

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Form Three Students' Readiness towards the Implementation of form Three Central Assessments (Pentaksiran Tingkatan 3 – PT3) in Selected Public Schools in Malaysia

Fatima Sabbir

Copy Editor, MSB Ventures

Abang Fhaeizdhyall

Lecturer, Academy of Language Studies, University Technology MARA, Malaysia

Nur Syamimi Zahari

Lecturer, Academy of Language Studies, University Technology MARA, Malaysia

Aisyah Nazamud-din

Lecturer, Academy of Language Studies, University Technology MARA, Malaysia

Abstract:

The study is conducted with the aim to investigate the level of readiness among students towards PT3 (Form Three Assessment) in School Based Assessment (SBA). The objectives of the study include to determine the level of understanding and knowledge of public secondary school students towards PT3 and to determine their level of readiness on the assessment. The researcher employed a descriptive and correlative research design with 746 respondents which involved all form three students from four urban secondary schools in the district of Klang, Selangor in Malaysia. The research has found that students revealed a high level of readiness towards PT3 in terms of their understanding, knowledge and preparation for PT3. They were also prepared for the assessment. This implies the present perception of students regarding PT3 assessment as positive and encouraging. Hence, further studies should be extended from this research in different angles such as the teachers' perception and steps to improve the result for the assessment in schools.

Keywords: School based assessment, PT3, students' readiness

1. Introduction

Education is a process whereby individuals attain various knowledge, acquire skills and habits and develop values (Begum & Farooqui, 2008). Undeniably, education partakes an important role in accomplishing Malaysia's vision of developing individual with full potential and aspirations in envisioning a developed nation by 2020.

Besides, one of the aims of education is to develop and maintain the economic well-being of the individual and society generally (Murphy, Mufti, & Kassem, 2009). Verifiably, the education system has reacted to and underpinned distinctive types of rights in the society. The 1996 Education Act guarantees the right to gain entrance to preschool education of all children between the ages of 5 and 6. Every child from age 6-17 is obligated to receive education. The Malaysian education system provides free education for every child for 11 years. Primary education is for a period of six years from standard one to standard six. Subsequently, students continue their education for three more years at the lower secondary level (Form 1 – Form 3) and followed by two years of upper secondary school (Form 4 – 5). The National Development Plan emphasizes on the quality and importance of education to every citizen emphasizing on individual needs and nation building. The National Education Philosophy (NEP, 1987) has been channeled towards achieving the nation's vision. Every child is geared to be educated, skillful and be trained in its own chosen path. This is articulated in NEP that states;

"Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, the society and the nation at large".

As in other regions of the world, Education in Malaysia is also experiencing educational transformation. The New Primary School Curriculum or 'Kurrikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah', (KBSR), being its Malay language acronym was implemented in 1983 until 2012. KBSR stresses the learning of basic skills and knowledge through various instructional materials by recognizing the need to cater for different levels of ability amongst the pupils (Nurul-Awanis, 2011). The

Integrated Secondary School Curriculum or 'Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah', being its Malay acronym was introduced in 1988 at the secondary level as an extension of the curriculum reforms efforts at secondary level. Abdullah & Kumar (1990) cited in (Nurul-Awanis, 2011) state that the new curriculum emphasizes on 'integration' that accents the importance the teaching of language and values. Over the years the education system has been too examination oriented, over emphasizing on rote learning and academic concepts. Thereby, the education reform is deemed necessary to shift from an examination oriented to a developmental one by promoting communication and creative skills among students.

Parallel with the education transformation (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, 2012), The Malaysian Examination Syndicate (MES) has introduced the National Educational Assessment System (NEAS). The main purpose of NEAS is to assist in achieving the objective of National Philosophy of Education in developing students' physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual capabilities comprehensively and holistically' (Norzila, 2013). The Ministry of Education (MOE) officially introduced the School Based Assessment (SBA) approach in evaluating students' academic progress in stages starting in 2011. Davison (2004) in (Malakolunthu & Hoon, 2010) mention that many other countries SBA has been included for assessment purpose, such as in Hong Kong, Australia and England. The Malaysian Examination Syndicate (2009) states that the main four objectives of NEAS are "to reduce the focus on public examination, to improve students' learning, to create a holistic and everlasting assessment, to develop a better human capital and to strengthen school based assessment" (Norhasnida, 2012).

