

**COMPETENCIES, INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT, INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT,
AND PEER SUPPORT ASSOCIATED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
MUSIC ACTIVITIES BY NOVICE PRESCHOOL TEACHERS**

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study is to examine factors associated with the implementation of music activities by novice preschool teachers in the central region of Malaysia. The objectives of this study included: (a) investigating the difference in implementation of music activities in relation to selected demographic variables; (b) investigating the correlation of competencies, instructional support, institutional support, and peer support with implementation of music activities; and (c) testing the model of novice preschool teachers' implementation of music activities. A survey was adopted in the form of a questionnaire distributed to 390 novice preschool teachers who had taught for five years or less. Descriptive analysis, t-Test, ANOVA, Pearson product moment correlation, factor analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) were employed for data analysis. All selected demographic variables did not have any significant difference in the overall implementation of music activities. However, there was a significant difference in singing activities. Novice teachers who were trained with a minor music option had a higher implementation than those without a minor music option. There was a significant and moderately positive relationship of teachers' implementation of music activities with teachers' competencies, instructional support, institutional support, and peer support. Based on SEM analysis, the model of novice preschool teachers' implementation of music activities fit to the data. This study made a unique contribution to research by developing a framework which focuses on the novice teachers' implementation of music activities in preschool for future research. This study also highlighted some implications and recommendations for policy and practice toward the betterment of implementation of preschool music activities.

**KOMPETENSI, SOKONGAN PENGAJARAN, SOKONGAN INSTITUSI,
DAN SOKONGAN RAKAN SEBAYA YANG DIKAITKAN DENGAN
PELAKSANAAN AKTIVITI MUZIK OLEH
GURU PRASEKOLAH BAHARU**

ABSTRAK

Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang dikaitkan dengan pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik oleh guru prasekolah baharu di kawasan tengah Malaysia. Objektif kajian ini meliputi: (a) menyelidik perbezaan dalam pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik berhubung dengan pembolehubah demografi terpilih; (b) menyelidik hubungan antara kompetensi, sokongan pengajaran, sokongan institusi, dan sokongan rakan sebaya dengan pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik; dan (c) menguji model pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik guru prasekolah baharu. Kaedah tinjauan digunakan dalam bentuk soal selidik yang diedarkan kepada 390 orang guru prasekolah baharu yang telah mengajar selama lima tahun dan ke bawah. Analisis deskriptif, ujian-t, ANOVA, Korelasi Pearson, analisis faktor, dan Model Persamaan Struktur (SEM) digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Semua pembolehubah demografi tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik secara keseluruhan. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam aktiviti nyanyian. Guru-guru baharu yang telah melalui latihan dengan mengambil muzik sebagai pilihan minor mempunyai pelaksanaan yang lebih tinggi berbanding guru-guru yang tidak mengambil muzik sebagai pilihan minor. Terdapat hubungan yang signifikan dan sederhana positif antara pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik dengan kompetensi guru, sokongan pengajaran, sokongan institusi, dan sokongan rakan sebaya. Berdasarkan analisis SEM, model pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik guru prasekolah baharu sepadan dengan data yang diperolehi. Kajian ini memberi sumbangan yang unik untuk penyelidikan dengan membangunkan rangka kerja yang memberi tumpuan kepada pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik oleh guru prasekolah baharu untuk penyelidikan pada masa hadapan. Kajian ini juga menekankan beberapa implikasi dan cadangan untuk dasar dan praktis ke arah perbaikan pelaksanaan aktiviti muzik prasekolah.

