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Kampus Sultan Abdul Jalil Shah



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**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**USING CREATIVE DRAMA TO  
TEACH HISTORY TO PRIMARY  
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

**HANEEM SAID**



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## ABSTRACT



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Young Malaysians today show little interest in remembering historical events, issues of governance and tend to treat patriotism trivially. These issues occur because most students are generally taught to memorise historical facts, rather than appreciate or understand History. This research investigates the used of creative drama in History teaching and the main creative drama strategies that helps to increase students' scores in History test. The students were divided into two groups: The control group and the experimental group. The control group used textbooks and the 'chalk and talk' approach, while the experimental group was exposed to the creative drama method for History classes. Data collections were made through a set of pre-post objective questions test and reflective journal. The data were analysed using a T-test and content analysis technique. The outcomes of this research show that the scores of students in both groups increased. However, the experimental group achieved a more progressive development with the mean score increasing by 17.49 ( $p < .05$ ) compared to the control group which only increased by 6.18 ( $p < .05$ ). These findings were supported by content analysis of the samples' reflective journals which found that theatre games can be used as a main strategy to helps students understands History and to improve their achievement in learning this subject in primary school.



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**Abbreviations**

BERNAMA	Malaysian National News/ Berita Nasional Malaysia
BPG	Teacher Education Division/ Bahagian Pendidikan Guru
BSM	Human Resources Division/ Bahagian Sumber Manusia
CTAA	Children's Theatre Association of America
EPRD	Education Planning and Research Department
FiTA	Faculty of Film, Theatre and Animation
FMSP	Faculty of Music and Performing Arts
FPN	National Educational Philosophy/ Falsafah Pendidikan Negara
GAGASAN	Gagasan Pendidikan Melayu Malaysia
IGS	Institute of Graduate Studies/ Institut Pengajian Siswazah
KBSR	New Primary School Curriculum/ Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah
KSSR	Primary Schools Curriculum Standard/ Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah
KWL	Knowledge, Want and Learn
OMR	Optical Mark Reading
PBS	School-Based Assessment/ Penilaian Berasaskan Sekolah
PMR	Lower Secondary Assessment/ Penilaian Menengah Rendah
PPPM	Malaysian Education Development Plan/ Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia
PWTC	Putra World Trade Centre/ Pusat Dagangan Dunia Putra
SJKC	Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina
SJKT	Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil
SKPM	Sekolah Kebangsaan Perempuan Methodist
SKTM	Sekolah Kebangsaan Tanjong Malim
SPM	Malaysian Education Certificate/ Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation



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# Primary School Evaluation Test/ Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah

Rendah

ZPD

Zone of Proximal Development

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## 1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

History is a foundation of national development (Sukhairi, 2010). Thus, an awareness of the subject should be taught, trained and practised continuously so that members of society gain a better understanding of themselves, their family background, community, roots, nation, and civilisation (Muhd Yusof, 2009). Studying history contributes to a better understanding of the politics, customs, beliefs, values, philosophies, principles, rules, and ethics as they apply in various contexts. The study of History unites people who have different ideologies, religions and taboos by examining their shared heritages. In Malaysia, the multiplicity of cultures, traditions, languages, ways of life, and dogmas create variety in society's identities.

It is this racial and cultural diversity that has made the history of Malaysia so distinctive for thousands of years, where all of its citizens serve as invaluable assets to the nation (Syakila, 2010). The history of Malaysia's people is a priceless treasure for the children and the generations that follow. To preserve and protect this treasured history, Malaysian youth are seen as the most sustainable in the effort to realise the government's aspiration to produce generations who are both enriched with historical knowledge and closely attached to their origins.

In his concluding speech at the 61<sup>st</sup> United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) General Assembly in the Merdeka Hall, Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2010, Muhyiddin Yassin, the Malaysian Education Minister announced that History will become a must-pass subject for the Malaysian Education Certificate or Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) commencing in 2013. This decision altered the current status of the subject which was a core subject at the secondary school level, but was not a compulsory subject to pass (Zulkefli, Rozaman, Marhaini, & Zulkiflee, 2010).

