IMPLEMENTATION OF EXTENSION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN MALAYSIAN'S PUBLIC LIBRARIES: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *Libraries are one of the best places to be visited by children during their leisure time. It is a place where they can get new information and knowledge through reading activity and to be seen as one excellent stop centre for children. But there will be very big challenges for library itself on how to maintain and ensure that the first time they came will never be the last one. This can be guaranteed by having extension services which will promise them with many exciting activities in library other than just reading activity. Implementing library extension services in Malaysia however is still not so huge in its practices. However this could be very important issue to be discussed when the effectiveness of having those services will benefit many people. This research was done based on three (3) main objectives: (1) To Identify to what extent the implementation of the extension services at public libraries of northern region in Malaysia; (2) Seek factors that motivate and inhibit public library in providing extension services to the public and; (3) To identify the types of extension services suitable for children's mind development. This study uses qualitative methods, where four (4) directors of the public libraries in Northern region of Malaysia were interviewed to get their point of view towards this issue. Data obtained from this study had been analyzed using Atlas.ti software and three models were developed.*

Keywords:*Extension services, Public Library, Children's Intellectual Development*

INTRODUCTION

Early children education in Malaysia can be ranked at a very good stage and level. The Government has always placed an extra effort in giving its very best towards the children education. From time to time the Malaysian government that conducted studies through the Ministry of Education in improving syllabuses, curriculum, and activities to ensure that children in Malaysia will be developed into the best future leaders. Numerous programmes have been designed and conducted for them to develop their cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude) and psychomotor (skills). Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) programme was designed for early children education in Malaysia to achieve following objectives, based on Education Aspiration and Pre – School Education Goal. Two groups of children that have been categorized under the children development program in Malaysia are shown in Table 1;

Table1: Two groups of children categorized under the children development programme in Malaysia

Group	Age	Responsibility	Types of ECCE Institution
First Group	0-4 Years Old	Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (MWFCD)	Childcare centres or nurseries or *taska* There are four Categories of Childcare in Malaysia; a) Government-owned childcare centres (*Taska Dalam Komuniti*) since 2006 b) Workplace childcare centres c) Institution-based childcare centres with 10 children or more (*PUSAT PERMATA NEGARA*) d) Home-based childcare centres with fewer than 10 children

Second Group	4-6 Years Old	1. Ministry of Education
		 2. Ministry of Rural and Regional Development
		
		 3. National Unity Department.
			1. Preschools or kindergartens or tadika
			   a) Ministry of Education Preschools
			 2. b) *KEMAS* Preschools
			   c) *PERPADUAN* Preschools
			   d) Preschools Education for children with special needs
			 3. e) Preschools operated by Private Sectors and NGO

kills, especially socialization process and personality development are among the skills that are emphasized to strengthen among the pre-school children in Malaysia. Thus, curriculum that has been taught in class is meant to develop their communication, social and various skills,

based on the general objective that has been set up. The general objectives of pre-school education are to enable the children to:

i. develop love for their country;
ii. be well mannered and practice moral values;
iii. master basic communication skills;
iv. respect the national language;
v. master the basics of the English language;
vi. appreciate physical activities as a basis for good health;
vii. develop physically and practice good health and safety measures;
viii. develop critical thinking skills through enquiry and the use of all the senses

(Education Aspiration and Preschool Education Goal)

Based on the above objectives, pre- schools teachers in Malaysia taught pre-schools children by the following learning areas;

i. Language and communication;
ii. Cognitive development;
iii. Socio-emotional development;
iv. Spiritual and moral development;
v. Physical development;
vi. Aesthetic and creative development.

(UNESCO 2006)

Apparently, the learning areas cover the bloom taxonomy as a whole. (UNESCO, 2006) was reported that many third parties have been involved in supporting the pre-schools programmes, including the Ministry of Health, Parent Teacher Association, NGO and Mass media such as RTM , TV3 and ASTRO (TVP). It is believed that participations and contributions from many people to support ECCE programme could lead to the success of the programme. It is recommended that library also participate, especially rural libraries in supporting this programme because library is the custodian of unlimited wealth of knowledge. Through such collaborative programme, the library could indirectly nurture the libraries in Malaysia do contribute to such collaboration programme with pre-school children, and it is hoped that more libraries in Malaysia will actively involve with this programme with the goal catching the attention of young readers   and inculcate their reading habits. Indeed the government of Malaysia is emphasizing on the ECCE programme since a few years back. Prime Minister of Malaysia YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak highlighted this statement during the ECEC conference in 2009. According to Najib, "Every child is precious and children are assets to our society. They are the most valuable resource of the nation. I believe that developing a nation and its people begins with early childhood education. While it is the duty of parents to ensure a child has the opportunities to develop, it is also the government's responsibility to help parents bring the potential to fruition. In developing a child's potential, we are in reality developing the human capital of the child and of the nation. In carrying out this task, we are enabling the child to grow holistically so that the child is equipped with abilities, knowledge

