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## **Emotions among the Primary School Students: A Malay Drama Program (Software)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Emotions are very complex experiences and, to express them, we use a great variety of terms, besides gestures and attitudes. Emotions involve a wide variety of feelings, thoughts, and behavior. The experiences that cause emotions are subjective experiences, or experiences from an individual point of view. Emotions for children are often associated with mood, temperament, personality, and disposition. Therefore, this study concentrates on 100 subjects from two primary schools in Malaysia. The objectives of the study were to find out the types of emotions while carrying out the tasks and to discuss the content of discussion of the subjects after the program. The subjects were picked at random and a program or software which consists of Malay short dramas and questions was given to the subjects. The subjects were in pairs or individual. The subjects' discussions and conversations were taped for forty-five minutes. The conversations were analyzed and the subjects' emotions were identified.*

**Keywords:** *Emotions, Primary school students, Malay drama program*

### **Introduction**

Wukmir (1967) claimed that emotion is an immediate answer of the organism that informs about the degree of favorability of the perceived situation. If it seems to

favor its survival, the living being experiences a positive emotion like happiness, satisfaction, desire, peace, etc. On the other hand, it experiences a negative emotion like sadness, disillusion, sorrow, anguish, etc. when the situation seems to be unfavorable for its survival. Moreover, all living beings have this mechanism of emotion which guides them all the time, acting as a compass, to find favorable situations to survive for those which it produces positive emotions and to move away from those unfavorable for survival in which produce negative emotions (González, Barrull, Pons and Marteles, 1998). Emotions are very complex experiences and, to express them, we use a great variety of terms, besides gestures and attitudes (González, Barrull, Pons and Marteles, 1998). An emotion is a mental and physiological state associated with a wide variety of feelings, thoughts, and behaviour (Frijda, 1986). Emotions are subjective experiences, or experienced from an individual point of view. Emotions are often associated with mood, temperament, personality, and disposition (Frijda, 1986). No definitive taxonomy of emotions exists, though numerous taxonomies have been proposed. Some categorizations include the 'Cognitive' versus 'non-cognitive' emotions, instinctive emotions versus cognitive emotions and basic versus complex emotions where base emotions lead to more complex ones (categorization based on duration). Some emotions occur over a period of seconds (e.g. surprise) where others can last for years (e.g. love).

According to Normaliza Abd Rahim and Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan (2009), emotions exist when expressing feelings in different situations. Emotions also offer a pleasing snapshot of current scientific thinking and research on emotions (Scherer, 2005). It accurately depicts the contemporary status of feelings in psychological research by largely downplaying them. Feelings, to most theorists, are the "tip of the iceberg" (e.g. Scherer 2005, p.139) a minor facet, passive component or even a distraction in emotion theory. However, there are indications, that the study of feelings may soon make resurgence from an unlikely quarter, neuroscience. There are also hints that fundamentalist positions on the notorious cognition-emotion debate are converging at last. These are the subtle trends, more implied than declared, that help to distinguish feelings and emotions from similar anthologies. For many people, feelings are the same as emotions. Yet in the emotion renaissance of the last thirty years or so, feelings have largely escaped attention, apart from a few scoffs about their confounding subjectivity, or occasional laments about their perpetual neglect.

A related distinction is between the emotion and the results of the emotion, principal behaviors and emotional expressions (Frijda, 1986). People often behave in certain ways as a direct result of their emotional state, such as crying, fighting or fleeing. Yet again, if one can have the emotion without the corresponding behaviour then we

may consider the behavior not to be essential to the emotion. Theories about emotions stretch back at least as far as the Ancient Greek Stoics, as well as Plato and Aristotle. We also see sophisticated theories in the works of philosophers such as Rene Descartes (1596-1650), Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) and David Hume (1711-1776). Later theories of emotions tend to be informed by advances in empirical research. Often theories are not mutually exclusive and many researchers incorporate multiple perspectives in their work.