This is also a global issue that has also been problematic in Western countries such as the USA. In Florida, for example, History is not a major subject in the school

curriculum. It holds a low status in that society, compared with other subjects such as Science and Mathematics which are seen to be more practical and carry future prospects for students. This is explained in more detail by De Oliveira (2011) who states that, “History does not have the same stature as other school subjects and this idea is influencing students’ attitudes toward history... Students, therefore, implicitly or explicitly, are exposed to the message that history is not a valuable school subject” (p. 34).

In Malaysia, the advent of the educational domain has resulted in greater awareness of the value of imparting historical information and awareness to its people through the teaching of History. Consequently, an increasing number of Malaysians have offered assistance in the mission towards enhancing the quality of History education in Malaysia. The rise of relevant authorities and particular individuals who seriously express their ideas, views and determination have demonstrated that there are many Malaysians who care about and are closely attached to their country. For instance, the subject of History has assumed a role on par with Bahasa Melayu (Ramakrishnan, 2010). As Ahmat Adam, Senior Fellow Researcher of the History Department of Universiti Malaya asserts, “It is time that the government elevates the status of the History subject in schools” (Sukhairi, 2010). This statement received a positive response from Omar Mohd, the Executive Chairman of the Malaysian History Association (PSM) who agrees that History should be given very serious attention (Ahmad Fadzil, 2010).

According to Masnah Ali Muda, Director of the Curriculum Division, Ministry of Education (Norizan, 2013), modifications to the History curriculum are crucial in order to stay consistent with the changes occurring. The Ministry will therefore make improvements to the subject content by making the syllabus more uniform through the establishment of the *Special Committee of Researchers for the History Curriculum and Secondary Level History Textbooks*. This committee will include a large number of Malaysian historians, who design course work which places emphasis on topics relevant to the formation and constitution of Malaysia, modern Malaysian history and national unity (Azman & Sophia, 2010).

Additionally, the Ministry has explained that any national education agenda involving commitment and cooperation will be prioritised and supported from various

angles, for instance retraining current History teachers and determining the time period in which teachers can make adequate preparation for the changes occurring: Adding more administrative staff, increasing the number of qualified teachers, providing financial support to enable all parties are adequately prepared for the new system, and to work in comfortable conditions (Umnohq, 2010).

Strong support has been provided by Ooi Keat Gin, Chairman of the History Department, School of Humanities at Universiti Sains Malaysia, who asserts that History should be made a 'must-pass' subject early on in order to raise awareness among the younger generations about the hardships and struggles that were faced by those who fought to form Malaysia (Norizan, 2013). Hasan Malik, the President of *Gagasan Pendidikan Melayu Malaysia* (GAGASAN) has also expressed his association's preparedness to work towards making History a must-pass subject in SPM to ensure society's continuity of survival.

Therefore, all stakeholders must consider this idea in a positive light and not dispute the necessity of prioritising the subject over others (Sidek, 2012). Thus, the government needs to be more assertive by not allowing students or schools to exempt themselves from sitting for or holding examinations. However, SPM candidates are advised to be more diligent, dedicated, hardworking, and focused on the learning of History, with the attitude that should students fail the History examination, they will fail to obtain the SPM certificate (Azman & Sophia, 2010). According to Idris Jusoh, the Education Minister II (as cited in Assim, 2013), the intention is not to burden students but to make them more serious about learning History. Similarly, Khoo (2012) asserts that if History continues to be neglected by students, Malaysians will not be able to produce a moderate civilisation over the next decades.

