

## **Teachers' Challenges in Implementing the Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) in the Classrooms**

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### **Abstract**

The Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) was introduced into the Malaysian education scenario with the aims of involving and immersing students in an English environment. Through HIP, it is hoped that students will have better opportunity and platform to use the language confidently, thus improving their English proficiency. HIP is aimed to foster positive behaviours towards the learning of English. Teachers play the main role in the planning, implementation and creating interests amongst the students. At the same time, teachers are also encouraged to develop tools and aids for the activities and organise school events in the English language. This study is conducted to find out the challenges that teachers face in creating a highly immersive English environment. A qualitative case study involving three teachers was conducted to obtain the data through in-depth interviews. The findings illustrated that teachers encounter several challenges in the implementation of HIP in the classrooms, including lack of parental involvements; teachers' attitude and motivation; lack of adequate time; teachers' self-confidence and self-efficacy; and lack of resources and cooperation. Therefore, in order for HIP to be fully successful, the challenges need to be addressed seriously through various solutions which can come from the school, parents and the community.

**Keywords:** Highly Immersive Programme (HIP), Teachers' Challenges, English Proficiency, English-rich Environment

### **Introduction**

English is essentially a global language. Its acquisition is equally pivotal to support a country's growing economy. English language and student employability both correlate strongly with one another because global economy is increasing (Malaysian Digest, 2016). English has been established as one of the key factors. This is in line with the Malaysian education aspiration in achieving the 21<sup>st</sup> century learning towards producing holistic and competitive individuals.

In Malaysia, a number of fresh graduates are unable to speak English fluently (Nalini & Subdrah, 2019). A study by Atan (2007) showed that the English proficiency among students and lecturers at tertiary level needs to be enhanced and elevated. Mosha (2014) discovered that among the contributing factors affecting students' performance in English are the students' infrequent use of English language at school and at home; large class size; teachers' responsibilities; poor conducive teaching and learning environment in the classrooms; limited home support environment; and poverty.

Various measures were hence taken to improve the declining standard of English proficiency among Malaysian students (Tampin, 2016). One of the measures taken is to create a supportive learning environment in schools. Chin (2007) and Yahaya, Yahaya and Ismail (2011) found that creating a supportive learning environment is important in learning a second language such as English. According to Bunce (1995), in order to create a highly immersive language-rich environment in school, a variety of activities of high-quality linguistic input, both inside and outside the classroom, need to be prepared. This is to ensure that students are exposed completely to the English language. However, English immersive environment does not just miraculously appear. It needs time, commitment, and belief in teachers and students to build such an environment.

In ensuring that every individual is competent in the command of English and also to boost students' English language proficiency in Malaysian schools, the Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) was thus implemented. HIP aims to involve and immerse students in English-rich environments (Ansawi, 2016) where they will be exposed to various types of English language activities that will gradually prompt their interests and create a passion for the language. The intent is for our students to be proficient and communicate confidently in English.

Teachers are the backbone of the nation's move to develop human capital for a knowledge-based economy. According to Yahaya, Yahaya and Ismail (2011), teachers play an important role in establishing a stimulating environment for students to practice English. They will have to provide a context so that class interactions are realistic and meaningful in assisting students to generate the target language transition. Teachers are to encourage students to speak the language through fun activities, immerse them in the language, and to persuade them to use English language in different contexts and situations.

To develop a better understanding of the classroom, especially what constitutes effective teaching, there is a dire need to listen to the teachers' voice and their views. Therefore, it is crucial for this study to find out the challenges faced by teachers in creating a highly immersive English environment for students. The findings of the study are seen as significant contributions to increase the literature in the area of HIP in general. The findings will also serve as useful guides to those involved in the teaching and learning of English language, especially in the Malaysian context.

## **Literature Review**

### **Highly Immersive Programme (HIP)**

The Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) is implemented to empower schools, by schools and for schools (Tampin, 2016). It is a programme that will improve the English proficiency of students through increased exposure to English language. Schools from the rural as well as the urban areas plan activities and implement HIP in and outside class, or as an extra class. This will depend on how they want to adopt according to their context and readiness towards the programme.

Schools are provided with a HIP Toolkit. The toolkit comes with a collection of activities and best practices from schools which have already implemented English enrichment activities with encouraging achievements. Besides the existing HIP toolkit, teachers are also encouraged to be more proactive and come up with their own innovative activities. If these activities are successful, they may be considered as part of the HIP toolkit for future best practices.

