

THE ACTUALIZATION OF THE NATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION  
IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KUCHING, SARAWAK: STUDENT AND  
TEACHER PERSPECTIVES

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Dedicated to:

My God, Lord Jesus Christ who loves me unconditionally

My beloved parents and siblings who always support me

My supervisor who inspired me to do my best

My friends and course mates who always cheered me to move on

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## ABSTRACT

The overall purpose of the study is to analyse the actualization of the National Philosophy of Education (NPE) in government and private secondary schools on the basis of student and teacher perspectives. The study believes that high tendency of failure in achieving the main objective of the NPE could occur if the relevant parties are unable to understand and personalize them. Since its establishment in 1988, there was no research conducted to study the actualization of the NPE, the present study addressed this issue, specifically from the perspective of the secondary school students and their teachers both in the government and private sectors. Survey design was adopted to obtain the research objectives. Two sets of questionnaires for students and teachers were designed and modified based on a handbook, “National Philosophy of Education, Goal and Mission” (*Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan, Matlamat dan Misi*), published by Ministry of Education in 2001. The Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient value for the teacher and student instrument was 0.96 and 0.98 respectively. A total of 185 Form 4 students and 45 teachers from both private and government secondary schools in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia were selected as participants in this research by using ‘stratified sampling method’. The mean scores for the actualization of the NPE in secondary schools based on student and teacher perspectives were 7.67 and 7.28 out of 10 respectively. 77.3% of students and 64.4% of teachers rated the level of actualization of the NPE as high. There were no significant differences between student and teacher perspectives but there were significant differences between respondents from government and private secondary schools. As per the results, the element most actualized was ‘high moral standards,’ and the least actualized was ‘putting on-going effort in education’. Overall, the results showed that the NPE is yet to be fully actualized in secondary school students and their lives.

## ABSTRAK

Tujuan keseluruhan kajian ini adalah untuk menganalisis aktualisasi Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan (NPE) di sekolah menengah kerajaan dan sekolah menengah swasta berdasarkan perspektif pelajar dan guru. Kajian ini percaya bahawa kecenderungan yang tinggi bagi kegagalan mencapai objektif utama NPE boleh berlaku jika pihak-pihak berkenaan tidak dapat memahami dan memperibadikan NPE. Sejak penubuhan NPE pada tahun 1988, tidak ada penyelidikan dilaksanakan untuk mengkaji aktualisasi NPE, maka kajian ini mengemukakan isu ini, terutamanya dari perspektif pelajar dan guru di sekolah menengah kerajaan dan swasta. Kajian tinjauan telah digunakan untuk mencapai objektif kajian. Dua set soal selidik bagi pelajar dan guru telah direka dan diubahsuai berdasarkan buku panduan, " Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan, Matlamat dan Misi" yang diterbitkan oleh Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia pada tahun 2001. Nilai kebolehpercayaan pekali Alpha Cronbach bagi instrumen guru dan pelajar adalah 0.96 dan 0.98 masing-masing. Sejumlah 185 pelajar Tingkatan 4 dan 45 orang guru dari sekolah menengah swasta dan kerajaan di Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia dipilih sebagai responden dengan menggunakan 'kaedah persampelan berstrata'. Skor min bagi aktualisasi NPE di sekolah menengah berdasarkan perspektif pelajar dan guru adalah 7.67 dan 7.28 masing-masing. 77.3% pelajar dan 64.4% guru menganggap tahap aktualisasi NPE adalah tinggi. Tiada perbezaan yang signifikan di antara perpektif pelajar dan guru tetapi terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan antara responden di sekolah menengah kerajaan dan sekolah menengah swasta ke atas pengaktualisasi NPE. Menurut hasil kajian, elemen yang paling banyak diaktualisasikan ialah 'berakhlak mulia' manakala paling kurang dimiliki ialah 'memberi usaha berterusan di pendidikan'. Secara keseluruhan dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan NPE masih belum diaktualisasikan dengan sepenuhnya pada pelajar sekolah menengah dan dalam kehidupan mereka.