After the new requirement was announced, the ministry established that History will also be made a core subject in primary schools by 2014 (Norizan, 2010) which means that there will be 11 core subjects in primary school: History, Bahasa Melayu, English, Bahasa Cina (SJKC), Bahasa Tamil (SJKT), Mathematics, Science, Local Studies (Kajian Tempatan), Islamic Education, Moral Education, as well as Civics and Citizenship Education (Perak Education Department, 2013). Zainal Kling, Professor of the School of Government at Universiti Utara Malaysia demonstrated his strong support of this decision

by indicating that History education should start at an early age (Mohd Yakop, 2010). In reality, this should have been implemented in 2010, however, due to objections raised by certain parties, its implementation had to be delayed (Wee, 2012). Therefore, the continuity and sustainability of the subject through the initiative to introduce it at primary school level is timely and necessary as it is in line with the goal of History Curriculum Standard in Primary School that allows students to understand the behaviours of humans, cause and effect, the uniqueness of Malaysia's history and the success of the country in creating patriotic nationals who practice democracy in Malaysia.

Additionally, this resolution is on par with the implementation of the Primary School Standard Curriculum or Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah (KSSR) where the introduction of this curriculum is consistent with the abolishment of the Lower Secondary Assessment or Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR). This indicates that the PMR examination will be discontinued and in turn, replaced by School-Based Assessment or Penilaian Berasaskan Sekolah (PBS). Many have expressed their desire for the Primary School Evaluation Test or Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR), to be continued as a public examination, as this type of assessment is able to assist and motivate students towards becoming more prepared to face secondary level schooling. Chong (2010) explains that:

UPSR is a milestone. It heralds the end of the primary and the beginning of secondary schooling. It gauges the readiness and preparedness of students for the next phase of their learning. It helps and guides secondary school teachers to place these students in the appropriate classes so that more effective teaching and learning can take place. (p. 13)

By accounting for these factors, the ministry has proposed to continue with the UPSR. However, the assessment of Year 6 students will be modified, where their achievement grades are no longer determined by the public examination alone, but will be integrated with the central evaluation and school-based assessment which also involves co-curricular activities, sports and psychometrics such as aptitude and personality tests (Mohd Nasaruddin, 2013). Some believe that this is the way to ensure that both teachers and pupils have more time to focus on co-curriculum and sports activities. The changes in the new format for both examinations, PMR and UPSR will be made effective simultaneously in 2014, two years earlier than the original date stipulated, in response to

demands from UMNO representatives that this initiative is expedited (Manimaran & Syed Mu'az, 2010).

The KSSR initiative has already been implemented since 2011 by targeting the subject of English as an initial strategy and it is expected to operate comprehensively for all subjects in all Malaysian primary schools by 2016 (Mohd Nasaruddin, 2013). Azian T. S. Abdullah, the Deputy Director of the Curriculum Development Department, Malaysian Ministry of Education, explains that consistent with the framework of the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025, the KSSR was revised and improved in 2012 after its introduction in January 2011 ensuring that students are equipped with the relevant skills, knowledge and values that are appropriate to current needs (Mohd Nasaruddin, 2013).

Thus, it is clear that the KSSR is a transformed curriculum which is molded into an improved version of the Primary School New Curriculum or Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah (KBSR). A comprehensive modification towards the previous curriculum was undertaken to fulfil the fundamental needs of students by re-structuring the design, organisation, pedagogy, time allocation, materials, assessment method, and curriculum management in schools. In the aspect of pedagogy, for instance, the transformation of KSSR places emphasis on the delivery of more complex learning by designing teaching and material plans tailored to the needs of students of various levels and performance, despite them being in the same class (Mohd Nasaruddin, 2013).

The level of capability of students is assessed using the Linus screening process, which integrates both literacy and numeracy as part of the Education Ministry's Standard Module. Through the first Linus screening, students are separated into three groups: Mainstream Group, Linus Group and the Remedy Linus Group. The third group is referred by specialists and includes students who have special needs, learning difficulties and need to be enrolled in an integrated special class so that their emotional, intellectual and psychomotor developmental needs can be monitored (Azran, 2011).

It is, therefore, evident that the implementation of the KSSR does have some very clear, well-directed and organised aims and objectives. Furthermore, KSSR includes two other strategies a) grouping weak students so that they will be more prepared to face a less difficult syllabus compared to other students, and b) broadening the medium of

education by making the Iban, Dusun and Kadazan languages the medium or intermediary, seeking to capture students' interests in engaging in the school sessions.