and skills to become a productive member of the nation. Economists have long believed that investment in early education is a good strategy in developing human capital which in turn, is an important source for economic growth. Cognitive and non-cognitive abilities are important for a productive work force. It is said that key workforce skills such as motivation, persistence and self-control are developed early. Children are the future generations who have the potential to drive the economy of the country as leaders, innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers and economists." (Prime Minister YAB Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak at the opening address of the Malaysian International ECEC Conference themed "DEVELOPING HUMAN CAPITAL BEGINS WITH CHILDREN on 14 April 2009)

Versatile leaders with multi-skills, capabilities and knowledge are the most needed leaders in near futures. For that reasons,the government of Malaysia takes a few approaches to design and set up strategies to meet crucial needs in developing first class children mind development. Among the strategies was introduction of Pusat Permata Program that was introduced by the YABhg. Datin Paduka Seri Rosmah Mansor after it was approved by the Cabinet on 21 June 2006 with a grant of RM20 million. Themed 'Every Child a Jewel' (Setiap Anak Permata), the Permata Negara pilot project was launched at 14 locations in 2006 iv at least one in each state- with the curriculum and teacher training spearheaded by Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (School Resources, 2010)

The founding principles of Permata ECEC Centres are:
- Every child is a jewel for the country
- Every child is precious
- Every child is a part of the human capital of the country
- Every child needs the best education
- Education must start from young/birth
- The first three years is crucial for development of the child

(Pusat Permata Negara, 2010)

Services offered at Permata ECEC Programs include childcare services, outreach programs, parenting courses, counseling, and healthcare services to help the local community develop a healthy lifestyle. Thus, Permata ECEC programmes, not only cater education for children but also for the parents of the children to take care of their children and to ensure the children are getting their best and raising them in a very suitable and comfortable environment. This Programme was adopted from the community-based integrated approach practised by Pen Green Corby, United Kingdom under the SureStart Program. Facilities provided to support this program includes a community resource centre and library; and some may offer the services of a speech therapist and nutritionist.

"To realize this mission government of Malaysia was allocated an additional RM150 million to implement the Permata project to childcare centres of government and statutory bodies. This includes the childcare centers of the Community Development Department of the Ministry of Rural Development all over the country, childcare centers of the National Unity Department and some institutions which are community-based

childcare centres. The government aims to upgrade more than 300 of these childhood education facilities to Permata centres." (School Malaysia Resources, 2010).

As far as government concern about the development of the first class children mind, this study was conducted to know the role played by the state libraries in supporting Permata programme. Apparently, it is noticeable that infrastructure and info-structure available at the state libraries in Malaysia were well established and it is believed that the Permata center can utilize these infrastructure as well as info-structure provided at the libraries in organizing and conducting the Permata program. Libraries is most suitable place for the Permata centre to organized its programme. With this regards, besides the Permata centre organize programme this centre can also introduce parents and children about libraries and services available in the libraries. This indirectly will nurture reading habits and reading cultures among children when they get introduced to the library. Apart from that, the library can use this programme as their stepping stone to promote library services to all people in Malaysia. Thus, seemingly both organizations will get advantages through this win – win situation programme.ies of the northern region in Malaysia towards the development of the first class children mind development. As information centres that have been well established, public libraries in Malaysia perform as catalyst that provides knowledge and information to society regardless of their age and geographical areas. Therefore, it is believed that Public Libraries in Northern Region of Malaysia do support Ninth Malaysian Plan in providing extension services for the children. To this effect, four libraries in Northern Region of Malaysia were chosen as samples. Meanwhile, the Director's of each public library were selected as the population of this study. They were soliciting to answer 14 structured interview questions.