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**LIST OF SYMBOLS**

$\alpha$	-	Alpha
df	-	degree of freedom
f	-	frequency
$\mu$	-	mean
p	-	level of significance
N	-	number of respondent
%	-	percentage
SD	-	standard deviation
t	-	t-test statistic

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

NPE	-	The National Philosophy of Education
KBSM	-	<i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah</i> (Malaysian National Secondary School Syllabus)
KBSR	-	<i>Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah</i> (Malaysian National Primary School Syllabus)
KSSR	-	<i>Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah</i> (Revised Primary School Standard Curriculum)
PBS	-	<i>Pentaksiran Berasaskan Sekolah</i> (School-based Assessments)
SPM	-	<i>Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia</i> (Malaysia Certificate of Education)
UCSCAM	-	United Chinese School Committees Association of Malaysia
UEC	-	Unified Examination Certificate
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

A coherent vision and goal are vital to any efforts that human being undertake. This is especially true to the educational efforts. A common educational vision, enshrined in the Philosophy of Education of a nation, is also like a lighthouse, in providing guidelines to turn the educational efforts of that nation into success. The general idea of philosophy is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as a theory or attitude that acts as a guiding principle for behaviour. As Peter (1997) indicated “statements of aims of education are positions taken that are based on a set of beliefs – a philosophy of education (p.176)”. What we belief will determine what we are going to be in the future. In view of the importance of vision and philosophy, the Ministry of Education in Malaysia adhere to the National Philosophy of Education (NPE) which was formed in 1988 in line with the National Principles (*Rukun Negara*) with ultimate aims of building an united and progressive society (Ministry of Education, 2001). As Azman (1998) indicated, the implementation of education policy in Malaysia has carefully taken many factors such as political, social and economic into consideration that it gives an acceptable norm of satisfaction to its multi-ethnic citizens. In Malaysia every ethnic groups have their own unique culture and interest. However, in order to have a harmony and progressive country, every individual shall unite together in pursuing the same vision despite diversity. The NPE serves this purpose (Mok, 2008).

The NPE reads:

“Education in Malaysia is an on-going 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, society and the nation at large.” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p.ix)

In view of the importance of education in developing the potential of students in a holistic and integrated manner and for the betterment of society and nation as prescribed by the NPE, it is the time for all Malaysians to unite and personalize the NPE, that the slogan “One Malaysia (*Satu Malaysia*). United we stand”, get realized among Malaysian citizens.

Overall, the NPE not only serves as general aims of Ministry of Education but it also provides answer to the questions, (i) What type of citizen we want to produce?, (ii) What type of world or society we would love to live in?, (iii) What are the values that we cherish?, and (iv) What are the logical relation between all these?. In general, this study aims to examine the actualization of the NPE in private and secondary schools in Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

“Bearing of philosophy on education is somewhat indirect; for most educators have to take their subject-matter to a large extent at second-hand, and have no time to inquire how far it is true, in any ultimate sense of the word” (Mackenzie, 1898, p.428). High tendency of failure in achieving the main objective of the NPE could occur if the relevant parties are unable to understand and personalize the NPE. As Arieah (1977) suggested, in order to find out whether students have mastered

certain skills as a result of the educational programs and whether they have acquired certain desired attitudes and values, it is necessary that the curriculum, and even the general aims be evaluated in a continual process.

The important role of the NPE as general aims of education in Malaysia, and its direct implication on school curriculum are evident in the current KBSR (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Rendah*) [Malaysian National Primary School Syllabus] and KBSM (*Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah*) [Malaysian National Secondary School Syllabus] (Ee, 1996). As Mok (2008) indicated changes in school curriculum, were in fact, aligned with objectives of the NPE. The KBSR and KBSM are anticipated to be able to reflect the NPE. That is the KBSR and KBSM were implemented in schools with the anticipation that they would produce holistic and balanced citizen having equipped with all the characteristics as prescribed in the NPE. However, the actualization of the NPE through KBSR and KBSM is remains vague in secondary schools. The most recent change of KBSR with the Revised Primary School Standard Curriculum or *Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah* (KSSR) should be read in this. Hence, the NPE, as general aims of education in Malaysia, shall be evaluated to identify its current trends of actualization. However, up-to-now, the current status of the actualization of NPE is vague, there is uncertainty whether the content of NPE has been transmitted successfully by teacher to students and further personalized by students. Therefore the study about actualization of the NPE is vital.

In general, teachers in government schools are trained in government institutions, whereas private school teachers mostly have not undergone any local teacher training in Malaysia. It is commonly known that private school teachers in Malaysia do not required having degree in education in order to teach. The private schools only need to register their teachers with Ministry of Education and will automatically subject to official entry to teach in government school (UNESCO, 2011). Thus, the actualization of the NPE in private school is anticipated to be more difficult and it is anticipated only minority of private schools have been exposed to the NPE. In fact, the understanding and involvement of private school teachers in the NPE is vital in order to close the gap between private and government schools in

actualizing the common general aims of NPE. Hence, the differences between government and private school should be studied to find out to what extent they are successful in implementing the NPE. This is vital to ensuring that both government and private schools aim to achieve the same objective, and for the unity and betterment of Malaysia.

