during educational policy changes in Malaysia, one form of probabilistic sampling, ‘purposive sampling’ has been used. Purposive sampling is, “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which can be learned” (Merriam, 1998, p. 61). According to Merriam (1998), to begin with purposive sampling, a researcher has to establish selection criteria for choosing the people or sites to be studied and “the criteria researchers establish for purposeful sampling directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases” (p. 61-62).

This study attempts to describe educational leadership practices in secondary schools. Due to the qualitative nature of the study within the time and resource limitations of a doctoral study, it was feasible to carry out research in only two schools. In order to enable the final selection of the two schools, I firstly listed the different variables/features between the two schools. As Lightfoot (1983 cited in Malakolunthu, 2007) suggests, choosing schools with contrasting features is important because the diversity in their philosophies, resources, population, and socio-economic backgrounds will provide researchers with rich and interesting information. In this study, the contrasting features of the sites provided insights which may be helpful in understanding how schools with different contextual backgrounds influence educational leaders’ efforts to assist teachers to become resilient during educational policy changes. The criteria used as a consideration in selecting research sites were as follows.

7.3.3.1 The criteria in selecting research sites

Three criteria were used in selecting research sites. These were involvement of the schools in current educational policy changes in Malaysia, school location and the willingness of participants to be involved in the study.

As the research is focused on the implementation of current educational policy changes in Malaysia, this study was restricted to only National Secondary Schools and did not involve Government-Assisted Religious Secondary Schools, Private Secondary Schools and all Primary Schools, because all these schools were not involved in the three educational policy changes.

One school in an urban area and one school in a rural area were selected for this study because, firstly, as described in Chapter Two (pg. 12) there are differences in living standards among the population in urban and rural areas. This occurs because of limited employment opportunities in rural areas as opposed to urban areas. In addition the issue of poverty also involves the indigenous people of Malaysia, who live mainly in rural areas and are among the poorest and least educated and this is a significant challenge for teachers. The Malaysian government faces the difficulty of integrating and assimilating them within mainstream society and also providing them with equal opportunities in education (Ministry of Education, 2004).

Secondly, teachers in rural areas more than those in urban areas, are faced with problems such as schools lacking appropriate infrastructure and teaching facilities as indicated in Table 4.1 (Chapter Four, p. 40).

Thirdly, many teachers in rural schools lack appropriate levels of expertise and have had inadequate teacher training (Ministry of Education, 2001). The Ministry is having serious problems in providing experienced teachers, especially female teachers, for school placement at schools in rural areas. In trying to solve this problem, the Ministry is taking the step of transferring experienced teachers to schools in rural areas, although generally teachers are reluctant to transfer, particularly females. This situation affects the quality of teaching and learning in

rural schools. If teachers are unwilling to be transferred to schools in rural areas but are forced to comply, they are unlikely to be enthusiastic about their profession. These negative feelings are likely to translate onto the students (NUTP, 2005b).

The above discussion summarizes differences between rural and urban locations in Malaysia. These differences between rural and urban locations led me to select one school from an urban area and one school from a rural area to enable me to identify any differences or similarities in challenges teachers were facing and in educational leadership practices aimed at sustaining teacher resilience during educational policy changes in two those very different settings.

The willingness of members of SMTs, teachers and PTA members to participate was crucial for the researcher to embark on the study. Even though I had received approval from the EPU, Prime Minister's Department to conduct research at any secondary school in Malaysia, full support was still needed from the participants. If I were to select a school in which the participants were not willing to give their support and commitment over extended period of time, it would severely limit the quality of the data to be collected. Therefore, the willingness of participants to participate was important in selecting research sites.

7.3.4 Participating Schools

From the list of schools that were provided by the Kedah State Education Department, two schools were identified which met the research criteria outlined previously. Hereafter, these schools are referred to as Aman Secondary School and Bersatu Secondary School respectively. Both names are pseudonyms.

Aman Secondary School was located in an urban locality surrounded by an affluent neighbourhood. The teaching staff numbered 73 of whom 33 were aged under 40 years while the rest were aged over 40 years. A considerable majority of the teachers were Malay with a small number of Chinese and a very small number of Indian descents (School record, March 2009).

The student population was 782 students, 510 male and 272 female, with 579 Malay, 148 Chinese, 52 Indian and 3 others. The majority of parents had higher and middle socio-economic backgrounds and were mostly professionals, businessmen and government officers. There were also a small number of students who came from lower income groups whose parents were factory workers and farmers.

Results published by Kedah State Education Department (School Record, 2009) for the 2008 Malaysian Educational Certificate examination showed that the Aman Secondary Schools' student pass rate was at the average level of national achievement. According to the Principal, Assistant Principal (Co-curricular) and Head of Department of Languages, the students at Aman Secondary School had also participated in several competitions, quizzes, debates, forums and sports games and had won awards and certificates at district, state and national level.

Bersatu Secondary School was located in a remote rural area. The teaching staff numbered 93 of whom 48 were aged under 40 years while the rest were over 40 years with the majority of them being Malay and the others Chinese, Siamese and Indian (School record, March 2009). The majority of parents had lower socio-economic backgrounds and were mostly farmers and rubber tappers. The aboriginal parents did not have any permanent jobs. They survived by hunting in the jungle and receive welfare payments from the Malaysian Government. There were also a small number of students who came from middle income groups whose parents were mostly teachers and staff for that school and schools in the surrounding area.

The school's student population was 1395, 703 male and 692 female with 1383 Malay, and 12 Aboriginal. Even though the majority of students at Bersatu Secondary School were from lower socio-economic backgrounds, results published by Kedah State Education Department (School Record, 2009) for the 2008 Malaysian Educational Certificate examination showed that Bersatu Secondary Schools' student pass rate was at the average level of national achievement. The school reported it had very few discipline problems. The most common problem was truancy by aboriginal students. Even though it could not be compared with Aman Secondary School in terms of school and public facilities, Bersatu Secondary School had still managed to produce successful students in a number of co-curricular

activities such as debates and forums. In sports, some students had won awards and certificates at district, and state level.

7.3.5 Negotiating research access and entering the field

This section focuses upon the outline of the processes that were used in order to get participant involvement in the study. Each school is discussed separately.

7.3.5.1 Aman Secondary School

In the process of negotiating and entering the field in Aman Secondary School, I contacted the school to request a meeting with the Principal to fully inform him about the study and to begin building a trusting relationship. At the meeting he was presented with all the documents related to the study including the letter requesting access (Appendix 4), the information sheet (Appendix 5), the letter of agreement to provide access to the school (Appendix 6), the consent form (Appendix 7) and was given a brief overview and time frame for conducting the research. He promptly agreed to become involved in the study and after reading all the documents, agreed to be interviewed and gave permission to contact other relevant personnel within the school such as members of the SMT, teachers and members of the PTA.

A meeting was held with each member of the SMT at which they agreed to participate in the research. A time and date for each interview was set.

To select teachers in the school, I sought permission from the Principal to obtain from the teacher responsible for school data, a list of all teachers and their ages, gender, years of experience, ethnicity and subject specialisations. From the lists I identified teachers who met the criteria and they were invited to participate and given all the documents concerning the study, including the information sheet (Appendix 8) and the consent form (Appendix 9). Only one teacher in Aman

Secondary School declined to be involved (because of other school commitments) ;consequently another teacher was invited and agreed to participate.

In selecting members of the PTA from Aman Secondary School, after obtaining the Principals' permission to directly contact the Chairperson of the PTA I made an appointment with him. At that meeting he was given the information sheet (Appendix 10) and consent form (Appendix 11) and a brief overview of the study, the procedures, their possible roles and the time requirements. He gave permission to have access to the PTA list of committee members in the school and from the list three potential interviewees from the school PTA were randomly selected. After providing them with the same documents and an explanation of the procedure they willingly agreed to participate and be interviewed. Table 7.1 below shows the participants' profile from Aman Secondary School. All the participants are identified by pseudonyms.

Table 7.1: The Participants' Profile from Aman Secondary School

No	Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Experience (Years)	Positions (SMT/Teachers/PTA)
1	Isman	Male	21 - 30	Member of the SMT
2	Rozaida	Female	21 - 30	Member of the SMT
3	Jalilah	Female	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
4	Afiq	Male	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
5	Hani	Female	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
6	Suriani	Female	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
7	Rosnah	Female	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
8	Najmin	Male	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
9	Jamal	Male	21 - 30	Science and Mathematics
10	Limah	Female	21 - 30	Science and Mathematics

Continued

11	Shahrul	Male	1 - 10	Science and Mathematics
12	Sukor	Male	21 - 30	Technical and Vocational
13	Saniah	Female	21 - 30	Technical and Vocational
14	Noor	Female	1 - 10	Technical and Vocational
15	Hamidah	Female	21 - 30	Humanities
16	Lorain	Female	1 - 10	Humanities
17	Lina	Female	1 - 10	Humanities
18	Afif	Male	21 - 30	Language
19	Aini	Female	1 - 10	Language
20	June	Female	11 - 20	Language
21	Saiful	Male	11 - 20	Member of the PTA
22	Noni	Female	1 - 10	Member of the PTA
23	Falah	Male	1 - 10	Member of the PTA

As shown in Table 7.1, the gender breakdown of the SMT participants in Aman Secondary School was 3 male and 5 female. Their teaching experience ranged from 11 to 30 years. They had different and diverse subject specializations, 3 in Language, 2 in Technical and Vocational and 1 each in Mathematics, Science and Humanities.

The participant teachers included 4 males and 8 females. Their teaching experience ranged from 1 to 30 years. The participant teachers had different and diverse subject specialisations which were 3 each in Language, Technical and Vocational, Humanities, 2 in Science and 1 in Mathematics.

There were 2 male members of the PTA and 1 female. Their experience as members of the PTA, ranged from 1 to 16 years.

7.3.5.2 Bersatu Secondary School

Much the same procedure was followed to enter the Bersatu Secondary School. I went to the school and met the Assistant Principal (Academic) as the Principal was on medical leave. I gave an explanation of the study whereupon the Assistant Principal expressed his delight because, as he stated, up until then, there had been no researcher or lecturer from any university in Malaysia who had visited their school and discussed with them the challenges that the teachers in the school were facing. I then arranged with him a time and date to interview him. Even though the Assistant Principal had given his consent to conduct the study in his school, as an outsider, I believed it was necessary to meet the Principal before commencing the study. In a meeting the following day with the Principal, he gave his permission to conduct the study in the school and also agreed to take part in the study himself, as well as to approach other relevant personnel in the school.

In the process of recruitment of members of the Senior Management Teams in the school, I used the same procedures as in the Aman Secondary School and all those approached agreed to participate.

In Bersatu Secondary School I identified teachers who met the criteria and they were invited to participate. All the teachers approached willingly participated and were happy to be involved in the study because most of them said that no one came to their school and tried to understand the challenges that they faced. In addition, they were proud to be selected as a participant because, as an outsider doing a PhD from an overseas University, I was willing to come to their school in an attempt to understand their challenges.

In selecting members of the PTA from Bersatu Secondary School the Assistant Principal (Students Affairs) volunteered to contact the Chairperson of the PTA because they were very close and worked together to handle student issues at

the school such as truancy. Individual appointments were made with the Chairperson and the same procedures were applied in inviting him and selecting members of the PTA in the school to participate in the study. They willingly agreed to be involved.

Table 7.2 below shows the participants' profile from Bersatu Secondary School. All the participants are identified by pseudonyms.

Table 7.2: The Profile of the Participants from Bersatu Secondary School

No	Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Experience (Years)	Positions (SMT/Teachers/PTA)
1	Ruslan	Male	21 - 30	Member of the SMT
2	Manaf	Male	21 - 30	Member of the SMT
3	Aziz	Male	21 - 30	Member of the SMT
4	Fatanah	Female	21 - 30	Member of the SMT
5	Kamal	Male	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
6	Bakar	Male	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
7	Faridah	Female	11 - 20	Member of the SMT
8	Ikram	Male	21 - 30	Member of the SMT
9	Nureen	Female	11 - 20	Science and Mathematics
10	Sham	Female	1 - 10	Science and Mathematics
11	Herida	Female	1 - 10	Science and Mathematics
12	Wardah	Female	21 - 30	Technical and Vocational
13	Rahim	Male	11 - 20	Technical and Vocational
14	Hanif	Male	21 - 30	Technical and Vocational

continued

15	Sima	Female	21 - 30	Humanities
16	Sani	Male	11 - 20	Humanities
17	Karimah	Female	1 - 10	Humanities
18	Salma	Female	21 - 30	Language
19	Kamila	Female	11 - 20	Language
20	Jaya	Male	1 - 10	Language
21	Mubin	Male	1 - 10	Member of the PTA
22	Adi	Male	1 - 10	Member of the PTA
23	Nasir	Male	1 - 10	Member of the PTA

As shown in Table 7.2, the teachers and SMT member from Bersatu Secondary School also varied in length of teaching experience and members of the PTA had varying lengths of time in terms of their membership of the organisation.

The gender breakdown of the SMT participants was 6 male and 2 female. Their teaching experience ranged from 11 to 30 years. The members of the SMT had diverse subject specialisations which were 4 in Humanities, 2 in Language, 1 in Mathematics and Science and 1 in Technical and Vocational.

The gender of the participant teachers was 4 male and 8 female. Their teaching experience ranged from 1 to 30 years. The participant teachers had diverse subject specialisations which were 3 each in Language, Humanities and Technical and Vocational, 2 in Mathematics and 1 in Science.

The members of the PTA were all male. Their experience as members of the PTA ranged from 1 to 5 years.

7.3.5.3 Summary of the participants

In both schools, three groups of participants were involved in this study as follows: (i) all members of both Senior Management Teams including the Principal, the Assistant Principal (Academic), the Assistant Principal (Student Affairs), the Assistant Principal (Co-Curricular) and all four Heads of Department (Technical and Vocational, Mathematics and Science, Humanities and Languages); (ii) twenty four selected teachers (twelve from each school); and (iii) six selected members of the PTA (three from each school) each of whom had a different role. Members of the PTA from Aman Secondary School were the Chairperson, the Secretary and the Treasurer. For Bersatu Secondary School they were the Chairperson and the Committee members responsible for parent issues with the school and school issues with parents respectively.

7.3.6 Interviewing as the data collection method

According to Gall, Gall and Borg (1999) researchers often conduct interviews of field participants in a case study. In this study, interviews served as the primary data collection method. The purpose of the interview is to gain an understanding of how the different participants regard the educational policy changes in Malaysia. How do the participants perceive and implement the new educational policies, the constraints and challenges that teachers face and how do teachers cope with these challenges and educational leaders can assist them in these situations?

I decided that interviews would be the most useful way to gather information in this study because interviews enable the researcher to collect large amounts of data from participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) and also allow for clarification of points that are raised during the interview session. All non-verbal cues, gestures, facial expressions, body movement and the like, can be observed easily in an interview and give additional meaning to what is said. To facilitate data analysis, notes were taken during the interview in order to note non-verbal information (R.

Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Because the study involved two secondary schools in different settings (urban and rural), it was important to select a type of interview that would both allow the collection of large amounts of accounts of experience from individual participants, but also to enable comparisons of the grouped responses from SMT members, teachers and PTA members across both schools in the case study.

According to Patton (2002), the main advantage of using standardized, open-ended interviews is that “the exact wording and sequence of question are determined in advance. All interviewees are asked the same basic questions in the same order. Questions are worded in a completely open-ended format”. Patton (2002) described the strengths of this type of interview as that: (i) respondents answer the same questions, thus increasing comparability of responses; and (ii) data are complete for each person on the topics addressed in the interview. In addition he added that this approach also reduces interviewer effects and bias when several interviewers are used, and permits evaluation users to see and review the instrumentation used in the evaluation and facilitates organization and analysis of the data. However, this type of interview also has some weaknesses. As Patton (2002) stated there is less flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances. In addition, standardized wording questions may constrain and limit naturalness and relevance of questions and answer. However, if I were to be more flexible and not standardize the interview questions across all participants, I could not assume that as an outsider, I would know entirely what ground to cover and what set of questions to ask in order to be able to probe participants’ experiences (Sahlberg, 2007).

More highly structured interview questions can also be problematic as Merriam (1998, p. 74) has stated: “the problem with using a highly structured interview in qualitative research is that rigidly adhering to predetermined questions may not allow a researcher to access participants’ perspectives and understanding of the world. Instead, a researcher gets reactions to the investigator’s preconceived notions of the world”. Therefore, in the interview process for this study, I provided the participants with the opportunity to tell their story about their perception of the implementation of this policy and also their perceptions of the challenges the implementation of this policy raises. In short, the emphasis of the interview was that of exploring participants’ experiences because as Gall, Gall & Borg, (2003, p. 239)

argued, “in qualitative research, the interview format is not so tightly structured because the researcher’s goal is to help respondents express their view of a phenomenon in their own terms”. Similarly, it was also important not to be too directive and to “hand over control of the content of talk to the interviewee” (Ball, 1994 cited in Pickard, 2007, p. 21). According to Gall, Gall and Borg (1999, p. 296), “researchers often conduct interviews of field participants in a case study”. They added that usually the questions are open-ended, meaning that respondents can answer freely in their own terms rather than selecting from a fixed set of responses”. In addition, according to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006), the open-ended interview is little more than a casual conversation that allows a researcher to inquire into something that has presented itself as an opportunity to learn about what is going on at the research setting. However, according to Burns (2000), even though an open-ended interview is made to be as natural as possible, the direction of the conversation is always controlled somewhat minimally to ensure the focus stays relevant to the problem. To maintain a clear focus on the particular aims of this study, I decided to use an interview schedule (see Appendix Two) as a general framework for the interview with some questions that would be used in all interviews but other questions specific to each participant because of their area of expertise and experience – in other words a balanced interview approach. I also planned to use probes as defined by Merriam (1998, p. 80): “probes are also questions or comments that follow up something already asked”.

Patton (2002) described three basic approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews. The three approaches are; (1) The informal conversational interview that relies entirely on the spontaneous generation of questions in natural interaction, typically one that occurs as part of ongoing participants observation fieldwork. The general interview guide approach that involves outlining a set of topics to be explored with each respondent. (3) The standardized open-ended interview that involves a predetermined sequence and wording of the same set of questions to be asked of each respondent in order to minimize the possibility of bias. This approach is claimed to be particularly appropriate when several interviewers are used to collect data. However, I chose this approach because: (i) I was a relatively inexperienced interviewer; and (ii) I had

limited time in which to familiarize myself with the schools and complete the fieldwork for the study.

Conducting an interview has a number of unique advantages. According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006, p. 173), an interview can produce in-depth data, and is flexible within which the interviewer can adapt the questions to fit each participant. By establishing rapport and trust, the interviewer can often obtain data that respondents would not give on a questionnaire. The interview may also result in more accurate and honest responses because the interviewer can explain and clarify both the purposes of the research and individual questions. Another advantage of the interview is that it allows the researcher to follow up on incomplete or unclear responses by asking additional probing questions. Reasons for particular responses can also be determined.

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) suggested that the interviewer must have a written protocol or guide, that indicates what questions are to be asked, in what order, and how much additional prompting or probing is permitted. Burns (2000), argued however, that the direction of the conversation is always controlled somewhat minimally to ensure the focus stays relevant to the problem. Interview guides will be used to direct the conversations, but participants will be encouraged to express themselves freely (R. C. Bogdan & Biklen, 1998) by answering questions that could be followed by probes in order to gather additional information (Merriam, 1998). According to Gay, Mills and Airasian, (2006, p. 174) “to obtain standardized, comparable data from each respondent, all interviews must be conducted in essentially the same manner.” The opening statement, interview questions, and closing remarks should be carefully specified in advance to ensure that data from all respondents can be compared meaningfully. I planned to start the interview with warm up questions and to conduct the interviews as much as possible as an informal conversation, while still ensuring that the interview fulfilled the purpose of my study. According to Burns (2000, p. 425), an open-ended interview takes the form of a conversation between informant and researcher. It focuses, in an unstructured way, on the informant’s perception of themselves, of their environment and of their experiences. It is a free-flowing conversation, relying heavily on the quality of the social interaction between the investigator and informant. I was aware

of the need to be alert to signs of participant tension or being uncomfortable, in which case I would temporarily halt the interview and only start again when the participant was ready to continue, or to permit a participant to withdraw from the interview.

In order to evaluate the appropriateness of the open ended questions in the interview schedule for this study, I carried out a pilot interview with a Malaysian teacher. I selected the pilot participant because she had experience as a teacher of more than 15 years, and had been involved at many levels such as a classroom teacher, as a head of department, as a SMT member and as a PTA member. The pilot interview confirmed that the participants should understand the purpose of the interview and be able to provide me with the information that I wanted. In the main fieldwork I also used open ended probe questions. It took 3 months to complete my interviews with all participants in the two schools.

Discussion below focuses upon the detailed procedures of how the interviews were carried out in order to get substantial data from participants whilst fulfilling ethical research procedures before beginning the interviews with the participants, during the interviewing process and after completing the interview.

7.3.6.1 Consent from participants

Integral to ethical research is the fundamental principle of informed consent (see Appendices 5-11). Participants need to be fully informed about what the research is about and what participation will involve, and that they make the decision to participate without any formal or informal coercion (Habibis, 2006 in Walter, 2006, p. 62). In this study participants were informed about their roles and asked for their written consent to participate. The informed consent entails potential participants being fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study, the procedures the study would follow, the duration of the study and the time commitment that would be required for interviews.

The participants were also assured that the study would not subject them to any adverse affects. Research that is likely to harm participants is regarded by most people as unacceptable. The ethics of social research focuses on the need to protect all participants from the possibility of harm (Babbie, 2006; B.L Berg, 2007). Harm can entail a number of facets such as physical harm, harm to participants' development and loss of self esteem (Bryman, 2004, p. 509).

I endeavoured to avoid any harm coming to any of the participants and tried to anticipate consequences for research participants which could be harmful. I considered carefully the possibility that the research experience may have been a disturbing one. I tried also to minimize disturbance to both the participants themselves and to the relationship the participants had with their environment.

Additionally, I ensured that the participants had information about the implications of the research and they were informed of their right to refuse at any stage for whatever reason and to withdraw data supplied, because they were considered to be voluntary participants. They also were informed that they had a right to decline the taping of their conversations. I discussed with all participants the selection of an appropriate time and place and also the role of researcher and participants in conducting the interview process. These aspects were considered to be important because it would influence the quality of interview data collected. All

these practices are in line with ethical research as stated by Bogdan and Biklen (2007).

The benefits of participating in the study were explained so that the participants could better balance risks with possible outcomes. Among the potential benefits that were offered to them were that the findings were likely to assist educational leaders in understanding the pressures teachers face and the ways in which they could assist teachers to become more resilient. Participants were also promised a short summary of the results at the end of the research and the whole thesis as a PDF file if they so wished.

7.3.6.2 Accomplishing the interviews

Once the participants had given their consent for interviewing and tape recording, the interviewing process began. Based on the research questions and the sub-questions I developed several interview schedules (See Appendix 12) which guided the thought process throughout the process with the participants. Semi-structured interviews with SMT members, several teachers and several PTA members were conducted on an individual basis.

All members of SMTs from both schools were involved in the study. Each school in Malaysia has a standard SMT. The team comprises a Principal and three different Assistant Principals, namely the Assistant Principal (Academic/Administration), Assistant Principal (Student Affairs) and Assistant Principal (Co-Curricular). Every secondary school in Malaysia has these four positions with each having responsibilities for different aspects of the school. For example, the role of the Principal is overall leadership of the school, but the Assistant Principal (Academic) focuses only on academic aspects such as teaching and learning and student assessment. The Assistant Principal (Student Affairs) focuses upon student discipline and welfare, including counselling and guidance, and the Assistant Principal (Co-Curricular) concentrates on sports, games and student associations.

The aim of interviewing them was to seek information about their understanding of the policies and their attitudes towards them, the main challenges that they believed teachers faced in the implementation of these policies and the approaches that they used in assisting teachers to face the challenges during educational policy changes. As all of them preferred to use the Malay Language, interviews were conducted in this language. Separate interviews with each SMT members were held in his/her office. Because each person had a different job specification which required them to play different roles in the implementation of new policies in their school, the separate interviews provided diverse information and in-depth explanation. A substantial amount of data was obtained about research topic in which there has been little research interest in Malaysia. This approach also assisted in obtaining a detailed understanding about this phenomenon in secondary schools in Malaysia.

Teachers were used as a principal source of information in addressing the research question. Because of the large numbers of teachers in the selected schools, it was not feasible to conduct interviews with of them. Instead, a sample that reflected an appropriate cross-section of gender, years of experience and different subject specializations in order to provide diverse perspectives was selected. The same interviewing and ethical procedures that were applied in interviewing SMTs were also used in this interviewing. The purpose of interviewing teachers was to find out their perceptions of the implementation of these policies, the challenges they faced as a result of the implementation of these policies and to uncover further information about how educational leadership was being exercised in assisting them during the implementation of educational policy changes. The interviews were conducted in a mixture of two languages, Malay and English, depending on the degree of fluency and preference of the participants concerned. I was comfortable with the use of the two languages. In both schools all interviews took place at the schools.

The third group of participants was members of PTAs from both schools. The same ethical procedures that were applied in interviewing SMTs and teachers were also used in this interviewing. The purpose of interviewing members of PTAs was to find out their perceptions of the implementation of this policy, the challenges that

they believed teachers faced as a result of the implementation of this policy and approaches that they used in assisting teachers to face the challenges during educational policy changes. All the interviews were conducted in the Malay Language. In both schools all interviews took place in the schools apart from the PTA Chairpersons from both schools who were interviewed in their offices.

The interviews with all participants began with some initial broad conversation focusing on various issues surrounding schools and education, and then gradually and slowly the conversation narrowed to focus upon the purpose of the study.

The conversation commenced with discussion in general about each participant's professional background and about their life in their school to make them feel more comfortable and confident to involve in my study. I then asked them their views about their schools. These introductory questions helped to build rapport and also to enable me to understand their background and personal views about the school. I was interested to know their views about their school because it would help me understand to what extent the participant was happy working at the school.

In order to find out more about participants' knowledge about the implementation of current educational policies I gave an opportunity for them to discuss the policies in general rather than focusing immediately upon a particular policy, which they might not know anything about. For participants who did have knowledge of the policies involved in this study, I asked about their understanding of and feelings toward the policy implementation. I also ask them about the way they personally implemented the policy and the progress of the implementation of this policy in their school generally. If a participant had no knowledge of at least one of these policies, I asked him or her to tell me about the current instructions that they had received from the Ministry of Education.

The next set of questions was about the challenges teachers faced as a result of the implementation of the educational policies. Participants were asked to talk about the challenges and to give examples of the most difficult challenges. The final set of questions concerned how SMT members could assist teachers to face these

challenges. I also asked them about practical examples of the methods they use in assisting teachers to face challenges. For members of the school SMT, for example, I expected that they know to what extent teachers were able to cope with the challenges and I asked them why they thought some teachers were more able to face the challenges and also how teachers faced the challenges. I asked SMT participants to give me an example of a teacher (without mentioning his or her name) who was able to face the challenges successfully. Alternatively, where participants said that teachers were not able to face the challenges, I asked participants to elaborate on the reasons that this may be. I then asked participants to give me an example of a teacher who was struggling or unable to face the challenges. At the end of the interview, participants were invited to discuss anything of relevance that had not been addressed in the earlier questions.

Regarding the way teachers cope with the challenges, they were asked about the methods they used themselves to cope with the challenges, and who assisted them to face the challenges and how.

PTA members were asked about their involvement as a PTA member at the school and about their views of the school. Member of PTAs were asked questions about the implementation of educational policy partly because I also wanted to know to what extent parents agreed with the implementation of educational policy in Malaysia. This information was essential because it could also relate to the challenges teachers' faced in the implementation of educational policy in the school setting.

The three different sources provided rich data about participants' perceptions regarding the implementation of educational policy, the challenges teachers faced as a result of the implementation of the policy and the ways that can assist teachers to face the challenges. The different sources also will help me to triangulate the data and provide different perspectives on the same overall phenomenon of education policy implementation within a secondary school, and across schools in two quite different community settings.

7.3.6.3 Ensuring accuracy and confidentiality of the information

Before explaining how I ensured participant confidentiality and carried out my data analysis, I need to explain how I addressed some issues around reliability and validity of the data I collected, to ensure that this was authentic, accurate and eventually believable for the readers. I referred to the concepts of reliability and validity and issues that have been discussed in several books about educational research (Bruce L. Berg, 2004; Creswell, 2005; N. Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Eisner, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mutch, 2005; Stake, 1995). According to Carmines and Zeller (1979, p. 11) “reliability concerns the extent to which an experiment, test, or any measuring procedure yields the same results on repeated trials”. In addition Mutch (2005) argued that:

reliability means that you or someone else could replicate your study with similar results. If other researchers took a similar-sized sample from a similar population and reapplied your research strategy, they should be reasonably confident that their study would yield similar results (p. 114).

Furthermore, Creswell (2005) noted that reliability means that scores from an instrument are stable and consistent. Scores should be nearly the same when researchers administer the instrument multiple times at different times. These definitions show that the majority of the authors agree that the concept of reliability refers primarily to: (i) the consistency of data and (ii) assurance that the findings should be replicated in similar studies by other researchers. However, the quotations also show that the concept of reliability primarily applies to quantitative methods and comparative studies. In contrast, this research is primarily an exploratory case study within the interpretive paradigm.

Mutch (2005) noted that validity is about ensuring that a study actually measures what it sets out to measure and that the research design should permit data gathering and analysis to confirm or refute the hypothesis as it is stated. In addition Creswell (2005) claimed that validity means the individual's scores from an instrument make sense, are meaningful, and enable you, as the researcher, to draw good conclusions from the sample you are studying to the population. Again, these descriptions seem more directly applicable to quantitative methods and data.

Other authors have commonly used different concepts when discussing qualitative research. For example Mutch (2005, p. 114), stated that “in qualitative research, you need to convince the reader that your study is trustworthy and credible”. As my study adopted a qualitative approach I decided that these two concepts were more relevant. According to Mutch (2005) the concept of trustworthiness can be described as follows.

Because of the nature of qualitative research, it is not possible to replicate a study and achieve similar results. The point of qualitative research is that you want each of your cases or participants to represent themselves, and although you might see parallels with other cases, you are not setting out to generalise your findings to a broader population. Your readers still need to be sure, however, that they can trust your processes and believe your findings (p. 114).

In ensuring that my data accurately represented my participants' views and eventually could be regarded as trustworthy by readers, I drew on a hermeneutic philosophy as a conceptual framework to analyse the data, as I will explain in Section 7.3.7.

For my qualitative study to be trustworthy, it also needed to have credible data. Mutch (2005, p. 115) explained that:

Credibility means that you have used some way of ensuring that your findings resonate with those in, or who are familiar with, the case or setting. One common technique is triangulation, where you use more than one data source, data-gathering technique, or researcher to give other perspectives on the case or setting. Another technique is member checking, where you return your transcripts, field notes, data analyses, or findings to the participants to see if they fit within their understanding of the phenomenon or situation (p. 115).

However, some authors in educational research have divergent viewpoints about how they classify triangulation and member checking. Mutch (2005) discussed these two approaches in considering the issue of research credibility. Creswell (2005), Denzin and Lincoln (2000) and Stake (1995), however, discussed these approaches when considering validity. Nevertheless, even though the various authors differed in how they classified triangulation and member checking, they all agreed that these two approaches can be used to ensure that the research data has credibility and/or validity. I used triangulation and member checking to assure the trustworthiness of the data and to ensure that the findings would have credibility with readers.

According to Creswell (2005) triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student) in descriptions and themes in qualitative research. In my study I involved three groups of participants (SMT members, teachers and PTA members) in the data collection in order to corroborate evidence amongst them. In addition, I followed another suggestion from Creswell (2005) in which he stated that member checking is a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account. In this case I returned interview transcripts to each participant and allowed them to review the interview transcripts. I also allowed them to make any amendments they deemed necessary. Eventually, I only used data that was confirmed and released by the participants for me. Thus I utilised a variety of

approaches to ensure the believability of the experiences and views of the various participants from the two schools in the study.

When the interviewing process had been completed, the interview tapes were transcribed by professional transcribers who were required to sign a confidentiality agreement (See Appendix 13). Once they had completed the transcription, the accuracy of their work was checked. As previously explained, during the fieldwork, most of the participants were interviewed speaking Malay and the Malay transcribed audiotapes were then translated into English. In order to ensure that the translated version was consistent with the original transcript I read both transcripts several times to check the accuracy, as were transcripts in the English language.

I then returned the transcripts in both languages to each participant, so that they could check the accuracy of the contents in both the Malay and the English versions and they were also asked to make any amendments they deemed necessary. They were informed that they could remove or alter any material that they were unhappy with. The letter of Authority for the release of transcripts was attached to the transcripts returned to the participants. (See Appendix 14) When the transcripts were returned it was noted that some of them had made amendments. They also attached the letter of authority that allowed the use of the transcripts.

The next step was to protect the confidentiality of the participants. This means that although the identity of the participants was known by me, procedures were implemented to ensure that it would not be possible for anyone else to access that information and the boundaries surrounding the shared secrets were protected.

Participants and their schools were guaranteed confidentiality so their participation would not be disclosed to anyone and their individual contributions would not be able to be attributed to them. For example, the principals' comments were not explicitly identified as theirs, but were included within the SMTs responses. This was done to protect the two principals' confidentiality.

Participants were also notified that the information they provided would not be revealed to others (Bruce L. Berg, 2009). Further, to safeguard the research participants' rights to privacy, confidentiality would be respected throughout the project by not discussing any specific school findings or events in the thesis report (Glesne, 2005).