The resulting benefits of the KSSR are not exclusively confined to the three main races: Malay, Indian and Chinese, but the largest ethnic groups of Sabah and Sarawak will also have the opportunity to become beneficiaries. To this extent, the KSSR implementation received positive feedback from parents, after seeing evidence that their children's interest in learning notably increased (Guru, 2011). This positive situation is the consequence of the approach taken in the KSSR where it is supported by elements such as creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, information technology, and communication taught explicitly to students of Level 1 and 2 by focusing on the '4M': Reading, writing, counting, and reasoning. The implementation will involve students from Years 1 to 3 in Level 1 and Years 4 to 6 in Level 2. Table 1.0 displays the differences between the KSSR and the KBSR.

**TABLE 1.0**  
**Curriculum Development of KSSR and KBSR**

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<b>FIELD</b>	a) Communication b) Spirituality, attitude and value c) Humanity d) Physical development and aesthetic e) Science and technology f) Self expression	a) Communication b) The human and the environment c) Self development
<b>COMPONENT</b>	Standard curriculum document	Syllabus
<b>STRUCTURE</b>	Modular	Linear
<b>ELEMENT</b>	a) Creativity and innovation b) Entrepreneurship c) Information technology and communication	Critical thinking skills
<b>FOCUS</b>	4M (Reading, writing, counting, & reasoning)	3M (Reading, writing & counting)

*Note: From Malaysian Education Ministry. (2010). KSSR Primary School Standard Curriculum.*

Other than prioritising the components, structure, elements, and focus, the KSSR also has an important role in forming human capital that is well-balanced, knowledgeable and highly skilled in achieving the educational aspirations of the country. Wee Kok Seong (as cited in Kik, 2011) adds that:

This system places greater emphasis on aspects pertinent to the formation of a noble personality, self-integrity, resilience, and competitiveness, all of which are important traits needed to meet future challenges. Skills and mastery of information technology and communication (ICT) should also be given due attention to equip students with generic skills. (p. 13)

Based on this statement, it is clear that the ministry entirely rejected Khoo Kay Kim's claims that the Malaysian education system has abandoned moral values and thus, is no longer relevant to the country (Zahrain, 2010). It is evident that the ministry has been working hard to ensure that student learning is balanced, not simply carrying the motive of passing with excellence in the exam-oriented academic subjects, but also centering on the assessment of skills, talent and ability by prioritising the construction of morals, spirituality, socio-emotions, physical development, attitude, and values. The application of the latest sophisticated information technology is also emphasised, so that students grow as well-rounded individuals towards realising the national identity and to make the transformation of the educational field of the 21<sup>st</sup> century sustainable.

In an effort to strengthen and consolidate History through the KSSR, the subject will not be a part of other subjects as it was previously where it was only an element embedded in the Local Studies subject for Year 4, 5 and 6 students (Rohana, 2010). Additionally, History will also be taught to students in Year 1, 2 and 3 so that an understanding of Malaysia's past will be instilled in them as early as possible. In working towards these aims, the ministry has decided that History must be taught in a manner that is easier to understand and grasp by primary school students (Norizan, 2010).

To achieve this goal, Khair Mohamad Yusof, the Deputy Chief Director of Education (Policy) explains that teachers need to apply the KSSR approach by focusing on fun teaching methods through activities such as singing, jazz chants, choral speaking, drama, music, simulation, quiz, and other teaching aids deemed appropriate (Ismail, 2014; Ikhsan & Norila, 2014). This means that teachers need to get used to the new approach which no longer takes the form of traditional classroom teaching methods which typically

take place in secondary schools (Mohd Nasaruddin, 2013). In other words, the approach of teaching History in primary schools will certainly be different in comparison to the secondary schools, as the students concerned are in the range of 7 to 12 years old where their cognitive level is lower than that of secondary school students.