This study also reflects the latest Preliminary Report for Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025, which envisions the transformation of education in Malaysia. The Blueprint also aims to ensure operational shift and alignment between policy formulation and implementation (Ministry of Education, 2012). This study thus runs as precursor to these efforts as it analyses the realization of the NPE in the targeted group of students. In fact, students are the one who undergo and involve in the actual curriculum. Therefore, actualization of different elements of the NPE should be happening in them. It is for this reason, firstly the study aims to explore their perspective. Secondly, it aims to analyse the perspective of their teachers on how well they think the NPE is actualized in their students. Overall, this study anticipates to filling the gaps of uncertainty by having comprehensive analysis on the actualization of every element prescribed in the NPE perspectives of students and teachers in government and private schools.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

In general, the overall purpose of the study is to analyse the actualization of the NPE in government and private secondary school based on student and teacher perspectives. The specific purposes of the study are as following:

- a) To analyse the level of actualization of the NPE in secondary schools based on students perspectives.
- b) To analyse the level of actualization of the NPE in secondary schools based on teachers perspectives.
- c) To identify differences between student and teacher perspectives on the actualization of the NPE in secondary schools students.

- d) To identify differences in the level of actualization of the NPE between government and private secondary school.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

With reference to the purpose of the study, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

- a) What is the level of actualization of the NPE in secondary schools based on student perspectives?
- b) What is the level of actualization of the NPE in secondary schools based on teacher perspectives?
- c) Is there any difference between student and teacher perspectives on the actualization of the NPE in secondary schools students?
- d) Is there any difference between the level of the actualization for the NPE in government secondary schools students and the level of actualization for the NPE in private secondary schools students?