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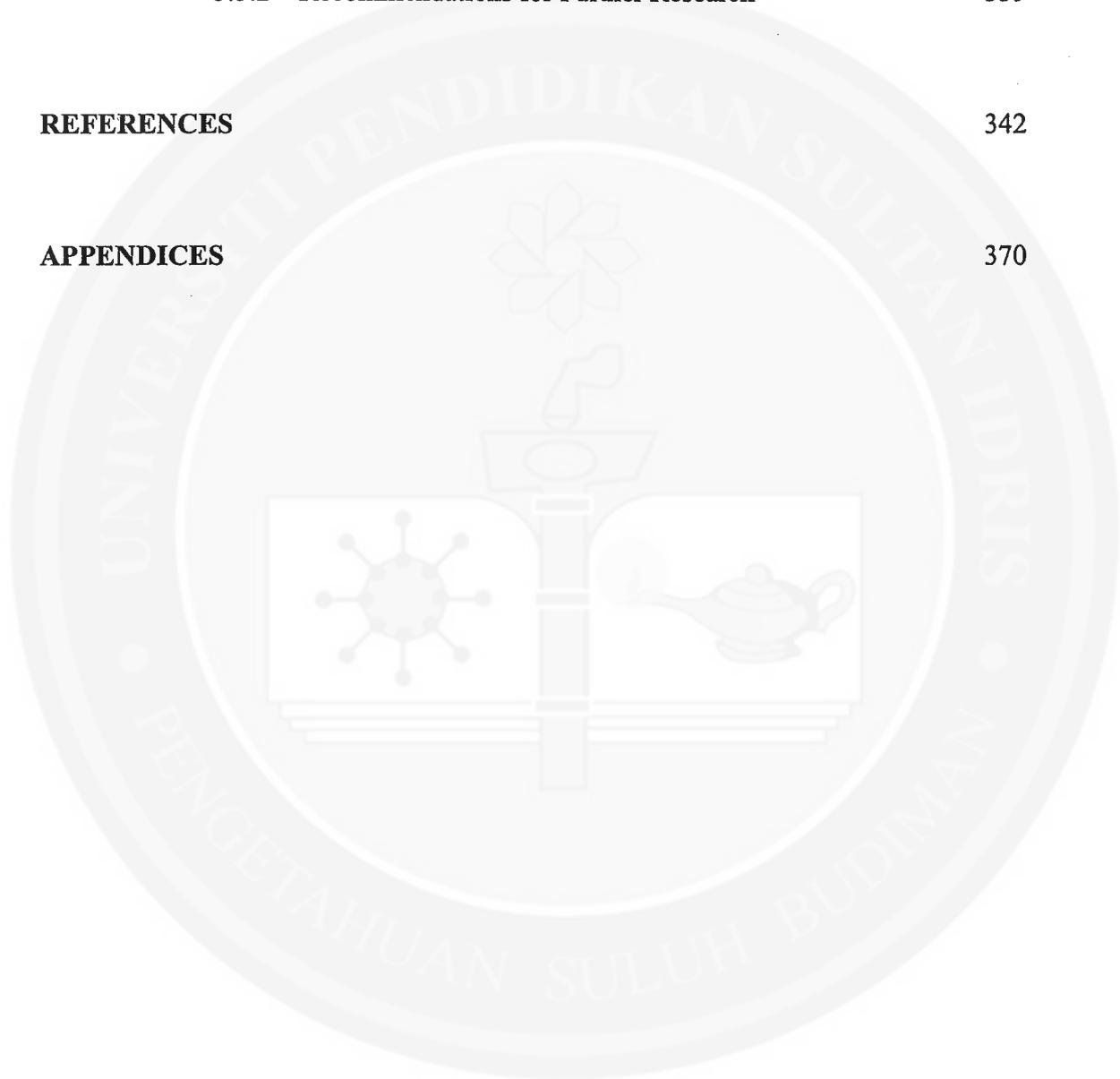
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preschool Curriculum in Malaysia

In line with the National Philosophy of Education, preschool education in Malaysia is a serious effort to develop children's potential in all aspects of growth to produce young individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, physically, and socially balanced. The Ministry of Education Malaysia firmly believes that preschool education is part of the national education system and should be an extension of primary school education (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 1996).

The aim of the National Preschool Curriculum introduced nationwide in 2003 is to nurture the potential growth of children in all aspects of development, acquiring basic skills, and to foster positive attitudes in preparation to enter primary education.

The planning and reforming of the curriculum takes into account the view, philosophy, and the inclusion of theoretical early childhood education, psychology, childhood development, and the latest learning trends such as the theories of multiple intelligence and emotional intelligence (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003).

The curriculum was revised and implemented in 2010. The aim of the newly introduced National Preschool Curriculum Standard is to develop the potential growth of children aged four to six in the physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects through a safe, stimulating learning environment as well as fun, creative, and meaningful activities. These were introduced in order to increase skills, instill confidence, and to shape a positive self-concept in children so that they can succeed in the present environment and be prepared to handle challenges and responsibilities when they enter primary school (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010).

The National Preschool Curriculum Standard as illustrated in Figure 1.1 is based on six strands or areas of learning: (a) physical development and aesthetic; (b) science and technology; (c) communication; (d) spiritual, attitude, and values; (e) humanism; and (f) self-efficacy. These six strands are extended to the primary school curriculum to ensure continuity between preschool and primary school.