The question of confidentiality raised particular difficulties for this study. Care was taken with regard to the possible identification of the people involved. Bruce L. Berg (2009) warned that issues of confidentiality and anonymity should be treated very carefully. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, I referred to the MUHEC Code of Ethical Conduct Research, Teaching and Evaluations involving Human Participants (MUHEC, 2006, p. 9). This code states that as a researcher I should ensure that no participant can be identified without the consent of that participant, while the confidentiality of information obtained incidentally during the study must also be respected except where disclosure is necessary to avoid grave harm. To fulfill this code, I addressed this matter in the information that was provided to potential participants and referred to the MUHEC Code to ensure that the study fulfills the code of ethical conduct for research involving human participants.

To ensure the confidentiality of the data, all recording tapes and other written records were kept in a place accessible to me only. This particularly applied to the audio-tapes which were kept under lock and key at all times. The soft copy data on the author's computer was password-protected. The data was also stored on the computer using pseudonyms. Therefore, the potentially identifiable research related data could not fall into inappropriate hands and nor was it able to be discussed carelessly (Bruce L. Berg, 2009). In addition, the backup data was also stored securely and was not accessible to any other computer users.

Anonymity was used to protect confidentiality. Anonymity means that the names of participants from whom the data was obtained are not known (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009, p. 438). Anonymity and confidentiality are key ethical issues (Habibis, 2006 in Walter, 2006). The essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity. In order to maintain confidentiality and anonymity, a pseudonym was used for each of the schools and the

participants. Pseudonyms were used for participants and also for their location and as such the dignity and welfare of the participants were protected.

However, Glesne (2005) has also warned of the potential of participants being identified in small communities. Hence, Bruce L. Berg (2009) suggested that we “avoid keeping identifying records and lists any longer than is absolutely necessary” (p. 59). In this study, both of the above scenarios have been taken seriously. For example, no real names were used for any participants. Even designations (e.g. Principal, Assistant Principal or Teachers) were used with care. Only if the information was not sensitive or unlikely to cause harm in any way to the respective participants or reveal their identities, was it released. All the ethical procedures discussed above were used consistently throughout this study.

7.3.7 Theoretical framework for data analysis

To ensure the reporting of all participants’ viewpoints based on the information that they provided during interviews, I used the hermeneutics philosophy as a theoretical framework to analyse the data. According to Barrett, Powley and Pearce (2011, p. 182) “hermeneutics philosophy as a theory of interpretation of experience emphasizes how we cope in the world and come to understand objects and subjects”. In addition they stated that “the philosophical tenets of hermeneutics can be used to explain human action, intent, and meaning in the context of organizations” (ibid, p. 182).

Based on these statements from Barrett and his colleagues, therefore, the hermeneutics philosophy was suitable for application in data analysis for this study because this philosophy elaborates the experiences in people’s lives. This statement could be directly related to the first and second purposes of this study in that, firstly, this study attempted to explain the experience of participants in implementing national educational policies (How do teachers/SMT members/PTA members’ perceive the implementation of national educational policies?) and secondly, this study also tried to identify teachers’ experiences in the challenges and conditions that

they faced as a result of the implementation of the policies. In addition, the hermeneutics philosophy also emphasises the way people cope with the experiences they face. This intention could be related to the third aim of this study in which it attempted to understand how participants coped with the challenges of the implementation of the policies and how educational leaders can assist them to do that. The compilation and synthesis of this discussion (findings from research questions 1, 2 and 3) would provide an understanding of the whole experience that teachers faced in the implementation of national policies (their acceptance of the policies implementation, challenges that they faced and how they coped with the challenges).

In addition, according to Barrett et al. (2011, p. 182) “hermeneutics philosophers claim that interpretation is the mode by which we live and carry on with one another”. In this study, I attempted to interpret the findings from interviews and produce a narrative that could assist participants and other teachers who were not involved in this study to understand more about their work during the implementation of national educational policies and about how to cope with the challenges of the implementation of national educational policies that they are unable to avoid. In order to convey participants’ views, the role employed was that of a storyteller (in hermeneutics in classical Greece, this term that was used by Plato to describe the esteemed and respected sophist Protagoras). According to Barrett et al. (2011, p. 183) “Protagoras was a storyteller who belonged to a long tradition of people who used what we would now call narratives and their thick descriptions as the way to develop character, adjudicate disputes, and persuade people about public policy”. I used the narrative style to draw the disparate views from participants together in order to convey the reality of their experiences in accepting the implementation of national educational policies, in facing challenges and coping with the challenges. By utilising the narrative approach I believed that I could close the gap between my understanding of the views of the participants and trying to convey what they actually wanted to share with other people. Thus, Gadamer (1960 cited in Barrett, et al., 2011, p. 185) refers to Schleirmacher’s approach to hermeneutics as: “to understand the author (participants) better than he (researcher) understood himself (myself)”. In addition, according to Ricoeur (1984) “we are engaging in narrative construction whenever we bring together facts as heterogeneous as agents,

goals, means, interactions, circumstances, and unexpected results. Through narrative we are able to discern a larger whole apart from each distinct element” (cited in Barrett, et al., 2011).

Furthermore, according to Wiklund, Lindholm and Lindström (2002) most research interviews are narratives about a particular phenomenon of interest and a hermeneutics approach is used to interpret and understand these narratives and the phenomenon the narratives are about. They also claimed that “the mode in which the narrative is created therefore becomes important during the analysis” (ibid, p. 115).

The next section will describe the actions that have been taken in data analysis that were driven by the hermeneutic philosophy in order not only to realise or understand the intentions of the participants (what the speaker meant), but to understand the meaning of the text itself (the speaker’s narrative). In order to understand the text from interviews I attempted to follow what was claimed by Ricoeur (1991) in that we do not understand anything new until we understand it in a way that dramatically changes our perspective. A new perspective is impossible unless we are able and willing to abandon our positions and risk our assumptions. In addition, according to Wiklund et al. (2002) the key to a new understanding is within the text, as the process of initial recognition makes it possible for the interpreter to approach the text with an open mind and thereby appropriate its sense. Thus, to fully understand the view the participants wanted to convey, when analysing the data I placed myself in the role of an outsider wanting to understand the situation faced by the teachers during the implementation of policy, the challenges that they faced and how they coped with these challenges. No assumptions were placed on the information they conveyed, rather I was trying to interpret what they explained in a way that was open to their views. The following is an explanation of how the data was analysed.

7.3.8 Data management and analysis

Nvivo is a software programme that is now commonly used for the analysis of qualitative data in social science research. Therefore, in my original research design I planned to use NVIVO, and attended some short courses on its use, and when I first began to analyse the data, I attempted to use the software. However, I found it very challenging to use and judged that I would have to invest considerably more time in developing a working understanding of the software and its potential uses. This could have negatively affected my time frame for my study in terms of (a) the timing of the fieldwork; and (b) completion of writing up before the end of my scholarship and visa. In addition, I believed that when I analysed the data manually I would be able to accurately identify themes appropriate to this study without using the Nvivo. This belief was informed by the argument of Welsh (2002) who stated that the Nvivo is less useful in terms of addressing issues of validity and reliability in the thematic ideas that emerge during the data analysis process. Welsh argues that this is due to the fluid and creative way in which these themes emerge. In addition she argued that “of course, details can be checked on the content of particular nodes and this could affect the inter-relationships of the thematic ideas, but in terms of searching through the thematic ideas themselves in order to gain a deep understanding of the data, Nvivo is less useful simply because of the type of searching it is capable of doing” (p. 6). The pilot interview and preliminary analysis of early interviews from the main study suggested that NVIVO would not be essential to the aims of the study and therefore I decided against its use in this piece of research. A final consideration is that I planned to transcribe the interviews myself and translate from Malay language to English. I judged that this detailed engagement with the interviews and transcripts would add depth to the data analysis through familiarization.

After returning from fieldwork I transcribed every audiotape containing interviews with sixteen members of Senior Management Teams (SMTs), twenty four teachers and six members of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) from both schools that were involved in my study. Each completed transcript was indexed by assigning a pseudonym to replace the name of the schools and the participants. Assigning a pseudonym to each transcript was important in order to be able to retrieve original

data and to cross-reference information while writing and reporting. During the fieldwork, I interviewed all the participants in the Malay Language because they preferred to use this language. When all the audiotapes were transcribed I translated all my interview transcripts into English. In order to ensure that the translated version was consistent with the original transcript I read both transcripts several times to check the accuracy of the translation. I then returned the transcripts in both languages to each participant, so that they could check the accuracy of the contents in both the Malay and the English versions and they were also invited to make any amendments they deemed necessary. Some participants made amendments. I attached the letter of Authority for the release of transcripts to all participants with the transcripts that I returned to them and obtained permission from all participants to further use the information they had provided.

In order to obtain an overview of the data from each school, I separated transcripts from the two schools. Then, I sorted all transcripts to three groups of participants (SMT members, Teachers and PTA members). In the analysis, I referred to the participants' point of view and tried to represent their views as they saw it and reportedly experienced it. I read each transcript several times. As I read them repeatedly I paid close attention to emerging themes and patterns. The first step that I took in identifying themes from the interview transcripts was to keep my research questions at the back of my mind, while I was reading each word in the transcripts. I looked at each piece of data, paragraph by paragraph, sentence by sentence and identified which one or more of the questions that particular paragraph or sentence(s) addressed. In order to get a clear picture about the themes, I cut sentences from each transcript and pasted them on big sheets of paper the topics for each sheet reflecting the Research Questions. Samples of my working pages are included in Appendix 15.

From the big sheets of papers I identified sentences that could be potential themes based on the three main research questions. I listed all potential themes and then I identified some overlap themes and combined these to be new themes. I repeated this process a number of times until I was confident that I had found suitable themes to answer my research questions. The same process was carried out for the three groups of participants. Finally, I found suitable themes to answer my research questions for each group of participants.

In order to ensure that I did not ignore any significant information contained in the interview transcripts, I read again and again the data from each transcript that I had not yet included in my previous writing. This analysis followed my hunches, ideas and thoughts expressing some of the concepts, pictures and insights which emerged as I worked through this analysis. When I was satisfied with my analysis and confident that I had utilised maximally the information from interview transcripts, I then combined these new written findings with the previous writing to form a common set of themes applicable to my study. During this process, I tried to weave the information, insights and the thoughts I had, to see whether this would lead me towards a bigger picture which may have overall significance for my study. The final products from this layered analysis were several distinct themes that I thought appropriate to answer my research question. Under each theme I placed all the words, sentences or statements that reflected them.

Initially, the themes were not arranged in order of importance but in the order in which they emerged during analysis. I then used two methods to organise the themes for reporting in the final thesis. There are two chapters (ie. Chapter 8 and 9) that I have organised according to the most frequent to least frequent comments by participants. Another chapter is organised based on a theme that allowed me to write a coherent narrative (ie. Chapter 10). This method provided a full picture of the issues that were discussed during the research interviews from different perspectives. Using this method I believe I remained faithful to what the participants wanted me to hear in order to ensure that I fulfilled my hermeneutic obligation to them.

In my narrative, I only chose quotations from participants' transcripts that I considered appropriate to enliven the picture I was creating and I used their pseudonym or tenure to show that a type of participant (SMT member, teacher, PTA member) had raised an issue. I presented the findings for each group of study participants in separate chapters because it helped to provide a clear picture about the group's views on the variety of positions they held.

Finally, each chapter included a conclusion that drew together some cross-school comparison, frequencies of the themes, and variations of gender, experience/seniority or teaching subject. I included those variables to portray variations within and the overall shape of the responses from a particular school. In

addition, this approach gave me a more holistic view of what life was like for participants in each school, and identified whether or not there were clear differences of institutional experience.

In the data analysis chapters I used a convention developed by Chang, Voils, Sandelowski, Hasselblad and Crandell (2009) to convert numbers of participants into acceptable qualitative descriptions of strength of agreement or disagreement with a statement (Figure 7.1).

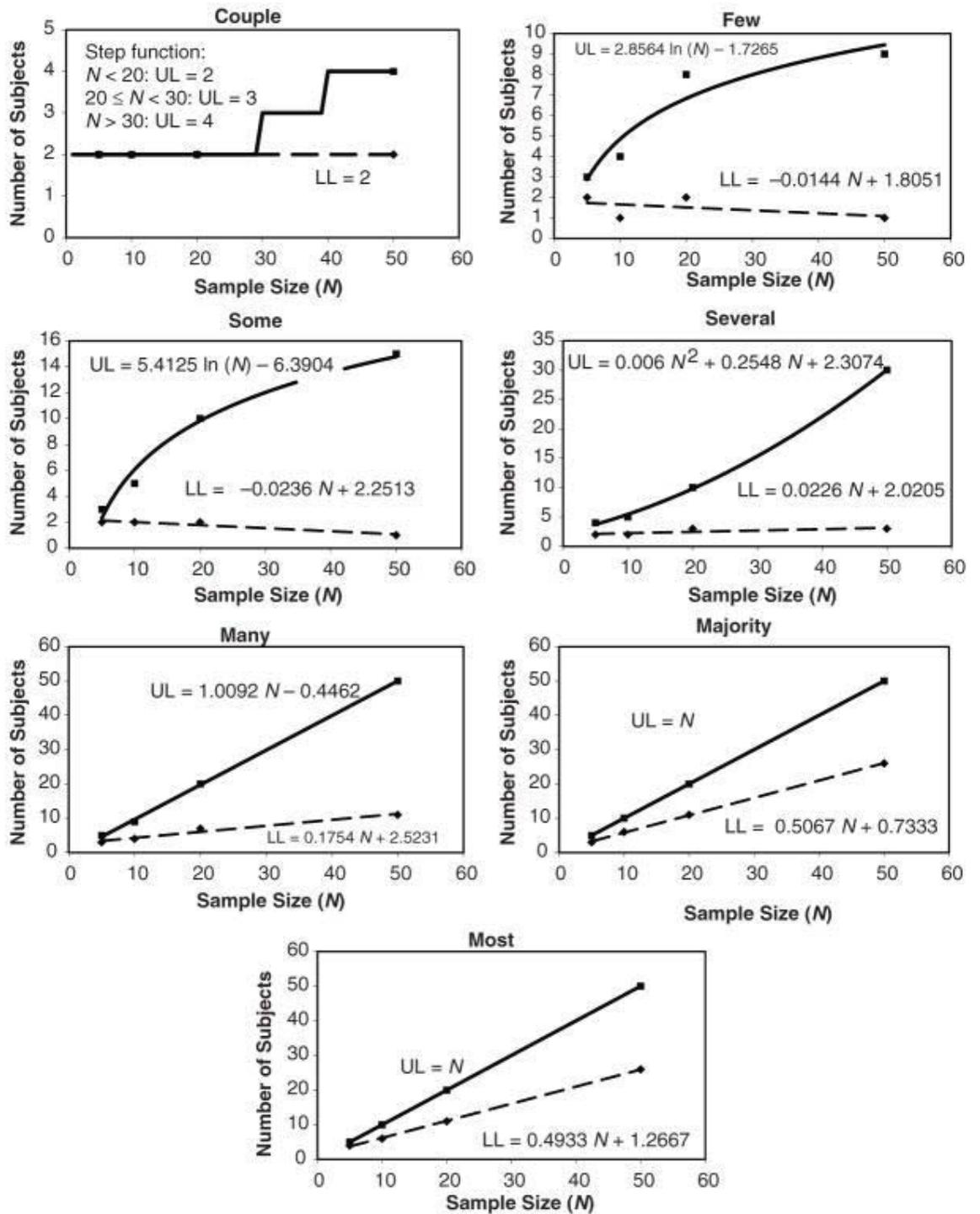


Figure 7.1: Results of Verbal Counting Survey, With Fitted Regression Lines

Using this figure, the number of respondents was arranged from the least to the most as follows; couple, few, some, several, many, majority and most. I utilized this method to describe the number of participants who were involved in answering the interviews' questions and to report the findings of my qualitative research.

7.4 Summary

This chapter has described the refined rationale and purpose of the study, the methodological approach and the procedures used to assist in developing an understanding of teacher resilience. In the first section, a conclusion has been provided from previous discussions about teacher resilience and educational leadership in Malaysia that has in turn become evidence for the rationale of the study.

In the second section evidence has been provided that a multi-case study was the most suitable methodology for this study. In order to strengthen the argument regarding the suitability of the methodology for this study, a description of the definition, types and strengths as well as limitations of case studies were provided and has concluded ultimately that a multi-case study was relevant to this particular study.

In the final section, details of the procedures used in conducting fieldwork were described. These included the emphasis placed on ethical issues prior to commencing research fieldwork, gaining access to the selected schools, the criteria that were used in selecting sites, negotiating access to the field, collecting data by utilising interviewing methods and keeping the information gathered secure. A description of the hermeneutics philosophy as a theoretical framework for data analysis and an explanation of the steps taken in analysing the data concluded in this chapter. The following chapter presents the findings of this study.

Chapter Eight

THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS IN RELATION TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, THE CHALLENGES THEY FACED AND HOW THEY COPE WITH THESE CHALLENGES

Summary of findings from teachers

Perceptions	Challenges	Coping with the challenges
Positive implication: increased opportunities for students to improve their English performance	Students who were not interested in learning and had low academic performance	Internal Factors: Teachers' personal attributes and qualities
Negative implications: the neglect of other subjects, the increase in difficulty levels for students and decreased examination results among students	School work environment	External factors: Senior Management Team Approaches Characteristics and Actions of Colleagues School Location
Factors the Ministry of Education need to consider in implementing the policy: time to implement	The attitude of parents toward academic achievement and discipline	

the policy, school location and teacher preparation		
Reasons for teachers becoming involved	The Ministry of Education's (MOE) Actions	
The need for continuity of policy implementation	Actions of Senior Management Teams (SMTs)	
	The personal challenges of teachers	

8.1 Introduction

The discussion in this chapter reports the findings of interviews with twenty four teachers - twelve each from Aman and Bersatu schools. The interviews aimed to explore how these teachers could maintain or build resilience during the introduction and implementation of new national educational policies in their schools.

The discussion in this chapter can be divided into two categories; 1) data that provides different insights into aspects of the policy implementation (which could be regarded as ‘background noise’); and 2) data that is directly related to issues around teachers’ resilience in the face of reform.

Data related to the background factors associated with new policy implementation include the following. There were perceptions of positive increased opportunities for students to improve their English performance. There were also perceptions of factors the Ministry of Education needs to consider in implementing policy, particularly around time to implement the policy, school location, teacher preparation and the need for continuity in policy implementation.

The data about resilience can be divided into two groups. Firstly, findings related to challenges teachers faced in their daily work as a result the policy reform focus on teaching students in English, rather than Malay. This resulted in the neglect of other subjects, the increase in learning difficulty levels for students and lower examination results among students. Secondly, findings about how teachers coped with challenges they faced. These include information about teachers’ personal attributes and qualities, senior management team approaches, characteristics and actions of colleagues, and factors associated with their school location.

8.2 The perceptions of teachers in relation to the implementation of national educational policies

Although interviews with teachers were originally focused on perceptions regarding the implementation of three national educational policies, the Smart School concept, the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English and the National Blueprint 2006-2010, it was found that the information supplied by the majority of participants focused more on the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. Some teachers from both schools said that this was because it was the most discussed issue among teachers and in society at that time. Most of the teachers also commented about educational policy implementation in term of the generic problem of wanting to get on with teaching.

Five themes emerged in the teachers' comments about the policies' implementation: (1) positive implication: increased opportunities for students to improve their English performance, negative implications: the neglect of other subjects, the increase in difficulty levels for students, decreased examination results and higher drop out rates among students, (3) factors that the Ministry of Education should consider in implementing the policy: time to implement the policy, school location and teacher preparation, (4) teachers reasons for becoming involved, and (5) the need for continuity of policy implementation.

8.2.1 Positive implication: increased opportunities for students to improve their English performance

Some teachers from Aman School and a few from Bersatu School had this perception. What was interesting was that none of the Aman School teachers who raised this matter were from the fields of Science and Mathematics, even though this

policy related directly to these two subjects. They were from the Language Department and the Technical and Vocational Department.

The teachers from Bersatu School who raised this issue were in the field of Science and Mathematics. However their explanation about benefits merely stated that this policy could help students to improve their English language test scores but did not comment about any benefits to learning in Science and Mathematics even though this is one of the main purposes of introducing this policy.

8.2.2 Negative implications: the neglect of other subjects, the increase in difficulty levels for students and decreased examination results among students

Some teachers spoke about these four implications in relation to the implementation of teaching and learning in Science and Mathematics in English.

One teacher stated that “the school management has forgotten about our subject because they were focused on Science, Mathematics and English” [Saniah, Aman School, p. 3]. This view is representative of some of the views of other teachers who taught subjects that were not related to this policy. In their view, the implementation of this policy seemed to cause their subjects to be “left behind and less important” [Saniah, Aman School, p. 3].

If the teachers at Aman School believed that the implementation of this policy had an impact on their subjects, in contrast, a few teachers from Bersatu School said that the implementation of the policy increased difficulty levels for students, as summed up by one of them, “since we have to teach in English for both Science and Mathematics subjects and the students are from rural places, so it’s kind of hard for them to understand and master the English Language”. [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 1]

Even though all the teachers from two different school locations identified different implications for teachers and students, they agreed that the examination

results in Science and Mathematics had been influenced by this policy. As one teacher put it, “All of a sudden, as a result the students in Science and Mathematics’ results were dropping because they have not mastered English yet” [June, Aman School, p. 3]

The findings show that even though the Ministry of Education had their own targets in the implementation of the national educational policies (as was explained in Chapter Three), some teachers claimed that the policy implementation created negative implications for them and also for their students.

8.2.3 Factors the Ministry of Education need to consider in implementing the policy: time to implement the policy, school location and teacher preparation

Some teachers from Aman School and a few from Bersatu School had views that the Ministry of Education (MOE) should consider these three aspects before implementing the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English.

In relation to the time to implement, a teacher suggested that “the Ministry should start the implementation of the policy earlier in primary schools and not, as the implementation did, in secondary schools” [June, Aman School, p. 3]. She said if the implementation of this policy commenced earlier and lasted for much longer, it would give more time for teachers and students to master English and indirectly assist them in the smooth implementation of this policy.

In addition, a few other teachers from both schools had the view that the Ministry of Education needed to consider the school’s location in the implementation of this policy. One noted that this policy was more suitable for implementation in schools in urban areas, but for schools in rural areas, she suggested that “the Ministry has to find alternative ways to implement the policy that suits the teachers and students’ abilities” [Saniah, Aman School, p. 4].

Furthermore, a teacher of English believed that to implement this policy successfully, “the Ministry need to prepare all teachers to be strong in that language. If we are not strong in English, how could we teach students Science and Mathematics in English?” [Afif, Aman School, p. 9].

All teachers in this section commented about the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. Even though this policy was implemented seven years before these interviews took place, the teachers still criticised these three factors that they felt should have been addressed before the implementation of new education policy.

8.2.4 Reasons for teachers becoming involved

A few teachers from Aman School and Bersatu School told me that they had to be involved in the implementation of teaching Science and Mathematics in English even though they did not like it, because that was the Ministry's prerogative. They said, as government servants they had to follow instructions from the government as their employer. For example one of them said, "I disagree with this policy but unfortunately teachers are not allowed to argue about this matter because we simply execute the instructions from the Ministry of Education" [Hanif, Bersatu School,p. 2].

They also worried that if they did not want to be involved in the implementation of this policy and made critical comments, it would result in some action being taken against them. As one of them said, "I cannot say any bad things about the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. I will be charged by the Ministry of Education" [Jamal, Aman School, p. 6].

Apart from that, the other participants maintained that some teachers became involved in the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English because of salary factors. They said that teachers who were teaching Science and Mathematics in English got an extra allowance, "so they didn't really comment against this policy implementation" [Sukor, Aman School, p. 7].

Meanwhile one-third of participants from Aman School and half the number of participants from Bersatu School said that they were not involved at all in the policy implementation. All of them said that they only concentrated on teaching their own subjects and had not focused on any of these policies.

8.2.5 The need for continuity of policy implementation

It was interesting to note that a few teachers who were not from the Science and Mathematics field suggested that the Ministry of Education should continue the

implementation of the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. Among them, two said that this policy should be continued because “the government had taken a lot of time for this to be implemented” [Hamidah, Aman School, p.4] and “it had involved a high cost and all the money budgeted had been used, so it shouldn’t be stopped” [Noor, Aman School, p. 3].

None of the teachers said that this policy should be continued for the purpose of improving English Language proficiency because enhancing the understanding of Science and Mathematics among students was the main objective given by the Ministry for the implementation of this policy.

8.3 Challenges that teachers had faced in their daily work

The second part of this chapter focuses on seven challenges the teachers said they were facing as a result of the Ministry introducing the policy. The challenges were: (1) Students who were not interested in learning and had low academic performance, (2) school work environment, (3) the attitude of parents towards academic achievement and discipline, (4) the Ministry of Education’s actions, (5) the actions of the Senior Management Teams, and (6) teachers themselves.

8.3.1 Students who were not interested in learning and had low academic performance

The main challenge that came from the attitudes of students, whether in Aman or Bersatu School, was that they were not interested in their lessons. Some teachers from Aman School and the majority from Bersatu School raised this matter. Revealing the pressure teachers felt from these attitudes Jaya said, “I want to teach but the students do not want to learn. So as a teacher, this condition is really upsetting me and makes me feel stressed”. [Jaya, Bersatu School, p. 7-8].

Furthermore, another teacher said that “the students don’t want to learn, they skip classes, it has been a trend. It never finishes. This happens every week. In the end, will the teachers be able to overcome this problem? What can we do?” [Sukor, Aman School, p. 3]. The teachers who commented about students that skipped class expressed their frustration with this situation. In their view, how could they successfully implement national educational policy requirements when there were still many students who behaved like this?

Meanwhile, some other teachers also commented that they faced another challenge from their students. Although their students were not skipping class, their ability to understand the content of teaching was a challenge for these teachers. Nureen explained that “sometimes I taught the same thing two, three times but the results were still the same. It seems that what I taught was just something useless” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 4]. She did not have any idea what else she could do.

Some other teachers also faced the challenge of students who had poor proficiency in English. Therefore, in implementing teaching and learning Science and Mathematics in English, when teachers tried to teach them in English, “they didn’t get anything, they didn’t understand anything” [Sham, Bersatu School, p. 2].

8.3.2 School work environment

This challenge was the second most frequently raised by several teachers in both schools. More teachers from Bersatu School than from Aman School, spoke about this in terms of the other responsibilities teachers had in addition to focusing upon teaching and learning, the shortage of equipment and facilities in some schools and external influences.

Some teachers from both schools said that they were stressed by their work environment that required them to carry out various other responsibilities apart from teaching. For example, June commented that, “there is just not enough time to do everything. Actually, I would feel that the workload is a burden. I really feel the tension and stress” [June, Aman School, p.6].

This challenge resulted in a teacher who had more than 30 years teaching experience saying that, “I do feel that I want to retire earlier, for sure at my age now the responsibilities are quite heavy and the management tasks are a lot.” [Saniah, Aman School, p. 6]. In addition, a female teacher said, “we don’t have enough time to finish all the tasks given. As married teachers, we really have a lack of time because we have a husband and children that have to be taken care of as well” [Salma, Bersatu School, p. 4-5].

A further challenge was raised by several teachers who said that they were working in schools that lacked suitable facilities. What was interesting was that this challenge only emerged in Bersatu School. Sham explained that when she wanted to do experiments the lesson always got disrupted by insufficient water supply and the apparatus in the science labs. So she said “it makes me feel uneasy and I always get stuck when I want to teach. One more thing, we have limited venues to teach because we don’t have enough classrooms” [Sham, Bersatu School, p. 5-6].

Apart from the challenge of lack of facilities that disrupted the implementation of the policy of teaching Science and Mathematics in English, some teachers from Bersatu School also said that their work environment has been influenced by being too examination oriented and when the students did not perform well and their examination result dropped, “the blame went 100% to the teachers. The truth is that many other factors should be considered prior to pointing fingers at us” [Rahim, Bersatu School, p. 7].

Besides the challenges of the work environment within the school, teachers also faced challenges in relation to external factors impacting on the school, including the school results being compared with other high-ranking schools. Aini revealed that “the comparison was not fair because their students were chosen from among the best students in our country but our students come with low levels of performance. So if the input is of less quality, then it is very hard for us to produce a better quality output” [Aini, Aman School, p. 11].

In addition, some teachers from Bersatu School said that they faced challenges from the environment outside the school because as one of them said, “it does not influence the students to take their studies seriously and to help them to

improve their academic achievement, compared with the environment of schools in urban areas” [Hanif, Bersatu School, p. 2].

The teachers explained that this environment created challenges for them because they tried to encourage students to learn while they were at school. However, when they were outside the school, the environment was more focused on leisure activities and did not motivate students to learn.

8.3.3 The attitude of parents toward academic achievement and discipline

More teachers from Bersatu School compared to Aman School raised this issue. The analysis shows there was a difference between the challenges faced by teachers in the two schools.

A few teachers from Aman School stated that parents were not concerned about their children. For example, a teacher involved in discipline issues informed me that she called some parents to discuss their children’s discipline problems but “some parents say that they have no time to come to discuss at school. The parents never come. So what to do, there is no cooperation. So a lot of things, we cannot get done” [Limah, Aman School, p. 5-6].

On the other hand, more than half number of participants from Bersatu School who raised this issue said that parents did not see the importance of academic achievement for their children because they thought that they could completely rely on teachers. The teachers also said that the parents’ excuse was they did not know anything about education. As a result a teacher explained that “the attitudes of the majority of parents do not take seriously their children's education and this has led to students not being interested in such subjects” [Hanif, Bersatu School, p. 2].

Thus, even though particular problems differed in each school, the interviews showed that parents’ attitudes presented challenges to some teachers.

8.3.4 The Ministry of Education's (MOE) Actions

More teachers from Bersatu School raised this challenge compared to teachers from Aman School. It was commented upon most frequently by teachers who were involved in the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. In addition some teachers talked about the actions of the Ministry of Education that had influenced the implementation of national educational policies in general and also the daily work of teachers.

The challenge relating to the implementation of the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English was only raised by some teachers from Bersatu School. They said that the teaching aids that were provided were not assisting them to implement this policy because students did not really understand the content of the course work that were all in English. As a result one teacher said “If I do use it, later I have to translate it for them to understand. So to stop wasting time, it's better to not use it and just teach the students as usual” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p 2-3]. They also stated that the Buddy System was not really helpful in implementation of this policy because as Nureen (a Science teacher) said “sometimes the English teachers don't know when I ask them about scientific terms. They gave me a literal translation which can't be used and doesn't link with any scientific terms. So I can't refer all terms to them” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 2-3].

In addition, some teachers complained about the implementation of national educational policies in general. One of them said “the education policy keeps suddenly changing, but although we are at the grass roots, we did not have detailed information about what the changes were, we have to follow the changes. That is our problem” [Rahim, Bersatu School, p. 11].

Another challenge was that the Ministry of Education knew that teachers were under a lot of pressure but they still did not take any action to solve the problem. One teacher said that “the Ministry asked us to fill in a form telling them about our level of pressure. We revealed our pressure but they still did not take any action regarding this problem” [Aini, Aman School, p. 6].

According to these teachers, the lack of appropriate actions taken by the Ministry of Education to reduce the pressure on them in performing their duties resulted in them finding it difficult to perform tasks related to the implementation of educational policies such as teaching. This shows that some actions of the Ministry of Education designed to assist teachers in the implementation of a new education policy or to ease their work, in fact created more challenges for them.

8.3.5 Actions of Senior Management Teams (SMTs)

Some teachers in Aman School were of the opinion that the Senior Management Team gave the teachers too much work related to the implementation of national educational policies. June explained, “all the teachers are complaining but the management asks us to do even more things, but teachers are the ones who have to organize everything. It’s quite a burden” [June, Aman School, p. 6].

In addition, a few teachers from this school said that they felt sad when they had done so much for their students but they didn’t get any recognition. As one of them said “I worked very hard to help the students, but he (the Principal) didn’t care about that” [Aini, Aman School, p. 12].

At Bersatu School a few teachers said that they found it difficult to understand how the Senior Management Team works. As one of the teachers said, “the school management are a bit unsystematic. I don’t even know their role in assisting us. They are not efficient in distributing tasks and it is really spoiling my interest towards teaching” [Sham, Bersatu School, p. 1]. As a result of this, Sham said “I can work without management” [Sham, Bersatu School, p. 1].

8.3.6 The personal challenges of teachers

Some teachers from both schools raised the challenges that they personally faced. They raised the issue that they were teaching subjects different from those they were trained to teach. Nureen said, “I feel dissatisfaction, and sometimes I feel I don’t have any new things to teach students. Sometimes I think of changing to another school because I can’t teach my subject” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 2].

The second challenge faced by some teachers in both schools was that they did not have a sufficient grasp of the English language. All of them were from the Mathematics and Science Department. As Nureen put it, “It’s myself is the challenge. I don’t really have mastery in English. So I have to spend much time in study to learn the English Language. It’s really hard” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 2].

8.4 How teachers cope with the challenges they face

An analysis shows that there were both internal and external factors that assisted teachers to cope with the challenges. These are discussed in the order of the frequency with which they were raised by the participants, to give a clearer picture of which factors were most significant.

8.4.1 Internal Factors: Teachers’ personal attributes and qualities

Most teachers from Aman School and Bersatu School, talked about their personal attributes and qualities that assisted them to face the challenges. These included acceptance of their responsibility as a teacher, social skills, self esteem, personal commitment and self satisfaction.

The majority of teachers from both schools said that they were able to face the challenges because they accepted their responsibility as a teacher. Even though all of them provided various statements in interviews with them, all have a common purpose as stated by one of them who said that, “I agree that is hard to face the challenges but when I think about responsibility, I am willing to do all the tasks that were given to me; I don’t care about anything else. Whatever it is I will do it” [Saniah, Aman School, p. 8].