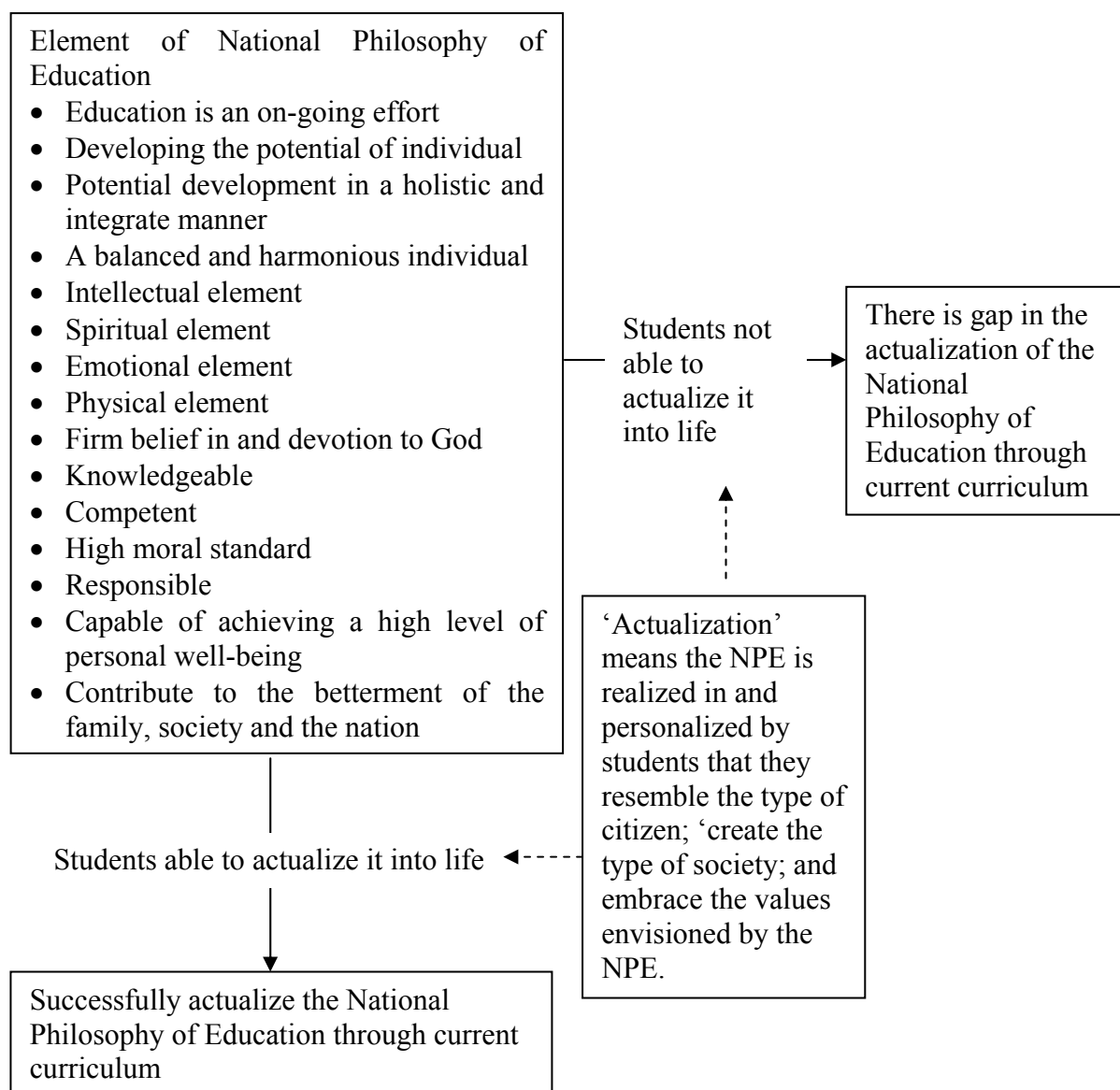
#### **1.5 Hypothesis**

The hypotheses for this study are listed as following:

- a)  $H_{01}$ : There is no difference between student and teacher perspectives for the actualization of the NPE in secondary schools students.
- b)  $H_{02}$ : There is no difference between the level of the actualization for the NPE in government secondary schools students and the level of actualization for the NPE in private secondary schools students.

## 1.6 Conceptual Framework

According to the Ministry of Education (2001), the elements of NPE have been categorized into fifteen (15) sub-groups as illustrated below:



## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

This study is anticipated to provide a better insight for educators to judge whether current curriculum has successfully transmitted all the elements as prescribed in the NPE or whether students personalize the underlying elements of the NPE and translate them into daily life.

In addition, educators and related authority may use the findings as reference in improving current curriculum in schools by knowing which element has yet to be actualized by students.

Finally, this study also serves as part of evaluation for the NPE, in which evaluate the general aims of education in Malaysia to identify whether the aims of education has been achieved in reality. Not only the device of the NPE is important, but also its actualization. This study provides indicator to identify whether the general aims has been transferred from general aims to specific goals of education, then to course objective, and finally transfer to the receivers (students).

## **1.8 Definition of Terms**

The key terms for this study are elaborated below:

### **1.8.1. Actualization**

With reference to Oxford dictionary, the term “actualize” means “(with object) make a reality of”. Hence, the term of “actualization” is used in this research to refer “to make the NPE into a reality”. Therefore, ‘actualization of NPE’ means the NPE is realized in and personalized by students that they resemble the type of citizen; create the type of society; and embrace the values envisioned by the NPE that Malaysia would like to have.



### **1.8.2. Perspective**

With reference to Oxford dictionary, the term “perspective” means “a particular attitude towards or way of regarding something; a point of view”. Hence, the term of “perspective” is used in this research to refer “students and teachers’ points of view on the elements of the NPE, whether they have been actualized in student daily life.

### **1.8.3. The National Philosophy of Education**

Ministry of Education (2008) indicates the NPE to constitute the basis for all education activities and programs in Malaysia. The current vision, mission, objectives of educators and various national education policies are derived from the NPE. There are fifteen sub-groups of elements of the NPE. They are:

- 1) Education is an on-going effort
- 2) Developing the potential of individual
- 3) Potential development in a holistic and integrate manner
- 4) A balanced and harmonious individual
- 5) Intellectual element
- 6) Spiritual element
- 7) Emotional element
- 8) Physical element
- 9) Firm belief in and devotion to God
- 10) Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable
- 11) Malaysian citizens who are competent
- 12) Malaysian citizens who possess high moral standard
- 13) Malaysian citizens who are responsible
- 14) Malaysian citizens who are capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being
- 15) Malaysian citizens who are able contribute to the betterment of the family, society and the nation

#### **1.8.4. Secondary School**

The secondary schools in this research are referred to government and private secondary schools in Malaysia. The government schools are fully subsidized by the government and with standard curricula of KBSR and KSSM, whereas the private secondary schools are run by private sector. There are three types of private secondary schools in Malaysia, which include private schools with national curriculum, independent Chinese schools with Dong Xiao curriculum and international schools with international curriculum (UNESCO, 2011).

### **1.9 Organization of Chapters**

This research is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides background of the research which includes problem statement, purpose of the study, research questions, hypothesis, conceptual framework, significance of the study and definition of terms. Chapter 2 provides a systematic review of relevant literatures to summarize what have been done on similar topic, find the gap in the literature, and further indicate how this research fills these gaps. Chapter 3 elaborates the methodology of the research. It explains about the research design, instruments, pilot testing, sampling method and data analysis methods.

Chapter 4 analyses the collected data and reports the finding. The findings will be further discussed and related to previous research in Chapter 5. In addition, implication and recommendations also will be also provided in Chapter 5.

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