NINTH MALAYSIA PLAN AND CHILDREN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Children are valuable asset for every country that would drive the successfulness of the country in future. Therefore, the development of the first class children mind was given recognition in the Ninth Malaysia Plan. This is done through enhancing the national capacity for knowledge and innovation and nurturing citizens with the "First Class Mentality" (Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2009). Programmes and projects will be undertaken to deliver's ninth Malaysian mission, priorities is given in improving the education system, increasing innovation and ensuring holistic human capital development. It can be started with early children development programme. Early childhood development is the foundation for the formation of quality human capital. It has the highest return in economic development and is the most cost effective way to reduce poverty and foster economic growth (Malaysian Insider, 2009). As reported by the World Bank (2006) on Early Childhood Development confirmed that "programmes which promote the growth and development of young children from the age of 0 to six years are the best investments for developing the human capital necessary for the economic growth of a nation."

ROLES OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN PROVIDING EXTENSION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

All institutions, including libraries that have a commitment to public service, have to reassess and expand their services in order to redress past inequities (Anderson, 1996) Thus the rationale on the existence of public libraries is mainly caused by the existence communities in certain places. Public libraries have to take challenge and responsibilities in upgrading and expanding their services in order to really meet their level of users needs and especially for the children. In Library Review Journal (1996), one of the authors wrote an article 'Library power for Children' which stated that library services have a long and honourable history of provision for the needs of children. Services to children have long been an important element in public library provision, although evidence recently presented by the Library Association suggests that provision from other sources is less satisfactory. Children are our future and deserve the highest level of provision and service support we can manage *"It is not just because they are members of the communities for which we provide services. It is not just because they need libraries to fulfill their information and recreational needs. It is not just to help build an informed populace in a democracy where one is essential for the well-being of the nation. In a high-tech world where some question the future existence of libraries, it is important that we woo and court future voters and taxpayers. Why should citizens vote to fund entities that shunned them in their teens?"* (Herald, 1998).

Thus, public libraries have witnessed a remarkable development in both the number of libraries and quality of services since 1965. Certainly the past quarter of a century will be remembered as the era in which our public libraries have become, for the first time in our history, a part of the everyday life of the ordinary people. Throughout the nation, half of the users of public libraries are children. Nowadays, children's books compete against the enormous onslaught of computer games, videos and other electronic devices. Children should be exposed to books. Therefore, it is still the responsibility of librarians to know their stock intimately, and to get books into the hands of the right child at the right time (Kanna, 2003).

EXTENSION SERVICES FOR CHILDREN LIBRARY

Survey has been conducted in UK whereby 66,000 children in 100 locations in United Kingdom, combination of public and school library contribute to 75 per cent of these locations, services and resources were found to be sub-standard. Finding shown that library does not provide good services and enough resources for the children. Based on the finding, The Library Association came up with ideas and start thinking about what library can do for the children's minds (Library Review, 1996). Activities conducted by Library Association through Library Power campaign include an award ceremony named three young experts as winners of a competition. The aim is to find children and young people who are passionate about particular subjects. Other the other hand, competition to record a two minutes rap on why they love library was hold as well. Children also were exposed to hands-on workshops involving braille and tactile communication and explored what libraries can do for visually and hearing-impaired people.

Issues occur in extension services for children library an\s illustrated from Figure 1. Some of the children library provides services for disabled children, for
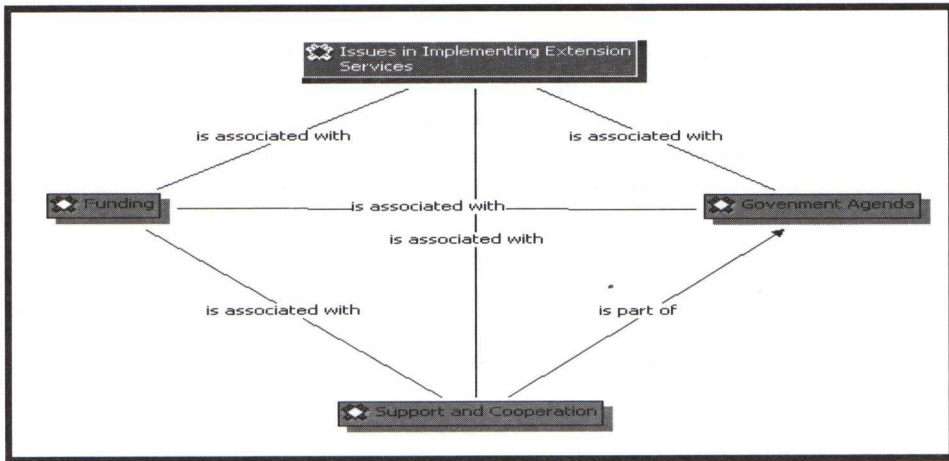