In addition, several teachers from both schools admitted that their social skills assisted them in facing challenges. The majority of them agreed that the most significant challenges came from students’ attitudes and they said that if they could solve these problems they would be able to implement their work smoothly. In this regard, the social skills of teachers were advantageous in helping them as they gave the students a lot of attention, got close with them and obtained their trust. What was interesting was that the approach they used to get close to students adopted a variety of familial roles in their interaction with students. As a senior female teacher said “actually I act like a mother to students, a motherly teacher. So, I always tell them, I’m talking to you like I was talking to my son” [Limah, Aman School, p. 13]. In addition, a senior male teacher mentioned that, “I play more roles than just teacher, as a father or as a brother. For example, when I meet a student, I always ask them whether they have eaten or not. When I take care of them, this will build trust in me from them” [Afif, Aman School, p. 5]. Furthermore, a junior teacher said, “I treat them as friends and they respect me as a teacher” [Kamila, Bersatu School, p. 5].

Another relevant social skill was having positive relationships with colleagues and this was highlighted by one teacher who said that, “everyone has their own problems but we’ve got to think that if we share the problems with others, they may not be able to solve it for us, but sharing it helps to release the stress” [Hamidah, Aman School, p. 7].

The importance of having positive social relationships with other members of the community was raised by another teacher who said, “Our relationship with our society is also important because when we are teaching at school, it will be much

easier for us to deal with the students if we are known in the local community and are respected” [Hanif, Bersatu School, p. 13].

The next teacher characteristic that assisted them in facing the challenges was their belief that they were competent to cope with the challenges of life and were able to maintain a high level of self esteem. Some teachers from both schools raised this matter. The majority of teachers who raised this characteristic had similar ideas such as one of them who said that, “even though I am facing lots of challenges, plus with the lack of facilities in the school, I can face the challenges and keep working because of my own capability” [Sham, Bersatu School, p. 7]. A senior teacher said, “I think that I am able to face all the challenges because of my own strengths. I have had lots of experience in facing challenges in education since I have been in the teaching field for 34 years” [Saniah, Aman School, p. 6]. A junior teacher who only had 2 years experience in teaching said, “I have a military background, so I able to cope with all challenges” [June, Aman School, p. 6]

The next discussion focuses on the personal commitment of teachers. What was interesting was that this issue was raised only by several teachers from Bersatu School but was not raised by those from Aman School. There were different ways in which teachers showed their commitment. As an example, Nureen said that “I have to ensure that my students succeeded in the examination, so when I faced a problem in using an English Language properly during my teaching, I forced myself to study again by buying the electronic dictionary” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 2]. In addition, Sham said that, “I try to help students to prepare for the examination and when I found that the school had inadequate facilities, I used my personal money to replace them to ensure that my teaching session was not interrupted by a lack of facilities” [Sham, Bersatu School, p. 6]. Furthermore, Rahim said that, “I spend my own time organising an extra class in the evening or in the weekend to help students who were left behind in their study” [Rahim, Bersatu School, p. 3]. Sima mentioned that “when my students got their results in their national examination, I took some university enrolment forms to school and encouraged them to apply. I really want to help my students” [Sima, Bersatu School, p. 4]. Karimah said, “teachers here really put an effort into making the students in this school excel in their examination” [Karimah, Bersatu School, p. 7]. Therefore it was not surprising when Sani said that,

“everyday I come from my home about 20km to the school because I want to help students in this rural area to succeed in the future” [Sani, Bersatu School, p. 6].

The last personal characteristic that assisted teachers in confronting challenges was their level of self satisfaction. Several teachers from both schools said that even though they feel stressed with the challenges in their work, as summed up by one of them thus, “after I see they’ve got good results in examinations and I can see the change in their attitudes. I am very satisfied. I got back my spirit. It is like exploding inside me. It makes me want to struggle more” [Limah, Aman School, p. 14]

8.4.2 External factors

In this section, the discussion concerns external support factors that were involved in assisting teachers to cope with the challenges in their working life at a school. The discussion is separated for each of these factors because they are from different sources. In short, I found that the order of external factors that assisted teacher to face the challenges was (1) the characteristics and actions of the Senior Management Teams, (2) the characteristics and actions of their colleagues and (3) school location.

8.4.2.1 Senior Management Team Approaches

I asked Lorain, “If we compare your personal strengths, your colleagues and school management, among those three factors which one helps you most?” and she replied, “I think management. If the management is good, teachers will like it and will want to participate in any activities planned by the management” [Lorain, Aman School, p. 4]

Lina also commented that, “the management factor plays an important role. If we work with good management, the teachers will be happy, no pressure, no

stress” [Lina, Aman School, p. 3]. What was the actual role played by the Senior Management Teams in helping teachers to cope with the challenges? A large number of teachers from both schools spoke about this matter. The SMTs assisted teachers to face the challenges when they: (1) created a happy working environment for teachers; engaged in activities with teachers; (3) solved the teachers’ problems; (4) had regular discussions with teachers; (5) encouraged and supported the teachers’ work; and (6) appreciated teachers’ work.

Even though some teachers from both schools said that some senior managers’ actions had created challenges for them, (as discussed in Section 8.3.5) the majority of the teachers in both schools claimed that the SMTs contributed toward a happy working environment and this assisted them in confronting challenges. For example Jamal said that, “the management of this school is providing us with a great environment where we feel happy, friendly and enjoy being together. They don’t create problems for us and that’s a big help to us in striving towards success”. [Jamal, Aman School, p. 7]

Additionally, the majority of teachers in both schools also claimed that the SMT members who engaged in teachers’ activities also assisted them to face the challenges. Shahrul maintained that, “the school management work together with us as a family. That helps us to perform better in our work even though we are facing real challenges in implementing the current educational policy” [Shahrul, Aman School, p. 6]. In addition Limah explained about her principal as she said “he involves himself with the staff in any activities and not only gives an order from his office for staff to do something but also works with them. He mixes with us very well and he is very good as a leader” [Limah, Aman School, p. 18].

Furthermore, the teachers also felt happy because the SMT members at their school helped them to solve their problems. Jamal said that “if teachers had a problem, the SMT members were quick and easily solved it and with this situation, working at the school didn’t bring any stress and teachers could focus more on their tasks” [Jamal, Aman School, p. 8]. The same situation occurred at Bersatu School when Herida said that the SMT members “didn’t procrastinate in solving teachers’ problems” [Herida, Bersatu School, p. 4] and this made them feel happy to work at the school. However at Bersatu School, a few teachers also claimed that their

problems were not only solved by the Senior Management Team but also by their school counsellor. Nureen said, “If I have a problem with students’ discipline, I report them to the counsellor. They will try to solve every report, so we as teachers can reduce our stress and can concentrate on our duties” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 6].

Some teachers from both Aman School and Bersatu School also mentioned that they got very strong support and encouragement from their SMT members to implement any programs that were for the students benefit. Aini said, “our Principal is very understanding and supportive even when money is involved! Whenever we ask for money for any programme, he gives money and full support” [Aini, Aman School, p. 3].

Teachers from Aman School and Bersatu School also added that among the major factors that made them keen to work was the open mindedness of the senior managers and that they had numerous discussions with them. In this regard Lina mentioned that “our Principal applies democracy, he is not autocratic. He doesn’t say that his opinion only is right and others are all wrong. He listens to everyone else’s opinions, and he easily accepts them if they are good” [Lina, Aman School, p. 4] .

What was intriguing in this matter was that teachers from both schools felt happy because they could discuss issues with their principals anywhere, even when they were socialising together in the canteen. As Hanif explained “If we have any issues we discuss them with the management staff in the canteen without the need to see them in the office and we do not need to talk formally” [Hanif, Bersatu School, p. 12]. As a result, with this situation, he added that “we have a formal and informal discussion with the management and this brings a positive environment to this school that can help solve many problems” [Hanif, Bersatu School, p. 12].

That aside, a few teachers from Aman School said that the SMT members also appreciated their work. These teachers said that the SMT sometimes showed their appreciation by giving them certificates of appreciation but what was interesting was that these teachers felt even better when the Principal showed his appreciation by buying them lunch in the canteen. One of them said “this is one of the ways he

appreciates what we are doing. If he is pleased with us and appreciates us, then that is fine with us. He is good to us” [Jamal, Aman School, p. 8].

These teachers claimed that they would prefer this informal appreciation because it acknowledges the accomplishment of the responsibilities given by the SMT. In addition, with this informal appreciation, all teachers could receive it whereas a formal appreciation would only be for a few selected teachers.

8.4.2.2 Characteristics and Actions of Colleagues

This factor was raised by a majority of the teachers from the two schools. They spoke about the way in which friendly, cooperative and supportive colleagues assisted them to face the challenges. Friendly relationships among colleagues were the aspect most frequently raised. This situation occurred more at Bersatu School compared to Aman School. Some teachers said that the friendly relationship existed among them because they didn't have any cliques among them. Limah said that, if they had too many cliques it created an uncomfortable environment because “some cliques only work and talk with each other. If we are not in their clique, we feel uncomfortable. We don't have any cliques at this school and we are happy being together” [Limah, Aman School, p. 18].

The characteristics that made them feel collegial included social factors such as they mixed with each other, had an open-minded attitude, were easy to communicate with, discussed mutual problems, had a common understanding and respect for each other, as well as being willing to compromise. Sima said, “I feel that my colleagues are like my own siblings and I can feel that we have a blood relationship between us because they are like my family. This kind of feeling makes me feel really happy” [Sima, Bersatu School, p. 9].

One of the factors that assisted teachers in coping with the challenges was a culture of cooperation among themselves. For example June said that “my colleagues here are cooperating with each other in optimising our work to achieve targets. This

is an important aspect because if you work alone, it is quite difficult to achieve the targets” [June, Aman School, p. 5].

The last characteristic, spoken about by several teachers, from both schools, was having mutually supportive attitudes. Even though she had had 33 years experience, one teacher said “I admit if there are no colleagues, I can’t do my job properly. For example, they can advise me. Every teacher is like me, we can’t do the job if we don’t have supportive colleagues” [Saniah, Aman School, p. 8]. In addition a junior teacher from Aman School said that “as a junior teacher if we have a problem, we can get advice from an experienced teacher to solve our problem. So they will advise us on how to face it. There is really good cooperation and communication amongst teachers in the school” [Noor, Aman School, p. 6]. In addition, Nureen said “when I have a problem, I’ll seek my colleagues firstly for advice rather than meet the management because we can’t see them directly” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 6].

From the comments above, it can be seen that colleagues also have a role in assisting teachers in facing the demands of their role. Indeed, some teachers said that their friends were better able to help them to face the challenges of school than school management.

8.4.2.3 School Location

Apart from factors that come from teachers themselves, SMTs and colleagues, a few teachers from Aman School and Bersatu School also voiced a view that they were happy working at their schools, even though they faced real demands because as Nureen said, “I’m having fun when I live near to my family here in my hometown. I don’t have to think much about the distance between workplace and my home. So I can focus and concentrate on my work. So I don’t have any problem” [Nureen, Bersatu School, p. 5].

These teachers also stated that they were happy to teach in their home town because they felt familiar with the environment. Therefore, should there be any

problems at school; it was easier for them to resolve the problems. This environmental familiarity allowed them to better focus on their responsibilities as teachers.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter consisted of three sections. The first section focused on teachers' perceptions regarding the implementation of the national educational policies, the second section explained challenges that teachers faced as a result of the implementation of these national educational policies and the third section revealed the methods they used and the support they received in facing those challenges.

In the first section, most of participants provided their views about the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. Their perceptions were that firstly this policy had positive implications in that it resulted in increased opportunities for students to improve their English. Secondly, however, they also stated that the policy had negative affects which included the neglect of other subjects, the increase in difficulty levels for students and decreased examination results among students. The third view expressed was their suggestion that the Ministry of Education should consider a longer period of time to implement the policy, the suitability of school location and the quality of teacher preparation. The fourth view expressed related to the participants providing their reasons for involvement in the implementation in this policy and finally the section focused on the need for continuity of the policy implementation.

The second section focused on the daily challenges that they had faced as a result of the Ministry of Education introducing the current educational policies. The challenges came from students' attitudes, school work environment, parents' attitudes, the Ministry of Education's actions, senior management teams' actions and teachers' personal challenges.

The last section demonstrated that there were internal and external factors that assisted teachers in coping with the challenges. Internal factors referred to

teachers' personal attributes and qualities. Teachers who stated that internal factors helped them spoke about characteristics such as acceptance of their responsibility as a teacher, social skills, self esteem, personal commitment and self satisfaction. The external factors are the other aspects teachers said assisted them in coping with their working lives at a school. Among the external factors were the Senior Management Teams' characteristics and actions, colleagues' characteristics and actions and the location of the school.

In conclusion the findings from these three sections illustrate that the teachers felt that the implementation of policy had more weaknesses than advantages. In fact, they forwarded suggestions to the Ministry of Education in terms of ideas for a more successful implementation of the policies. Only the teachers who were in areas directly related to such a policy were engaged in the policy implementation while the other teachers who were not in these areas focused only on the teaching of their own subjects and there were not many of these who agreed that the policy of teaching Science and Mathematics in English should be continued. Their perceptions show that they were not fully supportive of the implementation of national educational policies and that the challenges that they had received from various sources would increase their burden in implementing national educational policies. However, these teachers said that their personal strengths and abilities enabled them to confront the issue. In addition, the majority of them claimed that they still need help and support especially from the school management as well as from colleagues.

Chapter Nine

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICIES: THE PERCEPTION OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAMS, CHALLENGES THEY BELIEVED TEACHERS FACED AND ACTIONS TAKEN TO ASSIST TEACHERS

Summary of findings from SMT members

Perceptions	Challenges	Coping with the challenges
The implications for teachers, students and schools	School work environment	Creating a school culture that focuses on the implementation of educational policy
Factors the Ministry of Education needed to consider in implementing the policy	Student Issues	A spirit of unity in the planning and implementation of school-based programs
Reasons for the involvement of Senior Management Team members in policy implementation	Teacher Issues	Minimising the pressure on teachers as they implemented the new educational policies
The need for continuity of policy implementation	Parent attitudes towards academic achievement and discipline	Identifying teacher weaknesses in implementing educational policy and providing support for improving performance
The need for continuity of policy implementation	Characteristics and Actions of the Principals	Taking pride in the success of the school as a source of motivation and inspiration
	Actions taken by the Ministry of Education	

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of interviews with sixteen members of Senior Management Teams, eight from each of Aman School and Bersatu School. The SMT members in both these Malaysian schools included the Principal and three different assistant principals - the Assistant Principal (Academic), Assistant Principal (Student Affairs) and Assistant Principal (Co-Curricular). The membership of SMTs also included four different head of departments, which were the Head of Department Science and Mathematics, the Head of Department Technical and Vocational, the Head of Department of Humanities and the Head of Department Languages.

The interviews aimed to explore their views on how the SMT could assist teachers to maintain or build their resilience during the introduction and implementation of new national educational policies in their schools.

This chapter therefore describes, firstly, the SMT members' perceptions of the implementation of the policies; secondly, the demands they considered teachers were facing as a result of the implementation of national educational policies; and thirdly, the strategies used and the support they gave for teachers in implementing the policies.

9.2 The perceptions of the Senior Management Teams of the implementation of national educational policies

In the previous chapter relating to the perceptions of teachers, most of them had spoken about the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. The same happened with the Senior Management Teams. Although some respondents gave their views on the other policies, the majority of the senior managers provided their views on the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. A few SMT members from Aman School and three from Bersatu School maintained that the majority of teachers at their schools had focused

on this education policy because the policy was a hotly debated issue being discussed at that time.

There were four themes that emerged: (1) the implications for teachers, students and schools, factors the Ministry of Education should consider in implementing the policy, (3) reasons for involvement by SMT members and (4) the need for continuity of policy implementation.

9.2.1 The implications for teachers, students and schools

A few senior managers from both schools spoke about the negative impact of the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. Firstly, this policy caused a neglect of other subjects. As one of them said, “our subject is not being emphasised since the government is taking seriously Science and Mathematics in English” [Rosnah, Aman School, p. 3]. Secondly the policy increased difficulty levels for students because “students did not understand how to learn Science and Mathematics in English and as a result, they failed in the subject” [Jalilah, Aman School, p. 3]. Thirdly this policy “is putting too much burden and stress on teachers’ shoulders” [Kamal, Bersatu School, p. 2].

Another negative impact from the implementation of educational policy was raised by Isman who said that, “the National Blueprint is written on paper only but it is very difficult for us (Non-Cluster school) to implement” [Isman, Aman School, p. 10]. He said that this policy negatively affected the school as one of the objectives of this policy was to reduce the gap between high performing schools and normal schools and between schools in urban areas and schools in rural areas. However, he added that the implementation of this policy did not help to achieve this objective because if one school was named as the Cluster School “they receive much more money, selected students and they also have selected teachers. Our school doesn’t get anything, so the gap will grow bigger between a Cluster School and a Non-Cluster or normal school” [Isman, Aman School, p. 10].

This senior manager expressed his frustration with the implementation of the national Blueprint because as a principal at a Non-Cluster school, he faced so many demands to improve school performance while the school lacked numerous resources compared to cluster schools.

9.2.2 Factors the Ministry of Education needed to consider in implementing the policy

Some members of Senior Management Teams from both schools gave their views about three aspects that the Ministry of Education needed to consider in easing the implementation of the national education policy. These were: the time available to implement the policy, the school's condition before the implementation of the policy and the school location.

Regarding the time that was taken to implement the policy one person said that "it is too short and as a result the teachers didn't get enough preparation before it was implemented" [Ruslan, Bersatu School, p. 4].

In addition, a few members of the SMT from Aman School hoped that the Ministry of Education would take into consideration situations at schools and provide an option to the school as to whether they needed to implement the policy of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English or not. As Hani summed up, "the majority of our students are not really good in English. If we think we can implement this policy, so we should implement it, but if it is hard to implement, we should be given approval to keep on teaching as usual" [Hani, Aman School, p. 13].

Several members of the SMT from Bersatu School suggested that the Ministry of Education should consider the school location before the implementation of the policy. They said the policy was only suitable for implementation in an urban area because students in an urban area had additional opportunities to improve their learning - extra tuition for example. In addition, the facilities in a school in an urban area were much better than those in rural area schools. One of them noted "we have a huge gap between students here and in urban areas and the Ministry of Education

should not treat all schools identically in implementing such a policy” [Aziz, Bersatu School, p. 7].

9.2.3 Reasons for the involvement of Senior Management Team members in policy implementation

A few members of the Senior Management Teams from both schools said that they became involved in the implementation of the policy because they followed the instructions from the Ministry. One of them said, “as a government worker, we don’t have any right to complain and question it” [Aziz, Bersatu School, p. 7]. Another member of the SMT also said, “in fact we are against the implementation of this policy, but we can’t do anything, we are implementers, we have to accept it even though we oppose the implementation of this policy” [Najmin, Aman School, p. 2].

There were some members of SMTs who said that they were not fully involved in the policy implementation, so concentrated only on teaching their own subjects and had not focused on any new policy.

9.2.4 The need for continuity of policy implementation

Only one member of the Senior Management Team suggested that the Ministry of Education should continue the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. He said that “if they want to abolish this policy earlier, I would agree, but now, it is already at the peak level, with the materials costing millions of ringgit. So if we want to abolish it now, I am unhappy about that. It is better to just continue doing it” [Ruslan, Bersatu School, p. 5].

9.3 The challenges that Senior Management Teams believed teachers faced

The second part of the chapter focuses upon SMT members’ views about the challenges that all teachers in their school had faced. These were: (1) school work environment; student issues; (3) teacher issues; (4) parents’ attitudes towards academic achievement and discipline (5) the Principal’s characteristics and actions; and (6) the Ministry of Education’s actions.

9.3.1 School work environment

This issue was the one frequently brought up by the members of the SMTs in both schools. They raised six factors, including the other responsibilities teachers had as well as concentrating upon teaching and learning, the educational environment being too examination oriented, results being compared with other schools, their school being labelled by the community as a school of disrepute, the shortage of funds and facilities at Bersatu School and school location.

Demands relating to various other responsibilities that teachers had, other than teaching, were noted by more members of the SMT from Aman School than

from Bersatu School. A senior manager stated that “we see too much burden that teachers nowadays face compared to previous teachers. They need to prepare many documents and to deliver at a time that has been set by the State Education Department or the Ministry of Education. Therefore their teaching time has become narrower. Due to having too many duties they need to complete, sometimes they need to bring their work home to complete it because they don’t have enough time at school” [Afiq, Aman School, p. 13].

Some also stated that they had been overloaded by the system being too examination oriented. More members of the SMT from Aman School than from Bersatu School raised this matter. Afiq mentioned that as a result of the education system emphasising the examination achievements too much, teachers were asked to produce good results for their students without considering students’ academic abilities. “teachers feel pressure and it made their work conditions unhappy and, as a consequence, some of them feel tension and are always applying for leave” [Afiq, Aman School, p. 13].

The pressure to achieve good results became even greater because of school achievement being compared with results from other good schools. Some members of the SMT from Aman School raised this issue. As a result of this situation, one of them stated that “the parents didn’t want to send their children to this school. They thought that our school was not a good choice for their children because the examination results were among the lowest in the area” [Suriani, Aman School, p. 3].

Furthermore some members of the community were not only comparing the school’s results but they referred to the school as one of disrepute. They stated that such labelling was based on “students’ discipline problems and students achieving low academic results” [Jalilah, Aman School, p. 1].

In contrast and in relation to academic achievement and school reputation at Aman School, several members of the SMT from Bersatu School noted that they faced major issues arising from a lack of school facilities. One of them commented that “I know the teachers here want to make changes, but we face problems because the school didn’t have enough facilities and had limited finance” [Fatanah, Bersatu

School, p. 3]. Sometimes the “teaching sessions can’t be done smoothly and need to be cancelled because there are not enough classrooms” [Manaf, Bersatu School, p. 4]. As a result “the school lacks many things and that’s why the teachers were not really happy working here” [Ikram, Bersatu School, p. 6].

Apart from the lack of suitable facilities, the school location was also a challenge for the majority of members of the SMT at Bersatu School. No one from the Senior Management Team at Aman School spoke about this matter. Among the challenges relating to teachers working in a rural area, a senior manager said that the majority of parents “have low educational backgrounds and this affected students’ academic achievement because they are not able to help their children in academic study at home” [Manaf, Bersatu School, p. 2]. Aziz also agreed that the location of the school in a rural area had resulted in students who had an “inferiority complex and very low self esteem” [Aziz, Bersatu School, p. 5]. Ikram said, “Surely, this school is weak in many things and that’s why the teachers are not really happy working here” [Ikram, Bersatu School, p. 6]. As a result, some of them “have applied to change to another school and we have limited choice of teachers that are willing to work here” [Manaf, Bersatu School, p. 3]. He added that the members of the SMT found it difficult to develop proper planning for each teacher at the school because of high teacher turnover.

9.3.2 Student Issues

This challenge ranked second in terms of issues raised by members of SMTs in both schools. They talked about demanding interactions with students over issues involving discipline, students’ level of interest, academic abilities and attendance.

Students’ discipline problems were significant for many of senior managers in both schools. One maintained that, “I didn’t see any challenges at school except students’ discipline problems and we have implemented lots of programmes to reduce the problems, but their attitudes don’t change much” [Jalilah, Aman School, p. 4].

Similarly at Bersatu School, “students’ attitudes had made teachers fed up and some had given up” [Ikram, Bersatu School, p. 5].

Disinterested students were also a problem and this was raised by many senior managers from both schools. A few saw that this attitude had led to some difficulty in the implementation of teaching and learning Science and Mathematics in English. As Hani summed up: “the majority of students really don’t like Science even in the Malay Language. Therefore it becomes harder when it is taught in the English Language” [Hani, Aman School, p. 4].

Some members of the SMT from each school claimed that the poor academic ability of students was a serious issue for them. This problem was more difficult for teachers who were involved in teaching Science and Mathematics in English. As one SMT member said, “when some teachers try to teach Mathematics in English, their students asked them to repeat again and again because they couldn’t understand what they have been teaching. Therefore how could the teachers fulfil the lessons planned and the subjects syllabus” [Hani, Aman School, p. 8]. Even greater challenges are students who have low academic achievement when “some students cannot read, even they are already form 4 (16 years old) students” [Bakar, Bersatu School, p. 1]. This problem repeated itself every year “because although the students changed, most of them come from a similar family background and therefore their abilities and attitudes were about the same” [Hani, Aman School, p. 2].

The last student challenge concerned students not attending classes. Some senior managers in both schools raised this point. Manaf claimed that “when the students always skipped school, it made it difficult for a school to conduct any academic programs for students” [Manaf, Bersatu School, p. 4] and “basically students who were skipping school had discipline problems and were not good enough academically” [Aziz, Bersatu School, p. 5].

Analysis of interviews conducted with members of the Senior Management Teams from both schools illustrated that the problems arising from the students produced affects that impacted on each other. They stated that students who lack self discipline were not keen to study and this in turn led to poor academic achievement.

9.3.3 Teacher Issues

The third most frequently raised challenge for teachers from both schools stemmed from teachers' attitudes and actions. Many senior managers in both schools said that some teachers at their schools did not want to change, had limited proficiency in English and also that there were different working styles between experienced and less experienced teachers.

The first issue was highlighted by several members of the SMT from each school. Isman stated that, "the biggest challenge for this school is that the teachers' don't want to change their work style" [Isman, Aman School, p. 9] "because they feel comfortable teaching in the Malay language" [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 6]. Therefore with this attitude "there is a group of teachers who are clearly opposed to the policy of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 6]. In contrast at Bersatu School, the teachers "didn't oppose the implementation of the policy, but they don't want to be involved in the Buddy System that was developed to assist them to implement the policy and they also don't want to use teaching aids provided by the MOE to execute the policy. They still use their usual style of teaching" [Ruslan, Bersatu School, p. 4-5]. Most of the members of SMTs claimed that the attitudes of some teachers who did not want to change had created difficulties for other teachers who accepted the implementation of the policy fully.

The next challenge was raised by several members of the SMT from Aman School and Bersatu School regarding teachers having insufficient mastery of English to be able to teach Science and Mathematics in English. The problem occurred because as, one of them said, "they are not able to explain in detail their subject in English, therefore the students don't understand the lesson. This means that the implementation of this policy is very difficult for them" [Isman, Aman School, p. 3].

The next issue facing teachers was that some of them were not able to give their full commitment to their work. One of the Assistant Principals from Aman School said that some of these teachers "always gave many excuses when they were asked to do something. They just want easy work" [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 12].

At Bersatu School some teachers “refused to attend in-service training programs that the school provided for them even though we told them to do so” [Aziz, Bersatu School, p. 9]. The majority of SMT members who discussed this issue noted that the majority of uncommitted teachers were the junior teachers. One of them said that was because “the junior teachers failed to adapt themselves with too many programs at school” [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 12]. In addition Aziz and Kamal said that some teachers were not committed to their work at school because they were involved in outside activities that were actually out of their field. Aziz said “some teachers also worked as tuition teachers, direct selling agents and even selling at night markets” [Aziz, Bersatu School, p. 9]. Kamal said that the teachers “prefer to prioritize to gain material things rather than sacrifice their time to the students needs” [Kamal, Bersatu School, p. 6].

9.3.4 Parent attitudes towards academic achievement and discipline

Some members of the Senior Management Teams in both schools raised the challenge that they faced from parent attitudes because some of them did not really care about their children’s studies nor discipline matters. They delegated responsibility to the school for both discipline and education. Thus, Ruslan said “if we called some parents to come to school to discuss their children’s problems, the parents didn’t respond to the letter that we sent to them” [Ruslan, Bersatu School, p. 6].

Additionally, “sometimes a parent when they received a phone call from their children that told them about something inappropriate happening to them at school, they came to the classroom to check their children’s condition and it was disturbing teaching and learning” [Suriani, Aman School, p. 10]. She said that “supposedly the parent should come to the school office and discuss with the management first before they went directly to the classroom, but they just ignored this rule” [Suriani, Aman School, p. 10]. These senior managers stated that parents’ attitudes greatly concerned them and interfered with the focus on their duties.

9.3.5 Characteristics and Actions of the Principals

Even though the Principals from Aman School and Bersatu School were both members of their schools' Senior Management Team, one senior manager from Aman School and two from Bersatu School commented that they faced challenges from their Principal. The first comment came from a senior manager from Aman School. He explained that some teachers from his school said that they faced issues because as a male Principal he seemed to ignore female teachers and noted that the Principal spent more time socialising with male teachers. Therefore, "these female teachers felt unappreciated and they always opposed changes suggested by the Principal" [Najmin, Aman School, p. 6].

At Bersatu School, Aziz said that "the Principal is too stingy and afraid to spend the school budget and this prevented me implementing many of my ideas" [Aziz, Bersatu school, p. 11]. In addition Bakar said that "the Principal is a bit liberal and not in control of teachers and that this attitude meant some teachers tend to be not serious with their work" [Bakar, Bersatu School, p. 3].

9.3.6 Actions taken by the Ministry of Education

A few members of the Senior Management Teams from both schools raised the point that the Ministry of Education did not take any follow up action in relation to the suggestions that they and teachers had given in a survey, writing test and interview regarding the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English that had been carried out by the Ministry of Education two years ago. One of them said that "we have given our opinions regarding what they have asked us. However, we don't know any results up till now and everything keeps on continuing as usual, no feedback at all. What can we do?" [Hani, Aman School, p. 14].

The next issue was the rapid introduction of new policies by the Ministry of Education. A member of the SMT from Bersatu School explained that the MOE

always launched new policies without sufficiently studying the advantages and disadvantages of it and its affects. The policy was just launched and they wanted it to be performed in such a rush. She added that “always bring lots of challenges to teachers because the new policy that’s been introduced does not make teaching easier but adds to our burdens” [Fatanah, Bersatu School, p. 2-3].

In addition another senior manager from Bersatu School commented that a school in a rural area was confronted with issues when the Ministry of Education launched any education policy because most of the people who created, launched and changed all these policies regarding rules hailed from big cities such as Kuala Lumpur and “they don’t really understand the real problems happening in rural areas and when they implement such policy, it is more relevant to schools in urban areas” [Aziz, Bersatu School, p. 7].

This senior manager told me that me that he was disappointed because he saw that the national educational policies implemented by the Ministry of Education seemed to not take into account the suitability of their implementation at a school in a rural area.

9.4 Senior Management Team actions in assisting teachers in facing the challenges of the implementation of national educational policies

“Whether the teachers feel burdened or not in implementing the educational policies is dependent on the management in a school” [Najmin, Aman School, p. 4]. This statement shows the important role of the SMT members in a school. This section, therefore discusses various ways members of SMTs from both schools attempted to aid teachers in their schools. They used five methods: (1) creating a culture that focuses on the implementation of educational policy in a school; (2) togetherness in the planning and implementation of school-based programs; (3) minimising pressure on teachers as they implement the new educational policies; (4) identifying teacher’s weaknesses in implementing education policies and providing support for improving

performance; and (5) taking pride in the success of the school as a source of motivation and inspiration

9.4.1 Creating a school culture that focuses on the implementation of educational policy

A number of senior managers from Aman School discussed this method. They said they were trying to create an atmosphere of interest in the English Language among teachers and students because by creating such an environment teachers and students would accept this policy. One of them noted, “we have created the environment that shows we have a clear focus on the matter. Therefore, all teachers at this school just follow our way fully and that is the reason that this policy can be implemented successfully” [Najmin, Aman School, p. 2].

In addition, another member of the SMT maintained that the purpose of the school management creating this culture was to “make the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English fun because when it is fun, our teachers will do more towards the implementation of this policy” [Isman, Aman School, p. 9].

9.4.2 A spirit of unity in the planning and implementation of school-based programs

In the view of many members of the SMT from Aman School and of some members of the SMT from Bersatu School, this approach could also assist teachers. Among the actions taken prior to a policy being fully implemented in their school, one of them stated , “I do this plan of English Year Programmes together with teachers and always encourage them to participate. The purpose of this programme is to assist teachers to implement the policy successfully” [Isman, Aman School, p. 6].

Another member of SMT from Aman School also acknowledged that the implementation of this English programme was beneficial. She said that “when we implement new programmes that the people before this didn’t do, if we really go all out on this programme, I see our teachers are also happy to implement the policy” [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 10]. Another stated, “it has attracted our students to also join in and this leads to our teachers being more committed to implementing the policy [Hani, Aman School, p. 10].

Apart from implementing programmes related to the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English, one senior manager from Aman School noted that they put in a lot of effort regarding the Smart Schools aspect. They introduced a computer class and always encouraged their teachers and students to involve themselves in this class. She added that “we run it out of teaching time and the most important thing is that we try to implement the Ministry’s policy” [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 4].

At Bersatu School, there was no information on any specific program that was carried out regarding the implementation of national educational policies. Only one senior manager explained that his school had done many in-house courses to expose young teachers to teaching skills relevant to implementing teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English because they did not really have sufficient experience to teach these two subjects in English. He said that “we hope that these courses can assist the teaching of these two subjects - will become smoother and more effective” [Ikram, Bersatu School, p. 4]

9.4.3 Minimising the pressure on teachers as they implemented the new educational policies

The majority of members of the SMT from both schools explained that they put considerable effort into reducing the burden on teachers in implementing educational policies. Methods used by senior managers from both schools in trying to reduce the

burden on teachers in terms of implementing the national educational policies are outlined below.