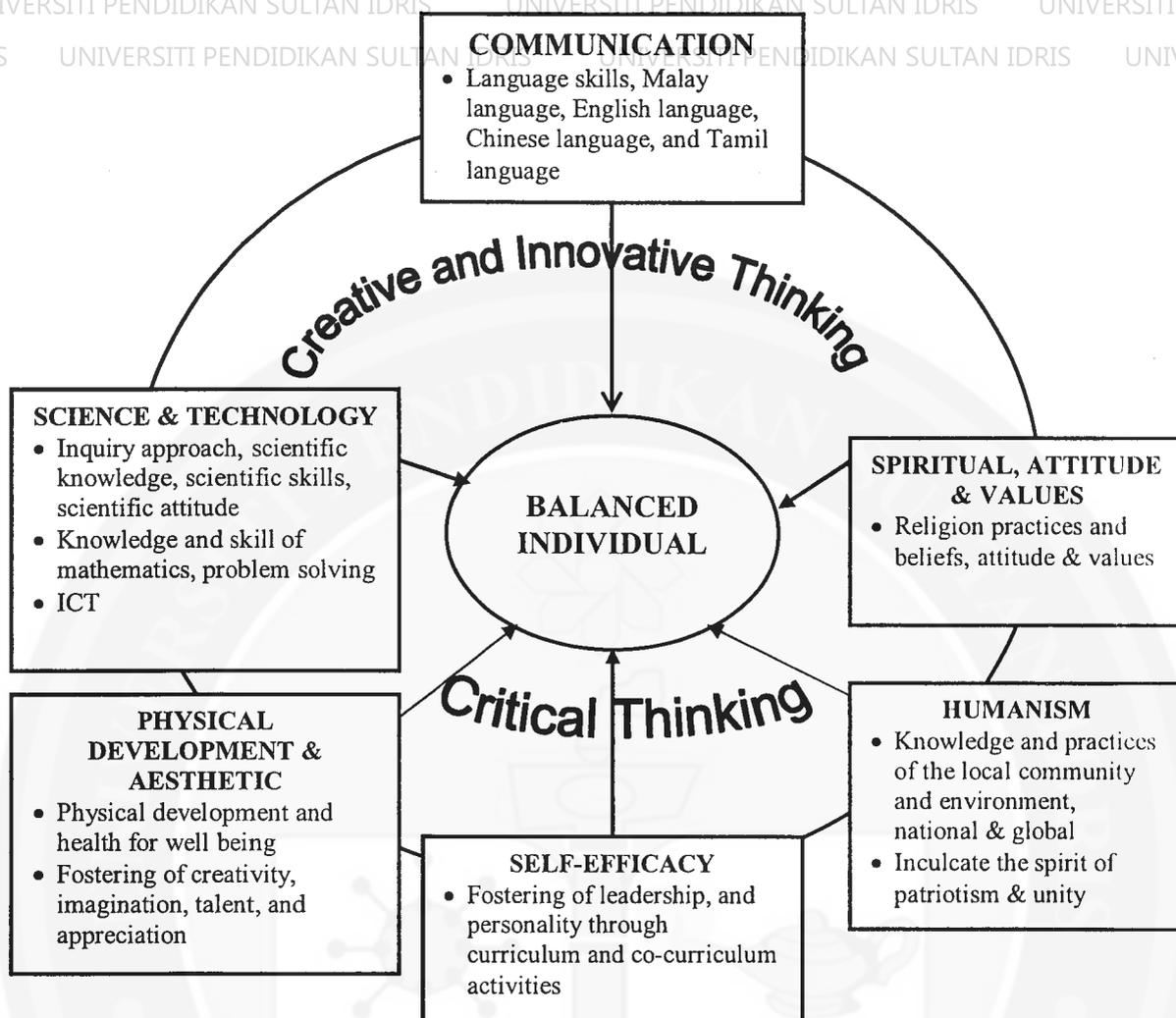


Figure 1.1. Strands of National Preschool Curriculum Standard. Source: Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010

The National Preschool Curriculum Standard (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010) focuses on the standard content and the standard learning process. The purpose of setting these standards is to ensure all children have an equal opportunity to receive quality education. The standard content is defined by specific statements on aspects that a child should know and be able to do in a specific time of schooling. These aspects consist of knowledge, skills, and values. The Standard learning process is defined as specific criterion or indicators of achievement in the

form of behavioral objectives which ensure mastery of the standard content (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010).

The National Preschool Curriculum Standard adopted two modular approaches of teaching and learning, namely the Basic Module and the Thematic Module. The Basic Module consists of four components: (a) languages (Malay, English, Chinese, and Tamil); (b) Islamic education/moral education; (c) outdoor activity; and (d) mathematics. The aim of the basic module is the acquisition and mastery in early literacy of the 4 Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic, and reasoning). The time allocated for teaching and learning of the basic module is flexible, ranging from 35% at the beginning of the school year to 16% at the end of the year as illustrated in Table 1.1.