Figure 1: Model – Issues relating to the implementation services at Public Libraries of Northern Region Malaysia

instance, St Petersburg Central Children's Library which has experienced about 20 years collaboration with the St Peterburg boading school for blind children. To cater for the blind children's needs, St Peterburg Library developed book talking. Apart from St Peterburg Children Library do work out an experimental programme "Information, Culture, and Education." The main objective of this programme is to make our young readers acquaintance with modern information sources and techniques. As a part of it, the sub programme "The Unique Child" was created, intended especially for children with various handicaps (Kouznetaova and Nazarova, 1999).Providing extension services for children at library has been practiced by many libraries around the world. It is done through the cooperation and participation from many people, organizations and institutions.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative research method. According to Myer (2002) "The ultimate aim of qualitative research is to offer a perspective of a situation and provide well-written research reports that reflect the researcher's ability to illustrate or describe the corresponding phenomenon. The research Interview questions were instruments for the qualitative research. Data was analyzed using text interpretation software called ATLAS.ti 5. The population of this study were the Malaysian Public Libraries in the Northern Region. The Northern Region area of Malaysia consists of Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak. Therefore, four directors of Public Libraries of Northern Region of Malaysia were selected to participate in this study.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES AND DISCUSSIONS

Issues Relating to the Implementation of Extension Services at Public Libraries of Northern Region in Malaysia

Funding

Funding is most crucial issues faced by all public libraries in Northern Region that affect the implementation of the extension services. Due to the lack of funding and sources of getting money in developing infrastructure and implementation of the better extension services, most the public libraries in Northern Region Malaysia were only providing extension services within their capabilities to reach out their patron, especially children.

Some of the public libraries in Northern region are doing well in obtaining funding, using their own communication skills, public relations with prominent figures of authority to gain support from them. This is done by proving to them that much of the activities organized by them were important and will give significant impact to the society especially younger generation. Libraries that have willing to do its own effort were a step ahead than others library.

SUPPORT AND COOPERATION

Support and cooperation from various organization, either government, private or non government organization are important in order for the libraries in Northern Region to deliver the best services to the public. Contribution from various agencies can make all the activities that were in charged and organized collectively attract more people to participate. In fact, cooperation from various agencies can create better, warmer atmosphere that could slowly win people heart to be a part of the communities together in realising libraries' objective which is to develop a first class children mind development. Public libraries in Northern Region Malaysia were realize that cooperation and support from other agencies and stakeholders will realizing their vision and mission, however not many were involve in liaising program handle by library. Most of the time public library work together with school libraries, villagers and resident near the public libraries. Few non government agencies were involved in the public libraries program. Therefore, librarians in public libraries were actively seeking their own effort to collaborate with other agencies to reach out as many patrons as possible.

GOVERNMENT AGENDA (PERMATA PROGRAMME)

Permata is one of the programmes that can be one of the milestones to strengthen public libraries functions in providing better extension services taking advantages of the Permata programme. Since government of Malaysia has allocated special budgets under this programme. However, most of the activities done by the Permata programme were held at other places rather than utilizing available infrastructure located at the public libraries. Most of the public libraries in the Northern Region Malaysia wanted to give their contribution towards this program since public libraries in Northern Region believe that they are having such facilities, infrastructures and info-structures that can support Permata programme. Public Libraries in Northern Region Malaysia hoping that they are giving chances to give their shoulder to realizing Permata Programme.

FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE AND INHIBIT PUBLIC LIBRARY IN PROVIDING EXTENSION SERVICES TO THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF NORTHERN REGION IN MALAYSIA

It is regarded as a big responsibility for individuals or responsive communities in this country to look at this matter fairly. Based on this study, researchers found that it is evidenced that the main factors that motivate libraries in Malaysia in general, and public libraries specifically to implement more services to their respective users. As shown in Figure 2, there are two factors that give significant impact on the implementation of the extension services in the children section at the public libraries, comprising of motivating factors and inhibiting factors. Motivating factors affect the Mission 2020, participation, globalization, demand and Permata Negara programme. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors either positive or negative might influence the implementation process and activities plan by the public libraries. Positive factors might be useful in determining the success of the extension services programme. Meanwhile, the negative factors might slow down the implementation process of the extension services in the public libraries.

FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE EXTENSION SERVICES MISSION 2020

As the country moves towards Mission 2020, every citizen in the country would take part in achieving the goal, everyone works together towards this mission. The focus is on the development of nation towards a brighter future, new life style and human capital. Young generations are catalyst that would realize the mission 2020. Therefore, the younger generations need to be prepared with new knowledge and high class mind development. As public libraries focus on this scenario, the public libraries in northern region in Malaysia and were working towards giving better services to children by introducing new extension services. Many efforts have been taken to prepare and offer new services to children. Toy libraries were developed at rural areas to support Mission 2020.
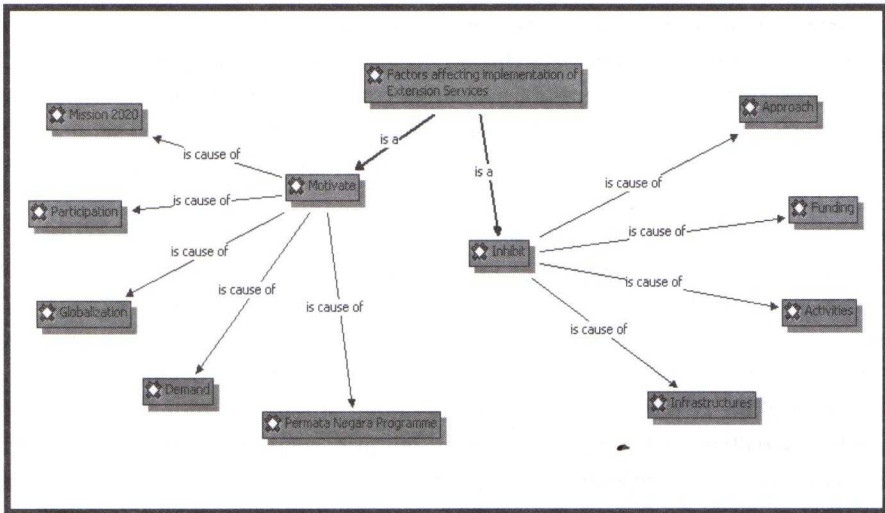

Figure 2: Model – Factors that affecting the implementation services at Public Libraries of Region Malaysia

PARTICIPATION

The number of people who participate in the activity organized by the public libraries could also influence and increase the motivation of the librarians to introduce new extension services to children. Due to the increasing number of children who come to the library, the librarians must provide extension services to them. Expansion of building, facilities and infrastructure are required to give good services to them.

GLOBALIZATION

Globalization also nurtured motivation for the public libraries in giving extension services to the public to cater development of first class children mind. The development of the latest information technologies in this era, help public libraries in implementing and offering effective extension services to the public.

DEMAND

Demand towards the varieties of services for children also increase from parents and children as well. Children's nowadays like to involve in many activities that can challenges their mental and physical strength. Thus, libraries must fulfill their educational, recreational and leisure needs in order to be relevant in this era with children needs and wants. For that reasons libraries must come up with new activities and services to serve children needs especially in the development of first class children mind. Therefore, all activities and services must reflect the development of first class children mind.

PERMATA NEGARA PROGRAMME

Permata Negara Programme which is implemented by the government will be one of the motivation factors that could ehance the interest of the public libraries to introduce new extension services for children section. Permata Negara Programme would be the stepping stone for the public libraries to introduce new extension services for children. This is because the target audiences for the Permata Negara Programme are children. In addition, the main purpose of the Permata Negara Programme is to produce children with a first class children mind. Therefore, Public libraries can approach the Permata Negara Programme organizer to collaborate together to give better commitment and services to educate children and developing their first class children mind development through extension services.

FACTOR THAT INHIBIT EXTENSION SERVICES - FUNDING

Lack of funding is a most crucial issue in the implementing process of extension services in the public libraries. The development of new infrastructure for providing extension services for the children at public libraries requires huge amount of money to make it reliable. Besides, activities and programme organizes also requires a lot of money to ensure many children can participate in the programme and activities organize by the public libraries.