SBA in secondary schools was implemented in 2012 with the current form three students being the first cohort of SBA. In Form 1 and Form 2, the students were assessed by the four components of SBA. As the students embark their educational journey into Form 3, there have been uncertainties of the new assessment system to replace the Lower Secondary Assessment or PMR (Penilaian Menengah Rendah) examination. The stakeholders are unsure of the accurate form of assessment for Form 3 students under SBA. Half year into the academic calendar, in referral to press release The Deputy Prime Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin informed that "through the improvements in the Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah (PBS) or School-Based Assessment on April 1, there would no longer be any centralised examination for Form 3 students implemented at the school level" (The Star, March 18 2014). Thus, the PMR will be replaced by PT3 (Form Three Assessment). In other words, form three students would not be assessed by any centralized examination beginning 2014.

PT3 known as "Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga", being its Malay language acronym or known as Form Three Assessment, is a summative assessment at the lower secondary education level to evaluate the academic achievement of students. Through PT3, the school will administer the assessment, assess and score students' responses (answers) based on instruments and scoring rubrics (standardized) provided by the Examination Board (Ministry of Education, 2014a). The first cohort of PT3 students, totaling to 480,000 Form Three students around the country will be the pioneer to sit for PT3 (New Straits Times, 18 June 2014) Furthermore, the Deputy Prime Minister reiterated that the Examination Board would assist schools in preparing the questions by providing a pool of examinations questions to be chosen from. PT3 would be implemented based on the period of execution prescribed by the Examination Board and the schedule of assessment is to be provided by the school. PT3 is viewed as a positive step towards fostering world-class students with excellent character. It focuses on HOTS and it assures that the new system would assist students in improving their performance and thinking abilities.

1.1. Research Problem

Teachers have voiced their dissatisfaction of the SBA, as it has raised the workload of teachers (New Straits Times, June 28 2014). Suara Guru Masyarakat Malaysia (SGMM) a non-governmental organization presented a memorandum against the system as the organization is of the opinion that SBA is producing a generation of Malaysian students who are submissive, do not possess critical thinking skills, are non-competitive and non-creative. Among the issues that were addressed are dissatisfaction among teachers on the issue that they are 'overburdened' with 'clerical' work as they have to key-in assessment grades, thus, spending more hours on non-teaching routines (New Straits Times, June 28 2014). The national Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) on the other hand had voiced its support for improvements to the SBA system. Nonetheless before even the teething problem were ironed out, the SBA system was suspended in April 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2014b).

The Ministry of Education, in reference to a press release dated 16 April 2014, stated that with the improvement of SBA, the Lower Secondary Examination (PMR) will be replaced by "Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga" (PT3) or Form Three Assessment. (Ministry of Education, 2014a). The Minister of Education announced that PT3 would start in July (New Straits Times, 18 June 2014). For any new system to work, time is the essence. As the authorities practically imposed the implementation, grievances were voiced out both from parents and students, as well as school authorities and teachers. What was made known were the components of the examination which consists of case studies, instrument assessments, oral and written tests. Concerned parents and teachers had voiced their worries on the time frame of the implementation of PT3. Issues raised by the stakeholders are on the little information revealed about PT3. Students and parents are confused with the PT3 format, whilst teachers are clueless about preparing their students for the assessments (New Straits Times, June 28 2014). Students on the other hand are relying on information provided by teachers to prepare for PT3.

Starting 13 October 2014, the new format for the form three assessments; PT3 was unveiled to the first cohort of PT3 students. The students were informed of the format and content of the new assessment only from April 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2014a). Within a time, span of seven months, the students were prepared for the new assessment which encompasses the lower secondary English syllabus.

As the prime stakeholders of the assessment are the students, their readiness towards the PT3 is very crucial. A careful study of the literature reveals that the level of readiness among students towards PT3 has not been thoroughly investigated. A clear understanding of students' readiness level of a new assessment is very essential for the assessment to be implemented in the education system. Realizing the gap in the existing literature, this study aims to investigate the level of readiness among students towards PT3. The study hopes to benefit policy makers, educators and parents in identifying the level of readiness of students towards PT3 and ensuring the objective of PT3 in developing holistic students is achieved.

