

PRIORITY AREAS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT: CONSENSUS OF VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

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ABSTRACT

Educators and researchers are looking for guidelines related to school improvement (SI), which includes a list of important areas of school improvement. However, there is vagueness about areas of school improvement in Malaysia. The purpose of this study was to determine consensus about areas of school improvement and rank the priority areas from the perspectives of various key educational stakeholders. This study involved groups of educational stakeholders' who were policymakers, theoretical experts, community leaders, headmasters, chairmen of Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), parents and ministry's officers. It portrayed how the consultation of various educational stakeholders' opinions about school improvement collectively gave feedbacks for better understanding the dynamics of school improvement. The study employed Open System Theory, Systems Thinking, Theory of Change and Organizational Development as underpinnings theories. The study mainly adopted a quantitative approach through e-Delphi study and Survey. Three rounds of e-Delphi study were conducted to identify areas of school improvement involving 21 educational stakeholders as the panelist of experts. The tool used to collect ordinal data during e-Delphi was a four-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4= Strongly Disagree). This study employed 90% of percentage agreement among the experts as the value to define consensus. After the three rounds of e-Delphi, questionnaires were produced as an instrument for collecting data from a survey involving 706 educational stakeholders from four strata; lecturers at MOE, chairmen of PTA, officers at District Education Office (DEO) and headmasters. The internal consistency of the 43-items questionnaires for the survey was established by calculating Cronbach Alpha coefficient to the 40 respondents as a pilot study. The reliability coefficient came out to be in the range of 0.897 to 0.917, suggesting a good internal consistency. The survey employed a three-point Likert scale (Excellent, Moderate and Need Improvement). Then, the data collected from the survey were analyzed by descriptive statistics using the SPSS software version 21 to assess the educational stakeholders' perspectives about areas of school improvement. The study revealed that feedbacks from

educational stakeholders work as input to facilitate the process of school improvement. The Malaysian education system is an open system where the involvement of educational stakeholders plays an important and influential role in establishing consensus about the areas of school improvement in Malaysia. The findings revealed nine areas of school improvement as agreed by the experts which were; Leadership and Management, Teacher Professional Development, School Culture, Student Learning Outcome, Instruction, Community Involvement, ICT in education, Curriculum and Support for Learning. Furthermore, the findings revealed five priority areas of school improvement as ranked by the educational stakeholders surveyed listed in the ranking order; 1) Leadership and Management, 2) Teacher Professional Development, 3) School Culture, 4) Student Learning Outcome and 5) Instruction. The results of the study showed that there were eight aspects that needed to be improved in the system; Teachers' welfare, Leadership innovation, Pre-training before appointment of school leaders, Curriculum focusing on unity among races, Every student has a learning potential, ICT literacy among school leaders, ICT literacy among teachers and Unity and national integration. The findings of this study are expected to offer valuable implications for researchers and practitioners in Malaysia and other countries to focus on the areas of school improvement identified from this study when crafting SI policy.