

A STUDY ON ATTITUDES TOWARD COMPUTERS AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER TEACHERS
IN THE HULU LANGAT DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Malaysian's School Resource Centers (SRC) are faced with a new important role as they are confronted with the challenge of information technology (IT) and the sophisticated needs of the users. The SRCs are hoped to introduce and to adopt computers on a wider scale in their management system. Its success will be determined by the SRC teachers' attitudes toward computers. This study was conducted to determine the factors that affect attitudes toward computers among 90 SRC teachers of 16 selected secondary schools in the Hulu Langat district and their extent of computer usage in SRC management system. The study also investigated relationships between selected independent variables (gender, size of school and the SRC, availability of personal and school computers, past experiences in using computers, computer usage and training) and the attitudinal differences (perceived usefulness, perceived ability and computer confidence) towards computers. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that individual competency in using computers is essential for an SRC teacher. Knowledge of this skill, supported by positive attitudes toward computers would enable the SRC teachers to manage the SRC effectively and efficiently. This study recommends that the Education Ministry, specifically Bahagian Teknologi Pendidikan and Pusat Sumber Pendidikan Negeri to recognize the importance of computer competency among SRC teachers and to emphasize it in conducting SRC management courses. In addition, at least a computer should be made available in every SRC. Finally, a suggestion for further study can be carried out on attitudinal differences toward computers among SRC teachers in other districts or states.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The growth of information technology (IT) and globalization has become synonymous in every realms of our everyday life. In the process of moving toward a fully developed country by the year 2020, Malaysia could not resist the information explosion as it exists in a boundless and global scenario. To fulfil this development, the Malaysian economy should be driven by brain power, skills and diligence in possession of a wealth of information with the knowledge of what to do and how to do it (Mahathir, 1991).

The above statement implies that there is a need for the nation, specifically the future young generation to be inquisitive and striving for recent information. This leads to several concerted efforts by various institutions, including the library or the Student Resource Center (SRC), to introduce IT in the organization as part of the library system toward the mid-1980's (Abdullah, 1990).

In the 1980's , the Ministry of Education had established School Resource Center (SRC) from the former school library for two significant reasons: (1) It made possible to the integration of two separate services; the library and the audio-visual services, (2) It provided school library with the opportunity to play

a more meaningful role in the teaching-learning process in school (Zaiton, 1980).

Today, the role of the SRC in schools has moved a step further by accepting the challenge of IT and the sophisticated needs of the users. Abdullah (1990) noted that the use of computers in SRC has become a significant factor in the evolution of library automation. However, in relation to Malaysian SRCs' process of adopting library automation in the SRC system, the first step would be to make use of the computers in the SRC management. The tasks include book processing and cataloguing, inventories, collecting and processing data statistics and many other desk-top publishing works. A well-coordinated library system tied together by computers and other technologies, would enable the SRC to control cost and expand its ability to deliver information in a timely and efficient manner (Abdullah, 1990). The effectiveness in the use of technology in the school curriculum would depend on the teachers' adeptness to change from using the traditional teaching method to the computer-based teaching (German, 1997). The SRC is part of the school curriculum which needs changes. The changes are related to technological application and the use of computer in its SRC system. Unfortunately, resistance is inherent in bureaucratic organization (Abdullah, 1990). Kahn and Anthony as quoted in Abdullah (1990), elaborated that these barriers are related to psychological organizational and economic factors as well as perceptions of the future. The SRC teachers may sometimes be in a difficult position in implementing changes.

For the success of implementing changes in the application of IT, the SRC teachers' positive attitudes and actions can be regarded to play an important role (Abdullah, 1990). They should be aware of new ideas from outside the SRC and willing to initiate and introduce changes and innovation. The users' acceptance, according to Koohang (1993), is a factor that plays an important role in more positive attitudes toward the use of computers in the library system.

Despite the great capabilities of IT and the use of computers, attitudinal differences toward computers still exist among SRC teachers. This may then affect their use of computers in their SRC management system. The factors that determine their attitudes toward computers are associated with personal characteristics of the SRC teachers and the school background. Important variables considered are gender, age, educational background, computer exposure and training, past experiences in using computers, the leadership of the SRC coordinators as well as support from the principal and the Parents Teachers' Association (PTA).

Out of the above variables, eight significant factors which can be measured had been identified and considered as the important variables in the research model. The causal relationship was between attitudes of the SRC teachers and their extent in the use of computers in the SRC system.