At Aman School, a number of SMT members talked about minimising the pressure on teachers. For example “we don’t really put too much pressure on the teachers, we don’t really push them and we give them a bit of freedom” [Jalilah, Aman School, p. 5] and “the factor that we consider is to implement the given policies by making it suitable for the school” [Najmin, Aman School, p. 8]. In order to achieve this target, one of them said “we examined the situation at school before making any changes and try to allow for teachers’ capabilities and attitudes towards the implementation of a policy. Then, we started with the simple things and after that they can move on to the more difficult things” [Isman, Aman School, p. 8]. In addition, another member of the SMT commented that “we need to do things step by step, depends on our teachers’ capabilities to avoid shock amongst teachers when implementing such policies” [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 4]. Furthermore, Afiq explained the processes the SMT used to implement new education policies without increasing the burden for teachers. He said that when they received an order from the Ministry of Education to implement the educational policy, they did not instruct teachers to perform all the tasks immediately, but they decided which should be implemented first, and which should be carried out later, depending on the priorities and wisdom of management. They understood that teachers had very large workloads. They felt the pressure and felt burdened with their work. Therefore he added that “our consideration is important, the way we follow the order and pass it to the teacher, and making it simpler for the teacher has led to teachers being happy and satisfied in implementing their responsibilities” [Afiq, Aman School, p. 13-14].

Another member of the Senior Management Team from this school maintained that “we make teachers do their job easily, we give way to teachers, we will encourage what they want to do, we see how they are working, we do not pressure them to follow our style”, [Najmin, Aman School, p. 4]. Even one of them said that “we come to school every Saturday and provide times for teachers as well as students to discuss anything regarding the English programmes that they want to discuss, without an agenda and they were free to talk about anything” [Isman, Aman School, p. 8].

At Bersatu School, the majority of members of the Senior Management Team also maintained that they attempted to reduce the stress on teachers while implementing the education policy. They said that, “we trust and empower the teacher’s freedom to decide their own activities” [Faridah, Bersatu School, p. 8], and “we provided chances for teachers to build their own creativity in teaching and we always support and approve any projects they requested [Kamal, Bersatu School, p. 6]. In addition, “we also provide enough financial resources for teachers to proceed with the activities they organize, so the objective of the activity can be achieved” [Ikram, Bersatu School, p. 6]. Therefore, it is not surprising, as Fatanah said, that “teachers love working here because they do not get disturbed by something else that will interrupt their job” [Fatanah, Bersatu School, p. 3]. This view was similar to the view of Herida [p. 22] She stated that teachers were happy working at Bersatu School because the senior managers at her school always assisted them in solving their problems. Another member of the SMT also commented that “if we control teachers too much and force them to work following our way, the work wouldn’t be good. Therefore, here we give the teachers freedom. We believe in our teachers and are happy because the work is being done” [Bakar, Bersatu School, p. 4].

9.4.4 Identifying teacher weaknesses in implementing educational policy and providing support for improving performance

Several members of the Senior Management Teams in both schools spoke about this strategy. Some members of the SMTs from both schools who were involved directly in the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English, explained that they carried out a survey at their school to evaluate the teachers’ performance in the classroom. Then, with the data obtained, they encouraged, guided and produced ideas for teachers to improve their performance. One of them said that “the purpose of the action that we took was to improve teachers’ performance and not to seek the weaknesses of the teachers or to burden them” [Hani, Aman School, p. 11].

In addition some senior managers also utilised programmes from the Ministry of Education to identify the shortcomings of some teachers. One of them noted, “we are conducting teaching observations that are based on the Curriculum Quality Monitoring System that was provided by the MOE” [Najmin, Aman School, p. 3]; similarly Suriani argued: “the purpose of teaching observation is not to comment or correct all teachers’ teaching ways but we just want to get an overview of the teaching methods and also want to share knowledge based on our experiences” [Suriani, Aman School, p. 13]. To achieve this purpose, “after we observed teachers in classrooms, we had discussion sessions to identify any reasons or difficulties that prevented teachers from achieving better teaching. We were able to develop solutions for any problems that teachers faced” [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 6].

Some members of the Senior Management Team from both schools also claimed that there were two programmes that they utilised in assisting teachers. One member of a SMT said that “this policy is truly implemented and to support its implementation, we are using the Buddy Support Programme to increase teacher’s English mastery and that is helping to implement this policy smoothly” [Kamal, Bersatu School, p. 2]. Furthermore, a senior manager said that they tried their best to implement educational policies and if teachers do not understand how to implement the programme they ask for guidance stating “we will give guidance. If guidance only at school’s level is not enough, we take from the outsider, for example we do lots of In-Service Training. We invite experts from outside” [Rozaida, Aman School, p. 4]. These senior managers explained various programmes in assisting teachers to implement the education policies.

9.4.5 Taking pride in the success of the school as a source of motivation and inspiration

More members of the SMT from the Aman School than from Bersatu School spoke about this approach. As a senior manager from Aman School explained, when the English Year Programme that was developed to help students in mastering English

was shown on television, and published in the ‘Sinar’ newspaper, they shared the news with teachers and students at their school and emphasised that this was their success and they were proud of it. He added that “as a result we can see that teachers and students were proud of the school. Therefore, being proud of our school is important and new policies are easy to apply when there is enthusiasm like that” [Najmin, Aman School, p. 9].

A senior member of the SMT from Bersatu School also stated that, “we try to highlight the school success to teachers in order to increase their patriotic spirit and love of this school. When these characteristics lie in all of us, that means we feel high spirited and this creates a wonderful environment for us to work in” [Ikram, Bersatu School, p. 6].

An examination of these two excerpts of the interviews from members of the SMTs from two schools in different areas shows that there were different methods that they used to promote the success of their schools.

9.5 Conclusion

This chapter consisted of three sections. The first section focused upon the perception of Senior Management Teams regarding the implementation of national educational policies. The second section detailed the challenges that teachers faced as a result of the implementation of national educational policies and the third section revealed the strategies they used and the support they gave to teachers to assist them.

Analysis of their perceptions shows that four themes emerged. Firstly there were negative implications including the neglect of other subjects, increased difficulty levels for students, a substantial additional burden on teachers and the widening gap between Cluster and Non-Cluster schools. Secondly, they suggested to the Ministry of Education that they consider the available time, the school conditions and the location of the school in implementing the policy. Next, they provided their reasons for involvement and lastly they noted the need for continuity of policy implementation.

The second section of the chapter focused upon SMT members views about the challenges that all the teachers in their school had faced. These were: school work environment, student issues, teacher issues, parents' attitudes towards academic achievement and discipline, the Principals' characteristics and actions and the Ministry of Education's actions.

The last section discussed various ways members of both the Senior Management Teams attempted to aid teachers in their school to face the challenges. They used five methods: creating a culture that focuses on the implementation of educational policy in a school, unity in the planning and implementation of school-based programs, minimising pressure on teachers as they implement the new educational policies, identifying teacher weaknesses in implementing education policies and providing support for improving performance and taking pride in the success of schools as a source of motivation and inspiration.

In conclusion, the perceptions of Senior Management Team members from both schools toward the implementation of education policies showed that they had almost similar views to those given by the teachers. They commented more upon the negative implications of the implementation of national educational policies and did not comment about any advantages of this education policy implementation. They also raised many of the same challenges claimed by the teachers. Even so, they reported that they had endeavoured to provide support to teachers so that they would be confident in implementing the policies.

Chapter Ten

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICIES – THE PERCEPTIONS OF PTA MEMBERS AND THE CHALLENGES THEY BELIEVED TEACHERS FACED AND THEIR EFFORTS TO ASSIST BOTH SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS

Summary of findings from PTA members

Perceptions	Challenges	Coping with the challenges
Increased opportunities for students to improve their English	Challenges from Parents	Working in unison with schools: providing additional funding for schools
Factors that assisted in the implementation of national educational policies The role of Senior Management Teams The role of teachers	Challenges from Teachers	Helping to establish links between parents and the school
	Challenges from Students	

10.1 Introduction

The discussion in this chapter reports the findings of interviews with six members of PTAs - three each from the Aman and Bersatu schools. The interviews aimed to identify any ideas that the PTAs could offer in attempting to assist teachers, especially during the implementation of national educational policies.

This chapter therefore looks at the perceptions of the PTA members in relation to the implementation of the policies; secondly, the challenges and demands they considered were facing teachers as a result of the implementation of these policies; and thirdly, the strategies used by them in order to assist teachers to cope.

10.2 Perceptions of the PTA in relation to the implementation of national educational policies

Even though they were not involved directly in the implementation of the policies, the PTA members' interpretation of policy implementation might reasonably be expected to represent their thinking and understanding of the educational policies.

Two themes emerged in the members of PTA's comments about the policies implementation: increased opportunities for students to improve their English language and factors that assisted in the implementation of the policies.

10.2.1 Increased opportunities for students to improve their English

Two members of the PTA from Aman School provided their views on the benefits of the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. They spoke about the implementation of the policy generally in terms of helping teachers and students to increase their knowledge in any field. In particular both of them said that the implementation of this policy would enhance English proficiency among students and be an added advantage to students when entering the workforce.

10.2.2 Factors that assisted in the implementation of national educational policies

All members of the PTA from Aman School and several from Bersatu School emphasised the important role of SMTs and teachers in ensuring the successful implementation of educational policies.

10.2.2.1 The role of Senior Management Teams

One of the PTA members from Aman School noted, “this Principal, he did the English year project and he explained his vision. So the teachers saw the activity and this motivated them to implement the policy” [Noni, Aman School, p. 4].

In contrast, at Bersatu School, even though one member of the PTA believed that the role of the SMT could assist in the success of the implementation of national educational policies, he did not highlight any programs initiated by the SMT. However, he emphasised that the SMT “is democratic and empowers teachers to implement the education policy based on their preferences” [Adi, Bersatu School, p. 5-6]. He added that, with SMT members having such attitudes, teachers felt happy to expand their ideas to implement the national educational policies and they carried out the duties without pressure.

10.2.2.2 The role of teachers

All members of the PTA from Aman School and a number from Bersatu School said that teachers also had roles to assist the successful implementation of policies. One noted, “I still believe teachers in this school can implement the policy successfully. From my observations, I saw that they worked so hard, towards the success of this policy implementation” [Falah, Aman school, p. 6].

Almost all members of the PTA who were involved in this study emphasised, however, that only teachers who worked diligently would be able to help in the successful implementation of national educational policies.

10.3 The challenges and demands that the PTA believed teachers faced as a result of the implementation of educational policies

The PTAs believed that teachers were facing several challenges as a result of the implementation of national educational policies, including pressure from parents, teachers themselves and students.

10.3.1 Challenges from Parents

Analysis of the interviews identified three issues related to parents which were: the issue of developing parent knowledge about new educational policies; parents who were too dependent on the school; and a lack of cooperation from parents.

The first topic is the difficulties that the PTA believed that teachers had with parent's understanding of educational policies and their implementation. All three members of the PTA from Aman School but none from Bersatu School raised the issue. One of them said they faced questions in relation to parents' understanding about any educational policies because "they always said that the new policies are not good and difficult to implement even though they have yet to see the full implementation of the policy" [Saiful, Aman School, p. 5]. In addition, Noni said that some parents had little understanding of the policies and the PTA had little or no opportunity to explain it to them. She added that "we want to explain the policy implemented by the government to parents in meetings with them, but their attendance is really small. So that is the challenge that teachers have to face because parents had limited knowledge about policy implementation" [Noni, Aman School, p. 2].

The second debate from some parents was that they were too dependent on the school in all matters related to their children both in academic terms and in relation to disciplinary matters. Several members of the PTA (from each school) commented on this. They explained that most of the parents did not really involve

themselves in their child's studies. Once they put their child into school they did not become involved in anything else. They put all the responsibility on the school. One of them maintained that "the parents do not want to do anything to help their school" [Mubin, Bersatu School, p. 3].

In addition, it was claimed that due to a lack of attention from the parents, "their children created problems at school and did not complete their homework and these attitudes interfered with teachers carrying out their work smoothly" [Nasir, Bersatu School, p. 2]. At Aman School a PTA member said that they had made extra classes for Science and Mathematics after school hours but not many students attended because as he said, "I heard from teachers that parents do not care whether their children want to come to the extra classes or not" [Saiful, Aman School, p. 9].

The next issue raised was a lack of cooperation and support for the school from parents. More members of PTA from Bersatu School than from Aman School raised this issue. Mubin said that "we always invited parents to meetings with us to discuss their children but they didn't attend and it seemed they didn't care about their children at school" [Mubin, Bersatu School, p. 2].

Another PTA member explained that when the teachers get involved in disciplinary matters "the parents will get mad and blame the school for punishing their child. How can teachers possibly teach the students without any help from the parents themselves?" [Nasir, Bersatu School, p. 2].

Several members of PTA from Bersatu School said that the parents were also less cooperative in paying the PTA fees. Mubin said that "we have problems helping funding the school to run their activities but some parents always delayed paying the fee" [Mubin, Bersatu School, p. 3] and Nasir said, "when they were asked to pay, parents will get mad and they will argue about it. Money is the biggest problem" [Nasir, Bersatu School, p. 2].

The discussion in the next section relates to the different challenges faced by teachers raised by the PTA of the two schools.

10.3.2 Challenges from Teachers

All members of the PTA from Aman School said that they confronted demands in the implementation of national educational policies resulting from teacher issues.

Several of them believed that the challenges came from teachers' preparation for the implementation of national educational policies. One of them said "Are they ready enough to implement the new educational policies?" [Saiful, Aman School, p. 7]. In addition another PTA member stated "As a father, my main challenge in facing teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English issue is teachers; they need to be trained well enough. I don't want my kids to be guinea pigs but are the teachers prepared for it?" [Falah, Aman School, p. 6].

Additionally, Noni believed that the implementation of national educational policies also became a challenge for teachers to implement because "teachers are burdened with too much work, not only teaching, but also having to do many more jobs until there is not enough time for the teachers" [Noni, Aman School, p. 3]. This aspect was also mentioned by teachers as discussed in Chapter 8, Section 8.3.2 and by some SMT members.

10.3.3 Challenges from Students

Several members of the PTA from Bersatu School raised questions in relation to the implementation of national educational policies presented by students who were not interested in their studies. He noted, "the teachers have to force them and have to work hard and have to give 100% to the students. It's like a hammer and nails. You have to hit many times for them to do the work" [Adi, Bersatu School, p. 1].

Moreover, he explained that the situation with some students who obtained good results and subsequently transferred to better schools occurred often, particularly from schools with poor academic performances such as this school. Therefore the school found it difficult to implement policies such as the teaching of

Science and Mathematics in English with poor performing students who had little interest in learning and it was certainly a challenge for teachers in low-performing schools to teach these two subjects in English.

10.4 Efforts of the PTAs within schools in fostering the teachers' ability to confront the changes

10.4.1 Introduction

There were two ways PTAs supported teachers (1) they provided additional funding for their school and they also helped in establishing links between parents and the school.

10.4.2 Working in unison with schools: providing additional funding for schools

PTA members from both schools who were involved in this study had the view that the success of the schools was highly dependent on internal factors in the school, but also external factors which included the PTAs. Along these lines Falah said that “we have to work together as one team because if we didn't have cooperation amongst us, it was impossible to shape and produce outstanding students” [Falah, Aman School, p. 1]. He added that his responsibility was to collect PTA fees from parents and then he spent the money to provide for students' activities such as extra classes. For example he said that they tried to help teachers to have more time for teaching by providing an amount of money to conduct extra classes and “this reduces the pressure on them to finish the syllabus during school hours, especially for the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English because they need more time to teach in English” [Falah, Aman School, p. 2].

In addition, “We give allowances to teachers who are involved in teaching an extra class and we help the school to deliver additional programmes to encourage students in using the English Language by donating some money to English Year Programmes” [Saiful, Aman School, p. 1].

In Bersatu school, Mubin noted that when the school asked for money, they never rejected any application from the school because “we want to reduce the school burden” [Mubin, Bersatu School, p. 1]. The members of PTAs emphasised that they attempted to understand teacher’s needs in the implementation of the policies and tried to meet those needs.

10.4.3 Helping to establish links between parents and the school

All members of the PTA from both schools who were involved in this study also spoke about this matter. Noni from Aman School explained that the PTA try to provide activities that can increase friendly relationships between the school and the parents. She said, for example, in order to attract the parents to come to the meetings, “we prepare gifts for the parents, so they will wait till the end. So we can attract them to come to the meeting and then during the meeting we can explain a new policy” [Noni, Aman School, p. 3].

At Bersatu School, the PTA members tried to establish good relationships between school and parents. They used informal meetings outside school to listen to parents’ thoughts and ideas and at the same time as one of them said, “we can also explain to other parents what actually happens in the school as we know it very well. We are also trying to make them get involved with school activities” [Nasir, Bersatu School, p. 5]. He said that he believed the parents from rural areas were happy to have informal meetings rather than formal. Therefore, the PTA members also endeavoured to establish cordial relationships with the parents. As such the parents were happy to contribute to the school.

10.5 Conclusion

This chapter consisted of three sections. The first section focused upon perceptions of the members of the PTA regarding the implementation of the policies, the second section described the challenges they believed teachers faced as a result of the implementation of the policies and the third section discussed the strategies used by them.

Two themes emerged here: increased opportunities for students to improve their English and factors affecting the Senior Management teams and teachers that helped in the implementation of the policy.

The PTA members believed that teachers were facing several issues as a result of the implementation of the policies, including challenges from parents, teachers and students.

In the third section I found there were the two methods utilised by the PTAs from both schools in an attempt to assist teachers in the implementation of the policies. These were that they provided additional funding for their school and they also helped to establish links between parents and the school

The PTA members only saw the positive side of the implementation of the policies. They stated that education policies provided better opportunities for students to improve their academic performance. In addition, they believed that the school management and teachers had also played their roles in terms of successful implementation and also accepted that teachers faced the same demands. Nevertheless, they carried out their overall responsibilities in supporting schools.

Chapter Eleven

DISCUSSION

11.1 Introduction

In the preceding three chapters, the views of teachers, members of SMTs and PTA members in response to the research questions addressed in this study, were presented. Further discussion of those findings in this chapter is separated according to each group, commencing with findings from teachers, followed by members of SMTs and PTA members, with the discussion of the views of each group being arranged in order of the three research questions for the study¹. Finally, a summary is provided and a conclusion to highlight the major issues emerging from this chapter.

The above organization of the discussion was used to facilitate understanding of how teacher resilience could be developed within the social system of interrelationships at schools. This is in line with the theory of teacher resilience as a multidimensional, socially constructed concept, and with its emphasis on the point that resilience can be developed in individuals (Howard, et al., 1999; Luthar, et al., 2000). The utilisation of this theory provided a means of examining the development of teacher resilience in a cultural context different from previous studies in the field and also alerted the researcher to factors that had not been noted by previous researchers.

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1. How do teachers/SMT members/PTA members' perceive the implementation of the Smart School Concept, the implementation of teaching and learning of Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010?
 2. What are the main challenges that teachers have faced and why do they believe that these challenges have arisen for them?
 3. How do teachers develop strategies to cope with these challenges and how do educational leaders assist them in these situations?

The discussion is undertaken further through a set of analytic categories, some of which are similar to the themes that emerged in the previous three chapters and some of which are newly derived from re-categorisation of the themes. These themes will be discussed with reference to previous and/or current relevant literature from Malaysia and/or internationally to identify similarities or differences among them.

11.2 Discussion of the observations from teachers

This section comprises three sub-sections which are the teachers' perception of the implementation of national educational policies, challenges that teachers faced as a result of the implementation of the policies and the way that teachers responded to the challenges.

11.2.1 The perception of teachers

Five issues emerged in this section which are: (i) limited knowledge of national educational policies on the part of the teachers, (ii) outcomes of the implementation of the policies, (iii) teacher preparations for implementing new policies, (iv) the need for the Malaysian Ministry of Education to customize the implementation of national educational policies to different school situations, and (v) the provision of economic incentives to attract teachers in order to implement the policies.

11.2.1.1 The limited knowledge of teachers

The discussion in Chapter Two regarding educational policy reform in Malaysia concluded that the introduction of a number of new policies in education began in the

phase of the National Development Policy 1991-2000 and continued in the phase of the National Vision Policy 2001-2010. In the period from 1991 until 2010 there were three national educational policies implemented. In 1997, the Ministry of Education introduced the Smart School concept, in 2002 the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English was introduced and in 2007 the Ministry of Education launched the National Blueprint 2006-2010.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the effects of the implementation of these three national educational policies on schools in general and particularly upon teachers. However the findings of interviews with teachers discussed in Chapter Eight, noted that the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English was the most discussed policy by teachers rather than other policies even though in interviews they were provided an equal opportunity to discuss the three national educational policies. The National Blueprint 2006-2010 is the most recent educational policy change so it would be easy to understand if teachers were focused primarily upon the National Blueprint but this did not appear to be the case.

The question that arose here was why did the teachers only focus on this one policy? Did they have limited knowledge of the other two policies? What are the factors that existed in the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English, and was absent in the other policies, leading teachers to place more emphasis upon this policy? This discussion will focus on identifying the factors that could suggest why the teachers focused more on this particular educational policy.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the role of teachers in implementing these three educational policies was different for each policy. For the implementation of the Smart School, teachers were required to integrate their classroom activities with computer based learning to enhance the thought process of students and creativity as well as to encourage them to take charge of their own learning (Ministry of Education, 1997). However none of the teachers in this study make any comment about this particular policy. The Ministry of Education launched the National Blueprint for six reasons which were to increase students' patriotism through education, to produce students of high moral standards, to make the National Schools preferred schools within society, providing equal educational opportunities for all

children in Malaysia, making the field of education a profession that is respected by the community and creating a culture of excellence in education (Ministry of Education, 2007c).

Some participants in this study claimed that the Ministry of Education did not provide specific training for teachers in implementing the policy or provide explicit guidelines for teachers to follow. They said that the Ministry of Education expected teachers to work towards these aims without providing specific guidance about how to do it. This particularly applied to increasing student patriotism through education and to producing students of a high moral standard. In executing the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English, the teachers in the study believed that teachers' roles were to prepare students to answer questions about these two subjects in the National Examination using the English Language. Some actions carried out by the Ministry of Education after this policy was put in place indirectly showed that the role of teachers as the initiators of this policy did need to focus on examinations. As examples, after five months of the implementation of this policy, the Curriculum Development Centre (one section in the Ministry Education) conducted a study to evaluate students' achievement in Science and Mathematics in examinations to measure the success of the policy (Hamzah & Abdullah, 2009). In addition, they also noted that in 2007 the Schools Inspectors Municipal MOE carried out an assessment of Cohort 1 students' examination results in Science and Mathematics at the school level. Furthermore, they also found that the State Education Department and District Education Office also focused on students' examination achievement in these subjects. All these actions taken by the Ministry of Education showed that the implementation of this policy was to be judged by examination results and the teacher expectations about their roles were accurate when it came to preparing students for examinations.

Of the three national educational policies, only the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English was closely associated with preparation for the National Examination. This illustrates that when a new policy was perceived to be relevant to the assessment of student performance, it would get more attention from teachers because as Ong (2010, p. 94) stated "Malaysia so far has focused on public examinations results as important determinants of students' progression to higher

levels of education or occupational opportunities”. In addition she said that “in Malaysia, pressure on teachers to produce high test performance results in much teaching to the test and the adoption of teaching methods designed to prepare students for the test so as to achieve high test performance” (ibid, p. 99). Therefore, it is to be expected that the implementation of a policy related to examinations, would receive greater attention from teachers.

In addition, undoubtedly due to teachers having limited information about the objectives of the implementation of national educational policies, most teachers of subjects other than Science and Mathematics said that they were not involved with its implementation. They appeared not to realize that if they were not involved with the execution of either the Smart School Policy or the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English they were still expected to be involved in developing students’ patriotism and morality as prescribed in the National Blueprint. Instead, in these findings, this was not described by teachers, suggesting that they would only discuss a particular policy if they considered it relevant to them. As Hamann and Lane (2004) stated, when faced with policy messages individuals calculate how much energy they want to expend to comprehend the issue and what concepts and plans they acquire in terms of connection and reconciliation. For each of these factors, individuals take the personal consequences into consideration whether or not they take decisive action. In these circumstances when the teachers felt that a policy did not directly relate to them they just focused on the teaching in their particular field. The question that arises for further study is, does the Ministry of Education need to identify the factors that influence teachers from various subjects to adopt the implementation of a national education policy prior to it being introduced?

11.2.1.2 Outcomes of implementation

Few teachers in the study discussed the benefits of the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English in assisting students to improve their proficiency in the language and not one teacher described the benefits of the two other policies. Indeed, more teachers maintained that the teaching and learning of

Science and Mathematics in English had more negative implications than positive as the policy had resulted in the neglect of other subjects, an increase in the complexity of learning tasks for students and lower scores in examination results.

Thus, this study found that the negative impacts of the implementation of this policy dominated the discussion by teachers. The question that arose here was why should the teachers claim that the implementation of national education policies had created an adverse impact for them as well as for their students? A study that was conducted by Shaver, Cuevas, Lee and Avalos (2007) found that teachers who spoke negatively about the changes their schools were going through as a result of policy implementation, generally felt silenced and ignored by all levels of administration when they were worried and concerned about the way a policy was being implemented. That is, they were more concerned about the way school management implemented the policy, rather than voicing negativity about the policy itself. However, this current study did not produce results consistent with their opinions. Instead the teachers said there were several factors contributing to the negative impact of the implementation of national educational policies, especially teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. The following discussion in the next two sub-sections (11.2.1.3 and 11.2.1.4) outlines these factors.

11.2.1.3 Teacher preparation for implementing new policies

Although Shaver and his colleagues did not reveal that teachers took any action regarding the weaknesses of the implementation of national educational policies, the teachers in my study maintained that when they felt there was something not appropriate in the implementation of policy, they suggested to the Ministry of Education that it needed to consider several factors before implementing such a policy.

Firstly, they suggested that the Ministry of Education should provide ample time to prepare teachers to introduce the policy of teaching Science and Mathematics in English. Members of management also said that, because the Ministry of

Education was too hasty in implementing this policy, this resulted in teachers who were not fully prepared to implement the policy. Other studies have also found that policy implementation that was conducted too quickly could have a negative impact. Wedell (2008) stated that hurried policy initiatives were unlikely to achieve the desired results. Wedell's (2008) study found that inadequate teacher preparation in England was an important reason why public school systems were not meeting the curriculum goals for the communication oriented English for Everyone programme. More closely related to the current study, the findings of a study in Malaysia from Idris et al. (2007) also showed that the teachers needed more time to ensure the implementation of teaching of Science and Mathematics in English successfully.

However, Pillay and Thomas (2004) had stated earlier that the Malaysian Ministry of Education had prepared some of the necessary programmes for assisting teachers in implementing teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. The Ministry also provided facilities for teachers to implement the policy in schools, as well as in-service training courses to enhance English proficiency among Science and Mathematics teachers. However a study by Tan and Saw Lan (2010) indicated that the teachers were trained principally as subject specialists, not language teachers. This suggests that the criteria of suitability of training programs for such a policy should be identified before they are implemented. This is likely to require a longer time frame than was used in the implementation of this particular policy. Louis et al. (2008) have suggested that policy makers need to find the appropriate longer term policy mechanism to influence teaching and learning - the core of educational policy - but which is also the most difficult and resistant to change from outside the school. The next question to be explored now then in Malaysia is what are the factors that influence the time frame for the implementation of a particular policy?

11.2.1.4 A requirement for the Ministry of Education to customize the implementation of educational policies tailored to different schools

There were also some teachers who suggested that the implementation of an education policy needs to carefully consider the location of the school. For example, they proposed that as their school was in a rural area, it was unsuitable in initiating the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English because many teachers had a poor level of English language usage. Moreover some members of the SMT in the rural area school recommended that teachers should be allowed to teach Science and Mathematics in the Malay Language before implementing the policy. According to Kandasmy and Blaton (2004), however, in Malaysia teachers are still working in a top down system as the country has a centralized education system. The implication from this statement is that teachers have no choice when the Ministry requires a new policy to be initiated in all schools. They are bound to follow the Ministry's instructions regardless of the school location or other characteristics of schools that could increase the demands of introducing the policy.

Some previous studies have found the benefits of the implementation of policies that match with local conditions however, such as Mintrom (2009, p. 330) who said that "from the perspective of policy design, whenever we assess alternative policy choices, we need to take a range of criteria into account. Here, the criterion of promoting local democracy is foregrounded". Raffo and Gunter (2008) stated that it was essential for local people to be consulted and have a direct say over the approaches and type of public service provided at the local level. Researchers have also stated that the involvement of local people in implementing a policy is important because those at the federal level have incomplete knowledge to be adapted in ways reflecting local, expectation and priorities (Hamann & Lane, 2004).

All of the above studies emphasise the importance of considering the opinions of those who have to implement a policy. This issue needs to be carefully studied by the policy makers because the reality is that the study's findings

demonstrate that teachers as implementers felt that they had to follow directions from the Ministry of Education in the implementation of a national education policy. Even the Minister of Education in Malaysia instructed all staff in the field of education to fulfil the new education policy by saying “shape up or ship out” (New Strait Times, 2007). In this specific case teachers felt compelled to implement the policy. As a result it is likely they were in a system which was too rigid, too bureaucratic and too inflexible to them (Carlgren & Klette, 2008). According to Hamann and Lane (2004):

the growing body of literature on educational policy implementation argues that at whatever tier of the educational system one references, implementation is a process engaged in by context-embedded individuals that entails intertwined process of interpretation, negotiation, sense making, bargaining, ambiguity management and the exercise of discretion. (p. 427)

They concur that from “this perspective, individuals take action on basis of their sense of what is, what can be, and what is supposed to be, thereby affecting the policy as implemented in practice” (ibid, p. 427). Furthermore, Carlgren and Klette (2008) also criticise inflexibility, bureaucracy, expert ruling and remoteness. The findings of this study indicate that it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education as a policy maker to identify appropriate compromises between decentralization and centralization in implementing educational policies.

11.2.1.5 The provision of economic incentives for teachers to implement national educational policies

The findings also showed that economic incentives had encouraged teachers to become involved in the implementation of the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. This result was consistent with the practice that Australia adopted by providing incentive packages primarily to attract teachers to rural areas

(Ladd, 2007). Even though these are two different national situations, both demonstrated that teachers can be encouraged to implement education agenda by using additional incentives.

The importance of this factor was justified by Rice et al. (2009, p. 515) who said that “the role of wages as a primary driver for teachers’ job decisions needs to be weighed alongside other factors. Money does matter”. However, they admitted that although wages was one factor that arguably could be used more productively to affect the quality of teachers, the challenge to provide high-quality teaching requires multiple options that extend well beyond teacher compensation. “Compensation-based reform may be a necessary, but not an entirely sufficient condition for improving teacher quality” (ibid, p. 516). Therefore, Ladd (2007) suggested looking beyond a single factor in favour of broader policy packages.

In the context of the education system in Malaysia, is the use of financial incentives the best method to engage teachers in implementing a new policy or are there other approaches that can be used? Issues relating to the introduction of financial incentives as an inducement for teachers to implement policies should be considered for ongoing study because the participants who raised the issue in this study were not among teachers who were involved with the implementation. They did not seem satisfied with the incentive. They worked diligently, but they did not receive an additional allowance as compared to teachers who were implementing teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English.

11.2.2 Challenges facing teachers as a result of the implementation of national educational policies

The second issue to be investigated from findings related to teachers is the demands they inevitably face. The challenges involve the attitudes and abilities of the students, the working environment of the school, excessive dependence of parents on teachers, challenges arising from the Ministry of Education and SMTs’ actions in requiring additional duties to be performed and supporting teachers in their work.

11.2.2.1 The attitudes and abilities of students

The main challenge teachers encountered when they wanted to implement the national educational policies, particularly in teaching of Science and Mathematics in English, was the lack of interest from students. This issue has a significant effect on teachers in implementing such a policy, because according to Davies et al. (2009) students have higher motivation when studying subjects compatible with their interests and ambitions.

In this study, students who did not have interest in their subjects had poor motivation levels. According to Rahman et al. (2010, p. 1265) “students who have high achievement motivation will be more successful compared to those with lower achievement motivation”. Based on this finding it would be an onerous task for teachers to implement the national education policy for the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English.

Furthermore, the results also indicate that teachers had concerns in the implementation of teaching and the learning of Science and Mathematics in English because of students’ poor proficiency in English and generally low academic abilities. Several studies in Malaysia regarding the policy of teaching Science and Mathematics in English have also found similar results (Rahman, et al., 2010; Sulaiman, Hassan, & Baki, 2009; M. F. B. Yahaya et al., 2009). The researchers did not provide any reasons why low academic ability interfered with the implementation of a policy. The issue remains, if students do have poor ability in some subjects, why is this not being addressed prior to the implementation of a new policy for teaching and learning? What are the reasons that have led to the inability of these students which has in turn created burdens for teachers? Is it the management of the school or the weakness of students a contributing factor? The answer to these questions have not been explored sufficiently in previous studies related to the implementation of this policy.

11.2.2.2 School work environment

At both schools, teachers stated that responsibilities other than teaching caused some difficulty for them in executing policies relating to teaching such as teaching Science and Mathematics in English. This result is in line with a study conducted by Moriarty et al. (2001) with teachers in England and Wales. They affirmed that the single most frequently cited factor claimed by teachers as stressful was the excessive demand for paperwork.

Several previous studies have noted also that teachers in Malaysia have been entrusted with numerous responsibilities (Malakolunthu, 1994; Segumpan & Bahari, 2006). The Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, who is also Minister of Education, announced at a press conference on March 31, 2010 the establishment of a special committee to review the workload of teachers in Malaysia (Utusan Malaysia, 31 March 2010). However, from February 3 to 11, 2011 in the same newspaper's "Forum Section" a teacher reported that there was no progress relating to the establishment of the committee. He expressed the opinion that, to date, there are no solutions to the problems that have arisen and instead it has resulted in more work for teachers (Utusan Malaysia, 3, 10, 11, 12 February 2011). Subsequent to this issue being raised, further discussions in the "Forum Section" of the newspaper about the workload of teachers took place over a number of days, demonstrating that for this issue, at this point in time, there is no satisfactory solution (Utusan Malaysia, 3, 10, 11, 12 February 2011).