In order to fulfil the objectives of HIP, schools are to construct four categories of activities. The four categories of activities can be used in and out of class, during extra class, and for outreach programmes. For instance, for in-class activities, English language teachers could insert interactive games in their teaching. Sánchez, Morfín and Campos (2007) illustrated that using games in teaching and learning process will not only increase students' motivation to learn English language, but also simultaneously develop and improve their learning ability.

As for out-of-class activities, Gaines (2015) stated that students who learn English as a second language (ESL) may lack immersion in English-rich environment once they are outside of the classroom. Therefore, English-rich environment should be created. Schools can set up an English corridor or corner, conduct assembly in English, or prepare an English stage for students to perform in English. Project-based learning will allow students to learn English language (Foss, Carney, McDonald, & Rooks, 2007). This kind of out-of-class projects offer an opportunity and motivation for students to learn English language from their surroundings and daily lives (Guo, 2011).

Additionally, teachers can also carry out extra classes early in the morning before school starts, or late in the evening after school ends. Teachers could provide extra guidance for students who could not cope academically. A mentor-mentee programme is one of the activities to guide students to improve their English language proficiency (Santhi, 2011).

Outreach programmes involve collaborations between schools and other stakeholders such as other schools, universities, non-governmental organisations and corporate bodies. Boothe (2018) asserts that outreach programmes such as home visits, peer buddy programmes, school community partnerships, and educational field experiences have the potential to enhance the outcomes of English language learning. Outreach programmes could also fulfil the need for second language learners to learn through communication in a variety of settings outside the classroom. Cultural exchange programmes with international schools, pen-pal projects with other schools, and English camps in collaboration with a university English society are some of the outreach programmes which involve schools and other stakeholders.

HIP gives true recognition to the English language (Tampin, 2016). Teachers have the autonomy to conduct effective teaching and learning activities, assisted by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The community, on the other hand, play their role by getting involved in the planned activities. Teachers implement the English Language programmes and lend their support in creating interest amongst the students. Students are the target group to receive HIP. They get involved directly, with teachers as facilitators. The aim of HIP is for students to have positive attitude towards learning and mastering English language, and hence to increase the overall proficiency of the language.

HIP is unique. Principals, teachers, students, parents and the community will have to be committed in ensuring this programme achieve its purpose (Ansawi, 2016). The objective of HIP is to increase self-assessed level of English immersiveness in schools. The school principal acts as an anchor and is responsible to run the HIP as part of the school activities. The principal also has to ascertain that HIP is conducted actively in the school. With HIP, the school is entitled to plan and enforce programmes at their own capability on the level of immersiveness without any pressure from the stakeholders.

## **Highly Immersive Programme (HIP) in Malaysian Context**

In the Malaysian context, the HIP was initially introduced in 1999 for Year 1 (7 year- olds) to Form 5 (17 year- old) students under the Upholding the Malay Language and Strengthening Command of English (MBMMBI) policy (Ministry of Education, 2016). All schools were required to organise support activities for students to increase their exposure time to the English language. However, the programme unfortunately did not achieve its main objectives and thus, gradually faded.

Subsequently, however, HIP has taken a new breath and being reintroduced with more strength and intensity under the existing MBMMBI policy (Ministry of Education, 2016). Its pilot phase was first commenced in 2016 and eventually implemented in all schools by 2018. Its aim is to create a highly immersive language-rich environment that promotes the use of English in all schools. With HIP, students are exposed to the English language through a variety of activities within and beyond the classrooms.

HIP is a part of the English language enhancement programme as advocated in Wave 2 (2016-2020) of Malaysia's Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025 (Ministry of Education, 2016) The aim of MEB is for students to master bilingualism and to be globally competitive. According to Jiew (2017), the objective of HIP is to improve the English proficiency of students through increased exposure to the target language. Besides that, HIP aims to inculcate positive behaviours towards the learning and usage of the English Language.

A survey in 2015 showed that more than 90% of circa 190,000 respondents wanted English standards to be improved in government schools (Malaysian Digest, 2016). HIP is implemented at all primary and secondary schools throughout Malaysia where English is expected to be used widely in an encouraging environment. HIP will make the environment of the school more possible for students to practice English, in and outside, of a classroom setting.