1.2. Research Objectives

The study aims to investigate the level of readiness among students towards PT3 (Form Three Assessment) in School Based Assessment (SBA). Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

- To determine the level of understanding and knowledge of public secondary school students towards PT3.
- To determine the level of readiness of public secondary school students towards PT3.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Assessment

Numerous countries across the globe have embarked on extensive reforms of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with the aim to prepare students to overcome the demands of life and work in the twenty-first century. Toffler asserts that the "the greatest challenge in the 21st century is not learning but unlearning and relearning". In this era of globalization, the change in curriculum and assessment has begun to the focus in the twenty first century skills. Hammond (2012) defines the change of focus towards the ability to discover and consolidate information to communicate well in multiple forms, frame and conduct investigations, solve problem, analyze and synthesize data, improve one's learning and work both independently and in teams. In tandem with the reform, improvement of the education system in many Asian countries has been brought in parallel with the economic reforms across the globe.

In Malaysia, parents and teachers consider public examination as the 'be all and end all' of assessments. Education in Malaysia has been looked upon as a process of preparing the students for examinations. The function of examination in Malaysia is to check whether the students are ready to proceed to the next academic level or not, also as benchmarks to understand their achievement (Kaarmann & Hinrikus, 2017). However, education should be reckoned as a process by which people obtain information, acquire habits, attitudes and endeavors. Education is an important element in the transformation of social economic and social progress. According to Begum and Farooqui (2008), during the process of education, the learners' progress is often required to be measured, alongside the educational changes that occurs. Malaysia is of no exception in the transformation process of the assessment in education.

2.2. School Based Assessment

School Based Assessment was implemented as a form of new assessment by the end of 2010 to replace the highly-centralized examination. The School Based Assessment (SBA) was a focal point for education reform in Malaysia. The implementation of SBA determined a new direction of assessment towards meaningful assessment. SBA is categorized by its distinct features of robustness and authenticity (Norzila, 2013). SBA is akin to be holistic, low stake integrated and comprises quality assurance of the assessment. In addition, the purpose of SBA is to monitor students' progress, which occurs as a continuum throughout the year, is essential in charting students' learning chart. Furthermore, SBA has been implemented with the purpose of enhancing students' cognitive, problem solving skills as well as personal development and communication skills (Begum & Farooqui, 2008).

In line with the changing trends in assessments, in the Malaysian context, School Based Assessment has been introduced into schools under the Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR). The Malaysian examination body has taken a step forward towards decentralizing assessment. The focal point of the change is to move away from the highly-centralized examination system to a system that is a blend of centralized examination and school-based assessment (Tuah, 2007) cited in (Suzieleez, Venville, & Chapman, 2009). The change in the assessment culture is viewed as a catalyst for education reformation Chan and Sidhu (2011). The reform of assessment is in parallel to the international education assessment scenario that has progressively move towards a more flexible assessment culture from a highly centralized examination and testing culture by implementing a diverse range of assessment methods in teaching and learning (Miller et al., 2013).

The concept of SBA or generally known as "Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah" which was implemented for Year 1 students in 2011 and Form 1 students in 2012 is in accordance to the National Key Result Area (NKRA) agenda as a part of the education reformation. The implementation of PBS paves the way to a meaningful assessment. It is parallel with KSSR as there is a great need for change in the way to assess students (Ikhsan, Norila, & Nurul Aida, 2013). The rationale of School Based Assessment is to break out of the examination-oriented system and varies educational assessment holistically toward a more performance and formative style. The assessment system no longer stresses on examination, but the level of skills attained by the students, which is measured and recorded by the subject teacher within a stipulated time. In a study conducted by the Ministry of Education, stakeholders suggest that the National Educational Assessment System (NEAS) should focus on school-based assessment and one-off examinations should remain in the system but at a lower stake at primary and secondary

education (Ministry of Education, 2011). Nonetheless, the reformation of education system in Malaysia is seen as timely, as the educational experts advocate for a change in the education system that is reliable and appropriate to be assessed at the school level and put less emphasis on evaluating students on their ability to excel solely in examination.