For that reason, the purpose of this research is to use creative drama to teach the target group of 11 year old students about the history of Malaysia. Through their engagement in creative drama, pupils can explore the capability and the extent of their imagination to construct unfamiliar situations and contexts. This demands a response to “make believe” situations as if they were actually happening, a uniqueness that does not exist in other learning approaches in History. Lello (2001) explains:

It [creative drama] has an important place in teaching History. It can ‘open doors’ of imagination, identification and interest which, for children, are sometimes hard to tap... It is strongly contrasted with many other teaching approaches in History and thus provides variety, emphasis and fun. (p. 38)

In short, the imagination in creative drama enables students to learn History by means of ‘doing’, ‘feeling’ and ‘experiencing’ for themselves the happenings or stories that have taken place throughout history. Guided by the teacher, the students’ concentration and senses are stimulated to imagine the situations that have occurred in the past, even though they themselves have never experienced them. Hence, students will begin to collaborate and cooperate in group activities based on the assignments given.

Active involvement of students can create a more lively, dynamic and cheerful classroom environment. Tezer and Aktunç (2010) explain that students’ active involvement is a sign that learning is effective. A study by Dickinson and Neelands (2006) found that effective learning must a) have a meaningful context, b) involves group and pair works, c) form the cooperation and support from other members, d) provide an interactive learning environment, and e) be safe and enjoyable. In summary, it is anticipated that the use of creative drama has the potential to improve existing teaching methods in History in the effort to be more closely attached to, and deliver this mother of all knowledge disciplines (Khoo, 2012) to the future generations, while inculcating their interest and passion for the subject and working towards improving performance.

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The education system in Malaysia often experiences overhauls and changes, parallel with advancement, development and current academic needs. Recently, the utilisation of exams and ABC grades in KBSR to measure students' progress and performance has been replaced with a BAND system through the KSSR. Regardless of the passion and excitement of the Ministry of Education to transform the education system, the challenges of developing human capital and producing Malaysians who stay loyal to the country remains central to the main mission (Zairil, 2013). Importantly, the direction for the development of the younger generation has to be balanced with the importance of understanding the history of the country.

Thus, the National Educational Philosophy or Falsafah Pendidikan Negara (FPN) outlines that History will be the main vehicle in the Malaysian education system which creates a sense of national unity, instills loyalty towards one's own country and produces citizens who take pride in being Malaysians. The History curriculum plays a substantial role in instilling awareness, developing a nation state that is integrated while consolidating a sense of patriotism among the younger generation, especially school students. The aim of the History curriculum is in line with the aspiration of the FPN, which places emphasis on the development of a holistic, integrated individual in terms of intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical development (Mohd Ayop, 2010).

However, this intention seems to be unachievable when many Malaysians have chosen to take essential facts about the races in Malaysia and the nation for granted (Awang, 2010). This problem is increasingly widespread and serious in Malaysian society based on the results of a survey conducted by the Special Unit from Utusan Malaysia who found that 98.5% of 200 respondents consisting of teenagers aged between 16 and 20 years failed to accurately answer 10 questions on general knowledge and the history of Malaysia. The result was different for adult respondents aged between 31 and 55, where only three questions were answered incorrectly, specifically the date of Malaysia Day, national motto and the third principle of the National Pillar. This reflects that young people in Malaysia have little interest and understanding about the history of Malaysia. A limitation of the study was that it did not specify the sex of the teens that may have

contributed to the high percentage of 'history-blind' cases among the younger generation (Special Report, October 29, 2010, p. 3).

Reverting to the issue of young Malaysians who are said to be 'history-blind', the government recommended that the cause of the problem should be identified at the grassroots level by reviewing the current situation within the education system in Malaysia. This is because today's society is a reflection of the state of children who received previous forms of education and thus, reflects the extent to which the efficiency and relevance of our education system was formed over the years. History experts have revealed that until this time, students have been taught to memorise history rather than to understand and appreciate it (Special Report, October 29, 2010, p. 3).

In this regard, Khoo Kay Kim (2012) who is an Emeritus Professor of History has a point when he asserts, "The principle is very clear whereby students must learn History by looking for important events that had happened in the past and making it future guidance and lessons to learn from. Memorizing names and dates are simply unnecessary" (p. 18). The statement highlights the need for students to master History through appreciation and not through memorisation. An appreciation of History which should serve as a catalyst to nationalism will not exist if students memorise historical facts just to pass the examination.