Teachers at both schools believed that they suffered from an education system that put too much emphasis on examination achievement. This finding is consistent with the views given by (Ong, 2010, p. 99) who stated that, "in Malaysia pressure on teachers to produce high test performance results in much teaching to the test and the adoption of teaching methods designed to prepare students for the test so as to achieve high test performance". Similarly, the opinion of some researchers in the USA noted that "teachers complained about the excessive emphasis placed on test outcomes" (Shaver, et al., 2007, p. 733).

Teachers found that the examination results for their students were being compared with the results of students in other schools despite differences in student ability and the facilities existing in the school. According to Ong (2010, p. 99) “results from the national examinations have been the sole yardstick of assessing student’s achievement for many years”. However the Ministry of Education acknowledged that the national examination system had been criticised for using examinations with too many subjects (Ministry of Education, 2006a). Although, since the year 2006, the Ministry of Education has recognized weaknesses in the national examinations, at the time this study was conducted the same system of examinations was still current, with teachers reporting that they were overloaded by the system.

In this study some teachers reported being asked to teach subjects that were not their first choice. This point was also recognized by the Secretary-General of the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) who stated that 25000 - 30000 teachers did not consider themselves sufficiently trained to teach in English (Berita Harian, 20 August 2009). However, the issue of teachers who were not teaching in their field was also found in several other countries. Dee and Cohodes (2008, p. 8) established from the report of the “U.S Department of Education 2004, table B-2, that in the 1999-2000 school year, nearly two-thirds of the middle school teachers whose main assignment was Mathematics did not have a major in their subjects”. Similarly in Australia as Darby (2010) noted, the Education and Training Committee in 2006 reported that shortages of qualified teachers, particularly in Mathematics and Science have led to an increase in the number of teachers teaching outside their subject area.

The question that arises from this study is why teachers were compelled to teach subjects that were not in their field? Based on records from the Ministry of Education (2006a) there were 27 educational institutions that provided teacher training and produced teachers in various fields and from 2001 until 2005, the number of prospective teachers who enrolled in these institutions varied between 18,000 to 29,000 per year. In addition, there were seven universities that also offered teacher training (Ministry of Education, 2006a). Despite the number of teacher training institutions and the graduation of many new teachers, the issue of teachers

teaching a subject that was not their main area of expertise, still appeared in this study.

A different issue reported by teachers in this study who had taught in rural schools was that they faced difficulties in their school environment. In particular, they faced challenges in implementing national education policy when working in a school lacking basic facilities. For example, some teachers claimed that they found it difficult to carry out activities related to the policy of teaching Science and Mathematics in English due to there being insufficient classrooms and inadequate equipment in the science laboratories. It has been reported that this lack of facilities occurs in many other Malaysian schools as well, as shown in Table 4.1 in Chapter Four (Ministry of Education, 2006c). Despite the report issued by the Ministry of Education in 2006, according to Sua (2010), secondary schools in urban areas in Malaysia still generally have far superior infrastructural facilities than those in rural areas and, as a result, poor basic facilities have discouraged many teachers from undertaking service in rural areas.

The study found that insufficient facilities had led to difficulties for some teachers in implementing national educational policy. Similar findings are reported in a study by Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008, p. 66) in Virginia, USA who claimed that “our results revealed that when learning is taking place in a substandard environment, there tends not to be as clear a focus on academia, and the learning environment is less likely to be perceived as orderly and serious”. However, there have not been many studies carried out in Malaysia relating to the effects of a lack of facilities in schools facing challenges implementing new policies.

11.2.2.3 Parents placing excessive demands on teachers

Teachers at both schools considered that parents were too dependent on teachers both to educate and discipline their children. The teachers at Aman School believed that the parents were too busy and had become marginalized in their role of supporting the school in relation to their children's academic progress with the role of disciplinarian falling to the teachers. The teachers at Bersatu School also said that their parents had poor education levels which made it difficult for them to understand the demands of educational policies. Therefore, in the academic area teachers noted that the parents did not take their children's education seriously and relied too much on teachers. The attitude of the parents in believing that the schools have complete responsibility in all areas of education was similar to the views reported by Cheng and Tam (2007) . They noted "in many Asian areas like Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan and Thailand, a tradition of parental participation and community partnership in school education has been largely absent" (p. 255).

As a result of these attitudes, it was reported that children had discipline concerns and did not concentrate on their studies. Consequently, the student attitude had influenced the teaching process and indirectly made the introduction of new policies such as the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English more difficult. The teachers hoped that the parents could control their children's behaviour so that they would be more disciplined; then teachers could perform their duties more efficiently. However, this suggestion is in contrast with a view from Elias (2009, p. 833) who said that "those who say that the schools should focus only on academic skills and that it is up to parents to build students' character may not be technically correct". In this situation, what are the methods that can be used by the schools to involve parents in facilitating the implementation of education policy? The function to educate students is the primary responsibility of a teacher, but if parents devolve responsibility to teachers for developing students discipline without meaningful involvement from them, it is very likely that this will increase the onus on teachers. Yet, if parents are given more opportunity to participate in the school, other issues may arise. As Cheng and Tam (2007) noted "parental involvement in school will inevitably increase the complexity, ambiguities, and uncertainty in the

political domain of school. How can schools be well prepared to handle these problems?” (p. 256). They consider that research in parental involvement at schools is still underdeveloped in the context of the Asian tradition.

11.2.2.4 Challenges arising from the Ministry of Education

Actions that were taken by the Ministry of Education in order to assist teachers in implementing national educational policies had generated added pressure for teachers. Three issues were raised by the teachers. The first two issues related to the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. Firstly, teachers reported that the teaching aids that were provided by the Ministry of Education were not actually assisting them in their teaching and were a time wasting exercise. Secondly the Buddy System that was developed by the Ministry of Education also did not have a profound impact on the implementation of the policy because English teachers who became the buddies for Science and Mathematics teachers were not familiar with scientific terminology. As a result of these weaknesses some teachers claimed that they had had difficulty in implementing the policy because their English skills were lacking.

The third issue is the teachers also faced difficulties due to the Ministry of Education constantly making changes to the policy. Even though teachers did not have detailed information about the changes they were bound to follow the Ministry of Education’s instructions. They also stated that, although they faced many difficulties as a result of the implementation of a new policy, and the Ministry of Education knew about the matter, there was no further action taken by them to reduce the problems. This further increased the difficulties for teachers.

The circumstances surrounding these problems appear to show that the Ministry of Education was too hasty in the implementation of new policies and did not have adequate planning in place for its implementation. The sequence of the implementation of the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in the English language showed that the execution of this policy was far too rapid.

According to Pillay and Thomas (2004) a dramatic shift in the Malaysian Education Policy occurred when on June 6th, 2002, the Malaysia Ministry of Education announced that from January 2003, Science and Mathematics would be taught in English in Year One (Primary Year One), Form One (Secondary Year One) and Lower Six (A-Levels Year One) in fully aided government schools. Thus, the period between the announcement and the implementation of the policy was only six months, despite the Malay language being the official language and the medium of instruction in education beginning from primary right up to the tertiary level since the 1970s. Numerous current teachers graduated from an education system that was based on the Malay language. Ambitious policy changes introduced at this pace consequently create enormous hardship.

These findings are in line with conditions that were described by Nguyen et al. (2009) who stated that the attitude of policy-makers who want fast results and who feel unable to await the outcome of systematic and lengthy research studies has led to an absence of the healthy scepticism and problematising necessary when introducing any pedagogic initiative. Considering previous researchers' views, and the findings of this study, policy-makers in Malaysia need to consider the need for appropriate and comprehensive planning and preparation prior to any new policy implementation.

11.2.2.5 The actions of the Senior Management Teams in imposing additional duties on teachers

Two different approaches were adopted by the members of SMTs in the two schools to involve teachers in the implementation of the national educational policies. At Aman School, the members of SMT delivered teachers a list of the various duties and activities that related to its objectives. In contrast, the members of SMTs from Bersatu School gave no instructions, but provided considerable space for teachers to implement a new policy in their own style.

Both management styles - delegating tasks or empowering teachers - still provided challenges to both sets of teachers in performing their duties. The question is which approach works better? If the school management emphasise standardising of teachers' activities, it could be, as stated by Hargreaves and Fink (2006), that standardisation has become the enemy of diversity.

However, if too much space is given to the teachers this may result in the policy not being fully implemented. The results from a study by Abu Bakar (2007), found that some teachers in Malaysia were reluctant to include computers in their teaching and that this affected the implementation of the Smart School Policy. Therefore, if the school management did not define relevant duties that teachers needed to carry out, would the implementation of policy goals still be achieved? Alternatively, what are the best methods that the members of SMTs can apply to successfully involve teachers in implementing national educational policies without putting them under undue pressure?

11.2.3 Teachers response to the challenges

The third issue to be discussed from findings related to the views of the teachers is factors that they believe have assisted them. The results showed that there were both internal and external factors, outlined below.

11.2.3.1 Internal factors

A number of factors appeared to influence the internal motivation of teachers to face the challenges. The majority of teachers claimed they were able to do this successfully because they accepted their full responsibilities as a teacher. Since this was a major factor that was recognized by many teachers, the question is whether, during the process of selecting future teachers, these features can be identified among prospective teachers? A study conducted by Frankenberg, Taylor & Merseth (2010,

p. 313) focused on “how pre-service teachers’ levels of commitment to urban teaching may affect their subsequent career decisions”. They identified factors that could influence the commitment of teachers. Therefore a study might also be carried out on the factors that can encourage teachers to be ready to meet their obligations when they enter the field of education.

In addition, in this study the teachers utilized their social skills in facing the challenges presented by students’ attitudes. According to Nguyen et al. (2009, p. 120) “a good leader mirrors a good father/older brother who performs by moral example and expresses responsibilities and care for subordinates”. Even though this statement was focused on leaders in general, teachers are by association leaders of their students. In order to minimize the discipline problems of students which could help teachers to concentrate more upon implementing an education policy, the actions taken by teachers need to resemble what students expect from a family friend - in line with what was noted by Nguyen his colleagues. In addition, as maintained by Osterman (2010), when students knew that their teachers cared about them, they responded appropriately. However, further studies could be carried out to identify the implications of this approach because the issue is, if teachers are too close to the students, will this close relationship in turn create behavioural issues?

Many teachers in this study said that they possessed sufficient self-esteem to face the challenges. From the literature discussed in Chapter Four many previous researchers have found that a teacher who had high self-esteem would be best able to face challenges (Garmezy, 1993; Luthar, 1991; Masten, et al., 2008; E. Werner & R. Smith, 1992). According to Wheeler et al. (2007) an individual who has a high level of self esteem and is confident in their ability to learn, makes appropriate choices and decisions, and responds effectively to change. In this study, some teachers stated that their confidence in their ability to face any challenges that emerged was due to their long experience as a teacher. Among the teachers who identified this factor many were experienced teachers. If the experience factor is important in being able to face challenges successfully, how do new teachers who lack experience cope? According to Veenmann (1984 cited in Ladd, 2007) new teachers in all countries tend to be overwhelmed and struggle with various issues. The question is what are the factors that can instill self esteem in these people? In this study one new teacher

expressed the view that her experience in the military had helped her confidence. Even though the military experience was only voiced by one junior teacher, the question is, whether this or similar service could provide advantages or disadvantages for teachers? In a review of past studies, I could not find any study that discussed experience in the military as a factor in assisting teachers at the outset of their careers.

Some teachers in this study who had taught in rural schools had a substantial personal commitment towards helping students. Most of them expressed their willingness to sacrifice time and money to help the students because they were aware that the majority of their students came from low income families. The result was similar to the findings of the study by Kushman (1992 cited in Frankenberg, et al., 2010) who found that teachers working with lower-income students were more likely to be committed to their learning. These findings suggest that the socioeconomic status of the community served by the school seems to be a factor that could influence a teacher's commitment to their students. But the question is whether the teachers who work with wealthier students do not also have a strong commitment just like the teachers who teach students who have low income? In examining this issue I found that Kushman (1992 cited in Frankenberg, et al., 2010) stated that teachers who worked with students from affluent backgrounds were more likely to be committed to their school. Briefly, the implications of the discussion on this issue seem to be that the teacher confronting students from low income families appears more committed to teaching while teachers with affluent students are more committed to the school as a whole. Relating these teachers' attitudes to the execution of policy, teachers who teach students from low income families have a specific focus on policies relating to teaching whereas teachers with wealthier students focus on the implementation of a broader policy scope which is not solely on teaching. The different actions taken by teachers who were educating students from both socio economic levels raises an issue. Should the Malaysian Ministry of Education take into account these differences when planning instructions and support for teachers if they want the successful implementation of new policies?

Finally, the majority of teachers observed that their self-satisfaction at students' exam success was a catalyst for their commitment to the job. The results

were in stark contrast to a study by Kearney (2008) who did not highlight students' examination achievements as a factor in teacher satisfaction. Moreover she stated that from her study "overall teachers are satisfied with salary, professional advancement opportunities, support/recognition of administrators, and safety of the school environment" (p. 626). In addition Perie, Baker and American Institutes for Research (1997 cited in Tickle, Chang, & Kim, 2010) identified that working conditions, administrative support and leadership, students behaviour, school atmosphere, and teacher autonomy were found to be associated with the job satisfaction of teachers. As discussed previously in Section 11.2.1.1 the Malaysian Education System gives emphasis to students' achievement in public examinations. Therefore the satisfaction of teachers at their students' examination achievements is a manifestation of this focus and is consequently a major source of teacher fulfilment.

11.2.3.2 External factors

This section looks at three external factors involved in implementation, namely – the contributions of the SMT members, colleagues' attitudes and the school location.

11.2.3.2.1 The contribution of SMT members

Analysis of teacher responses showed that many teachers felt more comfortable in performing the demands of educational policies if the members of SMTs provided a conducive working environment that did not place pressure on teachers. Many previous studies discussed in Chapter Five (Section: External support factors) indicated that the school work environment could assist teachers in being satisfied in their work at school and indirectly assisted them to meet any challenges (Brunetti, 2006; Cox, 2004; C Day & Saunders, 2006; Murray Nettles, et al., 2000; Patterson, et al., 2004). Even though those researchers listed various characteristics of a supportive school environment, none of them raised the feature that was mentioned

by the teachers in this study, which is that they felt happy working at their school environment where there was a collegial school management atmosphere, one of engaging in activities with teachers and not simply issuing orders. The involvement of members of the SMT with teachers' activities could facilitate them in attempting to understand teachers' needs and this factor was arguably essential in the successful implementation of new educational policies. As explained by Dean et al. (2007) school leaders bring their detailed knowledge of the school and its communities in ensuring that national frameworks are customised and elaborated in ways that meet local needs and priorities. Thus, by associating with teachers, the SMT members may better understand their needs and this, in turn, may help them adapt to the teachers requirements and encourage and support them in an indirect way.

In addition, teachers felt fulfilled when the members of SMTs solved their problems. A finding from another research study by Malaysian researchers was that all the interviewees agreed that if a member of SMT at their school did not solve problems that teachers faced, the situation became stressful (Halim, Samsudin, Meerah, & Osman, 2006). Along these lines teachers explained that members of SMTs were more successful in helping them because they had regular discussions with them either formally (school meetings) or informally (during breakfast or lunch at the canteen). The teachers also stated that their main issue in conducting any activities at school was financial but they felt appreciated when the members of the SMTs made it possible by providing financial support in helping them to organise their activities.

Teachers also commented upon the importance of having their work valued. Members of SMTs showed such appreciation by giving them a relevant certificate (formal appreciation) and often, the SMT at Aman School showed support for the work of the teachers by buying lunch in the canteen for them (informal appreciation). The importance of adequate appreciation of teachers is also noted by Faber (1991 cited in Abdul Samad, Hashim, Moin, & Abdullah, 2010) who said that even though teachers may sustain working under a high pressure workload, "they might leave the profession when due recognition and appreciation are not given or when there is insufficient reward". The results of this study showed that teachers were more

appreciative of informal acknowledgement because all teachers could receive it whereas a formal appreciation may have been for just a few.

11.2.3.2.2 Attitudes of colleagues

This study found that colleagues also had important roles in assisting and supporting teachers and that this in turn could result in them feeling more comfortable in their working environment. They believed that some colleagues' attitudes such as being friendly, not having any cliques among them, socialising with each other, showing respect, being cooperative by working together and supportive and advising and motivating each other, were helpful in facing challenges. Several previous studies also showed that staff collegiality was an important aspect for teachers to be able to face challenges (Biglan, 2008; Gersten, Keating, Yovanoff, & Harniss, 2001; Marzano, 2003; Talmor, Reiter, & Feigin, 2005).

Due to the essential role of staff collegiality, there have been researchers who tried to examine and describe the dynamics of collaborative school structures in terms of providing possibilities for emerging collegial practices (Fallon & Barnett, 2009). Even though they also found that staff collegiality could help teachers to work more confidently in their schools, there were findings that showed that there were teachers who prefer to work alone. The authors stated that teachers seemed to have made individual choices to maintain a certain degree of isolation, of privacy, shielding themselves from inquiry and criticism. Considering this situation, there is still much research to be carried out to identify situations that need to be established in schools so that either teachers who like to work with others or those who prefer to work alone will be fulfilled in their working environment.

11.2.3.2.3 The location of the schools

The final external factor that teachers recognised had benefited them in facing the challenges was the location of the school in their home town. The result matched a finding from Boyd et al. (2008) who noted that teachers in the USA also expressed preferences in teaching close to where they grew up.

In reference to this, it is interesting to consider whether all teachers should be posted to their home areas to enable them to face challenges successfully. Interestingly, the teachers from this study who mentioned this point were both junior teachers and senior teachers. This means that regardless of the length of teacher experience, they felt more comfortable when they were teaching in their own areas. Therefore a study could be undertaken to discuss the implications of these preferences for the successful recruitment of teachers, including the potential benefits of local recruiting and training.

11.3 Discussion of the findings from senior management teams (SMTs)

This section comprises three sub-sections which are the perceptions of the SMT members in relation to the implementation of national educational policies, challenges they believed that teachers face as a result and the methods they utilised in assisting them.

11.3.1 Perceptions of the SMTs

Analysis carried out on the perceptions of the SMTs on the implementation of educational policies found that three issues emerged. These issues are the SMTs' limited knowledge of national educational policies, possible negative effects of the

policy implementation and the Ministry of Education's need to customize the implementation of the policies taking individual school situations into account.

11.3.1.1 Senior Management Teams' limited knowledge of national education policies

Regarding the first issue and as previously raised in the discussion of teachers' perceptions, members of the SMTs also emphasised the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English in their discussion rather than the two other policies. They also focused on this policy because it related to the National Examination. In the discussion of this issue on teacher perceptions, SMT members said that they discussed this policy mostly because it related to these subjects being included in the National Examination. In addition, the members of SMTs also placed emphasis on this policy because it could influence their overall school examination achievement. A study by Tee et al. (2010) in Malaysia also found that their participants (Institute of Principalship Studies) always tried to raise or maintain their school examination ranking. Excessive concentration on the policy relating to examination result arises because of communities comparing the results between the various schools. Thus, the members of SMTs focused only on the policy related to the examination to ensure the achievement was considered satisfactory and that they were not seen as a low-performing school.

The results indicated that members of SMTs became involved in the policy because they were following instructions from the Ministry of Education. There is also a group of participants who said that they were not involved in the policy implementation because their subject was not related to the policy. They simply focused on their individual fields. This also occurred with teachers, but it was understandable because teachers are expected to concentrate primarily on their own subject. It was more surprising when members of SMTs also had this attitude because their responsibilities were not only for a particular subject, but, as a management group, for all subjects. Such questions should be investigated in more detail because these findings appear to indicate that not all SMT members were fully

knowledgeable about the policies and this is likely to make it more difficult for the SMT to successfully play its role in the implementation of new policies across the school. This issue is in line with the questions raised by Jonasson (2002, p. 660) who stated that “do their policies really matter? If they do, in what way? How the impact is revealed and under what circumstances is it most likely to be found? What is most likely to impede or even thwart government policies?” It is necessary to address these questions, especially in the context of the implementation of education policy in Malaysia because this study indicates that teachers and school management itself were both inadequately informed of the policies that were being implemented.

11.3.1.2 Possible negative effects of policy implementation

Although members of SMTs are expected to be key players in driving and encouraging teachers toward successful implementation of national educational policies, the results showed that they also identified that the policies have more negative than positive impacts. As with teachers, the findings from members of SMTs also showed that some of them felt the implementation of this policy had led to the neglect of their subject and increased difficulty levels for students.

Findings indicated that members of SMTs had similar views to teachers on the implementation of this policy in that they looked at the way in which educational policies affected the teaching of specific subjects. Why did the members of management in this study not expand the scope of policy implementation beyond their teaching areas? As Hoppers (2009) maintains, in implementing a policy, school leaders should play their role as one of exploring local conditions, facilitating the design of appropriate responses, piloting programmes and engaging in vigorous national campaigns. If the roles of SMTs identified by Hoppers are valid, then some management team members may need to expand their horizons somewhat and not just focus on their own subject.

11.3.1.3 The Ministry of Education's need to customize the implementation of national education policies with the prevailing situation in each school

The results indicated that it was the perception of members of the SMTs that the Ministry of Education needed to provide appropriate preparation time for schools in the implementation of a new policy. They also commented that the Ministry of Education should not treat all schools identically in implementing such a policy. Other findings also showed that the implementation of policy should be in accordance with the school situations. Among the studies was that of Tee et al. (2010) who found that a principal from a rural school mentioned that while his counterparts in an urban area were able to focus on academic achievement, he was occupied with fixing broken doors or trying to get his students to come to school and read. In addition, their study also noted a suggestion from another principal who said “high-performing schools should be left to the Principal to manage so that the Ministry of Education can concentrate on the poorer achieving schools” (ibid, p. 196).

Briefly, the findings of the study by Tee and his colleagues, which was also conducted in Malaysia, were that most of their participants (Institute of Principalship Studies) wanted the Ministry of Education to adapt the implementation of policy to each particular school situation. However, because Malaysia has a centralised education system (Kandasamy & Blaton, 2004), it may be difficult to implement this. Ribchester and Edwards (1999, p. 49) stated that “an analysis of policies in a sample of authorities shows how the centralization of educational control, since 1988, has created an unsatisfactory educational and economic environment for smaller schools”. The question arises as to what can be done by the Ministry of Education and school management to address this issue, raised by both teachers and school management.

11.3.2 Challenges members of SMTs believed that teachers faced

SMT members raised five challenges that they believed teachers faced: teachers' working conditions, students' attitudes and abilities, teachers' attitudes and abilities, the excessive dependence of parents on schools and the Ministry of Education's actions.

11.3.2.1 Working conditions of teachers

SMTs believed that teachers at their schools were under stress because of the additional responsibilities they had to carry over and above their teaching duties. Some examples they gave were helping to manage the school, filling in numerous forms, handling student discipline, being involved in co-curricular activities, preparing for school based-assessment and central national assessment, monitoring students daily attendance, compiling stock inventories, assessing student homework, acting as a sports teacher, being involved in PTA activities, and fulfilling other conditions of their employment. Teachers also faced pressures resulting from their close supervision by the school inspectorate, and the requirement that they attended various staff development programmes. This result is in line with findings from a study by Lupton (2005) who reported that his participants (Head Teachers) claimed that teachers cannot focus purely on high quality teaching because of the need to focus on other responsibilities. The majority of studies in this area in Malaysia have focused only on teachers but they also have found that having other responsibilities presents challenges as well (Abdul Samad, et al., 2010; Hazadiah & Salina, 2007). The study by Abdul Samad et al. which used a questionnaire to determine workplace stress among primary school teachers in Malaysia found that the psychological wellbeing of teachers was influenced by their workloads. In addition, the study by Hazadiah and Salina, which utilised a qualitative approach in attempting to understand new teachers' perceptions of their profession, found that the teachers felt dissatisfaction with a lot of non-teaching activities.

SMT members in this study also reported that the majority of junior teachers had issues in adapting to the various duties of teachers. This finding is in line with findings from Goh and Matthews (2011) who noted that prospective junior teachers were worried about adjusting to the school environment and not being able to effectively carry out so many different responsibilities effectively. In addition, Abbot (2003) stated that the actual experience of full-time teaching does not match with the novices' expectations and they were shocked with the situations they found themselves in. The question that arises here is, why do the teachers fail to adapt themselves to the school situation when they have had extensive prior training? According to Chubbuck, Clift, Allard, and Quinlan (2001) novice teachers in the USA failed to adapt to school situations because of the lack of sufficient professional and emotional support given to them in their schools. Is it the same factors that impact on new teachers in Malaysia being unable to adapt to the needs of the school or did the teacher training that they received not provide them with the knowledge and experience to help them adapt to the new situation at a school?

Additional studies relating to the views of SMT members on teacher working conditions should be carried out especially during the implementation of new policies because one recent study by Chan & Gurnam Kaur (2009) found that the principal in the school they studied was not concerned that the other responsibilities that teachers had would result in teachers experiencing a high level of job stress and low job satisfaction. They stated that the principal was not concerned about teachers because they placed too much emphasis on results and provided little time to interact with both teachers and students. The principal emphasised not only the need for excellent performance by their students in the National examinations, but also stressed the need to succeed in school competitions organized by the MOE such as the National '3K' (Three Excellent Aspects Award) for the best school in terms of cleanliness, safety and creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning. Some participants in their study claimed that their principal wanted them to do so much work in such a short space of time and they could not cope with their ever-increasing demands. All these resulted in some teachers experiencing a high level of stress and low job satisfaction.

In contrast, these research findings indicate that the members of SMTs claimed that they were concerned about the workload of teachers. The question arises as to what kind of educational leadership was required at schools to ensure that the schools achieve good results and at the same time not place added pressure on teachers.

Nevertheless, the SMT members in this study claimed that teachers faced pressure for their students to achieve good examination results in order to avoid their school being viewed as a low quality school. This finding is consistent with Tee et al. (2010) who noted that their participants (Institute of Principals Studies) said that their schools needed to maintain levels of school achievement equivalent to those of high-performing schools. In addition, Andersen (2007, p. 53) also argued that “within education research, teaching for the test is a recognised problem occurring when a high test score is communicated as being equivalent to high quality”. Emphasis on examination results has led to teaching in a manner that enables students in achieving high scores, Schwartz (2002 cited in Andersen, 2007) and, indirectly, teachers find it difficult to focus on the implementation of new policy.

The members of the SMT at Bersatu School further claimed that teachers had to work in an environment that lacked facilities. They said that, for example, the lack of a laboratory was a factor in teachers being unable to perform all the policy requirements of teaching Science in English. As a result, some teachers found it difficult to work there. Although this issue was raised by members of the SMT and teachers at a school in a rural area, few studies have been carried out on this issue in Malaysia. Some studies related to the lack of facilities in Malaysia were more focused upon the effects of a lack of facilities on students' motivation to study (Tee, et al., 2010; N. Yahaya, Yahaya, Ramli, Hashim, & Zakariya, 2010). However, a study by Uline and Tschannen-Moran (2008) found that teacher attitudes and behaviours are related to school facilities. They stated that “teachers are less likely to show enthusiasm for their job and to go the extra mile with students to support their learning when they teach in buildings they judge to be poor quality” (p. 66).

11.3.2.2 The attitudes and abilities of students

Members of SMTs in both schools believed that teachers were enormously challenged by student discipline issues, even though they did not specify in detail the number or proportion of these students. This was a major issue for teachers in each school because it reportedly interfered with the smooth implementation of education policy. They said that their schools had introduced several activities to reduce students' discipline problems, but these had not been successful because the students' attitudes remain unchanged.

In addition, they said that uninterested students, especially among those who received less attention from their parents, had led to them skipping lessons. It was difficult for teachers to conduct any academic programmes for students who did not regularly attend class, and this had made it more difficult to implement educational policy. This applied particularly to the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. This finding is consistent with findings from Rahman et al. (2010) who found that students who were highly motivated would work hard to complete tasks in contrast to those who were less motivated.

They also noted in this study that students with poor academic ability, especially in English with some students still unable to read, presented challenges for teachers in implementing the policy. They considered this problem to be a major challenge because teachers needed to take more teaching time to ensure that their students understood the lessons according to the objectives of policy implementation, while the time available is limited. This finding is in line with findings from M. F. B. Yahaya, et al., (2009) who found that students who had low academic ability could not understand Science and Mathematics when it was taught in English.

11.3.2.3 The attitudes and abilities of teachers

Some members of SMTs in this study found that teachers questioned their ability in relation to the acceptance of a new education policy. In implementing teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English they remained comfortable with their usual style of teaching these two subjects in the Malay language. Even though the issue was only about language, they felt uncomfortable with the changes recommended by this policy and the findings of this study showed that this led to them being opposed to its implementation. This result is consistent with a study by Lim and Presmeg (2011) who also found that teachers argued that Mathematics is best taught in the pupils' mother tongue because their students' achievement in Mathematics was better when they used their own language rather than English. Therefore they also opposed teaching this subject in the English language.

In addition the SMTs members saw that some teachers faced challenges because they needed to be involved in outside activities unrelated to teaching. Most teachers became involved in other jobs other than teaching because of financial factors. The question is why do these teachers need to have other jobs? Is the salary they receive not sufficient? The issue of salaries is an important point because there are previous studies highlighting the significance and importance of teacher wages in attracting and retaining skilled and effective teachers (A. Ali, 2009; Ladd, 2007; Taylor, 2008). In Malaysia, teacher salaries are determined by the government and are not dependant on where teachers are posted. Instead their salary depends on their qualifications and experience (Rao & Jani, 2011). Therefore further investigation of teachers' salaries in Malaysia is required to find out the detailed impact of salaries on their commitment to their work. Investigations could also be carried out on whether the decentralized salary setting common in the United States (Ladd, 2007) would have relevance in Malaysia.

11.3.2.4 The excessive dependence of parents on the schools

Members of SMTs also raised the issue of the challenges presented by some parents who did not really care about their children's studies or disciplinary matters. They delegated these responsibilities to the teachers and when they were invited to discuss their children, they rarely showed up. This result is in line with Esa et al. (2010) when they found that their participants (Institute of Principalship Studies) believed that parents' involvement in the school activities was not at a satisfactory level especially their involvement in education programs.

This situation is certainly challenging to teachers because parents have an important role to play, especially when there are changes in education policy. According to Furney et al. (2003, p. 93) "as our experiences with standards-based reforms increase and deepen, parents must become central to conversations about the need to ensure that all students benefit from the movement". The findings from this study show that the commitment of parents to school activities was low. They have an important role in helping schools in any changes including the implementation of new policies, so an investigation needs to be carried out in order to identify reasons as to why there appears to be minimal involvement from parents.

11.3.2.5 Actions by the Ministry of Education

The findings of this study indicated that the requirements of the Ministry of Education for implementation of education policy in Malaysia were constantly changing. Some of the SMT members said that sometimes the Ministry of Education required the implementation of a new policy without sufficiently studying the advantages and disadvantages of its affects in increasing the pressure on teachers.

Such actions by the Ministry of Education had produced additional challenges for teachers because they had to prepare the introduction of a new policy and before they had fully absorbed it, another change took place and they had to start

the process over. The situation of inconsistency in the implementation of education policies also occurred in Korea and officials have been criticized for their lack of consistency as a result of frequent alterations (Kyung-Keun, 2003).

I also found that SMT members believed that frequent policy changes in Malaysia were due to the implementation of a policy being too heavily influenced by political factors. Tee et al. (2010) found that their participants claimed that “school policies should be left to the teachers’ union to decide, not politicians” (p. 187).

The frequency of such policy changes presented a challenge to teachers because the members of SMTs also revealed that the Ministry of Education did not take any follow up actions to their suggestions in order to refine the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. The participants stated that the MOE just pushed ahead, even though they knew that the schools would face some difficulties.

11.3.3 SMT assistance to teachers

The previous discussion in Chapter Six indicated that Bajunid et al. (1996) suggested aspects of the roles of educational leaders that were considered appropriate in the Malaysian context because they were developed in response to the views and practices from leaders at their schools. However, the roles of educational leaders in their study focused upon improving the quality of teaching whereas my study concentrated on the roles of educational leaders in assisting teachers to face challenges of the implementation of national educational policies. In addition, their leadership roles were developed based on questionnaires whereas the findings of my study derived from interviews. R.Ahmad (2000) also suggested that educational leaders in Malaysia needed to apply distributive, instructional and transformational leadership in leading and managing their schools. However, all the roles of educational leaders that were suggested by R.Ahmad (2000) originally derived from western literature particularly from the USA and the UK. The distributive leadership concept was used in the discourse about school leadership mostly by researchers

from UK such as (Harris, 2004, 2008). Meanwhile, according to Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe (2008, p. 638) “instructional leadership theory has its empirical origins in studies undertaken during the late 1970’s and early 80’s of schools in poor urban communities in USA where students succeed despite the odds identified by Edmonds in 1979”. In addition, they stated that transformational leadership had its origins in James McGregor Burn’s 1978 publications in New York, USA. The aspects of the roles of educational leaders identified in this study were found during the implementation of new educational policies in the context of Malaysian schools: they appeared to be not unduly influenced by western theory and differed from the roles suggested by both Bajunid et al. (1996) and R.Ahmad (2000).

There were five approaches that the members of SMTs applied which were: creating a culture that focuses on the implementation of education policy at school, encouraging togetherness in the planning and implementing of school-based programmes, minimising the pressure on teachers, identifying teachers weaknesses in implementing policies and providing support for improving performance, and taking pride in the success of their school as a source of motivation and inspiration. In the following sections, I discuss each of these approaches.