Figure 3: Model – Most Suitable Extension Services provided for First Class Children Mind Development.
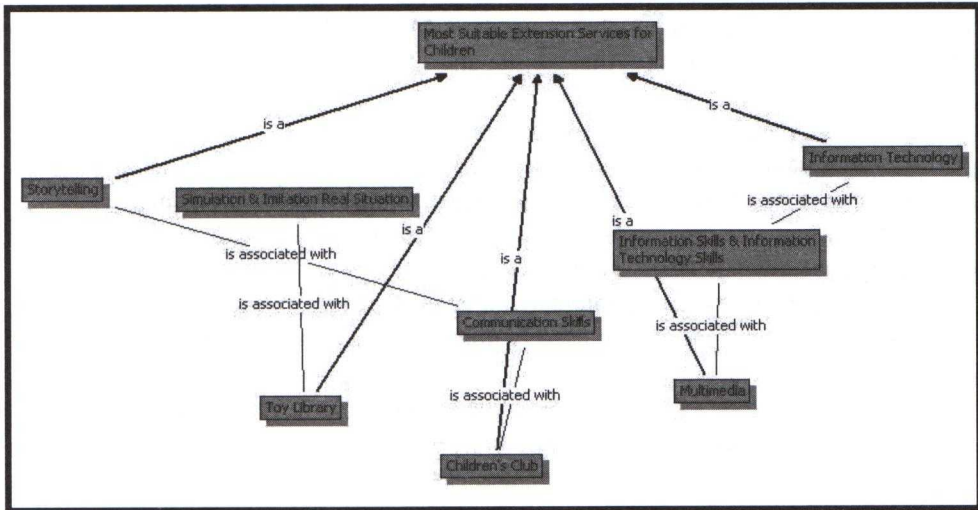
In Malaysia, funding allocated for public libraries is limited and depending on the state government to contribute part of it. Most of the directors at the public libraries in the northern region agreed that lack of fund restricted the public libraries to add any additional services and organize any additional programmes and activities.

APPROACH

Lack of approach from other organizations, institutions, corporate bodies and individuals to collaborate together with the public libraries in providing extension services to the children at public libraries. It might also give significant impact and might slow down the process of implementing the extension services to the children at public libraries. Government of Malaysia should approach public libraries and use its infrastructures to organize any Permata Negara Programme to ensure both may gain benefits, either directly or indirectly by sharing common mission and vision to produce children with first class mind will be achieved.

MOST SUITABLE EXTENSION SERVICES PROVIDED FOR FIRST CLASS CHILDREN MIND DEVELOPMENT

Storytelling

Story telling is an activity that require tellers to interact with the listeners or audiences by presenting the story that has been memorized earlier and act together with the action that represents with the story that they share with others. To be more attractive story tellers may wear suitable and beautiful costumes, according to the story line theme. Most of the public libraries in Malaysia organized this activity for children. Many researches revealed that story telling could give benefits for children, especially in developing

language abilities, appreciation of literature, critical thinking and comprehension, and understanding of community and self (Kortner,1988). Kotler (1988) also summarized that storytelling is a viable method for stimulating children's imaginations, ultimately leading to a higher cognitive level in student responses. Meanwhile, Scott (1985) highlights the benefits of storytelling to student that consist of:

i.   introducing children to a range of story experiences;
ii.   providing young students with models of story patterns, themes, characters, and incidents to help them in their own writing, oral language, and thinking;
iii. nurturing and encourage a sense of humor in children;
iv.   helping put children's own words in perspective;
v.   increasing knowledge and understanding of other places, races, and beliefs;
vi.   introducing new ideas and be used to question established concepts without threat to the individual;
vii. leading to discussions that are far ranging and often more satisfying than those arising from formal lessons; and
viii. serving as the most painless way of teaching children to listen, to concentrate, and to follow the thread and logic of an argument.

MULTIMEDIA

As everyone's concern multimedia is becoming one of the effective ways to approach children in learning. It is a combination of different types of media comprising of text, animation, images, sound and many more which will affect children's ability to accept, participate and absorb on any information produced through it. Macaulay (2003) stated that multimedia is increasingly being used in computer-based learning, and the general indication is that this trend will persist for a while to come. One rationale for this trend is the assumption that multimedia has properties that can aid learning, particularly the learning of abstract subject matter. One area that has long been seen as a target for the use of learning aid is children's learning. Involving children with multimedia applications will possibly bring tremendous enhancement in their academic capabilities. Macaulay (2003) in his study investigated the effectiveness of multimedia on the learning performance of non-English-speaking third world children. The performance scores of two groups of 18 children were recorded immediately before and after using either multimedia or no multimedia to learn mathematics. The children that used multimedia scored significantly higher than those who did not. Children will respond more when they listen to music and definitely more if they watching video. This is an example of their behaviour when they are exposed to different types of media. There are myriad of multimedia products available, such as interactive multimedia edutainment application..