James (1884) argued that emotional experience is largely due to the experience of bodily changes. The Danish psychologist Carl Lange also proposed a similar theory at around the same time, so this position is known as the James-Lange theory. This theory and its derivatives state that a changed situation leads to a changed bodily state. As James (1884) says 'the perception of bodily changes as they occur IS the emotion.' James (1884) further claims that 'we feel sad because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and neither have we cried, strike, nor tremble because we are sorry, angry, or fearful, as the case may be.' This theory is supported by experiments in which by manipulating the bodily state, a desired emotion is induced (Laird, 1974). Such experiments also have therapeutic implications (e.g. laughter therapy, dance therapy). The James-Lange theory is often misunderstood because it seems counter-intuitive. Emotions are thought to be related to activity in brain areas that direct our attention, motivate our behavior, and determine the significance of what is going on around us. Pioneering work by Broca (1878), Papez (1937), and MacLean (1952) suggested that emotion is related to a group of structures in the center of the brain called the limbic system, which includes the hypothalamus, cingulate cortex, hippocampi, and other structures. More recent research has shown that some of these limbic structures are not as directly related to emotion as others are, while some non-limbic structures have been found to be of greater emotional relevance.

According to the Georgia Institute of Technology (2009) in an article entitled Older Adults Control Emotions More Easily than Young Adults found that regulating emotions such as reducing negative emotions or inhibiting unwanted thoughts is a resource-demanding process that disrupts the ability of young adults to simultaneously or subsequently perform tasks. The study which included 72 young adults who were 20 to 30 years old and 72 adults who were 60 to 75 years old was funded by the National Institutes of Health. It was conducted by Blanchard-Fields and Susanne Scheibe, a former postdoctoral fellow at Georgia Tech currently at

Stanford University. For the investigation, three-fourths of the participants watched a two-minute Fear Factor television clip depicting a woman eating something revolting in order to win money. The video was intended to induce a feeling of disgust in the participants. The remaining participants comprising the control group watched a two-minute clip of two men talking about a woman's dress and subsequently sharing a beer in silence that was not intended to induce emotions. After watching one of the videos, each participant played a computer memory game. The study showed that all of the participants performed better at the working memory task after watching the clip than before, likely due to the learning process. However, after being told to turn their disgust into positive feelings, the young adults performed significantly worse than the older adults in the memory task. Older adults who were given the same instructions continued to improve at the memory task. To ensure that feelings of disgust were induced by the film clip, participants reported the extent to which they felt each of eight emotions such as disgusted, sad, frustrated, distressed, angry, happy, content and interested at the beginning of the study, after watching a clip and after each computer task. Watching the Fear Factor video produced elevated disgust ratings in all participants.

Another study conducted by Larson and Brown (2007) among the adolescents in a high school theater program demonstrated how teens learned about how to employ positive emotions to motivate their work. Students also used strategies to manage their own and others' negative emotions. The research was conducted through interviews with the students during a three-month period of rehearsals. This study demonstrates how schools and programs can support the development of "emotional intelligence" of adolescents. An open-ended interviews and observations were carried out to gain an in-depth understanding of one setting a high school theater program. Ten teenagers were interviewed every two weeks over a three-month period while the theater group rehearsed a musical. Two adults who led the production also were interviewed biweekly. In addition, the researchers observed the rehearsals weekly. During the rehearsals, teenagers reported frequent emotional experiences, including disappointment, anger, anxiety, and exhilaration. The program provided a culture that helped them learn to respond constructively to the events and feelings associated with these different emotions, the researchers found. The adults provided models and helped the teens cultivate strategies to manage strong emotions. The youth learned from repeatedly using these strategies to employ positive emotions to motivate their work; they also learned how to manage their own and others' negative emotions. The researchers also found that the young people

were very actively engaged in the process of emotional learning. In the theater setting, they were proactive in learning to manage emotional situations, evaluated experiences and put to use the insights they gained, and actively drew on the ideas and assistance of adults and peers.