11.3.3.1 Creating a culture that focuses on the implementation of education policy at school

Results revealed that the school management at Aman School had created a culture of interest in the English language among teachers and students. This culture demonstrated that the SMT had a clear focus on this policy, teachers felt happy and under no pressure in following the management’s methods and as a result the policy could be implemented successfully.

The role of school management is to create a culture that can ensure the cooperation of all parties, especially school teachers, and is very important because, according to Collinson et al. (2009, p. 14) “the involvement of teachers is vital for successful changes to take place. However, teachers cannot bring about the

necessary changes without organisational and systemic change occurring alongside their changing attitudes, values and approaches”. Consequently, it may be argued that the school management actions in creating such a culture will in turn help teachers to focus on the targets in the policy.

In the absence of a positive culture driving all parties to ensure the success of the new changes that occur in the field of education then, as stated by Smyth (2001, p. 7) “the changes can only amount to little more than tinkering with the technical skills of teaching, while the broader issues are defined and determined elsewhere”.

To maximize the achievement of the objectives, and at the same time not overload teachers in doing this, the findings of this study would suggest that the school management needs to identify an appropriate work culture that could be established at their school to assist teachers to clearly understand the objectives of the policy implementation.

11.3.3.2 Encouraging togetherness in the planning and implementing of school-based programmes

This section draws on the finding that more members of the SMT from Aman School worked together with teachers to plan and implement the school-based programmes that related to the national educational policy than did members of the SMT from Bersatu School. In this case, the members of SMT at Aman School had created an English Year Programme that encouraged teachers to implement the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English and this attracted students to get involved as well as introducing computer classes as part of the implementation of the Smart School programme.

This result is consistent with a statement from Nettles et al. (2000) that opportunities to participate in the school created a positive environment. In addition, the need for an spirit of cooperation between the school management and teachers was also suggested by Collinson and Cook (2007). They said that teachers, principals and support staff needed to work collaboratively, disseminate and

contribute to their own learning and the education of their colleagues leading to a continuous improvement in the organisation. Furthermore, Collinson et al. (2009, p. 5) stated that “education is slowly absorbing the new shift in thinking and is beginning to implement changes that encourage teachers and principals to engage in learning together”.

Briefly, the findings of this study and the views from previous researchers indicate that school management should be ready to work with teachers in designing activities in line with the policy to be implemented. This approach would appear to enable teachers to feel that they are an integral part of the planning programs and not just merely implementing directives from management.

11.3.3.3 Minimising the pressure on teachers

The results of the study also indicated that the majority of the SMT members from both schools emphasized that they attempted to ease the burden on teachers in implementing education policy. However, they had different approaches.

The SMT members from Aman School acknowledged that they assisted teachers by developing programs related to the implementation of national educational policies. In planning the programs, members of SMT examined the school conditions and tried to adapt the programs to the capabilities of the teacher. Then they determined actions to be carried out stage by stage. They also gave sufficient time for teachers to discuss any problems that arose. All these actions were taken to ensure that teachers would be satisfied in implementing their responsibilities. This result is in line with findings from research by Dutro et al. (2002) that found teachers explicitly credited a top-down approach to facilitating change because the change would not have happened if it had not been given the impetus from above.

Alternatively, the SMT members from Bersatu School empowered teachers to determine the suitability of the activities that needed to be conducted to help them implement the education policy. SMT made available financial resources and

support when teachers needed to proceed with activities that could facilitate them in achieving the objectives. The purpose of giving teacher freedom was to increase their enthusiasm for implementing their work and to reduce pressure. Although some suggestions from researchers in Malaysia previously (such as Bajunid, et al., 1996; Nordin, Yusof, & Jusoff, 2010) suggested that teachers should be empowered to carry out their duties in school, no study investigating the effects of the empowerment of teachers in the implementation of education policy requirements has yet been carried out.

Both schools had different approaches in terms of easing the load on teachers to implement policies. The findings suggest that among supportive actions that can assist teachers to be resilient is when leaders attempt to reduce stress factors at school (Masten, 1994). Without such pressure teachers are better able to maintain their focus on implementing national educational policies.

11.3.3.4 Identifying teachers' 'weaknesses' in implementing policies and providing support for improving performance

The findings showed that the school management utilised a monitoring system that was developed by the Ministry of Education to identify teachers' 'weaknesses' in implementing educational policies. Although such monitoring may seem negative, they reported that the monitoring system was important in identifying suitable supportive actions that they needed to provide for teachers after they had uncovered teachers weaknesses from using this monitoring system. That is, leaders were using the system diagnostically in order to assist teachers. The implementation of monitoring in the classroom is important for improving the performance of teachers as described in the study by James and Jones (2008). They carried out a case study of the development and implementation of a policy to monitor teachers' classroom practice in a secondary comprehensive school in Wales, UK. They found that the participants (teachers and senior leadership team) had "no objection to classroom observation, indeed it was valued by many as a way of sharing good practice,

addressing weaknesses and helping staff to be more reflective about their teaching” (ibid, p. 10).

However James and Jones (2008) also found that the majority of senior leadership members were not at all comfortable grading their colleagues. They felt it was threatening, unnecessary and superficial and that it could cause disillusionment and impede confidence. Given these negative aspects of monitoring, further research may be needed to be conducted in Malaysia to assess more widely the effects of monitoring of teachers’ implementation of education policy.

11.3.3.5 Taking pride in the success of their school as a source of motivation and inspiration

The SMT members from Aman School had been using electronic and print media to publicize the success of the school. This in turn raised the school’s reputation and boosted the morale of teachers.

There are several literature reviews that discuss the use of media to promote the implementation of education policy at schools (Blackmore & Thorpe, 2003; Mills, 2004). According to Blackmore and Thorpe (2003, p. 582) “the media also actively played a part in the construction of teacher identities. Teachers also actively sought to undertake impression management by marketing their school”. In addition they also stated that “mass media does mobilize attention by teachers, school administrations, students and parents alike to particular aspects of schools’ processes by deciding what constitutes an educational issue and what constitutes a desirable outcome” (ibid, p. 590).

My findings only showed that the school management utilized the media to promote schools’ success in implementing education policy in order to enhance teachers’ enthusiasm. However, the study by Blackmore and Thorpe (2003) explained the various advantages of using media for the implementation of education policies. Perhaps more research should be conducted, particularly in Malaysia, to identify the advantages or disadvantages of using the media for this purpose.

The findings also showed that only the school in an urban area used the media to promote the success of their schools, while the school in the rural area did not indicate that they had this opportunity. The question therefore is, does media involvement with the school provide equity for all schools? This matter needs to be refined in order to avoid the situation where teachers who are involved with policy implementation in schools in an urban area are eager to continue to implement policies because their successful efforts received extensive coverage, while teachers in rural areas feel marginalized because their efforts do not receive any attention from others.

11.4 Discussion of the findings from members of PTAs

This section comprises three sub-sections which are: PTA members' perceptions of the implementation of national educational policies, the challenges they believed that teachers faced and the approaches they utilised in assisting teachers to cope.

11.4.1 Perceptions of the PTAs

An analysis conducted on PTA members' perceptions on the implementation of educational policies shows that two issues emerged and both issues relate to the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. The issues are that this policy could help to increase opportunities for students to improve their English language skills and the PTA members believed the roles of members of SMTs and teachers could assist in the implementation of national educational policies.

11.4.1.1 The limited knowledge of national educational policies on the part of the PTAs

The results indicated that the PTA members believed that the implementation of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English would improve English proficiency among students, giving them an added advantage when they entered the workforce. It was these increased employment opportunities that PTA members saw as the main benefit of this policy. The result of this study is in line with a study from Tan and Saw Lan (2010) who stated that in Malaysia, ensuring that their students could function in English in the workplace is a major issue.

Because a policy may affect employment opportunities for a student after leaving school, it was not surprising in this study that members of PTAs as parents focused their discussion on this policy rather than other policies.

11.4.1.2 The role of SMTs and teachers in ensuring successful policy implementation

These findings revealed that PTA members recognized the role of school management in providing programmes relating to a policy in schools that empower teachers to implement such a policy and that this could ensure its success. Similarly, they recognised that teachers who were diligent also helped to advance the implementation of policy.

Briefly the results showed that the members of PTAs thought that only members of SMTs and teachers had a role in ensuring the successful implementation of a policy whereas in Profession Circular number 5/2001 (Ministry of Education, 2001b) it was clearly emphasised that the PTA was established in all government schools with an aim of encouraging unity between parents and teachers in the school. In addition, according to Esa et al. (2010) the PTA's involvement should include assistance in management and administration, together with improvement in

students' performance in curricula, co-curriculum, contentment, welfare and discipline.

In contrast, the findings of this study showed that parents handed their children's education to the school alone. The discussions on this matter earlier in sections regarding the teachers and school management have also confirmed this finding.

11.4.2 Challenges members of PTAs believed that teachers faced

Members of PTAs believed teachers faced three challenges as a result of the implementation of national educational policies. These are:

11.4.2.1 The challenge of informing parents about new educational policies and obtaining their co-operation

All the PTA members from Aman School stated that the main challenge teachers faced arose from the parents not understanding their role. PTA members also said that if parents understood more about such a policy, they would become more involved in the implementation of policy rather than just handing over the matter to teachers.

However, it was difficult to identify research that discusses this issue. Most findings in studies relating to parental involvement with schools referred to the general difficulties that schools faced in getting parent involvement in school activities (Cheng & Tam, 2007; Esa, et al., 2010; Lupton, 2005) rather than focusing upon implementing national educational policies.

There were a number of findings relating to parental involvement pointing to a variety of positive student academic outcomes including higher grade-point averages, (Gutman & Midgley, 2000) increased achievement in reading (Sénéchal &

LeFevre, 2002) and proficiency in mathematics (Izzo, Weissberg, Kaspro, & Fendrich, 1999). Positive student behavioural outcomes associated with parent involvement include increased ability to self-regulate behaviour (Brody, Flor, & Gibson, 1999) and higher levels of social skills (McWayne, Fantuzzo, Cohen, & Sekino, 2004). Therefore researchers should continue to explore how to develop parents understanding about educational policy, how to encourage them to become more fully involved in the implementation of a particular policy and what is the relationship between parental involvement and successful policy implementation in specific cases.

Members of the PTA from both schools also believed that teachers at their schools faced challenges due to a lack of cooperation from parents. This finding is consistent with a study by Lupton (2005, p. 595) who found that “parental participation was also low, with fewer than half of parents attending consultation evenings”.

Additionally, these findings did not show any difference between the levels of parental involvement in school activities even though the school in the urban area was ethnically mixed and the school in the rural area was predominantly Malays. However the study by Lupton indicated that in the schools with predominantly white populations, his participants reported that many parents were disinterested in education, and a minority was hostile to the school. However, his study also showed that a more positive attitude from parents was reported in the schools in ethnically mixed areas. As my research did not show any difference, such studies should be continued, especially in Malaysia, to determine whether there is a relationship between parents' ethnicity and the level of cooperation with the school.

11.4.2.2 Teacher issues

Members of the PTA had concerns about the quality of the preparation teachers received for the implementation of national education policy, particularly the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English. They were concerned about teachers' readiness for implementing the national education policy in general. The same issue was raised by Rice et al. (2009) who examined the issue of preparing teachers for policy implementation in the USA. They found that policy makers faced challenges in increasing the number of qualified teacher candidates, recruiting teachers to the schools where they were needed most, distributing teachers in equitable and efficient ways, and retaining qualified teachers over time in order to fulfil the requirements for implementing new policies. Many of the issues raised by Rice et al. were similar to what is currently happening in Malaysia in relation to the production of quality teachers who are able to assist schools in achieving the government's policies.

Similarly to SMT members and teachers themselves, member of the PTA from Aman School also believed that teachers faced challenges in implementing the new education policy because they had so many other responsibilities. Beckmann and Minaar (2010) investigated middle-class parent expectations of teacher workloads from a South African labour law perspective. Their findings showed that teachers were burdened with various workloads which included teaching responsibilities, classroom management, extra-curricular activities, pastoral and administrative duties as well as professional development. Their study listed in detail the various tasks of teachers, compared to this research that only stated that teachers were burdened with many tasks without detailed explanation. However their study focused on teachers' daily work whereas this study only concentrated on the challenges that teachers faced during the implementation of national educational policies. My study demonstrates only that parents recognize the challenges that teachers face in implementing education policies due to a variety of tasks; they did not describe in detail the workload compared to the study by Beckmann and Minaar. Thus, a study could usefully be carried out to identify, in detail, the workload that

can be a challenge for teachers in implementing education policy and parents' recognition of this.

11.4.2.3 Student issues

PTA members claimed that teachers faced challenges in implementing national education policy because students lacked interest in their studies. Research findings from Dotterer, McHale, and Crouter (2009) also showed that parents in their study claimed that students who are not interested in studying create difficulties for teachers. However, their findings have not addressed the challenges teachers face when implementing education policy, focusing rather on teachers improving the academic performance of the students. Even though this study and the study by Dotterer et al. showed different implications for teachers due to students' lack of interest in their work, this issue needs to be addressed by policy makers because as Eccles, Wigfield, and Schiefele (1998 cited in Dotterer, et al., 2009, p. 509) stated "students' interest in academia is an important component of academic motivation that facilitates learning". Therefore if they were not interested in their study it became a challenge for teachers to implement an education policy that was linked to teaching.

In addition, members of PTAs also believed that teachers faced the difficulties of students who obtained good results transferring from a lower performing school to a higher performing one. The majority of students that remained at the school were reportedly students who had no interest in learning and had low academic ability. As a result, the teachers reportedly found it difficult to implement a policy such as the teaching of Science and Mathematics in English with these students.

The findings of this study showed that students who obtained good results did transfer to other schools, but a study by Garcia, McIlroy, & Barber (2008, p. 212) obtained different results when they found that "parents of students with lower achievement levels on standardized tests are entering the public school market and

making an unnecessary decision to transfer schools”. Even though there were differing levels of achievement among transferred students, my findings showed that the parents had switched their children to other schools in order to achieve better results. Garcia and his colleagues also found that the “parents make this choice in the belief that the child will have a better chance of success in a different environment” (ibid, p. 212). This discussion shows that the parents emphasised their children's performance in the examination and they were willing to transfer their child to another school in order to ensure that their goals would be achieved. Teachers had to face the situation that these movements may disturb their work, including the implementation of education policies.

11.4.3 The actions of PTA members in assisting teachers to cope with the challenges

The third issue to be discussed relates to findings in relation to methods that members of PTAs have applied in working with schools in order to assist teachers to cope with the challenges of the implementation of national educational policies. The results revealed that members of PTAs supported teachers with additional funding for their school and helped to establish links between parents and the schools.

11.4.3.1 Providing additional funding for schools

Most PTA members said that a major role they could play in assisting the schools in implementing education policies was to provide financial assistance for the implementation of additional activities related to education policy such as providing extra time for teaching (extra classes) by providing money to buy teaching aids and giving allowances to teachers who were involved in these activities. These extra classes help teachers by giving them more time for teaching and indirectly reduce the burden on teachers of completing the syllabus during school hours especially with

the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English which requires more time. Several studies also found that the main contribution from PTA to schools was they provided financial aid to the schools in order to materialize the school programs (Esa, et al., 2010; Razali, 2007).

The majority of PTA members who raised this issue were from Aman School. At Bersatu School, the PTA members were less specific and only expressed in general that they provided financial assistance to their school upon request. It could be that this reflects the difficulty of collecting PTA fees in rural schools. The previous studies showed that PTAs provided financial support to promote school activities. However, the question is what is the best way that the PTA of schools in rural areas may get financial (or alternative) support from underprivileged parents?

11.4.3.2 Helping to establish links between parents and the school

Various methods have been attempted by the PTAs at Aman School and Bersatu School to attract parents in helping teachers ensure the success of school activities including the implementation of policies related to education. Research has clearly shown that strong parent-teacher relationships lead to increased parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Lawson, 2003).

Many previous studies have indicated that the relationship between school and parents is important and may lead to positive school outcomes. However Knopf and Swick (2007) claimed that many educators found it extremely difficult to facilitate parental involvement at levels that would result in significant changes. In addition, Lawson (2003) reported that teachers and parents have differing ideas about parental involvement. Teachers were more school-based in their thinking, while parents have a broader community view of their involvement. These divergent views of the nature of parent involvement and the role parents should play in the process of education could lead to conflict and continued misunderstanding. Furthermore, in Malaysia, Esa et al. (2010) believed that there was limited time to set up a discussion

between parents and teachers because both parents were working full time. This would certainly make it more difficult for the PTA to establish a close relationship between parents and teachers.

Several studies identified strategies to build strong relationships between parents and schools such as making sure the initial contact with parents is a positive one (M. Seligman & Darling, 2007), and communicating with parents consistently through a variety of means (Swick & Bailey, 2004). This study showed that the PTA members at Aman School had prepared gifts for parents who attended the PTA meeting to establish a close relationship between the school and parents. The PTA at Bersatu School used informal meetings outside school to listen to parent's thoughts and at the same time explain situations at the school. There is no evidence that either of these activities made a major contribution to improving relationships between school staff and PTA members. Therefore the number of studies regarding this issue needs to be increased because if the parents are to gain a better understanding of how they can support teachers, it is likely that they will be better able to make a substantial contribution to the successful implementation of a policy.

11.5 Summary and conclusion

This section summarises the findings about the situation where teachers had to accept the implementation of new national educational policies which indirectly added to the challenges they faced in their daily work. The section also provides answers to an important aim of this study which was to identify how Malaysian educational leaders may assist teachers to sustain their resilience during the implementation of national educational policies.

In discussing the participants' response to the question "How do teachers/SMT members/PTA members' perceive the implementation of the Smart School concept, the implementation of teaching and learning of Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006 – 2012?" the majority of them claimed that the education system in Malaysia is dominated by

examination achievement. Therefore, the policy of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English that are subject to examination, has received more attention from them than the other two policies. Additionally, due to the system emphasising examination results, the majority of participants, either teachers or members of SMTs from both schools who were teaching subjects that were not related to this policy, were only focused on their subjects and therefore did not give their opinions on how to assist their school to succeed in the implementation of the policy. They focused on their subjects in order to ensure that their students achieved better results in the national examinations. Briefly, this examination orientation has tangibly influenced participants' views about education in Malaysia. It seems likely that in the current policy environment, whatever policies are introduced, teachers will only focus on policies that affect subjects that are subject to examination because their school results will be compared with results from other schools and they do not want their school to be viewed as a low performing school.

In the implementation of the policy of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English, the majority of participants believed that this policy had more negative implications for teachers than positive ones. This results from two factors. Firstly, the Ministry of Education was too hasty in implementing this policy, resulting in teachers not being fully prepared. The teachers would prefer to teach these two subjects as usual in the Malay language because most of them did not have adequate proficiency in English.

Secondly, the centralization of the education system in Malaysia has led to some negative implications of the implementation of this policy. The participants in the rural school in this study claimed that the negative results appeared due to numerous disadvantages in their school in terms of the quality of teachers and students and a general lack of facilities. Despite these additional difficulties, they still had to implement the policy along the same lines as the schools that had qualified teachers, excellent students and adequate facilities.

The discussion above summarises the participants' perceptions and indicates that the new policy implementation in Malaysia has had a negative impact on teachers. It was not surprising that when they were interviewed relating to the challenges that they face due to the implementation of policy, they raised a variety of

issues. Nevertheless the major ones raised were in regard to the policy of teaching Science and Mathematics in English. Therefore, when they were interviewed regarding “what are the main challenges that have teachers faced and why do they believe that those are the main challenges for them?” the most frequent challenges derived from the implementation of this particular policy.

The implementation of this policy related directly to teaching and the majority of participants from both schools claimed that the main challenges that teachers faced was the various other responsibilities they had to manage as well as teaching. In addition, the attitude of some members of SMTs who quickly delegated various tasks to teachers also led to increased challenges. Due to numerous other responsibilities at school, the majority of junior teachers were concerned when adapting themselves to the many duties required of teachers.

Teachers also faced challenges because of negative student attitudes. These included students who reportedly had a lack of interest in studying, were skipping lessons, had little motivation to succeed, and had poor academic ability especially in English with some students still partially illiterate. All of these features became an issue for teachers in implementing the policy of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English because teachers needed to ensure that their students understood the lessons according to the objectives of policy implementation. At the same time, it was reported that the students’ attitudes and abilities had not helped teachers in achieving the objectives. Moreover, this challenge is constant because new students enrolling in the schools come from similar family backgrounds and their ability, as well as their attitude, is said to be almost the same as preceding students.

Teachers also reportedly faced challenges in implementing the policy because of parents’ attitudes. Some parents were not concerned about their children’s studies nor about discipline matters. They delegated these responsibilities to teachers. Teachers in the school in an urban area in this study felt that parents were not paying attention to improving the discipline of their children because they were too busy working. In contrast teachers in the rural area faced challenges because parents have relatively low educational levels and had difficulties in assisting them at home.

The actions by the Ministry of Education in constantly changing national educational policy also increased the challenges for teachers. The participants claimed that they were struggling to implement a new policy and suddenly the MOE changed the policy and they faced new challenges. They reported these to the Ministry of Education but no actions were apparently taken.

All the issues discussed above apply in both the schools involved in this study whether the school was in an urban area or in a rural area. In addition to all these challenges, teachers in the rural school faced further issues because of a lack of school facilities. For example, the lack of a laboratory left them unable to perform the policy requirements of teaching science in English.

In summary, teachers from both schools had issues in implementing the national educational policy due to seven factors which are; the education system placing too much emphasis on examination achievement, the MOE being too hasty in implementing new policies, the centralization in the Malaysian education system, the other responsibilities teachers have apart from teaching, the attitude and ability of the students, the attitude of parents and constant changes to policies. In addition, teachers from the rural school faced additional challenges stemming from a general lack of suitable facilities.

The next discussion will answer the question “How do teachers cope with the challenges they face and how do educational leaders assist them in these situations?” The summary will conclude with a discussion on the role of educational leadership in sustaining teacher resilience in order to face these challenges during the implementation of national educational policy.

In regard to the aim of this study to find approaches that educational leaders utilised in order to assist teachers to sustain their resilience, all groups of participants claimed that members of SMTs from both schools had played the main role in assisting teachers to face the challenges. The findings from this study describe the various methods that members of SMTs used to assist teachers. There were five major roles, detailed further below.

Firstly, the SMTs provided a congenial working environment that did not place pressure on teachers. Among the members of SMTs’, actions that could lead to

the existence of this environment at the schools were the members of SMTs being collegial, engaged in activities with teachers, solving teachers' problems effectively and the setting up of regular discussions with teachers either formally (school meeting) or informally (during breakfast or lunch at canteen). When members of SMTs' adopted these approaches teachers were more relaxed in performing their duties.

Secondly, the SMTs eased the burden for teachers in implementing the policy and different approaches were emphasised by each school. At Aman School, the SMT worked together with teachers to plan and implement the school based programmes that related to the national education policy. With this program, teachers felt that they were part of the planning program and not just merely implementing directives. The program had also led to the implementation of a culture where the teachers could focus on the policy. In addition, the program was developed to suit teachers' capabilities and outlined actions to be carried out intermittently. These actions led to all teachers being co-operative. At Bersatu School, the SMT members empowered teachers to determine the suitability of the activities that needed to be conducted to help them implement the education policy. The SMT provided financial resources and support when teachers needed to proceed with activities that could facilitate them in achieving the objectives of policy. The purpose of giving teacher's freedom was to increase their enthusiasm for implementing their work and to reduce pressure.

Thirdly, they provided encouraging forms of monitoring. At both schools, the SMT carried out monitoring of the teachers duties related to the policy implementation. Based on the results of monitoring, the SMT would identify the challenges that teachers faced and were supportive.

Fourthly, they showed continuing appreciation by giving certificates (formal) or buying lunch (informal). Even though the informal appreciations seemed of less tangible value than the formal one, the majority of teachers preferred this type of appreciation because all teachers could receive it and they felt satisfied that their work had received immediate recognition from the SMT.

Fifthly, they promoted the success of the school by using the media. When news spreads about their schools, teachers were more eager to implement the policy requirements.

Apart from the role of SMT members in assisting teachers to face challenges, there were five teacher attitudes that also helped. These were, that teachers accepted their full responsibilities as a teacher, utilized their social skills, possessed sufficient self-esteem, had a personal commitment to sacrifice their time and money to help students and felt a sense of self-satisfaction at student exam success. All these acted as a catalyst for their motivation. These attitudes were identified by teachers from both schools except for the personal commitment that was only identified by teachers at Bersatu School.

There were also three other minor factors that also could assist teachers. Firstly, the PTA provided financial assistance for the implementation of additional activities related to education policy and helped to persuade parents to help teachers, to assist in ensuring the success of school activities including implementation of the policy. Secondly, an atmosphere of collegiality in assisting and supporting each other. Thirdly, the location of the school, preferably near the home base of the teacher.

As outlined above, the main factor assisting teachers in facing challenges came from members of the SMTs. However, the attitudes of teachers themselves, the role the PTA members played and the attitude of colleagues, as well as school location, was also a factor.

The data from three chapters show some contradictions and some agreement amongst teachers, SMT members and PTA members. Referring to their perceptions of the implementation of national educational policy, only PTA members believed that the policy would provide positive implications for students whereas teachers believed that the policy has both positive and negative implications for students and for them as well. In addition, SMT members believed that the policy could only have negative impacts for teachers, students and their schools. Both teachers and SMT members believed that the Ministry of Education had an important role in considering timing, school location and teacher preparation prior to implementing the

policy. Both groups of participants also stated that they become involved in the implementation of educational policy because they had to follow instructions from the Ministry of Education. However, they proposed that the implementation of the policy needed to be continued because the government had taken a lot of time to implement the policy and it also involved a high cost.

The data about the challenges participants faced as a result of the implementation of educational policy showed that they have different views about what were the biggest challenges that teachers have to face as a result of the implementation of the educational policy. However, they agreed that the challenges come from students' attitudes and ability, school work environment, parents' attitudes, teachers themselves, the Ministry of Education's role and SMT members' actions.

Finally the data on how teachers are able to cope with the challenges of the implementation of educational policy showed consistently that the main role of assisting teachers to face the challenges belonged to SMT members. In addition, there was agreement as to the role of teachers' personal attributes and qualities and upon PTA members' role in also helping teachers to face the challenges.

After reviewing the findings of my interviews with the three groups of participants in each of the two different schools in the light of literature on teacher resilience and educational leadership in the Malaysian context; in this section I further interrogate the data by looking at wider issues of educational policy change. I draw here on international studies of issues of educational policy changes, training prior to implementing changes in educational policy, the policy and workplace conditions in which teachers work, teachers' emotional stress in implementing a new change in education, and management of change within contexts of increased performativity. Finally, I provide a conceptualisation of the findings. This will provide a holistic overview of the issue of change in educational policy in Malaysia and leaders' roles in change management.

11.5.1 Issue of changes in educational policy in Malaysia

The previous discussion indicated that the Ministry of Education in Malaysia changes educational policies frequently, often introducing a new policy before the education system has had time to focus on implementing a previously introduced policy. A study by Mundia (2012) showed that when the government of Brunei, through the Ministry of Education, rapidly introduced the implementation of a new policy aimed at improving the quality of teacher education programs in Brunei by eliminating programmes at undergraduate level and changing to master of teaching degree courses, the teacher training institutions were not ready to implement the policy because they did not have enough information about the deficiencies in current teaching courses that they were supposed to refine.

Cheng (2005, p. 7) has noted how “many countries and areas in the world shared similar patterns or trends in educational reforms.” Cheng (2009, p. 70) later described swift policy changes like those which occurred in Malaysia and Brunei as “the reform syndrome.” He explained that “because of serious international or regional competition, while one country in the Asia Pacific region was preparing to initiate educational reform, other regional competitors also conducted reforms and initiated more changes in their education system” (p. 70). Tsao (2008) also argued that changing the policy swiftly can be criticized as poor planning. As Ross, Nunnery, Goldfeder, Rachor, Hornbeck and Fleischman (2004, p. 385) had pointed out, “for effective change to occur, there must be sufficient time for reform strategies to be mastered by teachers and integrated with existing school structure” .

During many different changes implemented by the Malaysian Ministry of Education, measurement and judgment of the results of the changes have typically concentrated solely upon students’ achievement in the National Standard of Examination. Therefore it is understandable that teachers also invest their efforts in the areas that will be tested by examination. This situation also occurred in other places. Day and Smethem (2009) argued that teachers in most countries across the world are experiencing a similar mix of government interventions in the form of national tests, criteria for measuring the quality of schools and the publications of

these on the internet in order to raise standards and promote more parental choice. McDermott (2007) also claimed that most public schools now focus on and often times fear annual school scores based on aggregated results of state-developed indicators. In addition, Hamilton (2003, p. 25) believed that “recent large-scale education reform efforts, along with state and federal legislation, illustrate the growing importance that policymakers and education reformers are attaching to accountability for student performance”. In summary, most countries place a high emphasis on examination or other formal assessment results within their education systems.

The question arises as to whether the emphasis on measuring the results of policy changes, by results examination occurred because of pressure from society? The findings from this study indicated that teachers and SMT members attempted to maintain or lift their school examination ranking because communities compared the results amongst the various schools and the participants did not want to be seen as a low performing school. Even though the emphasis on the examination showed that teachers in Malaysia face pressure from parents, this appears to be somewhat different in the UK. According to Munn (1998, p. 384), “parental choice was one element in the government’s strategy to make schools more responsive to parental concerns and so tilt the balance of power more towards the consumer (parent) than the producer (schools)”. In addition, Chen (2011) noted that in Taiwan, there is considerable parental involvement as he stated that “it can be seen that the process of policy-making was influenced by the expectations from public. In particular, the parental expectations that are included in the rationale may suggest the important role that the community can play in education policy decision-making”(p. 206). However, as Tso (2008) also from Taiwan pointed out, parental expectations in the Taiwanese context might pressure the government to act rashly.

The above discussion showed that there is an important question about whether the implementation of changes in the education system in Malaysia is mostly influenced by external forces. If policy changes are the result of external forces, teachers are always going to face challenges as they will have relatively little

influence upon policy *making* and will only have influence over policy implementation.

11.5.2 The Issue of training prior to implementing changes in educational policy

According to Cheng (2009, p. 73) “If school systems are to perform well, teachers’ professional competence must be developed and must be relevant to the changing aims, content and practice in schools”. He added, “the key concepts here are effectiveness of teacher practice and adaptation of teachers to changes in working conditions” (p. 74). These two statements from Cheng emphasise the importance of teachers receiving adequate training to ensure that educational planning could be carried out smoothly and to eventually achieve the desired targets.

However, the findings of my study also showed that teachers are not being fully prepared and not sufficiently trained in implementing new changes in education. In addition, teachers and SMT members claimed that teachers need more time before implementing policy. The issue of teachers receiving less than optimal training also emerged from a study by Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson and Orphanos (2009). They found that “while teachers typically need substantial professional development in a given area (close to 50 hours) to improve their skills and their students’ learning, most professional development opportunities in the U.S. are much shorter” (p. 5).

Participants in my study believed the teacher preparation was inadequate because the MOE provided too broad a training and did not focus enough on what teachers needed to know and be able to do if they were to be able to successfully implement a particular new policy. This finding is in line with Darling-Hammond, et al. (2009, p. 5) in which they stated “American teachers say that much of the professional development available to them is not useful”. Similarly, in this study teachers reported that they had not received a proper guidance in implementing the changes. The question then is, is it more suitable for the Ministry to provide general

training which teachers themselves adjust to suit the local requirements of a change, or does the Ministry need to provide specific training for each change that teachers need carry out? Will increased specificity in training consume too much teacher time and cost too much? Notwithstanding these choices, “sufficient training needs to be in place for teachers to feel that they are empowered and supported” (Eloff & Kgwete, 2007, p. 355).

Since so many policy initiatives were being introduced at once in this study, teachers and principals were obligated to attend many kinds of training workshops and programmes in order to be able to meet their requirements. As Cheng has reported elsewhere, this kind of mandatory professional training and development inevitably became an additional source of pressure for them (Cheng, 2009, p. 71).

11.5.3 The policy and workplace conditions in which teachers’ work was situated

The findings showed that there were four workplace conditions in which teachers work was situated. The first condition was that the Malaysian education system is highly centralized. This condition has led to a requirement for standard implementation of central system policy regardless of local school situations. On the basis of the rural school’s experience in this study, this condition may create more challenges to teachers at schools in rural areas because their schools have a lack of facilities. This issue was also highlighted by Sua (2010, p. 59) who stated that “there has been a great disparity between urban and rural schools in Malaysia in terms of supply of teachers as well as infrastructural and ICT facilities. This disparity has affected real access to education as well as equality and quality of education among rural students and in the process, has created an achievement gap”. As discussed previously the education system in Malaysia places more emphasis on student exam results and, therefore lower performing rural students created greater challenges for their teachers. Therefore, the teachers in this study suggested that the MOE should not treat all schools identically in implementing such a policy, rather it should be in accordance with the school’s particular situation.

The second condition of teachers' workplace situation was their workload. They already had various responsibilities during their daily work and the implementation of a new policy simply increased their workload. As a result, teachers were experiencing a high level of job stress and had low job satisfaction. This situation is consistent with a statement from Day and Smethem (2009, p. 143) that "although reforms in schools are different in every country in their content, direction and pace, they have common factors which is they result in an increased work load for teachers". Similarly, in a major survey of teachers in England to investigate reasons for attrition, Smithers and Robinson (2003, p. 5) reported upon key reasons for secondary teachers leaving the profession. They found that the most frequently given reason for going was workload (58% of leavers) followed by pupil behaviour (45%).