The benefit of School Based Assessment is that students are appraised based on school standards and school information, not on nationwide or state-wide information (Mansor, Leng, Rasul, Raof, & Yusoff, 2013). Qu and Zhang (2013) further mentions that formative assessment provides teachers with more thorough and continuous feedback, and a comprehensive understanding of what assistance students need, thus teachers can decide on the type of teaching methods to apply according to the students' need. Other than that, having this type of formative assessment in education system is crucial in enhancing students' learning. This is proven in a study done by Nor Hasnida Che Md Ghazali (2016), students are motivated towards learning if the teachers have a positive attitude towards assessment, and most of the teachers have a positive attitude towards School Based Assessment.

2.3. Form Three Assessment (PT3)

"Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga" (PT3) or Form Three Assessment is an important component of SBA is being used to evaluate form three students beginning from this year which replaces the Lower Secondary Assessment, PMR. The assessment is a part of PBS improvement in lower secondary level. It is seen as a positive step towards nurturing world class students with exemplary character. Furthermore, the assessment is aimed to foster and develop HOTS (higher-order thinking skills) among students. The implementation of PT3 is received with mixed feelings and opinions from the stakeholders. The education fraternity does believe that under the PT3, students' soft skills would be honed, assessed and cultivated by teachers in a consistent manner (New Straits Times, 1 July 2014). Likewise, the introduction of PT3 is seen timely because Malaysia is moving towards a global approach in education in the era of globalization. PT3, which is a component of SBA is a proactive effort by the Ministry of Education to produce students who not only excel in academics but also able to keep up with current demand, such as being creative and think critically, able to communicate effectively and solve problems. The new system is able to produce students who are able to keep up with demand of the globalization era by transforming the system used before. Meanwhile, Hamid (2014) states that the purpose of PMR being replaced by PT3 is to take off the pressure of to do well among students whereby, parents, teachers and even the media think that the centralized examination are the be-all and end-all, where students must pass exams. The author further emphasizes that the stakeholders must ensure that learning is fun. The implementation of PT3 begins in stages from 1 July 2014 onwards based on the schedule set by the Examination Board and prepared by school (Appendix A). Whereas, students' achievement in PT3 will be reported in the form of grades A, B, C, D, E and F with respective interpretations (Appendix B) (Ministry of Education, 2014a; New Straits Times, 2 July 2014). PT3 is an effort to strengthen the implementation of the SBA at national level. In the context of the current Malaysian education system, PT3 is proposed as a summative evaluation. The instruments are prepared at the national level, and the schools may have a selection of instruments to choose from. PT3 evaluates a student's academic performance after three years of learning at the lower secondary level. PT3 aims to produce students who have a high level of self-confidence and self-reliance. In contrast to the pattern of previous examinations, PT3 is able to produce students who have Higher Level Thinking Skills (HOTS).

Since the implementation of PT3 is conducted literally within a short span of time, the stakeholders have expressed concerned about the seemingly last-minute announcements and limited information on PT3. The stakeholders are anxious on the whole. Little information has been revealed during briefing with the stakeholders at the early stage of PT3 (New Sunday Times, 29 June 2014). Teachers are clueless about preparing their students for the assessments as the sessions to familiarize teachers with the new format are being conducted 'at the last minute'. The dissemination of information nonetheless have been conducted in stages with the help of the state education departments and district education offices, Ministry of Education division, principals, head of schools, secondary and primary school teachers and representatives from the Parent Teacher Association representatives throughout the nation (New Straits Times, 2 July 2014).

There were also challenges that the teachers had to face as this new assessment implemented (Salleh, Ismail, Wahab, & Abdullah, 2017). The findings of the study suggested that the teachers need more training modules to make this assessment effective, as most of the teachers were not ready to implement SBA despite the time constraint that they had. In another study, it was found that the teachers faced several major problems in the implementation of SBA in terms of the core knowledge of the subject, assessment facilities and equipment, and Physical Education classroom management (Veloosa & Ruzlan Md Alib, 2016).