According to Normaliza Abd Rahim and Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan (2009), students would create positive and negative emotions when having pressure from work. The study concentrated on an art of acting course, a compulsory course for students who undertake the minor in performing arts. The course was also opened to all students at the university. This course was to enhance students to be confident, vocal and most importantly to overcome their fear of performing. The objectives of the study were to find out the content of discussion of subjects by using the content analysis and to identify the types of emotion while carrying out their task. The subjects consisted of 10 undergraduate students from a class of the art of acting. The subjects were to write their own script, prepare the props, setting and most importantly act in the play. All the subjects have roles in the play. The subjects' discussions and conversations were taped for three hours a week until the fourteenth week. It was found that each subject had more than five emotions for each conversation.

The lists of emotions were adapted from Heath (2002). The emotions were categorized according to primary, secondary and tertiary emotions. Heath (2002) explains that having identified an emotion, one has to look for body symptoms and mental attitudes that are associated with that emotion. Once such correlations are found it becomes easy to determine the emotional responses when they are intense. One can also identify the emotion direct, or indirectly through the symptom or attitude that is currently expressing itself. Low-intensity emotions can only be identified indirectly. According to Parrot (2001) list of emotions, there are three categories of emotions, primary, secondary and tertiary emotions. Parrot (2001) claims that joy is categorized under the primary emotions whilst delight, happiness and pleasure are categorized under tertiary emotions. Therefore, the lists of emotions by Heath (2002) and Parrot (2001) were suitable for the purpose of this study.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the study were as follows:

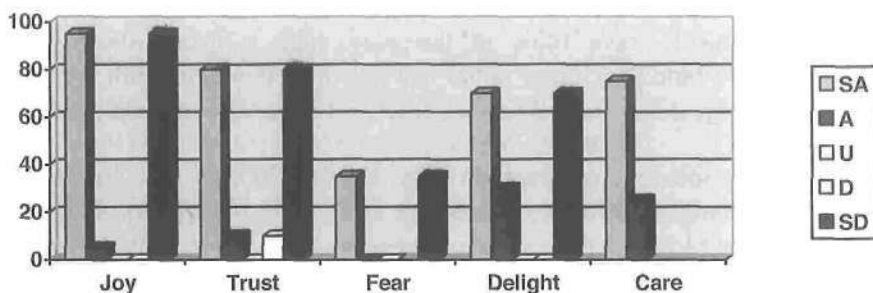
1. To investigate the emotions of the subjects through Malay drama program
2. To discuss the emotions of the subjects through Malay drama program

### **Methodology**

There were 100 subjects involved in this study from two primary schools in Malaysia. The schools involved were selected at random. The subjects were all the nine year olds. A literature program which consists of Malay drama was given to the subjects individually or with peers. The subjects were to try out the program which consists of several Malay dramas (short drama) and questions pertaining to the dramas. Each subject was given 45 minutes and they were allowed to discuss with their friends. At the end of the viewing, the subjects were interviewed and given their opinions based on their emotions.

**Findings**

The findings below explained the emotions from the subjects after the program. The findings were discussed in percentages and the details of the interview sessions were also included to support the data.



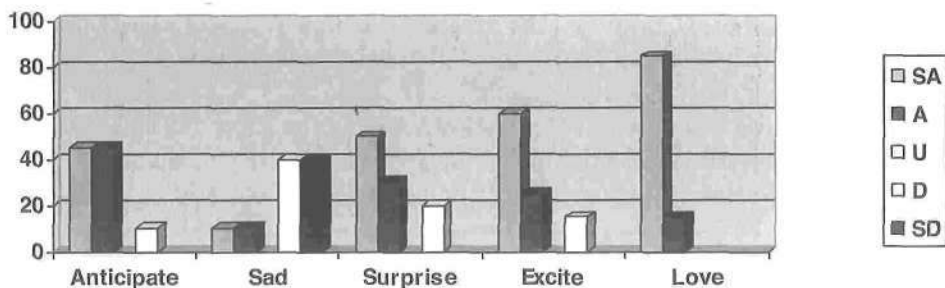
Graph 1: Primary emotions: fun, trust, fear, delight and care