The Thematic Module includes all the learning strands in the National Preschool Curriculum Standard as well as the creative, critical, and innovative elements. Teachers can develop themes that are appropriate for the child, locality, and events. Examples of themes suggested include My Self, My Country, and Exploring the Living World. The time allocated for teaching and learning of the thematic module is flexible, ranging from 35% at the beginning of the school year to 54% at the end of the year as illustrated in Table 1.1.

In Malaysia, preschool includes children aged 4 to 6 (4 year-olds, 5 year-olds, and 6 year-olds). The formal period of teaching and learning for the preschool program is a minimum of three and a half hours per day for 4+ year-old children and four hours per day for 5+ year-old children. The total number of hours per week

should not be less than seventeen and a half for 4+ year-old children and 20 hours for 5+ year-old children (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010).

Preschool education is a non-formal education and children need a physical and social environment that is non-rigid to ensure effective learning. Therefore, the preschool timetable is flexible whereby it can be altered by teachers to ensure an effective learning process.

Table 1.1
Time Allocation for Teaching and Learning in Preschool Classes

MODULE		TIME %	
BASIC MODULE	LANGUAGE	MALAY	
		ENGLISH	
		CHINESE/TAMIL	
	MATHEMATICS		Flexible (early year: 35%) (end of the year: 16%)
	OUTDOOR ACTIVITY		
ISLAMIC EDU. / MORAL EDU.			
THEMATIC MODULE	INTEGRATED MODULE	Flexible (early year: 35%) (end of the year: 54%)	
	daily routine & morning talk (reciting prayers, eating, reflecting)	30%	

Source: Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010

1.2 Music Education in the National Preschool Curriculum Standard in Malaysia

In the National Preschool Curriculum Standard, music education is part of the Creativity Development Component in the Physical Development and Aesthetic strand. The emphasis of the Creativity Development Component is to enable students to cultivate imagination, creativity, talent, and appreciation. The music aspect is to be taught in conjunction with visual arts, and drama and creative movement. There are four standard contents in the music aspect: (a) participation in singing activities, (b) participation in playing of percussion instruments activities, (c) participation in sound exploration activities, and (d) showing music appreciation. Each of the standard music contents has its own standard learning processes.

The standards of teaching and learning in the National Preschool Curriculum Standard (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010) describe what the preschool teachers need to know and to do during the process of teaching and learning. There are six standards of teaching and learning: (a) planning in the teaching and learning, (b) approaches in the teaching and learning, (c) continuous evaluation, (d) environment of the teaching and learning, (e) parental involvement, and (f) children with special needs.

(a) Planning in the Teaching and Learning Standard

Preschool teachers need to perform daily and yearly planning in accordance with the National Preschool Curriculum Standard. Teachers plan educational activities which include the support of the creativity development in students. Teachers become

facilitators and guide the children's learning. Therefore, teachers need to identify and respond to the diversity of children and encourage them to be creative. At the same time, the teachers can become a creative model for the children, and thus build a creative student community that shows a positive attitude toward new ideas and creativity. Teachers may conduct music activities which include sound exploration activities.

(b) Approaches in the Teaching and Learning Standard

Preschool teachers are encouraged to use a variety of approaches of teaching and learning in accordance with the suitability of the standard content and the standard learning process. The approaches include child-centered learning, learning through play, integrated approach, thematic approach, and learning based on multiple intelligences. The national curriculum provides opportunities for music activities to be taught as a main content or basic core module that uses elements of creativity and aesthetic in the classroom as well as to be integrated into other strands, either directly or indirectly.

(c) Continuous Evaluation Standard

Continuous and comprehensive evaluation needs to be conducted by preschool teachers on all the aspects prescribed in the National Preschool Curriculum Standard including attitude formation, skill acquisition, and social readiness. The method of evaluation is based on continuous observation and evaluation of produced work or may include children's performance in music. Recording is an activity which

systematically records information related to children's development, ability, progress, and achievement. Recording can be in the forms of checklists, anecdotal records, running (continuous) records, and portfolios.

(d) Environment of the Teaching and Learning Standard

Preschool teachers need to prepare a conducive environment in the learning centers that is appropriate for preschool children. The learning centers need to be equipped with suitable, sufficient, and updated materials. This may include basic musical instruments such as non-melodic percussion instruments (tambourine, ring bell, castanet, drum, *kompang*, and double tick-tock), audio equipment (radio, cassette player, CD player), and teaching aids (song charts or song lyric charts and pictures) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2010).

(e) Parental Involvement Standard

School management and preschool teachers need to foster a good relationship with parents or guardians through various ways. Teachers need to explain to parents regarding the preschool curriculum and methods of evaluation in the preschool. The school and teachers need to involve parents in programs and school activities such as Sport Day, Family Day, parental programs, and music concerts.