2.4. Readiness

Identifying student readiness is essential as it will help to engage students by understanding their level of readiness by relating to content knowledge and process skills. To determine where students might be on the readiness spectrum, teachers need to question and query students. When students are identified on the learning spectrum, initiatives to new learning process are made. The readiness to learn for all students is acquired at a different level. Educators must strive to capture students' ability to attain readiness in the learning spectrum. The level of readiness differs from one student to another. If readiness is defined in terms of specific mastery level of skills, then, one students' readiness may be a long achieved goal of another student, or a yet to be accomplished success of another student (Meisels, 1998). Therefore, readiness towards learning must be focused on the ability of students to manage time and adapt towards self-directed learning by understanding

own learning styles and experiences (Chun & Junaid, 2012). Oliver (2001) highlights that the readiness of learners must be considered in the move to implement new assessment system and it would be unwise for policy makers to implement reform without first addressing students' needs and concerns (Chun & Junaid, 2012). Readiness is posited as the pivot of learning and teaching engagement, rather than an end in the journey of attaining a goal. Likewise, Meisels (1998) quotes Bruner (1966)'s view that it is fruitless to wait for students to exhibit their readiness learning unexpectedly without preparing the students with some intervention in the context of learning and teaching. According to Masek and Nasaruddin (2016), the level of readiness among the students was found to be moderate and they were also not serious and not prepared for the SBA.

Hammond (2012) defines readiness, or cognitive competence, as the knowledge of relevant facts that is used as a mean of reasoning and logical thinking. Meanwhile, Tyler (1964) cited by (Meisels, 1998) derived readiness as analyzing relevant skills and knowledge needed by new cognitive activities. Tyler (1964) further noted that once the components are identified they are arranged in hierarchy from lower to higher levels of knowledge (p.238). Readiness is certainly a vital element involved in the process of change in support for initiatives towards change (Armenakis et al., 1993; Armenakis, Harris, & Feild, 1999) cited by Holt, Armenakis, Feild, and Harris (2007). In the context of readiness towards change in an assessment, Holt et al. (2007) argued that the stakeholders must be informed the change process during implementation and be well versed with the change of content.

Nonetheless, there are a few studies on the readiness of teachers towards SBA. A careful study of the literature reveals that the concept of readiness of PT3 has not been thoroughly investigated.

Ikhsan et al. (2013) investigated the teachers' readiness towards SBA and four aspects of readiness were highlighted; namely teachers' ability to implement SBA, teachers' understanding of SBA, facilities given for SBA implementation, and time adequacy for SBA implementation. The result of the study indicated that teachers have the readiness to implement SBA in the curriculum especially on the understanding of SBA; teachers' ability to implement SBA; and facilities given for SBA implementation. However, it was not the case when it came to the time adequacy for SBA implementation. Accordingly, Nair et al. (2014) in their research focused on three aspects; planning, developing and analyzing of SBA items. The research highlighted that while teachers might have the ability to plan and conduct classes following the SBA concept; they were not prepared and fully aware regarding the process of analyzing items and moderation of marks. Faizah (2011) on the other hand, also addressed the issue of readiness on the implementation of SBA among training teachers who had experience regarding SBA. The study focused on the aspects of teacher's concern on tasks relating to SBA, students and most importantly of teachers themselves. Generally, it was reported that the teachers are also concerned on the implementation of SBA. These concerns include the uncertainties on the requirements and demands of SBA, the impact of SBA on the students and teachers' uncertainties of their own ability to meet the demands and execute their roles as the teachers in the implementation of SBA in classrooms. In different studies, there were found that the teachers' level of readiness in implementation of SBA was high (Veloo, Krishnasamy & Ruzlan Md-Ali, 2015; Samsudin et al., 2016). Majority of them were ready for the new assessment system to be implemented.

3. Methodology

This study employs a descriptive and correlation research design and convenience sampling was employed to determine the secondary schools that were involved in the stage of data collection. This study was conducted in the district of Klang, in the state of Selangor, Malaysia.

The sample consisted of form three students from urban public schools in Klang. The form three students selected for this study are the first cohort of PT3. Thus, it meets the purpose of selecting the sample for this study. Four urban secondary schools were selected to participate in the study. The overall sample for this survey was 746 respondents which involved all form three students of the selected schools.