Graph 1 above showed five emotions after the program. The emotions involved were ‘fun’, ‘trust’, ‘fear’, ‘delight’ and ‘care’. As for ‘fun’, the graph clearly shows that 95% of the subjects strongly agreed and 5% agreed that they had ‘joy’ when trying out the program. It was clearly shown when the subjects stated, ‘I was having fun and I felt joy after trying the program’, ‘I had this joyful feeling right now’, ‘When I managed to answer all the questions, I had ‘joy’ and ‘The drama had given me joy’. The drama in the program also had given the ‘trust’ emotion towards the subjects. The subjects had learnt the emotion of ‘trust’ through the drama. It was clearly showed that 80% of the subjects strongly agreed and 10% agreed that the subjects had the ‘trust’ emotion throughout the program. This was also clearly stated in their comments where the subjects mentioned, ‘I know about trust now’, ‘The characters had shown that they trusted each other’, ‘I felt that I trusted the characters’ and ‘I understand being trustworthy is important’. 10% of the subjects disagreed that they had ‘trust’ emotion after the program. This might be the fact that they had no



concentration towards the story, are not interested, are too noisy or even they did not understand the story in the drama. The subjects mentioned that 'I don't understand the story at all', 'Who was that boy?', and 'Why was that boy crying?'.

As for the 'fear' emotion, it was clearly shown among the subjects. This was due to the fact that the storyline of the drama had made them feel 'fear' for a while. 35% of the subjects chose strongly agreed since they had fear emotion after watching the program. They were seen with scared faces and some of them were seen screaming and jumping while watching the drama. They were also seen very eager to give their opinions after the program. They mentioned 'I was really scared just now', 'I felt fear for a while' and 'I had this fear feeling just now'. More than half of the subjects' disagreed (50%) and 15% strongly disagreed that they had 'fear' emotion after the program. They had given comments like, 'I did not feel anything after the program', 'It was not scary at all', 'I was not scared', the story was not scary enough for me'. The statements on 'fear' emotion above clearly stated that they had no fear after the program. The reasons might be that the subjects did not understand the storyline, did not concentrate on the program and the room was too noisy and they had several distractions. As for 'delight' emotion, the subjects were seen delighted after the program. This was clearly shown when 70% of the subjects strongly agreed and 30% of the subjects agreed that they were 'delighted' after the program. They were seen smiling and were also seen chatting about the program on their way out of the classroom. The subjects mentioned that, 'I was really delighted that I joined this program', 'I was delighted that I understood the story in the drama', 'Did you see me smiling all the way?' and 'I really feel delighted'. As for 'care' emotion, 100% of the subjects strongly agreed and agreed. They had the emotion during and after the program. The storyline in the drama had taught them the 'caring' emotion. They mentioned, 'The storyline was about caring', 'The children in the story were very caring', 'I understand the 'caring' emotion in the drama' and 'the storyline about caring was really interesting'. The comments given by the subjects were really clear where they had the 'caring' emotion during and after the program. They learnt about the emotion through the drama.

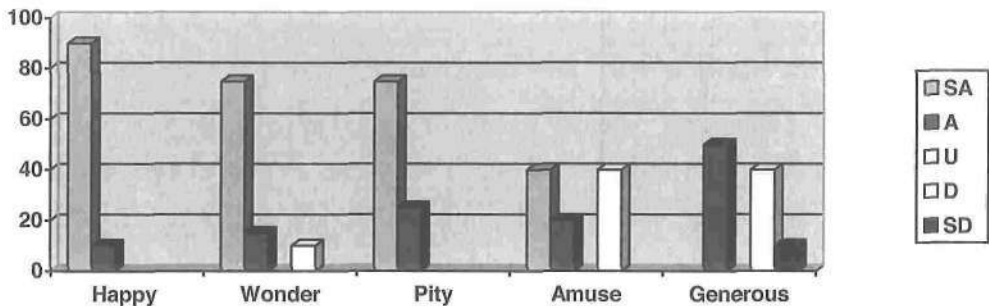


Graph 2: Primary and Secondary emotions: anticipate, sad, surprise, excite and love