The existing History subject taught via 'chalk and talk' and textbooks seem to be very popular and frequently used by teachers in secondary schools (Azman & Sophia, 2010). History teachers nowadays are overly dependent on textbooks, causing the learning process to become very monotonous, non-dynamic and ineffective (Syakila, 2010). Khoo (as cited in Nuradilla, 2013) elaborates on this:

We find history teachers teaching statistics; boring, mindless, meaningless statistics. The facts they learn, devoid of all emotion, are presented as indisputable evidence, thus contributing no understanding and having no real value beyond interesting trivia. Texts also make history seem to be cut and dried. There is no mystery, no wonder of how things will turn out... (p. 28)

These statements indicate that the teaching of History, especially through textbooks has given rise to some negative consequences in learning. The scenario also revealed that school History teachers failed to create a dynamic, fun and meaningful learning experience, an issue that has been raised and debated for over 20 years. For

example, Kochhar (1984) unravels the issue by elaborating on the impact of using textbooks, driving the students to learn History by way of memorising facts and simply taking in anything written by the authors without analysing the significance and the logic of the story to the national history. Additionally, Kochhar (1984) states:

The use of a single textbook is the least interesting and least effective. Sometimes, the textbook takes the place of the subject; it constitutes a boundary. The pupils memorise the textbook material verbatim; they accept blindly the views and interpretations of authors. This proves harmful as the power of critical thinking does not develop. (p. 172)

In summary, although textbooks have the reputation of simplifying the teachers' tasks due to their compact and concise nature, their excessive use explains the students' limited learning experience, especially with regards to aspects of cognitive development and critical thinking skills. To prevent primary school students from suffering the same problems when History is made a core subject, Muhyiddin (Kamarul Afendey & Ishak, 2013) proposes that the teaching of History be altered, so that students do not exclusively learn the subject through conventional classroom education. Similarly, Ahmad Fadzil (2010) expresses the view that, "The subject of History in primary schools should be delivered through various effective teaching approaches". Noraini (2011) agrees that a more creative delivery technique must be adopted as the core strategy.

Simply put, it is clear that the problems arising are also somewhat related to the longstanding methods employed in the traditional teaching of History. There is therefore a need to review and put in place effective teaching methods which are properly developed so that the intended learning outcomes can be attained (Haili, 2010). Thus, this study focuses on the impact of creative drama as an alternative teaching approach on the achievement of primary school students in the History test. It is hoped that this research will contribute to the improvement of the quality of History education and support the government's efforts to boost education in Malaysia globally according to local frameworks.

### 1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study seeks:

- i. To compare the Year 5 students' pre-test and post-test scores of the control group in the History test.
- ii. To compare the Year 5 students' pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group in the History test.
- iii. To compare the means of the pre-test and post-test scores of both control and experimental groups in their History test.
- iv. To identify specific strategies used in the creative drama-centred approach that helped students improve their learning process in History.

### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research problem of this study is to identify the level of effectiveness of the use of the creative drama approach in assisting students to master the chapter entitled History of our Country (Sejarah Negara Kita). The research questions are:

- i. Is there a significant difference in the History test achievement of Year 5 students' pre-test and post-test scores in the control group?
- ii. Is there a significant difference in the History test achievement of Year 5 students' pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group?
- iii. Is there a significant difference in the means of the pre-test and post-test scores of both control and experimental groups in their History test?
- iv. What are the specific strategies used in the creative drama approach that helped students improve their learning process in History?

## 1.5 HYPOTHESES

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The hypotheses of this study were developed to examine the extent of the effectiveness of the use of creative drama on the achievement of Year 5 students in the History test. An experimental test design was chosen to test these hypotheses at the level of significance of  $p < 0.05$ . The following are the null hypotheses tested in this study:

- H<sub>01</sub> There would be no significant difference in the History test achievement between Year 5 students' pre-test and post-test scores of the control group.
- H<sub>02</sub> There would be no significant difference in the History test achievement between Year 5 students' pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group.
- H<sub>03</sub> There would be no significant difference in the means of the pre-test and post-test scores of both control and experimental groups in their History test.