CHILDREN'S CLUB AND ACTIVITIES (*KELAB SINAR PINTAR*)

Bartko, Todd, Eccles, Jacquelynne (1999) stated that there are a number of reasons that both scholars and parents expect young people to benefit from participation in clubs and youth organizations. The factors, such as activities, roles, and relationships available to children and adolescents when they participate in clubs are among the reasons why they

are required to be exposed to clubs' participation. Children participation in activities and programmes are crucial "... for one, participation in a supervised constructive activity limits the time that is available for less constructive activity, such as television watching, or for getting involved in risky behaviors. For another, activities offered by clubs or youth organizations enable members to learn valuable skills. Many of the activities offered by clubs help students to extend and elaborate on the more formal knowledge learned in school." (Bartko, Todd, Eccles, Jacquelynne, 1999).Activities and programmes scheduled or organized in one club are observed as important attributes in promoting and motivating potential participants to join them. One reason that clubs succeed is that they are familiar with the participants who feel that the sense of belonging and are cared for at the club. On the other hand, the ability of clubs management to provide members with rewards and recognitions, could make it more succeesful and the comfortable.

These senses of belonging could give better impact for self development for children mentally and physically. Club activities give an opportunity to children to enhance their skills and social interactions outside the school time. No matter what type of clubs they are participating, the enjoyment and participation of children would be more anticipated. Based on this scenario many institutions including libraries, it is their never ending efforts to provides children with interesting club activities in a way to maintain or enhance their participation and ensure the improvement on their social and educational development. This is proven that public libraries with their own club for children called Kelab Sinar Pintar received very high participation, whenever activities were organized during the school holidays or weekends. Kelab Sinar Pintar was officially launched on 2nd July 2008 in Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) by Seri Paduka Baginda Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Nur Zahirah. This Club was first initiated with its main agenda which is to motivate children to love reading and make it as their habit. This club is open to all children in Malaysia that provides them with many activities, such as colouring, forum, discussion, quiz and so on.

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Children in ICT era is our responsibility to ensure that children would not left even a step behind, but they must flow together with the rapid change in the ICT trends. Many parties, individuals or groups, keep abreast with the international initiatives to ensure that ICT would benefit, not only among adults but also to ensure the impact of ICT development would literally impact from young generation as well. One research highlighted how people in United States look into this matter seriously and many efforts take placed for it. Kdevries (2008) in his writing stressed that it is offered by the United States (US)-based nonprofit, nonpartisan child advocacy organization, The Children's Partnership (TCP). TCP makes the case that groups working on children's issues lobby for changes in public programs serving children to make them more effective, efficient, and accessible by incorporating ICT. The briefing also emphasizes that broadband (high-speed Internet) has become a prerequisite for digital opportunity. In light of the above picture, TCP provides a "National Digital Opportunity Action Agenda for Children", calling on children's advocates to:

i. Establish 21st century skills as a national priority for children and integrate them into teaching at schools, in after school programmes, and at libraries or other places children spend their time.

i. Provide financial incentives to help low-income families acquire home computers and affordable broadband; and encourage their use at home to pursue educational, health, and other opportunities for youth."

1. Support the development of model digital literacy efforts, online safety education, and other technology training to help parents guide their children wisely in the online world; and encourage businesses to offer technology training to their employees."

ii. Support the application of technology to improve the delivery of health and human services; use the Internet to provide information to families about public and private resources; and offer incentives to develop new technology applications that can make education, job training, health care, and social services more effective for children and families and more efficient for taxpayers."

iii. Create a federal office to manage digital opportunity efforts across government, involve the private sector effectively in digital opportunity efforts, and track progress towards meeting national digital opportunity goals.

As been discussed above, the children partnership programme in United States could inspire us the importance of involving children with ICT development. Gordon (2000) in his writing suggested that the integration of IT into our children's lives can take place through the introduction of electronic-based educational toys. These provide fun and entertaining learning experience, enhancing many aspects of their natural development while introducing and easing them into the technology-based world we live in. With different ages, a, more advanced products may be added to their repertoire, such as those that simulate proper computers except focusing on providing wholesome educational content. Public libraries should thus provide as many as they can services that ensure ICT skills to be enriched among children. This includes email or social network education and ethics that cover e-mail or internet communication as well as computer-edutainment programmes, like online tutorial and so on.