Graph 2 above showed the five emotions given by the subjects after the program. The emotions involved were 'anticipate', 'sad', 'surprise', 'excited' and 'love'. As for 'anticipate' emotion, 45% of the subjects strongly agreed and 45% agreed that they anticipated during and after the program. The storyline made them anticipate the story and they were seen contented with the storyline after the program. The comments given by the subjects reflected the emotion, 'I anticipated the story to be sad in the beginning', 'I did anticipate the story just now' and 'The storyline was really interesting and I did anticipate for a bit'. Hence, 10% of the subject disagreed that they anticipated during the story in the drama. This was merely because they were not concentrating, they did not understand the storyline and they were not interested with the storyline. They mentioned, 'I did not understand at all', 'I was not interested with the storyline' and 'I was not concentrating at all'. As for 'sad' emotion, only 10% of the subjects strongly agreed and 10% agreed that they had 'sad' emotion during the program. The storyline in the drama had touched their emotion. The comments were clearly stated when they mentioned that 'I was nearly crying after watching the drama', 'The story was really sad', and 'The story made me in tears'. Although only a small number of subjects agreed but more than half of the subjects strongly disagreed and disagreed. 40% of the subjects strongly disagreed and disagreed that they had the 'sad' emotion during the program. The comments given by the subjects were 'The story was not sad', 'I thought it was funny', 'I did not feel sad at all' and 'The story did not give me sad emotion'. According to the comments given, it was clearly shown that the subjects did not feel the 'sad' emotion after the program. Partly because, the subjects did not understand the story in the drama or even the subjects were not interested in drama.

As for 'surprise' emotion, more than half of the subjects strongly agreed and agreed that they had the emotion. 50% of the subjects strongly agreed while 30% agreed

that they had ‘surprise’ emotion. The emotion was due to the fact that they looked stunned and surprised during the program. They also gave comments like, ‘I was really surprise just now’, ‘I thought the story will end this way but I was surprised’, and ‘I was shocked and surprised with the story in the drama’. Hence, 20% of the subjects disagreed that they had ‘surprise’ emotion. They also commented, ‘I was not surprised with the ending of the story’, and ‘The story was not surprising at all’. As for ‘excited’ emotion, 60% of the subjects strongly agreed and 25% agreed to the emotion. They were seen very excited with the drama. They gave comments like, ‘I was so excited to see all the characters in the drama’, ‘the story was so exciting’, ‘the ending of the story was exciting’ and ‘I felt so excited after the program’. Hence, 15% disagreed that they felt excited with the program. This might due to the fact that the subjects did not concentrate well or even not interested towards the project. The subjects gave comments like, ‘I was not concentrating because it was too noisy’ and ‘I did not understand the story’. ‘Love’ emotion had also been chosen by the subjects. 100% of the subjects strongly agreed and agreed that they had ‘love’ emotion during and after the program. They seemed to be contented with the drama and gave comments like, ‘I love this drama’, ‘I love to watch more dramas’, ‘I love the characters in the drama’ and ‘I love to learn more about Malay drama. This showed that the ‘love’ emotion had played an important role in creating good drama. The passion and love towards Malay drama would therefore fulfill the part of the needs of loving Malay literature.

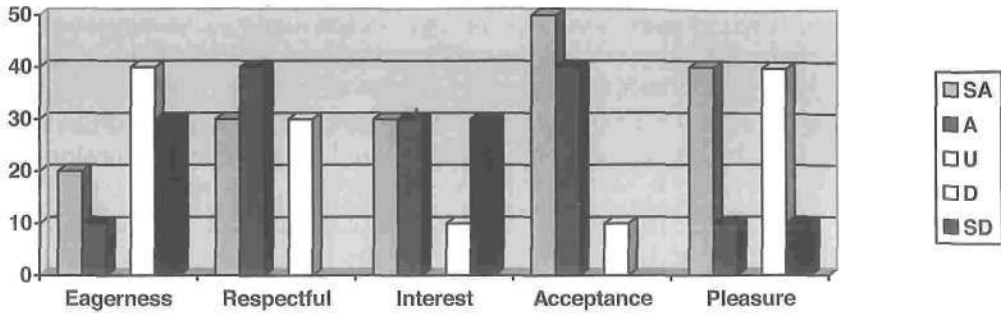


Graph 3: Primary and Secondary emotions: happy, wonder, pity, amuse and generous

Graph 3 above showed the five emotions given by the subjects after the program. The emotions were ‘happy’, ‘wonder’, ‘pity’, ‘amuse’ and ‘generous’. All of the subjects seemed to be very happy with the program. They gave good comments like, ‘I was really happy to participate in this program’, ‘I was really happy during the program’, ‘The drama made me happy’, ‘The storyline made me happy’ and ‘I was