Day and Smethem (2009, p. 146) reported a survey by Market & Opinion Research International of all serving teachers registered with the General Teaching Council for England in 2002. The survey that involved over 70,000 respondents reported that when asked to give the three greatest demotivating factors in their work 56% of respondents cited workload, 39% cited overload, 35% cited a target driven culture and 31% cited pupil behaviour and discipline. In summary, research consistently shows that teachers worldwide face challenges with their workload.

Third, teachers faced challenges in implementing national education policy because students reportedly lacked interest in their studies. According to Sammons et al., (1998), pupil behaviour and attendance were a significant problem in 'less effective' schools. In addition, differences in students' background and abilities have been reported to create difficulties for teachers when dealing with larger classes of students because some of them were very advanced in their learning while others were not (Chen, 2011). The previous discussion showed that teachers in this study focused a lot on examination results and therefore, students' attitudes also created challenges for them. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009, p. 492) "the deteriorating climate is marked by increases in troublesome student behaviors, and teachers become emotionally exhausted as they try to manage them".

Fourth, teachers in this study also faced challenges because of what they described as the excessive dependence of parents on the schools; that is, parents did not actively co-operate in the implementation of new policy. The challenge that teachers faced was to inform parents about new educational policies and also to obtain their co-operation in implementing education policy. Ng has reported a similar situation in Hong Kong when the government attempted to implement school-based management (SBM) in the education system. The policy needed parents to become involved with this implementation but Ng (2011) stated that the parents in Hong Kong did not understand the meaning of their intended involvement in schools. The Hong Kong government introduced a policy that mandated parental involvement in managing schools. Even with the introduction of this mandate, Ng concluded from her study that “the process of including parents to participate in schools, aiming at achieving the institutional goal of partnership, emerges as a far more complicated process than expected” (p. 665). While my findings and those of the Ng study revealed that schools faced challenges in obtaining parents’ involvement, a meta-analysis of 50 studies on the existing research on parental involvement at school by Hill and Tyson (2009) found that parental involvement was positively associated with achievement. The reported absence of such involvement in this study created challenges for teachers in helping students to achieve. Some of these challenges were associated with emotional stress.

11.5.4 Teachers’ emotional stress in implementing a new change in education

The previous discussion showed that teachers face emotional stress in implementing a new change in education. Hargreaves (2004) argued that

Change and emotion are inseparable. Each implicates the other. Both involve movement. Change is defined as ‘movement from one state to another,’ while emotion comes from the Latin

emovere, meaning 'to arouse or stir up'. There is no human change without emotion that does not embody a momentary or momentous process of change (p. 287).

In addition, findings from my study showed that teachers felt emotional stress because they felt forced to implement an educational policy change with which they did not agree. They remained comfortable with their usual style of teaching, they felt uncomfortable with the changes recommended by this policy and the findings of this study showed that this led to them being opposed to its implementation. They only became involved in the policy because they were following instruction from the MOE. According to Hargreaves (2005), when teachers resist reform efforts, it is often because it threatens their emotional bonds with students and colleagues by overloading the curriculum and intensifying teachers' work and control from the outside. In addition, Schmidt and Datnow (2005), stated that teachers anticipate the negative consequences that the reform agenda - often imposed from the outside - will have on them and their students; thus, teachers resist reforms when the rhetoric of change does not match with the reality of their everyday experiences.

Logically, because the changes affect teachers' emotions, teachers need to be supported emotionally to cope with changes. According to Jennings and Greenberg (2009, p. 496) "when teachers lack the social emotional competence to handle challenges, they experience emotional stress. High levels of emotional stress can have an adverse effect on job performance and may eventually lead to burnout". In addition, "Socially and emotionally competent teachers have high self-awareness. They recognize their emotions, emotional patterns, and tendencies and know how to generate and use emotions such as joy and enthusiasm to motivate learning in themselves and other" (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009, p. 495).

In order to assist teachers to cope with negative emotional experiences of the changes, they need to be assisted to be a 'resilient teacher' because as Day and Kington (2008), stated

It is clear from research reported here that teachers need to be resilient to sustain their sense of effectiveness in what is an

emotionally as well as an intellectually demanding endeavour; that their capacity for resilience relates to their sense of positive or negative identity; and that the extent to which they are able to manage this relates to their sense of effectiveness (p. 22)

Day and Kington (2008, pp. 8-9) further argued that “teachers need to be resilient and to be supported emotionally during these periods in order that these may be managed in ways that build or sustain positive identities and existing effectiveness”. Furthermore, Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) claimed that throughout their research, they found that high-resilient individuals tend to experience positive emotions even amidst stress.

The above discussion showed that previous studies associated positive emotion with resilience. Therefore, this study set out to identify the ways that teachers can be helped to be a resilient teacher and consequently to exhibit positive emotions when facing challenges from educational changes.

11.5.5 Issues of change leadership

This study also focused on the issue of leadership for change. According to Hargreaves (2004, p. 306), “the analysis of the emotional impact of educational change on teachers has important implications for leadership at the national or state/provincial and individual school levels”. As discussed in Chapter Six there have been previous no studies conducted in Malaysia regarding the issue of the role of educational leadership in assisting teachers to become resilient and eventually to have positive emotions in facing educational policy changes. Therefore the findings of this study have contributed new knowledge about the important implications for school level leadership when facing educational changes that require teachers to change what they do.

The findings from my study showed that five approaches were utilised by the educational leaders. First, they provided a congenial working environment that did

not place undue pressure on teachers. Due to this action, teachers felt that the changes did not bring unreasonable pressure on them. Second, they eased the burden for teachers in implementing the changes in educational policy by adapting change requirements to the capabilities of the teachers. Teachers were also consulted in determining the suitability of the activities that needed to be conducted to help them implement the education policy changes. Third, they provided encouraging monitoring by identifying teachers' difficulties in implementing the changes and providing support for improving performance. Fourth, they showed continuing appreciation, both formal and informal. Finally they promoted school successes. This in turn raised the schools' reputation and boosted the morale of teachers to work harder at their schools.

In summary, the findings from the schools in this study suggested that issues of changes in educational policy in Malaysia, training issues prior to implementing the required changes and the policy and workplace conditions under which teachers work, all created emotional stress for teachers in implementing new changes in education in Malaysia. In order to meet these challenges, the role of educational leadership was therefore to attempt to implement the educational policy changes at their schools in ways that did not result in undue pressure for teachers to adapt the implementation of educational policy in accordance with the teacher's ability, to give teachers immediate assistance when they needed it, to appreciate the work of teachers and disseminate the school's success in order to create positive emotions for teachers and to also help them become more resilient in meeting the challenges of change. Hargreaves (2004) has argued that educational leaders face challenges to create an inclusive environment for developing and implementing educational change, especially within a context of mandatory reform, to regain the credibility and commitment of their staff, to exercise moral purpose and personal courage and to promote what is best for their staff. My findings are consistent with Hargreaves statement and add weight to his argument.

Chapter Twelve

CONCLUSION

12

12.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I provide the brief answer for each of the research of the questions; a critical discussion of the main findings of the study and the issue of changes and change leadership. In addition, I identify the contributions and limitations of the study, and the final section provides some suggestion for further research.

12.2 Addressing the research questions

1. *How do teachers/SMT members/PTA members' perceive the implementation of the Smart School Concept, the implementation of teaching and learning of Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010?*

The majority of participants in this study focused their discussion only upon the implementation of national educational policies that related to examinations. This is not too surprising because the Malaysian education system is dominated primarily by examination achievement. Most participants therefore spoke only about the implementation of the teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English rather than the two other policies. Additionally, the emphasis on examination results had led some members of the Senior Management Teams and teachers who were teaching subjects that were not related to the teaching of Science and Mathematics to concentrate on teaching

their subjects rather than focusing on assisting all staff in their schools in implementing the policy. They felt the policy was irrelevant to them so they focused only on improving the results of their particular students in the examinations. The majority of participants also believed that the implementation of the national education policy had more negative effects for teachers than positives ones. This was primarily because they believed the Ministry of Education was too quick in implementing the policy and as a result teachers were not fully ready for implementation. Furthermore, the centralization of the education system in Malaysia has led to the Ministry of Education to implement policy in all secondary schools regardless of school location, facilities, or teacher or student quality. Therefore, teachers in rural areas in this study were confronted with additional demands in implementing the policies simply because their school was under resourced compared with schools in urban areas.

2. *What are the main challenges that teachers have faced and why do they believe that those are the main challenges for them?*

The main challenge teachers reportedly faced in implementing new policies arose from the demands of the many and varied responsibilities they had to carry out in the school. They were also reportedly challenged by the lack of interest on the part of the students, pupils missing lessons and having poor motivation and low academic ability, especially in English. Teachers faced challenges because they believed some parents were remiss in their responsibilities to their child's education and discipline matters. The teachers said that parents delegated these responsibilities fully to teachers. The participants also claimed that the Ministry of Education kept changing national educational policies, making it more difficult for them to implement them properly. All the above challenges of education policy change were confronted by both urban and rural teachers in this study but the rural teachers faced additional barriers because their school had a lack of facilities.

3. *How do teachers cope with these challenges and how do educational leaders assist them in these situations?*

The majority of participants (including members of the Senior Management Teams, teachers and Parent Teacher Association members) claimed that members of the Senior Management Teams (the educational leadership at each school) played the dominant role in assisting teachers to face challenges in the implementation of national educational policies. The educational leadership teams reportedly used a number of strategies in assisting teachers. They provided a congenial working environment that did not place undue pressure on teachers; eased the burden for teachers in implementing the policies; provided encouraging monitoring; showed continuing appreciation and promoted the success of the school. In addition, teachers' personal strengths such as accepting their full responsibilities as a teacher; utilizing social skills; possessing and maintaining a high level of self-esteem; having a personal commitment; and feeling self-satisfaction at students' success in exams, were reported as assisting them to face the challenges. Three other minor factors that could assist teachers to face challenges were also reported: support from members of the Parent Teacher Association; co-workers' collegial professionalism; and being employed close to their home town.

12.3 The main findings related to the issue of change and change leadership

This study begins the work of identifying the significance of the role of educational leadership in sustaining teacher resilience through difficult periods of new policy implementation, an area that has not previously been addressed fully, either internationally or in studies conducted specifically in Malaysia. Inclusion in the study of a focus on teacher resilience in rural area schooling provides new insights because previous studies were only carried out in urban and suburban areas. The topic of educational leadership for sustaining teacher resilience during the national

educational policy reforms in Malaysia is novel in terms of educational leadership, teacher resilience and policy implementation and analysis. Data analysis carried out using categories based on the hermeneutic philosophy, and presented in a narrative approach is a qualitative research approach that has rarely been used in previous studies undertaken in Malaysia. I attempted to use the theory of resilience as a theory to explain teachers' coping strategies in the study. It was found that the dominant factor that could assist teachers was supportive educational leadership in the school itself.

Discussion of the role of educational leaders in assisting teachers to become resilient emerged in response to contemporary changes in education policy in Malaysia. The study has suggested that there may be major issues that inhibit smooth education policy changes in Malaysia; the Ministry of Education may have been too quick to change a policy, education policy is too tied to achievement in school examinations and there is evidence of a strong external influence on the implementation of educational policy in Malaysia especially from parents.

Such a situation has reportedly caused teachers in this study to feel emotional stress and has made it difficult for them to implement the education policy requirements more efficiently and effectively. However, the role of school leadership was identified by participants as being important in ensuring that teachers are able to maintain and increase their resilience in order to ensure that teachers are more emotionally stable and thus in a better position to be able to implement policy change requirements more successfully.

12.3.1 Policy and workplace conditions under which the teachers' work is situated

Analysis of the data from the schools in this study revealed that there were four specific workplace conditions in which teachers' work is situated in Malaysia. The first condition is that the Malaysian education system is highly centralized. This has led to an inflexible implementation policy regardless of individual school context and

situation. This condition created more challenges for rural teachers in this study because their school lacked facilities. The second condition is workload. Teachers had many and various responsibilities during their daily work and the implementation of new policy increased their workload further. As a result, teachers were reportedly experiencing a high level of job stress and had low job satisfaction. Third, teachers reported that they faced challenges in implementing national education policy because students lacked interest in their studies. Finally, teachers also faced challenges because of the excessive dependence of parents on the schools. The difficult challenge that teachers faced was to inform parents about new educational policies and also to obtain their co-operation in implementing education policy.

In contrast, the majority of teachers in this study reported that educational leaders provided significant support and created pleasant working environments for them. In addition, the teachers themselves believed that their personal inner strength and support from PTA members also assisted them to face the challenges of the changes in education policy. These assisting factors were present in both schools.

Negative impacts on teachers' emotions and resilience in achieving teaching targets arose because the pressures teachers in the implementation of educational policy changes that came from outside schools. The actions taken by the MOE in implementing a new educational policy that seemed to ignore teacher preparation and school context requirements increased the challenges for teachers. In addition, teachers also faced challenges from parents who prioritised examination achievement by their children. Those two situations became constant stress factors for teachers because they were outside the teachers' control. Considering the difficulty teachers faced in controlling outside pressure, educational leaders necessarily played a pivotal role in assisting teachers whenever the Ministry changed educational policy.

12.4 Contributions of this study

- This study identifies the significance of the role of educational leadership for sustaining teacher resilience, an area that has not previously been addressed

fully, either internationally or in studies done in Malaysia, in terms of sustaining teacher resilience through difficult periods of new policy implementation.

- The study of teacher resilience in rural area schools provides new insights because the previous studies were only carried out in urban and suburban areas.
- The topic of educational leadership for sustaining teacher resilience during the national educational policy reforms is a new topic for three research areas which are educational leadership, teacher resilience and policy implementation and analysis.
- In the context of Malaysian leadership studies, the unique perspective of my qualitative methodology has been to value the voices of my participants. Previous educational research in Malaysia has used primarily survey methods, resulting in the collection of quantitative data that has not reflected individuals' personal expressions of their views and experiences. The qualitative methodology and case study approach used in my study is thus fairly novel in Malaysia, and it provides an example of how fresh insights into the processes and effects of education policy changes can be generated. My qualitative interviews valued the voices of my participants through giving them opportunities to express their opinions on any issues relating to the implementation of new educational policies that were affecting them. The participants could also express their views fearlessly because I was able to assure them that I would not allow anyone else access to the information they provided me with. I believe that this guaranteed confidentiality has resulted in the participants providing me with honest and accurate information about their experiences of the implementation of national educational policies, the challenges they faced and the way they coped with these challenges.
- Data analysis carried out using categories based on the hermeneutics philosophy, and presented in a narrative approach is a qualitative research approach that has rarely been used in previous studies undertaken in Malaysia.

- The involvement of three different groups of participants provided a range of complementary insights into the implementation of educational policy changes in Malaysia during the time of this research. Teachers and SMT members raised the important point that, as a consequence of the Ministry of Education being too hasty in implementing new education policy, there were more negative implications for teachers than positive ones because they already have various responsibilities in their daily work especially on the core teaching task. The implementation of the new policy increased the workload burden and stress on them. Conversely, PTA members took a more positive view, stating that the implementation of new policies provided better opportunities for students to improve their academic performance. There was strong agreement, however, about teachers' workload issues. All three groups of participants believed that teachers already had many varied responsibilities in their daily work and the implementation of changes in national educational policies increased their workload substantially. In discussing the way teachers cope with the challenges, each group of participants claimed that they played their role in assisting teachers to face challenges. Teachers believed that their personal strengths and abilities enabled them to confront the challenges of the implementation of national education policies. The SMT members reported that they had endeavoured to provide support to teachers so that they would be confident in implementing the policies and that they carried out their overall responsibilities in supporting schools. The PTA members claimed that they help teachers in facing challenges by providing financial assistance in the implementation of additional activities related to education policy and to persuade parents to help teachers, to assist in ensuring the success of school activities including implementation of the policy. All three groups of participants did acknowledge, however, that the main factors assisting teachers in facing challenges originated from members of the SMTs consistent with Leithwood et al.'s (2000) belief that leadership practices can help to foster teachers' commitment to change.

12.5 Implication of the findings of the study

There are several specific implications for secondary schooling policy and practice in Malaysia that can be derived from the findings of this study.

Suggestions for the Policy Makers include:

- The dominant emphasis on examination results in the education system in Malaysia may need to be reviewed because of the negative effects it reportedly has on new policy implementation. The evidence of this study is that at present teachers only attend to policy changes if it is perceived that they will affect examination results.
- The need to consider providing ample time for teachers to prepare to implement a new policy. It is also suggested that the Policy Makers should not change policy so frequently and, instead, allow sufficient time for each new policy to become established within schools.
- It is suggested that the policy makers make accommodations between centralization and decentralization in implementing policy by actively considering the differences among schools and not simply treating all school identically in implementing a particular policy. That is, the implementation of a policy needs to be adapted to schools' particular contexts and situations.
- At the school level, policy makers should systematically investigate and evaluate the workload of teachers. The majority of participants in the study, whether senior or junior, claimed they were under negative stress because of the scope of their workload. Placing more teachers at schools in their home town could alleviate some stress. In addition, the Ministry of Education needs to also try to improve school facilities, particularly for schools in rural areas.

- To enable SMT members to better translate policy into practice at the school level, the Ministry of Education should provide training in leading change to all the members of the SMT prior the implementation of a new education policy thus encouraging a culture in translating policy to practice at their school that can involve all members of the school. This is important because currently, in practice, schools are only sending SMT members and teachers who are directly affected by a particular policy to the training sessions the Ministry provides and as a result (as reported in this study) SMT members and teachers who are not related to that policy said that they did not know about the policy. Clearly, the SMT members involved in such training have an important role in making sure that other SMT members and teachers find out about the policy changes and in creating a culture that will translate policy into practice effectively. In addition, SMT members also can apply some approaches that were discussed in the literature review about leading and managing change by helping teachers to implement new policies. The literature reviewed earlier in this thesis provides numerous insights in this regard. Amongst the strategies that they can apply are, for example, to: create a context where personnel become familiar with new policy implementation and influence staff to agree to be involved in the changes (M. Fullan, 2003), consider working through a process that helps teachers see new possibilities and situations; recognise that being confronted with something new hits the emotions; and recognise that emotionally charged ideas change behaviour or reinforce changed behaviour (Kotter & Cohen, 2002). In addition, the literature suggests that they require new mind and action sets for leading complex change. To manage change successfully they need personal characteristics of energy/enthusiasm, hope, moral purpose, and skills in understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing and coherence making (M. Fullan, 2002). Furthermore, according to Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (2000), almost all school reform and restructuring initiatives assume the need for significant changes in classroom practice. Therefore, to facilitate educational change that is beneficial for students, it needs to be ensured that such changes can be implemented smoothly in the classroom by committed teachers. Leithwood et al. (2000)

believed that leadership practices can help to foster teachers' commitment to change. According to them "empirical evidence has demonstrated the impact of such leadership on organizational members' willingness to exert extra effort and most probably, on their sense of self-efficacy. Both of these psychological states are closely related to commitment" (p. 135). They believe leadership practices that would contribute to fostering teacher commitments to change are: Identifying and articulating a vision and fostering the acceptance of group goals by encouraging the personal adoption of organizational goals and increasing goal clarity and the perception of such goals as challenging but achievable; providing individualized support; creating intellectual stimulation to draw teachers' attention to discrepancies between current and desired practices and to understand the truly challenging nature of school restructuring goals; providing an appropriate model to enhance teachers' belief about their own capacities and their sense of self-efficacy; providing high performance expectations in order to help teachers to see the challenging nature of the goals being pursued in their school and providing contingent reward by giving informative feedback about performance in order to enhance teachers' capacity beliefs, as well as emotional arousal processes makes this set of practices potentially transforming too (p. 143-144).

Suggestions for the Leadership Programme Providers include:

- The literature review of educational leadership training at the University of Malaya showed that there was a strong emphasis on theories of educational leadership. Therefore it is suggested that more emphasis should be placed upon practical training using real scenarios and authentic situations. Educational leaders would then be able to gain hands-on practical experience in a safe learning environment rather than focusing upon memorizing leadership theories.
- Educational Leadership training at IAB and the Institute of Principalship Studies could usefully focus their training on the role of effective leadership

in developing effective schools and give more attention to the emotional aspect of educational leaders in their training. This study indicated the importance of teachers being stable emotionally when expected to implement educational policy changes.

- The Leadership Programme Providers also need to provide educational leadership training that is appropriate for specific school situations rather providing the current general training. In other words, to support educational leaders in their schools as part of the training.
- One finding from my study showed that the schools faced difficulties in informing parents about the policy being implemented. The parents were also reluctant to become involved in the implementation of educational policy and delegated this responsibility fully to schools. Therefore, the Leadership Programme Providers should also provide for educational leaders some training that can help them to involve parents more systematically with the implementation of policies in schools.
- The previous discussion in Chapter 6 regarding leadership and learning showed that some points that were raised by the researchers had not been implemented widely in Malaysia. These point to issues such as; the role of leaders in improving student achievement (Robinson, Hopepa & Llyod, 2009), the essential role of professional learning communities in education system (Hargreaves, 2009), and the vital aspects of emotion to leadership in developing or established leaders in schools (Crawford, [2011](#)). Therefore Leadership Programme Providers could include those aspects in their training programme for leaders.
- One of the ways in which the Malaysian Leadership Programme Providers could enhance their training programs is by taking into account the Best Evidence Synthesis Iteration (BES) framework (Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009). This framework provided detailed process and guidance for educational leaders in order to improve students' academic achievement. This process could be applied in the Malaysian context, which is students' performance-driven. Therefore, leaders need to understand and apply an approach such as pedagogical leadership as suggested by the BES in order to assist teachers in conducting their teaching sessions and consequently assist

students to achieve good result. The Leadership Programme Providers also could use this guidance to influence teachers' teaching activities and as a result could fulfill the objectives of policy implementation.

Suggestions for the members of SMTs (including Principals) include:

- Forming a special committee at their schools to investigate teachers' various responsibilities; identifying suitable approaches to ensure equitable workload among teachers; and providing support for teachers in adapting to new situations at their schools, especially teachers with limited experience.
- Trying to balance the emphasis on achieving excellence in examinations and other priorities established by the Ministry of Education and not placing too much work pressure on teachers through the introduction of too many new policies simultaneously.
- Identifying the actual reasons behind the attitudes of students who are not interested in study and who have low academic ability, rather than simply putting all the blame on the students.
- Identifying suitable methods to involve parents in facilitating the implementation of policies. These need to be appropriate to the particular school situation. In this study, the majority of parents in the urban area had good academic backgrounds, but they were too busy with their work to become involved in the school. In contrast, most of the parents in the rural area had more time to become involved at school but they generally had low academic records which made it difficult for them to understand the intricacies of educational policies.
- Assisting teachers in implementing the national educational policies by providing a congenial working environment that does not place undue pressure on them; easing the burden for teachers in implementing the policy, providing encouraging monitoring, continuing to appreciate teachers formally or informally and promoting schools success in ways appropriate to their schools' situation.

Suggestions for teachers include:

- Openness to the approaches that are utilised by the members of the Senior Management Teams in assisting them to face the challenges.
- Developing their professional and personal strength by accepting responsibilities as a teacher, utilising social skills such as those used in their family in facing challenges presented by students' attitudes, possessing sufficient self-esteem to face challenges, having a personal commitment to sacrifice time and money to help students, taking pride in students' success in examinations and using their success as a catalyst for self-motivation, increasing collegiality with other teachers by supporting and assisting each other in implementing their work.

Suggestions for PTA members include:

- Providing financial assistance for the implementation of additional activities related to education policy.
- Persuading parents to help teachers in promoting the success of school activities including the implementation of new policies.

12.6 Limitations of this study

There were some limitations of this study, as follows.

- This study focused on three educational policies, but the majority of participants emphasised, in their discussions, the policy of teaching Science and Mathematics in English. During analysis of data for this study, the government abolished this policy and replaced it with a new policy, Upholding the Malay Language, Strengthening Command of English Policy

(Badri, 2011). With the implementation of this new policy, the government changed back the medium of instruction for the teaching of Science and Mathematics, from English to the Malay language. However, the changing of the policy did not adversely influence the data gathered regarding teaching Science and Mathematics in English and other policies because the main aim of this study was not focused exclusively on just one particular policy, but on policy implementation more generally. The study concentrated upon the situations or conditions that emerge as a result of the implementation of any new policy and the challenges resulting from the introduction of such policy.

- The purposeful sampling of selection from only two secondary schools decreased the generalisation of the research findings. However, this study, as in many qualitative studies, did not aim to generally apply the findings to all schools. Nevertheless, the findings provide ideas for members of the Senior Management Teams, teachers and Parent Teacher Association members to assist teachers to face challenges in the implementation of national education policies
- Even though this study aimed to compare the differences between a school in an urban area and a school in a rural area, the findings showed that there were few differences between them. For the first topic regarding participants' perception of the implementation of national educational policy, the findings were almost the same between those two schools. For the challenges that teachers faced as a result of the implementation of national educational policy, all the challenges were almost identical except that the school in a rural area faced additional challenges because of their school lack of facilities. For the discussion regarding the methods used and support teachers received to face the challenges, the findings were also largely identical apart from the way members of the Senior Management Teams eased teachers burden to implement the policy and to promote school success. Because of the scope of the study, these differences may simply be differences between two secondary schools.
- The data collection was limited to members of the Senior Management Teams, teachers and Parent Teacher Association members. It did not involve students even though students are involved directly in the implementation of

the national educational policies. Valuable opinions could have been obtained if data had been also derived from students. Nevertheless, due to practical considerations, it was not possible in this study.

The method for this study was limited to the interviews because it was considered that the data gathered through interviews was rich enough to make other methods unnecessary. However, this decision meant that the data relied on the reported experiences of those involved, not direct observation by the researcher.

12.7 Suggestions for further research

Based on the results of this study and the limitations identified previously, some suggestions for further research are outlined below.

- Given the excessive emphasis on achievement in the examination had reportedly led to various challenges for teachers who were directly involved with the implementation of an education policy and also for teachers who were not involved with the policy, a study to identify an educational system that does not place too much emphasis on examination achievement should be conducted in order to identify ways to reduce Malaysian teachers' stress in their work.
- Some practices by the Ministry of Education in the implementation of education policies such as being too quick in implementing policies, centralisation in delegating tasks regardless of school facilities and students' qualities, and keeping on changing policy, provided challenges for teachers. Therefore, a study could be conducted to identify other administrative practices that may be more appropriate for implementing policies to ensure that the aims of the implementation of the policy are achieved and at the same time do not put unnecessary pressure on the implementers.
- It is suggested that systematic, longitudinal research studies be carried out to identify the best way to implement a policy.

- This and other studies have reported the problems teachers faced because of the various responsibilities they have, problems from students and a lack of facilities in rural schools. Several studies in these areas need to be further carried out because the problems teachers continue to face.
- The findings also indicated that teachers felt comfortable and able to face challenges when they were working at their home town because they were familiar with the environment and communities' demands in the area. Thus, a study that compared teachers' experiences in their home town and those working elsewhere could be conducted to determine whether the Ministry of Education should increase the number of teacher's local training centres to recruit teachers based on their home town.
- The findings about approaches members of the Senior Management Teams or other educational leaders used in assisting teachers to build and sustain their resilience in this study are based mainly on the implementation the policy of teaching and learning of Science and Mathematics in English. Therefore, a study could usefully be carried out to identify whether these approaches are also used by educational leaders in regard to the implementing of other current policies introduced by the Ministry of Education such as the policy of Upholding the Malay Language, Strengthening Command of English Policy (Badri, 2011) and the policy of One Student, One Sport (Usuldin, 2011).
- Research might also be conducted to identify the factors that influence the acceptance or rejection by school leadership of the implementation of a particular education policy.
- The findings of this study showed that teachers who accepted their full responsibilities as a teacher, utilised their social skills such as those developed in their family, to face challenges from students. They also worked together with their colleagues, had a high level of self-esteem, personal commitment and self-satisfaction, all of which assisted them to face challenges and become resilient. The question is whether, during the process of selecting future teachers, these features can be identified among prospective teachers? A study could be carried out on the factors that can encourage teachers to be better prepared to meet their career obligations when they enter the field of education.

- The findings also showed that teachers faced challenges because parents in urban areas were reportedly too busy with their work and parents in rural areas had low levels of academic backgrounds. The staff reported that these two factors decreased parental involvement in assisting teachers. Parents may view the situation quite differently. Thus, some studies need to be carried out to more fully explore parents' understanding about educational policy, how to encourage them to become more fully involved in the implementation of a policy and what is the relationship between parental involvement and successful policy implementation.
- Studies concerning the role of the PTA in assisting schools and teachers, particularly in the implementation of educational policies should be considered because, apart from this study, findings of previous studies have shown that Parent Teacher Association members may help teachers in general but that their help is not necessarily focused on the implementation of educational policies.

As a result of this small-scale study, a little more is known about the way in which teachers in urban and rural secondary schools in Malaysia may be supported to develop resilience. The findings are useful at several levels and provide a sound basis for future research, policy development and the practice of teachers and educational leaders. The success of education policy development and implementation in Malaysia will be better informed as a result of this study and future research that builds on its findings.

APPENDIX 1



Massey University

27 February 2009

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Dear Ahmad

**Re: HEC: Southern B Application – 09/03
Educational leadership for sustaining teachers' resilience in two secondary schools
in Malaysia**

Thank you for your letter dated 27 February 2009.

On behalf of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B I am pleased to advise you that the ethics of your application are now approved. Approval is for three years. If this project has not been completed within three years from the date of this letter, reapproval must be requested.

Please note that travel undertaken by students must be approved by the supervisor and the relevant Pro Vice-Chancellor and be in accordance with the Policy and Procedures for Course-Related Student Travel Overseas. In addition, the supervisor must advise the University's Insurance Officer.

If the nature, content, location, procedures or personnel of your approved application change, please advise the Secretary of the Committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr Karl Pajo, Chair
Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B

cc Dr Marian Court
School of Educational Studies
PN900

Prof John O'Neill
School of Arts, Development & Health Education
PN900

Prof Howard Lee, HoS
School of Educational Studies
PN900

Ms Tara Fisher
Graduate School of Education
PN900

Massey University Human Ethics Committee
Accredited by the Health Research Council



APPENDIX 2



UNIT PERANCANG EKONOMI
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JABATAN PERDANA MENTERI
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Ruj. Tuan:
Your Ref.:

Ruj. Kami: UPE: 40/200/19/2249
Our Ref.:

Tarikh: 6 May 2008
Date:

Ahmad Zabidi bin Abdul Razak
8B College Street
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Palmerston North 64
New Zealand

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA

With reference to your application dated 20 March 2008, I am pleased to inform you that your application to conduct research in Malaysia has been approved by the **Research Promotion and Co-Ordination Committee, Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department**. The details of the approval are as follows:

Researcher's name : **AHMAD ZABIDI BIN ABDUL RAZAK**
Passport No. / I. C No: **740410-02-5897**
Nationality : **MALAYSIA**
Title of Research : **"EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINING
TEACHER RESILIENCE IN TWO SECONDARY
SCHOOLS IN MALAYSIA"**

Period of Research Approved: **THREE YEARS**

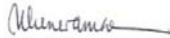
2. Please collect your Research Pass in person from the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department, Parcel B, Level 4 Block B5, Federal Government Administrative Centre, 62502 Putrajaya and bring along two (2) passport size photographs. You are also required to comply with the rules and regulations stipulated from time to time by the agencies with which you have dealings in the conduct of your research.

3. I would like to draw your attention to the undertaking signed by you that you will submit without cost to the Economic Planning Unit the following documents:

-
- a) A brief summary of your research findings on completion of your research and before you leave Malaysia; and
- b) Three (3) copies of your final dissertation/publication.

4. Lastly, please submit a copy of your preliminary and final report directly to the State Government where you carried out your research. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(MUNIRAH ABD. MANAN)
For Director General,
Macro Economic Section,
Economic Planning Unit.
E-mail: munirah@epu.jpm.my
Tel: 88882809/2818/2958
Fax: 88883798

ATTENTION

This letter is only to inform you the status of your application and **cannot be used as a research pass.**

C.c:

Pengarah
Bahagian Perancangan Penyelidikan & Dasar Pendidikan
Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia
Aras 1-4, Blok E8
Kompleks Kerajaan Parcel E
Pusat Pentadbiran Kerajaan Persekutuan
62604 Putrajaya
(u.p: Dr. Soon Seng Thah) (Ruj. Tuan: KP(BPPDP)603/011 Jld 9(08))

Prof. Dr. Nik Meriam Nik Sulaiman
Pengarah,
Instiut Pengurusan Penyelidikan dan Perundingan,
Universiti Malaya
C313, Bangunan IPS,
50603 Kuala Lumpur.

APPENDIX 3



جڤاتڤن پلڤاڤان نڤرڤن كڤڤاڤان دارالامان
JABATAN PELAJARAN NEGERI KEDAH DARUL AMAN
KOMPLEKS PENDIDIKAN, JALAN STADIUM
0504 ALOR STAR
KEDAH DARUL AMAN

Telpon : A.S. 04-731311
No. Fax : 04-7317242

"KEDAH MAJU 2010"

Kami : JPK(PPSG)/03-12/RJd.29(3)
Tarikh : 6 Mei 2009
11 Jamadilawal 1430

En. Ahmad Zabidi bin Abdul Razak
Kampong Pisang
Padang Terap Kiri
06300 Kuala Nerang

Tuan/Puan,

Kebeneran Untuk Menjalankan Kajian di Sekolah

Adalah saya dengan hormatnya diarah memaklumkan bahawa permohonan tuan/puan untuk menjalankan kajian / soal selidik di Sekolah di Negeri Kedah, bertajuk " *Educational Leadership for Sustaining Teacher Resilience in Two Secondary Schools in Malaysia* " telah di luluskan.