HIP encourages students to learn through playing. While they are interacting and having fun using English as a medium of communication and learning, they will also create a gratitude for the language and be more comfortable to use it in their daily lives. Schools are thus provided with a HIP Toolkit to guide them in the planning, based on their local context and capabilities. In order to ensure the sustainability of this programme and that the activities are carried out in schools, principals, teachers, students, parents and the community are roped in to be involved in HIP.

## **Fundamental Factors that Contribute to HIP Achievement**

### **Teachers' Role**

Teachers of 21st century need to acquire certain skills in managing the teaching and learning in the classrooms (Pacific Policy Research Centre, 2010). In order to become world-class educationists, teachers need to develop a deep understanding of the classroom, especially what constitutes effective teaching. They need to be able to understand the behaviour, growth characteristics, and the development of students. This is done by predicting actions, motivating, and adapting the understanding to the process of teaching and learning. Teachers should have knowledge, skills, and experience for effective learning process.

In addition, teachers must also have the skills in planning programmes to support and assist the development of students. Teachers are not only playing the role as instructors but they are also facilitators to students' learning (Wang, 2008). Teachers need to inspire students' potentials, cultivate students' abilities and develop their creative and critical thinking skills. It is thus very important for teachers to implement a highly immersive English-rich environment in school in order to ensure that every student is competent in the use of English.

### **Students' Role**

According to Jiew (2017), English teachers play the main role in HIP by adopting effective teaching and learning, and also conducting English language activities. Simultaneously, teachers are encouraged to develop tools and aids for the activities, and organise school events in English language.

On the other hand, students are the core of HIP and their role is to participate fully in the activities. Teachers arrange project-based learning and encourage students to do research on the internet which is basically in English language. When students play, communicate, and enjoy using English in class, outside class and during extra class, it is hoped that they would appreciate the language more and comfortably use it in their daily lives. Students' feedback is important to continue and to bring improvements to HIP in the school.

### **Principals' Role**

The Principal of the school or the school head plays an important role in implementing HIP. The Principal is the person who creates an English environment and leads the school in implementing HIP (Tampin, 2016). Principals support all English programmes carried out in schools and ensure that all English activities are carried out properly and effectively.

Furthermore, the Principal is the constant motivator to teachers in providing continued motivation and support to them in carrying out their duties in various English activities. The Principal would monitor English teachers and observe English lessons from time to time. Besides that, the Principal also encourages teachers and students in participating in English activities and connects parents and the community to HIP in the school.

### **Parental and Community's Role**

According to Ansawi (2016), parents and the community also play a vital role in the implementation of HIP. They can support the programme by lending assistance outside the classrooms. Parents could be part of the HIP through PTA, give suggestions, or be directly involved with the activities, and share ideas on how to run the activities. One of the advantages of HIP is parental involvement. Parents can follow up with the various activities and programmes organised by the teachers to reinforce learning. Parental feedback on their children's development is crucial.

It is therefore important for the parents to fully take part together with their children in the activities arranged by the teachers. This would encourage and motivate their children and the teachers to organise more interesting, fun, and worthwhile learning programmes. Furthermore, the community too can assist the school by providing financial assistance and expertise. The success of HIP is thus not only in the hands of the students and teachers but also on the involvement of schools, principals, parents and the community.

### **Related Studies**

McDermott and Rohtenburg (2000) highlight the importance of helping novice teachers learn strategies for developing strong trusting relationships and effective communicative approach when working with the parents. The lack of family involvement in school is a growing problem. Teachers lament on the overall lack of success at involving parents in school events. Though they acknowledge the significance of parental involvement in children's education, they are of the opinion that the mobility of low income parents has contributed to their lack of involvement in school activities. The teachers also feel that many parents opine that urban schools are unresponsive to their children's learning needs. Furthermore, there is also a general decline in parental involvement as children progressed through school. Ansawi (2016) stated that parents who are eagerly involved in school programmes are essentially from the minority, mostly those with steady income jobs. It cannot be denied that it takes

more effort to encourage parental participation in arranged activities. Continuous monitoring is needed and proper action is required in order to address this issue.

As for teachers' attitude and motivation, teacher education programmes must prepare novice teachers to work effectively with parents. Teachers need to learn a variety of strategies and skills to involve parents in their children's education. They must learn to communicate tactfully with adults of different groups. Communicating effectively is crucial for teachers. Teachers should learn the significance of parental participation in their children's education and ways to bring it forward. Some of the parents confess that they are busy and are not able to attend school events. This is the reason why they value frequent communication with the teachers. Teacher education programmes should also inspire teachers to be involved with the community. Teachers can attend cultural events that are held by the community. All these would help break social barriers and nurture understanding and respect between parents, community and schools (McDermott and Rothenburg 2000).