really happy that I understood the story'. The subjects were seen contented and smiling on their way out. They even volunteered to participate in any other program. Besides happy, the subjects also felt 'wonder' emotion. They were seen gazing and wondering on how to answer the questions from the program. They even mentioned, 'I wonder what the story is like?', 'I have been wondering the end of the story' and 'I wonder I can be like the character in the drama'. The comments were positive where the subjects were seen involved in the program. Hence, only 10% of the subjects disagreed and they did not feel the 'wonder' emotion. This might due to the fact that they did not understand the storyline. The comments like, 'I did not understand the story', and 'I really don't know this story' had made the subjects feel that they disagree with the emotion.

As for the 'pity' emotion, 100% of the subjects strongly agreed and agreed that they had this emotion. They were seen discussing the story from the drama and the word 'pity' can be heard occasionally. The comments were, 'Pity the boy', 'I really pity the girl in the story', 'I felt pity at the end of the story' and 'I have this pity emotion when the boy fell down'. The comments showed that they subjects understood the story and hence the pity emotion developed. The subjects had chosen the 'amuse' emotion after the program. 40% of the subjects strongly agreed and 20% agreed that the emotion had taken place. They were seen giggling and discussing about the content of the drama with the peers. Although, 40% of the subjects disagreed that they had this emotion, but the subjects gave comments like, 'I did not expect it to be amused', 'I missed that amused part, which one was it?' and 'I really did not feel amuse after the program'. The subjects might felt that they did not find the drama amusing at all and they already set up their mind in the beginning that drama would be a serious matter. As for the 'generous' emotion, 50% of the subjects agreed that they felt generous and being generous was really a good attitude. They mentioned, 'I want to be as generous as the boy in the drama', 'Being generous was really a good idea' and 'I like that boy's attitude in being generous'. The comments showed that being generous was really a great idea and they had set their emotions to be positive. Hence, 40% of the subjects disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed that after the program they had the generous emotion. They did not find that the drama gave them the emotions. The comments like, 'I did not expect the drama taught us to be generous' and 'I did not think that the boy in the drama was generous'. The understanding of the subjects clearly stated that they disagreed with the emotion involved.



Graph 4: Tertiary emotions: discover, respect, interest, understand and pleasure

Graph 4 above shows the five tertiary emotions given by the subjects after the program. The emotions were, ‘discovery’, ‘respect’, ‘interest’, ‘understand’ and ‘pleasure’. As for the ‘eagerness’ emotion, only 20% of the subjects strongly agreed and 10% agreed that they discovered the emotion. The comments are like, ‘I was eager to discover that the boy was faking the pain’, ‘I was eager to discover that the storyline was interesting’ and ‘I was eager to discover the truth in the drama’. The subjects were seen contented after the program. Hence, 40% disagreed and 30% strongly disagreed that they were eager to discover anything after the program. They looked really puzzled with the story and according to their comments they mentioned that, ‘I was not eager to discover the meaning of the story’, ‘I was not eager to discover the mystery in the forest’ and ‘I did not understand and was not eager to discover anything from the story’. The subjects were not eager to discover feeling might be because they did not understand the meaning of discovery emotion. As for the ‘respectful’ emotion, 30% of the subjects strongly agreed and 40% agreed that they obtained this emotion. They obtained the emotion through the process of watching the drama and able to answer most of the questions given. The comments like, ‘I understood why the boy respected the girl’, ‘I really respect the children in the drama’ and ‘the moral value of the drama was about respect’. The subjects were able to give good comments on the emotion. Hence, 30% of the subjects disagreed that they learn about respect from the drama. They might be thinking that respect should be earned. The comments like, ‘We should earn respect from other’ and ‘I should respect the elders’. They did not refer the respect emotion to the drama from the program.