2. Kelulusan ini adalah berdasarkan kepada apa yang terkandung di dalam cadangan penyelidikan yang tuan/puan kemukakan ke Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia. Sekolah yang terlibat adalah seperti berikut:

3. Kebeneran ini adalah tertakluk kepada persetujuan Pengetua/Guru Besar sekolah berkenaan dan adalah sah sehingga 30 November 2009.

Sekian, terima kasih.

' BERKHIDMAT UNTUK NEGARA '
' PENDIDIKAN CEMERLANG KEDAH TERBILANG '

Saya yang menurut perintah,


(ROZAINI BIN AHMAD, B.C.K.)
Penolong Pengarah Kanan (Ketua Unit)
Unit Perhubungan dan Pendaftaran
Sektor Pengurusan Sekolah,
b.p. Pengarah Pelajaran Negeri Kedah Darul Aman.

Jmkppskajep/2009/002

APPENDIX 4



SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
New Zealand
T 64 6 356 3295
F 64 6 351 3385
www.massey.ac.nz

March 2009

Dear [Principal]

Letter Requesting Access

Educational Leadership for Sustaining Teacher Resilience in Two Secondary Schools in Malaysia

My name is Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak and I am a Lecturer in Education in the Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy at the University of Malaya. I am currently engaged in a doctoral study at Massey University, funded by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. My supervisors are Professor John O'Neill and Dr Marian Court. In my research I hope to explore secondary school educational leaders' professional practices to ensure that teachers sustain their resilience when they face new challenges.

I intend to undertake my fieldwork at various points between March 2009 and May 2009 and, with your approval, would very much like to invite members of staff from your school to volunteer to take part in the study. I am aware also that, prior to making any decision to participate, you may wish to discuss the proposed research with your senior management teams.

I enclose an information sheet (see Appendix 1) which gives details of the study, the procedures and the levels of involvement which are required from participants. I would like to emphasise that participating schools and individual members of staff will be given confidentiality with regard to the data which are gathered.

I am only permitted to start the research with approval from the Economic Planning Unit. For conducting this study I have already received written approval from the Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department in Malaysia, giving me permission to conduct my fieldwork in Malaysian Schools (see Appendix 2). I therefore seek your kind permission to carry out my study in your school.

Schools have been selected for this study according to specific criteria including location, socio-economic background and student population characteristics. Your school fulfils these criteria.

The methods of data collection are interview, document analysis and survey. In this study, interviews will serve as the primary data collection method. The interviewing will involve (i) members of the senior management teams (Principal, Assistant Principal Academic, Assistant Principal Students Affairs and Assistant Principal Co-Curricular), (ii) Heads of Department of Technical and Vocational, Science and Mathematics, Humanities, and Languages, (iii) a sample of teachers and (iv) a sample of members from committees of the Parent and Teacher Associations (PTA). All participants will be interviewed once for a maximum of one-and-a-half hours. The interviews will take place between March and May 2009.

Emerging themes from the interviews with teachers will feed into the development of a survey questionnaire, which will then be administered to the wider teacher population in the school. Completion of the questionnaire will be anonymous and voluntary. This survey will take place between October and November 2009.

In addition, with your permission, an analysis of relevant documents that members of your Senior Management Team use in assisting teachers to face the challenges will also be undertaken to understand the approaches that each member of your team use in assisting teachers to face the challenges of the implementation of new education policies.

As above mentioned, I seek your permission to approach all members of Senior Management Teams and all Heads of Departments.

However, it is not feasible to interview all teachers, so only twelve will be invited to participate in interviews. I wish to interview a diverse group that will include different ages, levels of experience, gender, ethnicity and subject specialisation (three teachers from each department). I thus seek your kind assistance to identify teachers who meet these criteria. Teachers will be invited to volunteer to participate until the sampling criteria have been fulfilled.

In order to explain my study to senior management, heads of department and teachers, I seek your permission to make a presentation to a whole staff meeting regarding the purpose of my study, methods of data collection, the procedures and the time for which participants will be involved and the participants' rights. Following the meeting, information sheets and consent forms will be distributed to staff.

In addition, for selecting members of PTAs, with your permission, I will contact directly the Chairperson of the PTA in your school and I will give him/her a brief overview of my study, the procedures, their role and the time requirements of the study. Then, I will seek the Chairperson's permission to have access to the PTA list of committee members in your school. From the PTA committee members list, potential interviewees will be randomly selected and invited to participate in the study. Three will be interviewed to represent the views of committee members.

I would be happy to make arrangements to discuss this project further with you and/or your colleagues. I may be contacted as indicated in the letterhead above.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I look forward to your early reply.

Yours sincerely,

Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak
School of Educational Studies
College of Education
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North, New Zealand

Home phone (New Zealand) : ++646 3567594
Mobile phone (New Zealand) : ++646 02102564632
Home phone (Malaysia) : 04 7860779
Mobile phone (Malaysia) : 0136698236
E-mail : zabidi@um.edu.my

APPENDIX 5



Massey University
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
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T 64 6 356 9099
F 64 6 351 3385
www.massey.ac.nz

Educational Leadership for Sustaining Teacher Resilience in Two Secondary Schools in Malaysia

INFORMATION SHEET

Members of Senior Management Teams

Researcher Introduction

My name is Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak and I am a Lecturer in Education in the Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy at the University of Malaya. I am currently engaged in a doctoral study, funded by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. My supervisors are Professor John O'Neill and Dr Marian Court. I invite you to participate in this study. The school principal has given me permission to approach staff, seeking volunteers.

Purpose of this study

The intent of this study is to explore educational leadership professional practices in assisting teachers to sustain their resilience when they face new challenges. The research topic emerged from the current situation in Malaysia where a number of new educational policies are currently being introduced. These are the introduction of the Smart School concept, the implementation of teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010.

The Malaysian Ministry of Education has argued that the implementation of these educational policies will be of potential benefit for students as individuals as well as for society as a whole. However, the implementation of the policies also creates challenges for teachers, departments, senior management teams and school communities. In particular, teachers need to concentrate on teaching and learning whilst trying to fulfill the demands of the new educational policies.

As a result, the implementation of these educational policies raises three main related issues. The first issue concerns the perceptions of educational leaders and teachers toward these educational policies and the challenges that their implementation will bring for them. The second issue regards the response of educational leaders and teachers to the challenges presented by the implementation of these educational policies. The third issue is the role of

educational leadership in assisting teachers in facing challenges that are a result of the implementation of these educational policies.

This research project will enable the investigation into educational leadership professional practices to ensure that teachers sustain their resilience when they face new challenges. Empirical data obtained from this research will be valuable in providing ideas for educational leaders on how to assist teachers to sustain their resilience and ensuring that all the innovations by the Ministry of Education will be implemented successfully and achieve their objectives.

Methods of data collection

The methods of data collection are:

1. Personal interview with Senior Management Team members, selected teachers and selected members of PTA committees.
2. Analysis of school documents related to the three education policies.
3. Questionnaire survey of all teachers.

In the interviews I am only interested in gathering data related to participants' understanding and experience. There are no right or wrong answers and I intend to make no judgements about the quality of teaching or supervision in my analysis

Participants' Involvement

You are invited to participate in this research project to express your opinions on and experiences of the existing teaching environment in Malaysia. Your views are also sought on educational leaders' professional practices in assisting teachers to face challenges. Your contribution will provide invaluable information for the betterment of the teaching environment in schools in Malaysia.

All the participants who will be involved in this study will be interviewed once for a maximum of one-and-a-half hours. The personal interviews and documents analysis will take place between March and May 2009.

The interview will be recorded with participants' permission. This is to help me focus on listening to the participant rather than on taking notes, as well as to have a record for reference. The recorded interview will be transcribed into written form. It will then be made available to participants for review if they wish to rectify or change any information.

The survey will be conducted online from New Zealand by using Survey Monkey. This survey will take place between October and November 2009.

Confidentiality statement

i) Participants

The identity of participants will be protected. In order to do this :

- all participants may respond personally and confidentially to my invitation to participate;
- participants will be interviewed away from the school if they wish; and
- the identity of participants will remain confidential during data collection and in the final research report.

ii) The institution

The identity of the school will also be protected. In order to do this :

- the name of the school will not be mentioned or revealed during data collection; and
- the name of the school will be replaced with a pseudonym for ease of reference during data collection and in the research report.

I shall return interview transcripts promptly for your verification. All information is confidential and will be stored and reported in such a way that the participants' identity will not be revealed. The original interview recording and signed consent forms will be stored in a secure place. I shall provide you with a copy of the conclusions and recommendations from the completed study. All original data will be destroyed after 5 years.

Participants' rights in the study

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate in the interview, you have the right to:

1. withdraw from the study at any time until the interview transcripts are finalised;
2. decline to answer any particular questions during the interview;
3. ask for the recording to be stopped at any time during the interview;
4. ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
5. use Bahasa Melayu where and if you feel better able to express yourself;
6. provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
7. be given access to the summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Contact details

If you require further information or clarification on this research project, feel free to contact me or my supervisors as follows:

Doctoral Research Student Supervisors

Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak Professor John O'Neill Dr Marian Court
School of Educational J.G.ONeill@massey.ac.nz M.R.Court@massey.ac.nz
Studies
College of Education
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Home phone (New Zealand) : ++646 3567594
Mobile phone (New Zealand) : ++646 02102564632
Home phone (Malaysia) : 04 7860779
Mobile phone (Malaysia) : 012-5334251
E-mail : zabidi@um.edu.my

Committee approval statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: [Southern B](#), Application [09/03](#). If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, Please contact [Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University, Human Ethics Committee: Southern B](#), telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Do you agree to participate?

If you agree to participate to participate in this research project, I sincerely thank you. Please complete the consent form as per attached and return it to me using the enclosed self-addressed envelope within 7 days of receiving this invitation.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to working with you.

APPENDIX 6

Educational Leadership For Sustaining Teacher Resilience In Two Secondary Schools In Malaysia

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Agreement to provide access

This agreement will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have read the Letter requesting access and have had the details of the study explained to me.

I grant permission for the researcher to:

1. conduct the study at my school.
2. attend a staff meeting in order to explain the purposes of the study.
3. have access to members of Senior Management Teams, selected teachers and selected members of PTA committees.
4. be provided with copies of relevant school records and documents.
5. be provided with a private room in which to undertake interviews.
6. be given assistance to access teachers with details of the online survey.

Signature: Date:

Institution

Full name – printed:

E-mail address:

APPENDIX 7

Educational Leadership For Sustaining Teacher Resilience In Two Secondary Schools In Malaysia

CONSENT FORM

Members Of Senior Management Teams

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I agree/do not agree [DELETE ONE] to the interview being voice recorded.

Signature : Date :

Full name – printed:

E-mail address :

Contact number(s) :

APPENDIX 8



SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
New Zealand
T 64 6 356 9099
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www.massey.ac.nz

Educational Leadership for Sustaining Teacher Resilience in Two Secondary Schools in Malaysia

INFORMATION SHEET

Teacher participants

Dear: _____

With your principal's permission, your name has been chosen from the list of teachers at the school, to be invited to participate in an interview my doctoral research study that explores secondary school educational leaders' professional practices to ensure that teachers sustain resilience when they face new challenges. You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. However, your contribution of information is much sought and appreciated. Please read below for further details.

Researcher's introduction

I am Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak, a lecturer in Education in the Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy at the University of Malaya. I am currently engaged in a doctoral study at Massey University, funded by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. My supervisors are Professor John O'Neill and Dr Marian Court.

The title of my doctoral research project is Educational Leadership for sustaining teacher resilience in two secondary schools in Malaysia.

Purpose of this study

The intent of this study is to explore educational leadership professional practices in assisting teachers to sustain their resilience when they face new challenges. The research topic emerged from the current situation in Malaysia where a number of new educational policies are currently being introduced. These are the introduction of the Smart School concept, the implementation of teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010.

The Malaysian Ministry of Education has argued that the implementation of these educational policies will be of potential benefit for students as individuals as well as for society as a whole. However, the implementation of the policies also creates challenges for teachers, departments, senior management teams and school communities. In particular, teachers need to concentrate on teaching and learning whilst trying to fulfill the demands of the new educational policies.

As a result, the implementation of these educational policies raises three main related issues. The first issue concerns the perceptions of educational leaders and teachers toward these educational policies and the challenges that their implementation will bring for them. The second issue regards the response of educational leaders and teachers to the challenges presented by the implementation of these educational policies. The third issue is the role of educational leadership in assisting teachers in facing challenges that are a result of the implementation of these educational policies.

This research project will enable the investigation into educational leadership professional practices to ensure that teachers sustain their resilience when they face new challenges. Empirical data obtained from this research will be valuable in providing ideas for educational leaders on how to assist teachers to sustain their resilience and ensuring that all the innovations by the Ministry of Education will be implemented successfully and achieve their objectives.

Participants' involvement

As a teacher, you are thus invited to participate in this research project. This is your opportunity to express your opinions on your current teaching environment and to share your views on how educational leaders' professional practices assist teachers to face the challenges. Your contribution will provide invaluable information for the betterment of teaching environment in Malaysian schools.

In the interviews I am only interested in gathering data related to participants' understanding and experience. There are no right or wrong answers and I intend to make no judgements about the quality of teaching or supervision in my analysis.

I plan to interview three teachers from each department between March and May 2009. Diverse opinions and experiences are sought. Potential participants have been selected from the school teacher database according to age, experience, gender and subject specialisation. A total of twelve teachers will be interviewed.

The interview is a personal interview with each teacher, which should last for a maximum of one-and-a-half hours. If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed only once.

The interview will be recorded with your permission. This is to help me focus on listening to you rather than on taking notes, as well as to have a record for reference. The recorded interview will be transcribed into written form. It will then be made available to you for review if you wish to rectify or change any information.

When all teacher interviews have been completed for the study, a survey questionnaire will be developed from themes identified by the researcher. All teaching staff in this and the other participating school will be invited to participate in an online, anonymous survey questionnaire in October and November 2009.

Participants' anonymity and confidentiality

I understand your concern for confidentiality. Please take note that your confidentiality is my main priority. In order to ensure this:

1. you may respond confidentially to this invitation for research participation by returning the consent form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.
2. if you agree to participate, you will be given a pseudonym in any report from the study.
3. you may be interviewed away from the school premises, if you so wish.
4. you may set your own time for the interview.
5. you will be given the opportunity to amend your interview transcript.

Please also note that the name of the school will not be mentioned or revealed during data collection or in the research report. Protecting the identity of the school is also a major concern. For ease of reference, I will use a pseudonym to replace the name of your school during the research.

All information is confidential and will be stored and reported in such a way that your identity is protected. The original interview recording and your signed consent form will be stored in a secure place. All original data will be destroyed after 5 years.

Participants' rights in the study

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation.
If you decide to participate in the interview, you have the right to :

1. withdraw at any time until the interview transcripts are finalised;
2. decline to answer any particular questions during the interview;
3. ask for the recording to be stopped at any time during the interview;
4. ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
5. use Bahasa Melayu where and if you feel better able to express yourself;
6. provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
7. be given access to the summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Contact details

If you require further information or clarification on this research project, feel free to contact me as follows:

Doctoral Research Student
Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak
School of Educational Studies
College of Education
Massey University, Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North, New Zealand

Home phone (New Zealand) : ++646 3567594
Mobile phone (New Zealand) : ++646 02102564632
Home phone (Malaysia) : 04 7860779
Mobile phone (Malaysia) : 0136698236
E-mail : zabidi@um.edu.my

Committee approval statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/03. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, Please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University, Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Do you agree to participate?

If you agree to participate in this research project, I sincerely thank you. Please complete the consent form as per attached and return it to me using the enclosed self-addressed envelope within 7 days of receiving this invitation.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to working with you.

APPENDIX 9

**Educational Leadership For Sustaining Teacher Resilience
In Two Secondary Schools In Malaysia**

CONSENT FORM

Teacher Participant

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I agree/do not agree [DELETE ONE] to the interview being voice recorded.

Signature : Date :

Full name – printed:

E-mail address :

Contact number(s) :

APPENDIX 10



SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
Private Bag 11 222
Palmerston North
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T 64 6 356 9099
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www.massey.ac.nz

Educational Leadership for Sustaining Teacher Resilience In Two Secondary Schools in Malaysia

INFORMATION SHEET

Members of Parent Teacher Association participants

Dear : _____

With your Chairperson's permission, your name has been chosen from the list of PTA members at the school, to be invited to participate in an interview my doctoral research study that explores secondary school educational leaders' professional practices to ensure that teachers sustain resilience when they face new challenges. You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. However, your contribution of information is much sought and appreciated. Please read below for further details.

Researcher's introduction

I am Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak, a Lecturer in Education in the Department of Educational Management, Planning and Policy at the University of Malaya. I am currently engaged in a doctoral study at Massey University, funded by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. My supervisors are Professor John O'Neill and Dr Marian Court.

The title of my doctoral research project is Educational Leadership for sustaining teacher resilience in two secondary schools in Malaysia.

Purpose of this study

The intent of this study is to explore educational leadership professional practices in assisting teachers to sustain their resilience when they face new challenges. The research topic emerged from the current situation in Malaysia where a number of new educational policies are currently being introduced. These are the introduction of the Smart School concept, the implementation of teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English and the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010.

The Malaysian Ministry of Education has argued that the implementation of these educational policies will be of potential benefit for students as individuals as well as for society as a whole. However, the implementation of the policies also creates challenges for teachers, departments, senior management teams and school communities. In particular, teachers need to concentrate on teaching and learning whilst trying to fulfill the demands of the new educational policies.

As a result, the implementation of these educational policies raises three main related issues. The first issue concerns the perceptions of educational leaders and teachers toward these educational policies and the challenges that their implementation will bring for them. The second issue regards the response of educational leaders and teachers to the challenges presented by the implementation of these educational policies. The third issue is the role of educational leadership in assisting teachers in facing challenges that are a result of the implementation of these educational policies.

This research project will enable the investigation into educational leadership professional practices to ensure that teachers sustain their resilience when they face new challenges. Empirical data obtained from this research will be valuable in providing ideas for educational leaders on how to assist teachers to sustain their resilience and ensuring that all the innovations by the Ministry of Education will be implemented successfully and achieve their objectives.

Participants' involvement

As a PTA member, you are thus invited to participate in this research project. This is your opportunity to express your opinions on the current teaching environment in Malaysia and to share your views on how educational leaders' professional practices assist teachers to face the challenges. Your contribution will provide invaluable information for the betterment of teaching environment in Malaysian schools.

In the interviews I am only interested in gathering data related to participants' understanding and experience. There are no right or wrong answers and I intend to make no judgements about the quality of teaching or supervision in my analysis.

I plan to interview three PTA members between March and May 2009. Diverse opinions and experiences are sought. The interview is a personal interview with each PTA member, which should last for a maximum of one-and-a-half hours. If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed only once.

The interview will be recorded with your permission. This is to help me focus on listening to you rather than on taking notes, as well as to have a record for reference. The recorded interview will be transcribed into written form. It will then be made available to you for review if you wish to rectify or change any information.

Participants' anonymity and confidentiality

I understand your concern for confidentiality. Please take note that your confidentiality is my main priority. In order to ensure this, :

1. you may respond confidentially to this invitation for research participation by returning the consent form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.
2. if you agree to participate, you will be given a pseudonym in any report from the study.
3. you may be interviewed away from the school premises, if you so wish.
4. you may set your own time for the interview.
5. you will be given the opportunity to amend your interview transcript.

Please also note that the name of the school will not be mentioned or revealed during data collection or in the research report. Protecting the identity of the school is also a major concern. For ease of reference, I will use a pseudonym to replace the name of your school during the research.

All information is confidential and will be stored and reported in such a way that your identity is protected. The original interview recording and your signed consent forms will be stored in a secure place. All original data will be destroyed after 5 years.

Participants' rights in the study

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation.

If you decide to participate in the interview, you have the right to :

1. withdraw at any time until the interview transcripts are finalised;
2. decline to answer any particular questions during the interview;
3. ask for the recording to be stopped at any time during the interview;

4. ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
5. use Bahasa Melayu where and if you feel better able to express yourself;
6. provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
7. be given access to the summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

Contact details

If you require further information or clarification on this research project, feel free to contact me as follows:

Doctoral Research Student

Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak

School of Educational Studies

College of Education

Massey University, Private Bag 11 222

Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Home phone (New Zealand) : ++646 3567594

Mobile phone (New Zealand) : ++646 02102564632

Home phone (Malaysia) : 04 7860779

Mobile phone (Malaysia) : 0136698236

E-mail : zabidi@um.edu.my

Committee approval statement

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/03. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, Please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University, Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Do you agree to participate?

If you agree to participate in this research project, I sincerely thank you. Please complete the consent form as per attached and return it to me using the enclosed self-addressed envelope within 7 days of receiving this invitation.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to working with you.

APPENDIX 11

**Educational Leadership For Sustaining Teacher Resilience
In Two Secondary Schools In Malaysia**

CONSENT FORM

Parent Teacher Association Members

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I agree/do not agree [DELETE ONE] to the interview being voice recorded.

Signature : Date :

Full name – printed:

E-mail address :

Contact number(s) :

APPENDIX 12



Massey University
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Te Kupenga o Te Mātauranga

SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL STUDIES
Private Bag 11 222
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T 64 6 356 9099
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www.massey.ac.nz

Interview Schedule

Introduction

Hello, my name is Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak. I'm a Phd student at Massey University. I think you have already received information about me and the purpose of my visit to your school. I do hope that I don't interrupt your work. As you know this is a visit to get acquainted. It's not an evaluation of you or your school program. As I stated in my information letter to you, I only wish to get a picture of your perception about the implementation of the new educational policies, the main challenges that you have to face and how you cope with these challenges. Even though I have a specific purpose in carrying out my study, in terms of this interview I will give you full opportunity to discuss these issues in any way that you want. Are you happy with this approach? Are there any changes you would like to suggest?

Interviewing Senior Management Team and Heads of Departments

1. Let's talk first about yourself and your work.
 - Can you tell me about your background in this profession?
 - Can you tell me about your service in this school?
 - What do you think about this school?
 - Can you share your experiences as a Principal / Assistant principal (Academic) / Assistant Principal (Student Affairs) / Assistant Principal (Co-Curricular) / Heads of Department of Mathematics and Science? Can you please elaborate?

2. Can you tell me what you know about current education policies? (If the participants know). Can you please elaborate?
 - What do you understand about this policy?
 - Can you tell me about your involvement in this policy in your school?
 - How did you feel when you got involved in this policy?
 - How did you implement the policy in your school? Can you tell me more?
 - What has been the progress on the implementation of this policy in your school?

(If the participants don't know)

 - I will try to lead the participants with a leading question such as "Have you heard about one of these policies? (The introduction of the Smart School concept / the implementation of teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English / the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010)?"
 - If they know about these policies or one of them, I will continue the interview with the following open questions.
 - Can you please elaborate?
 - What do you understand about this policy?

- Can you tell me about your involvement in this policy in your school?
- How did you feel when you got involved in this policy?
- How did you implement the policy in your school? Can you tell me more?
- What has been the progress on the implementation of this policy in your school?

But, if the participants still don't know about these policies or one of them, I will not demand that they have to answer my question, but will ask them politely to tell me about the current instructions that they have received from the Ministry of Education?

3. I want you to think some more about the challenges of implementing these education policies. Can you tell me about the challenges these policies create for you?

- Can you give me an example of the most difficult challenges?
- How did these come about?
- How did you feel about the challenges?
- What happened then?
- Can you tell me more?

4. Can you tell me how you cope with these challenges?

- Can you give me an example?
- Do you think that teachers in your school are able to face these challenges?
- (If the participants say that teachers are able to face the challenges)- Why are they (teachers) able to face the challenges? How do they cope with these challenges? Can you give me an example of a teacher (without mentioning his/her name) that is able to face the challenges successfully?

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- (If the participants say that teachers are not able to face the challenges)- Why are they (teachers) not able to face the challenges?
Can you give me an example of a teacher (without mentioning his/her name) that is not able to face the challenges?
 - How do you assist them to cope with these challenges?

5. Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you want to tell me?

Interviewing teachers

1. Can we start talking about you as a teacher? Can you tell me about yourself and your work?
 - Can you tell me about your background in this profession?
 - Can you tell me about your service in this school?
 - What do you think about this school?
 - Can you share your experiences as a teacher? Can you please elaborate?

2. Can you tell me what you know about current education policies? (If the participants know). Can you please elaborate?
 - What do you understand about this policy?
 - Can you tell me about your involvement in this policy in your school?
 - How did you feel when you got involved in this policy?
 - How did you implement the policy in your school? Can you tell me more?
 - What has been the progress on the implementation of this policy in your school?

(If the participants don't know)

- I will try to lead the participants with a leading question such as "Have you heard about one of these policies? (The introduction of the Smart School concept / the implementation of teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English / the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010)?"
- If they know about these policies or one of them, I will continue the interview with the following open questions.
- Can you please elaborate?
- What do you understand about this policy?

- Can you tell me about your involvement in this policy in your school?
- How did you feel when you got involved in this policy?
- How did you implement the policy in your school? Can you tell me more?
- What has been the progress on the implementation of this policy in your school?

But, if the participants still don't know about these policies or one of them, I will not demand that they have to answer my question, but will ask them politely to tell me about the current instructions that they have received from the Ministry of Education?

3. I want you to think some more about the challenges of implementing these education policies. Can you tell me about the challenges these policies create for you?

- Can you give me an example of the most difficult challenges?
- How did these come about?
- How did you feel about the challenges?
- What happened then?
- Can you tell me more?

4. Can you tell me how you cope with these challenges?

- Can you give me an example?
- Who do you think assists you to face the challenges? How have they assisted you and why? Can you tell me more?

5. Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you want to tell me?

Interviewing PTA Members (Represent Communities)

1. Can we start talking about you as a PTA member in this school? Can you tell me about yourself and your work?

- Can you tell me about your work in this role?
- Can you tell me about your service in this school?
- What do you think about this school?
- Can you share your experiences as a PTA member? Can you please elaborate?

2. Can you tell me what you know about current education policies? (If the participants know). Can you please elaborate?

- What do you understand about this policy?
- Can you tell me about your involvement in this policy in your school?
- How did you feel when you got involved in this policy?
- How did you involve in the implementation of the policy in this school? Can you tell me more?
- What has been the progress on the implementation of this policy in your school?

(If the participants don't know)

- I will try to lead the participants with a leading question such as "Have you heard about one of these policies? (The introduction of the Smart School concept / the implementation of teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English / the publication of the National Blueprint 2006-2010)?"
- If they know about these policies or one of them, I will continue the interview with the following open questions.
- Can you please elaborate?
- What do you understand about this policy?
- Can you tell me about your involvement in this policy in this school?

- How did you feel when you got involved in this policy?
- How did you involve in the implementation of the policy in this school? Can you tell me more?
- What has been the progress on the implementation of this policy in your school?

But, if the participants still don't know about these policies or one of them, I will not demand that they have to answer my question, but will ask them politely to tell me about the current instructions that they know this school have received from the Ministry of Education?

3. I want you to think some more about the challenges of implementing these education policies. Can you tell me about the challenges these policies create for you?

- Can you give me an example of the most difficult challenges?
- How did these come about?
- How did you feel about the challenges?
- What happened then?
- Can you tell me more?

4. Can you tell me how you assist people in school (Senior Management Teams/ Teachers/ Other Staff) cope with these challenges?

- Can you give me an example?
- Do you think that people in this school (Senior Management Teams/ Teachers/ Other Staff) are able to face these challenges?
- (If the participants say that people in this school (Senior Management Teams/ Teachers/ Other Staff) are able to face the challenges)- Why are they able to face the challenges? How do they cope with these challenges? Can you give me an example of one of them (without mentioning his/her name) that is able to face the challenges successfully?

- (If the participants say that people in this school (Senior Management Teams/ Teachers/ Other Staff) are not able to face the challenges)- Why are they not able to face the challenges? Can you give me an example of one of them (without mentioning his/her name) that is not able to face the challenges?
- How do you assist them to cope with these challenges?

5. Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you want to tell me?

APPENDIX 13

Educational Leadership For Sustaining Teacher Resilience
In Two Secondary Schools In Malaysia

TRANSCRIBER'S CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I (Full Name - printed)
agree to transcribe the recordings provided to me.

I agree to keep confidential all the information provided to me.

I will not make any copies of the transcripts or keep any record of them, other than those required for the project.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX 14

Educational Leadership For Sustaining Teacher Resilience
In Two Secondary Schools In Malaysia

AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TRANSCRIPTS

This form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used by the researcher, Ahmad Zabidi Abdul Razak in reports and publications arising from the research.

Signature:..... Date:.....

Full Name – printed:.....

APPENDIX 15

Examples of the researcher's working pages of transcript analysis and how themes were derived

Z What are the challenges? *Teacher - challenges*

(K The challenge is that these students they don't want to listen to the teachers. Class A is okay, but other classes at the back really are problematic. The students' attitude, when we speak nicely to them, they won't listen. If possible, they want us to be mad at them. I am not sure what other methods that we should use. But we have to be patience, keep advising the students, it is already our job to do so. Even the students don't want to listen to us, but we keep on advising, if we don't advise them, the students will get nothing if we, teachers don't do anything.) *School A participant 18*

S For you how is the progress of that policy within this school? How's students reaction? Can they catch up with this new policy? *School A participant = 20*

J From the discussion I made with Mathematics and Science Teachers, clever students which placed in good class, they can understand and catch up. But *students that aren't clever and placed in not so good class, they can't understand so they can't catch up.* They don't even understand the questions, it actually makes two problems for them. First, they don't know how to answer Mathematics questions then how to understand the questions because it's in English. Especially in Mathematics, calculation subject, make this more difficult to these kinds of students. I also discuss this matter with Additional Mathematics teachers; they also said the same things. They also said that it's not *the students can't answer the questions but when the questions are in English, they can't understand the questions and maybe they are shock because this is new policy.* PPSMI was started on 2003 right? If we including this year, the PPSMI is already been implemented for 6 years. Maybe students who are not really good in English, but

A We had been given some of the management task. I used to hold many posts in administration such as secretary in co-curricular activities. I also had been given the responsibility for SAL room. I did not care at all to take this responsibility because this task also relates with English. However, there are some other activities that have to be done for students. Besides, I had been assigned to the scholarship programs which it should be done by the management. Nowadays, many

School = P
Principal = 19

✓ B- teachers hold many tasks and posts. These management task should not been given to the teachers. If we refer to the other places such as Mara Science Junior College (MRSM) or university, the teachers and lecturers did not been assigned for any task relates to the management.

Q You think these tasks were a burden to you?

A Burden and challenging. How did we can manage all these tasks in the same time? The management task, and also we need to teach and took care of the students one by one. Compared to the doctor, we have more 'patients' than them.

✓ B-
various other responsibilities

Q Did this situation still occur continuously?

A It still happens. Many teachers often made complaints. Even the Ministry of Education (MOE) knows, but still did not take any actions regarding this problem. Once, we used to fill in the form by MOE. They want to know our level of pressure on works. All teachers stated that the management tasks should not been mixed up with the teachers.

B- We should focus on the students to help them in their studies. As a result, teachers cannot give full attention to their students and had been burdened by other works. I can say that the blame should put on the teacher if the students did not do so well in their studies. For example, a teacher had been involved in scholarship program. At the same time, she as a class teacher, need to collect the fees. This task should not be done by the teachers. For some place which have succeed in their jobs as an educator such as MRSM or Matriculation Programs, their educators did not been burdened by these kind of tasks.

B-
various other responsibilities

School = A
participat = 15

Z How about the criteria of the school environment those help to face the challenges in school?

K (We always hear about teachers' stress, yes that's right because teachers' duties are a lot. Comparing the teacher from before and the teacher now, the teacher from before don't have as much work as us nowadays. Side jobs, need to finish the syllabus, worried and much other stuff.) For Islamic studies, sometimes we have to have practical classes. There are lots of activities to be done such as knowledge culture, Arabic writings, Fardhu Ain classes (KAFA), lots of work. Actually, in teaching and learning we already have all these. But we have to do it in more details individually. It feels like not enough time to do all these work. Teachers are also complaining, the people who are above them want to do lots of things, but teachers are the ones who have to organize everything. It's quite a burden, but, even there are lots of works to be done, I don't bring back all the school work back home, I finish them all in school only.

B-
various other responsibilities

School = A
participat = 10

L Extra work for me, so on top of that, you have your usual responsibilities. All these things come together with the teachers work. And on top of that, you have to be involved with the co-curriculum side. So this year I was given back my badminton.

B-
various other responsibilities

School = A
participat = 19

But only feel angry when we have been given with the management works, so how could we focus on the student. We can teach them but it can't be 100%. Moreover, our school had been compared with good school, which is not good if we have a different level of students, management, and we have different level of pressure and different budget. We can't be compared with Asma Secondary School because they got different budget and different students.)

B-
various other responsibilities

Z Why there are a rebellious and the "don't want" attitude are there?
The one as you see it.

Student = A
parent = 17

N I think one of the reasons is because of the students' background.
Some of them that I met, their parents sometimes support what their children are doing. When their child came late to the school, they will say their children woke up late because they slept late the night before. How are the students to get better if the parents support them like that? If they don't want to learn, I also don't know what to do.
There was one time, a programme called zero absences; there was this one student who didn't come for 60 days. But then, when we asked the mother, she said that she also don't know what to do with her child, he doesn't want to go to school, the child said he is lazy to come to school and the mother is kind of agree with the child. So, parent is one of the main factors that cause the rebellious attitude within the students. There are some students that can be categorized as okay, smart, that's easy for us. But there are some the other way around so it is kind of hard.

C-
Parents' attitudes

A- Student issues - 15, 20

B- Various other responsibilities - 19, 15, 10

C- Parents' attitudes - 17

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