For this study, the researcher adapted with minor modifications on few already developed and established instruments related to the topic concerned. The questionnaire was adapted from Adediwura (2012) and Cheng et al. (2011). A set of questionnaires was used for the study to collect data. A structured questionnaire, which was divided into five sections, was used as one of the mode to collect data. Seven hundred and fifty (750) questionnaires were distributed to the form three students of the participating secondary school. The questionnaires were self-administered by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of thirty-six questions and deals with the readiness of students in PT3. The questionnaire utilized in this research is to investigate the level of readiness among students towards English PT3.

For the data analysis, the responses were presented and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.00 for Windows. All responses were coded and numerically accumulated for data entry.

The data collected from the questionnaire were tabulated and converted into frequency and percentages using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22.00 for Windows).

4. Findings

4.1. *The level of understanding and knowledge of public secondary school students towards PT3*

Results from the findings (Table 4.2) reveal that respondents have moderate level of understanding and knowledge of PT3. The mean scores for the respondents' overall understanding and knowledge of PT3 is 2.58, while standard deviation (SD)

is 0.59. The survey shows that the respondents have had been thoroughly briefed of the concept of PT3 (mean=2.78, SD=0.88). The survey also indicates that the respondents have moderate understanding of the requirements and procedures of PT3. The mean scores are 2.63 and 2.55 respectively, while the standard deviations are 0.78 for both the items. The findings also disclosed that the respondents had low moderate level of understanding on the marking criteria (mean=2.37, SD=0.81) and moderation system (mean=2.39, SD=0.80) of PT3. The findings also showed that the respondents had moderate level of understanding and knowledge on the aims and objectives of PT3 (mean = 2.51, SD = 0.89). The respondents indicated that they had moderate opportunity to discuss PT3 with their classmates (mean = 2.65, SD= 0.92). Furthermore, the respondents indicated that they follow the progress of PT3 (mean=2.77, SD=0.88). Sufficient understanding and knowledge of PT3 among respondents is essential as it builds the foundation for the respondents to be assessed accordingly for PT3.

	Understanding and Knowledge Of PT3	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I have a good understanding of the requirements of PT3	2.63	.78
2.	I have a good understanding of the procedures of PT3	2.55	.78
3.	I have a good understanding of the marking criteria of PT3	2.37	.81
4.	I have a good understanding of the moderation system of PT3	2.39	.80
5.	I have a good understanding of the aims and objectives of PT3	2.51	.89
6.	I have been thoroughly briefed of the concept of PT3	2.78	.88
7.	I have had sufficient opportunity to discuss PT3 with my classmates	2.65	.92
8.	I follow the progress of PT3	2.77	.88
	Overall Understanding and Knowledge of Respondents	2.58	.59

*Table 4.2: Understanding and Knowledge of PT3
Scale: 1=Very Limited 2=Limited 3=Sufficient, 4=Very Sufficient*

4.2. The Level of Readiness of Public Secondary School Students towards PT3

The findings disclosed that the respondents were prepared for form three assessment; PT3 (mean= 3.54, SD= 0.61). The respondents stated that they are always focused on the ongoing assessment (mean=3.67, SD=0.95). This is supported by the findings which showed that the respondents prepare for PT3, vis-à-vis; attended extra classes (mean=3.91, SD = 1.14), purchased extra English language books (mean = 3.72, SD= 1.15), reading English language books / novels / magazines (mean= 3.83, SD = 1.07) and communicating with friends in English (mean = 3.61, SD = 1.13). Besides, most of the respondents also indicated that their English language teacher discussed the process of PT3 (mean = 4.03, SD = 0.10) and provided feedback to improve the respondents' reading, speaking, listening and writing skills (mean = 4.03, SD = 0.10). The respondents were in consensus that teachers' role towards the preparation of the respondents concerning PT3 is essential. The findings also showed that group presentations (mean=3.51, SD=1.15) and individual presentations (mean=3.44, SD= 1.12) were conducted during English language class. The respondents also conducted self-assessments in reading, writing, listening and speaking skills (mean= 3.86, SD=1.03) and peer assessments in reading, writing, listening and speaking skills (mean=3.38, SD= 1.01). Nonetheless, the findings indicated that the students do not use available resources in the school library to prepare for PT3 (mean= 2.65, SD= 1.06). This result is in contrast with the findings that revealed the respondents were prepared for PT3 by other means as stated above. However, overall, the respondents do portray positive readiness towards PT3.