As for the ‘interest’ emotion, 30% of the subjects strongly agreed and 30% agreed that the obtained the interest emotion after the program. The subjects were seen giving interest towards the program and were seen very keen in giving comments

later. The comments like, 'I was really interested in the program', 'I was interested in Malay drama', 'I am interested in the characters in the drama. The subjects were seen contented and satisfied when giving comments. Hence, 10% of the subjects disagreed and 30% of the subjects strongly disagreed that they had the interest emotion. They were seen not interested with the drama and were also seen talking with their peers. This might be the reasons like, they did not understand the story or they might not be interested in Malay drama. Comments like, 'I was not keen on the Malay drama' and 'I lost my interest in the Malay drama not long ago'. The comments were negative and therefore ideas from the subjects were also taken to improve the quality of the program. The ideas like, 'More children characters would be appropriate', 'Funny drama' and 'Moral values that links to everyday lives'. As for the 'acceptance' emotion, 50% of the subjects strongly agreed and 40% agreed that they accepted and therefore understood the story. They were seen smiling and contented after the program. The comments like, 'I understood the story', 'I understood the whole story', 'I understood the moral values of the story' and 'I understood Malay drama now'. The comments were positive and had made them understand about the Malay drama. Hence, 10% disagreed that they understood the story. For instance, comments like, 'I did not understand at all' and 'I did not understand why the boy fell down'. These might be the reason that they disagreed and seemed to be dissatisfied with the story. As for the 'pleasure' emotion, 40% of the subjects strongly agreed and 10% agreed that the subjects had pleasure emotion. They were seen satisfied and contented with the story and the pleasure feelings occurred. The comments like, 'The story gave me pleasure' and 'the moral values of the drama gave me great pleasure'. Hence, 40% of the subjects disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed that they had 'pleasure' emotion after the program. They did not seem to be contented with the story in the drama.

### ***Discussion of the findings***

Based on the findings above, overall discussion will be explained. More than 80% of the subjects strongly agreed and agreed for 'joy', 'trust', 'delight', 'care', 'anticipate', 'surprise', 'excite', 'love', 'happy', 'wonder', 'pity', 'amuse', and 'acceptance' emotions. Whereas all subjects strongly agreed and agreed for 'joy', 'delight', 'care', 'love', 'happy', and 'pity' emotions. Hence, more than 50% of the subjects strongly disagreed and disagreed for 'fear', 'sad', 'generous', 'eagerness' and 'pleasure' emotions. More than 80% of the subjects strongly agreed for 'joy', 'trust', 'love', and 'happy' emotions. More than 50% of the subjects disagreed for 'fear', 'sad', 'eagerness', and 'pleasure' emotions. More than 50% of the subjects strongly agreed and agreed for the positive emotions, for instance, 'joy', 'trust', 'delight', 'care', 'excite', 'love', 'happy', 'amuse', 'respectful', 'acceptance' and 'pleasure' emotions. More than 50% of the subjects strongly agreed and agreed for the negative emotions, for instance, 'anticipate', 'pity', 'surprise' and 'wonder'

emotions. More than 50% of the subjects strongly disagreed and disagreed for the positive emotions, for instance, 'generous', 'eagerness' and 'pleasure' emotions. More than 50% of the subjects strongly disagreed and disagreed for the negative emotions, for instance, 'fear' and 'sad' emotions. Finally, no students felt undecided on their emotions for Malay drama.

## Conclusion

To conclude, Malay drama plays an important role in children's emotions. The effects of Malay drama had clearly affected the children's with positive or negative emotions. Therefore, the implications of this research will be able to give good contribution towards the schools and the Ministry of Education where the children's literature should be introduced actively through program or software. The types of selected short drama would play an important role in enhancing their mood and the love of literature in them. This research too will be able to give good example towards better learning. It is hoped that future research will concentrate on the ways to solve the problems during the process of making the program or software based on the types of emotions occurred.

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