# MALAY AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT IN TECNOLOGICALLY RICH AND NON-TECHNOLOGICALLY RICH MALAYSIAN SCHOOLS

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## ABSTRACT

i.    Need for the Study

One of the major driving forces in the current school restructuring efforts in Malaysia and in other parts of the world is the belief that the current school system, built on the 19th century industrial efficiency model is inadequate to meet the needs of the 21st century that will be transformed by technology (Fouts, 2000). In 1997, the Ministry of Education Malaysia in tandem with the government initiated the Multimedia Super Corridor Project from which the Malaysian Smart School Conceptual Plan emerged. In this plan, the Ministry planned to introduce computer-assisted instruction in stages in the schools beginning in 1999. This plan will eventually encompass all schools by the year 2010 (MOE, 1997).

ii.   Statement of Problem

This study focused on the Malay language and English language achievement of Smart School students. Malay language was chosen because it is the national language of Malaysia and the medium of instruction for all academic subjects in Malaysian high schools. The researcher assumed that a good command of the Malay language could be translated to better performance in other academic

subjects that were not within the scope of this study. English language was chosen because it is the designated second language in education and it is the language most frequently used and associated with computers, software, the internet and other related technologies.

iii.   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to compare the Malay and English language achievement of ninth-grade Malaysian students in technologically rich and non-technologically rich schools.

iv.   Research Methodology

A quasi-experimental non-randomized pretest-posttest control group research design was used to test the hypotheses in this study. In this study, the independent variable was the type of program in which the ninth-grade student were enrolled. The dependent variables were the English and Malay language achievement of the ninth-grade students (as mentioned by the Malay Language Proficiency Assessment and the English Language Proficiency Assessment).

v.   Results

There was a statistically significant difference ($p<.001$) between the Malay language achievement of ninth-grade Malaysian students who had attended technologically rich schools and the Malay language achievement of ninth-grade Malaysian students who had attended non-technologically rich schools and the difference was educationally meaningful ($\Delta = 0.41$).

There was a statistically significant difference ($p<.001$) between the English language achievement of ninth-grade Malaysian students who had attended technologically rich schools and the English language achievement of ninth-

grade Malaysian students who had attended non-technologically rich schools and the difference was educationally meaningful ($\Delta = 0.80$).

vi.    Implications for Instructional Practice

The findings suggest that the Smart Schools Program has had a favorable influence on the Malay and English language achievement of ninth-grade students. Enhanced performance in English language ($\Delta = 0.80$) by Smart School students is in particular, meaningful given the general decline in the English language proficiency among high school students that has occurred during the past several years. Perhaps, the Smart School Program and the use of computer-assisted instruction in language learning can arrest the decline in the English language.