	Readiness of PT3	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I always focus on my ongoing assessment so that I can improve myself at the next level of assessment	3.67	.95
2.	I attend extra classes to prepare for my PT3	3.91	1.14
3.	I purchase extra English language books in addition to those required by the school to improve my performance	3.72	1.15
4.	I read English books / novels / newspapers /magazines	3.83	1.07
5.	I communicate with my friends in English	3.61	1.13
6.	I communicate with my family members in English	3.19	1.24
7.	I use available resources in the school library to prepare for PT3	2.65	1.06
8.	I have a study area at home to prepare for PT3	3.79	1.11
9.	I have learning schedule to prepare for PT3	3.13	1.16
	Readiness of PT3	Mean	Std. Deviation
10.	I have sufficient reference books to prepare for PT3	3.76	1.12
11.	My English language teacher discusses the process of PT3 with the students	4.03	1.04
12.	We have individual presentations during English language lessons	3.44	1.12
13.	We have group presentation during English language lesson	3.51	1.15
14.	We do self-assessment in reading, speaking, listening and writing skills	3.86	1.03
15.	My English language PT3 trial marks is a good indicator of the real PT3.	3.01	1.20
16.	We do peer assessment in reading, speaking, listening and writing skills	3.38	1.01
17.	We use materials from different sources during English language lessons	3.35	1.07
18.	Our English language teacher gives us feedback to improve our reading, speaking, listening and writing skills	4.03	.10
	Readiness of PT3	Mean	Std. Deviation
19.	I am always motivated prepare for PT3	3.47	1.16
	Overall Readiness	3.54	.61

Table 4.3: Readiness of PT3

Scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

5. Conclusion

In this study, the students revealed a high level of readiness towards PT3. In the context of readiness towards an assessment, Meisels (1998) quotes Tyler (1964) who derives readiness as analyzing relevant skills and knowledge needed by new cognitive activities. Tyler (1964) further highlights that once the components are identified they are arranged in hierarchy from lower to higher levels of knowledge (p.238). As the Minister of Education announced that PT3 would start in July (New Straits Times, 18 June 2014), the implementation of PT3 was hasty. The students were informed of the format and content of the new assessment only from April 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2014a). Within a time, span of seven months, the students were prepared for the new assessment. Identifying student readiness is essential, as it will help to engage students by understanding their place in the readiness spectrum by relating to content knowledge and process skills. To determine where students might be on the readiness continuum, teachers need to probe and query students. Educators must strive to capture students' ability to attain readiness in the learning spectrum. The teacher's role in the assessment process is viewed as vital in determining the students' readiness towards an assessment system. The educators commitment and expertise is viewed as the key to attain success in any assessment undertakings (Malakolunthu & Hoon, 2010). In the context of PT3, though it was initially challenging for the teachers to be accustomed to the new system, the teachers were motivated committed to guide the students towards excellence (New Straits Times, 14 October, 2014). With the same objective, students were eager to face the new assessment system.

Furthermore, the level of understanding and knowledge attained by the students in the span of seven months is determined by the dissemination of information by the stakeholders. Little information was revealed during briefing with the stakeholders at the early stage of PT3 (New Sunday Times, 29 June 2014). The dissemination of information nonetheless was conducted in stages with the help of the state education departments and district education offices, Ministry of Education division, principals, head of schools, secondary and primary school teachers and representatives from the Parent Teacher Association representatives throughout the nation (New Straits Times, 2 July 2014). In a research conducted by Ikhsan et al. (2013) on the implementation of SBA, their findings revealed that majority of the teachers are ready in implementing SBA, specifically on the teachers' understanding and ability to implement the assessment in the curriculum. Similarly, in the context of PT3, if the teachers are ready in the similar context in the implementation of PT3, appropriate dissemination of information within the time span will allow the students to understand the format and content of PT3 as the characteristics entails in PT3.

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