TOY LIBRARY

Research has proven that play will help children to develop their social, emotional and intellectual development. Ginsburg (2011) stated that play allows children to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strength. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. In addition, Ginsburg (2011) also believe that when play is allowed to be child driven, children practice decision-making skills, move at their own pace, discover their own areas of interest, and ultimately engage fully in the passions they wish to pursue. Pla is integral to the academic environment. It ensures that the school setting attends to the social and emotional development of children as well as their

cognitive development. It has been shown to help children adjust to the school setting and even enhance their learning readiness, learning behaviors, and problem-solving skills (Coolahan K, Fantuzzo J,Mendez J, McDermott P, 2000).

The library initiatives towards the implementation of toy library services is something new in Malaysia but the extension of this service vary, based on its demand and acceptance amongst society. Kapellaka and Crete (2005) in their articles found that, historically, the earliest recorded toy library was established in Los Angeles during the depression years. In 1935 the manager of a neighbourhood store reported to the school principal that toys were stolen from his store, by children of that particular school. As a result of this incident and because the principal realised that the children did not have toys in their own, toy loans were initiated. There are records of toy libraries in Germany in 1952 and in Denmark in 1959. Swedish toy libraries established in the early 1960's, served as a special service for children with physical and developmental handicaps. Norway, Italy and India had toy libraries by 1965. In Australia, the toy library institution was established in 1971 and in Britain in 1967. Children could learn something new when they play with toys. Not only do they learn new things but able to improve skills and techniques through imagination and creativity. This will enhance the sensitivity of IQ development among children. There are variety of toys and games available in the market. Some of them are very expensive to own but provide much potentials in learning beneficial in IQ developmental process. Libraries are the best places to take this responsibility if they would consider to have toys as part of their collections that could make childrens happy with this decision. In Malaysia, Emkay is a non-governmental agency which plays an important agency in supporting libraries or information centres to extend this kind of services for children. Producing a prominent incentives and fund to libraries to build up a space for toys and play services in a way to support children's development.

"Dalam dunia kanak-kanak bermain bersama rakan sebaya amat menyeronokkan dan menjadi asas kepada konsentrasi mereka. Berlandaskan keperluan inilah kami menganjurkan pembinaan seumpama ini," – Emkay Chief Director of Coporate & Communication, Mohd. Roslan Ali.

Social-emotional learning is best integrated with academic learning; it is concerning if some of the forces that enhance children's ability to learn are elevated at the expense of others. Play and unscheduled time that allow for peer interactions are important components of social-emotional learning. (Fisher, 1992)

"The toy library offers many benefits to children, and one that is perhaps not obvious is the opportunity it provides for children to learn how to make decisions. Choice-making and decision-making skills are important for children to develop independence and self-confidence. Having opportunities to make choices and decisions can give children a sense of control in their lives, which can help to alleviate frustration and difficult behavior, as well as improve communication and social interaction skills. Good quality toys help with the educational and all aspects of the development of a child, but many are expensive and

would therefore be unavailable to many families." -Sangeeta Gupta, a Manager of Kidzworld Toy Library

CONCLUSION

Extension services, especially for children in public libraries in Malaysia should be upgraded to ensure children could get adequate educational experiences, knowledge and skills at the library to help in the development of a first class children mind. There are many infrastructures, tools and activities that can be provided by the public library to foster children mind and educate them at their early age. This is because younger children are like sponge as they can absorb anything that their parents or other adults taught them. Therefore, children must be molded at their early age. Based on the research findings, activities that can help first class children mind development include storytelling, children clubs, toy library, multimedia section and information technology section. Each activity and infrastructure provided, give different significant effects based on three domains of Bloom taxonomy which are cognitive, affective and psychomotor. even though, public libraries in Northern region Malaysia are facing difficulties in implementing the extension services programme for children due to the following reasons, mainly funding, government agenda, lack of activities, infrastructures and support and cooperation. Yet, the public libraries in northern region Malaysia can develop their motivation with several programmes conducted by government, such as Permata Negara programmes by taking part with Permata Negara programmes, benefiting globalization, increasing number of children participation, towards realizing mission 2020 and increasing demand from the public.

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