## 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY



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- i. To encourage the application of the creative drama approach in the teaching and learning of History in primary schools.
- ii. To assist primary school students to understand and learn History more easily.
- iii. To provide information and data to History teachers about the advantages of using creative drama as an alternative approach to teach History in primary schools.
- iv. To enhance active classroom participation in learning History through creative drama.
- v. The findings of this study will be very useful to the State Education Department especially the State Education Resource Centre in organising creative drama courses and workshops for teachers so that teaching History in primary schools becomes more interesting and effective.



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## 1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

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There were several limitations in this research. This study was only conducted in one school, namely Sekolah Kebangsaan Tanjong Malim (SKTM) located in the district of Tanjong Malim, Perak. The selection of this school was made randomly through enlisting all national primary schools located in Perak. This school was selected without knowing the location and identity of the school concerned. The researcher was not aware of the existing differences of individual students in terms of their background, cognitive ability and academic achievement, with the exception of knowing that all students followed the same syllabus.

This study involved 78 students from two classes. The researcher specifically chose Year 5 students as the sample group for this study as they were not involved at that time with the public examinations, UPSR. In addition, the school administration also quarantined Year 6 students by not allowing them to participate in any other extra-curricular activities except for workshops and courses related to the UPSR. Other than that, the researcher also found that Year 5 students already had some exposure to history through the Local Studies subject covered in Year 4. In other words, history had been taught upon entering Year 5, so these students were already familiar with history compared to Year 1, 2 and 3 students.

A further limitation lies in the fact that this researcher only focused on the independent variable, namely the type of teaching methods (creative drama & conventional), as well as the dependent variable which is the student achievement scores. In other words, the independent variables were analysed to view the correlation or its impact in influencing the dependent variable. To control the extraneous variables, several issues needed to be highlighted, including ensuring that students from both groups experienced similar academic achievements. Therefore the researcher obtained the results of the school's monthly test for the students from their respective teachers. Also, the pre-test for both groups was analysed using the T-test to determine that there was no significant difference in terms of their ability or achievement prior to the study.

An additional study limitation was that the content was confined to the chapter entitled History of our Country (Sejarah Negara Kita) contained in the syllabus of Local

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Studies for Year 5 students as only this chapter comprises history elements. The title includes the division of sub-topics such as The Founding of Melaka, The Glorious Years of Melaka, Melaka: The Knowledge Center, Islamic Propagation Centre, The Expansion of Power, The Arrival of External Forces, and The Deterioration of the Melaka Sultanate.

All topics were taught in a 12-week period from 11<sup>th</sup> July 2011 to 26<sup>th</sup> September 2011 with one class per week and one hour for each class. However, throughout the research period, there were several scheduling problems. For example, some classes had to be cancelled, postponed and delayed until the following week or changed to another learning slot due to the overlapping time with the school's extra co-curricular activities such as the 'cleanest classroom competition', sports day, teachers' farewell day, and the Yassin-recital programme in conjunction with the UPSR.

## 1.8 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

The following term definitions contained are discussed in this section in further detail to clarify their functions in the context of this study:



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### 1.8.1 Creative Drama

Creative drama can be defined as a structured drama activity that uses students' imagination and willingness to act or pretend to reinforce academic objectives (Courtney, 1989). It may involve activities such as a dramatic play, story enactment, imaginative journeys, theatre games, music, and dance (Buesgen, 1999) which are believed to assist in the formation of stable emotions, problem solving competency, effective communication skills, as well as critical and creative thinking. In creative drama, students use their own words to convey meaning. The sources which could be used to build the essence of creative drama are folklore stories, legends, myths, fantasies, imagination, songs, and poems which contain interesting plots with positive moral values. Therefore, the researcher applied the historical tales of Melaka as the main fundamental theme of these creative drama activities of History learning.



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