According to Thwala (2015), teachers need adequate time to explain lessons thoroughly. This shows the importance of creating more time for both learners and teachers to make inclusion successful. Teachers face difficulty in completing the syllabus within the specified allotted duration. It also implies that they have to do extra activities for students with learning difficulties.

Sabokrouh (2013) illustrates that teachers who have higher English proficiency have the tendency to believe more intensely in their teaching capability. This suggests that cultivating one's English language proficiency can increase the teacher's self-confidence and self-efficacy. The current level of English proficiency and attitude toward the English language is one of the significant predictors of teachers' efficacy.

In relation to the lack of resources and cooperation, McDermott and Rothenburg (2000) asserts that schools are accountable for establishing open communication with parents. Schools need to come up with ways to connect and communicate with parents. Zarina (2012) highlighted that school should consider setting up some criteria before assigning teachers to teach English classes. Authorities in charge should arrange some training courses and workshops for teachers on a regular basis. English language officials are required to regularly organise and sustain training and workshops for teachers, and every teacher should be given the opportunity to attend these training courses before they start teaching new programmes.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants and Setting**

A purposive sampling method was used in selecting primary school English language teachers from the state of Kedah, Perak and Penang. According to Fox (2009), respondent recruitment for qualitative research leans towards researchers' network, either existing ones known to the researcher, or those who know what is going on in the setting.

A total of ten teachers were invited to participate in the in depth interviews through the researchers' network. However, from the initial ten teachers invited, five did not respond to the invitation. Two teachers declined to be interviewed, citing that they were not playing crucial roles in HIP. Only three teachers agreed to be interviewed. They were from Kedah, Perak and Penang respectively.

Respondent One (R1) has taught English for more than ten years in Kedah. She is also the Head of the English Panel in the school. Respondent Two (R2) has taught English for seven years in Penang. Respondent Three (R3) has taught in a rural school in Perak for five years. Though she is not an English optionist, nevertheless, she puts effort into every lesson conducted and always refers to the School Improvement Specialist Coaches (SISC+) for assistance.

The number of participants is considered adequate for a qualitative research due to the amount of time to carry out and to gather the interview data. According to Schofield (2002), generalisation is not a goal in a qualitative research as compared to a quantitative research.

### **In-depth Interview Protocol and Analysis**

The in depth interview protocol was adapted from the Levels of Use Interview Schedule (LoU-IS) from Loucks, Newlove and Hall (1975), as cited in Zarina (2012) to obtain the information needed for this study.

The researchers had requested for permission from the participants to carry out the interview. The three participants' teaching background had been earlier identified. No time setting was determined for each participant's interview in order to provide a friendlier and more comfortable environment throughout the interview sessions. In addition, according to Longhurst (2003), data confidentiality and anonymity are the most important part of ethical consideration. There was a written and verbal agreement between the researchers and the participants that no information would be shared to any third party. The participants' confidentiality and privacy are protected by using pseudonyms in the transcriptions and presentation of data and the evidence would be kept in confidence throughout.

The participants in the interviews were asked to answer the study topic about the challenges they faced during the implementation of the HIP in their schools. The teachers' challenges in implementing the HIP inside and outside of the classrooms were emphasised. Their experiences would illustrate the reality of the implementation process, and the commitment and support obtained in school. The researchers also explored and identified the problems more deeply to find out the factors that had influenced the conditions. The in depth interviews were recorded for transcription purposes. The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder upon the request of participants.

The interview data in which all the conversation files were transcribed in verbatim were analysed accordingly. The time allocated for transcription was based on the length of the interview. Every transcription was reviewed at least twice to get an overview of the message conveyed. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcripts. The researchers coded the data by hand and read and re-read the data to counter check the codes for consistency and validation. Then, the researchers identified themes for the coded data to explore the challenges faced by teachers in implementing the HIP in schools.

## **Results and Discussion**

The findings showed five major challenges faced by the teachers when implementing the HIP in their schools. The challenges are:

### **Lack of Parental Involvements**

In this study, the researchers found that respondents encountered challenges in involving parents with the programmes in their schools. Parental feedbacks on their children's development is vital. Nevertheless, parents' belief and attitude towards the programme had become one of the challenges for teachers in schools to implement the HIP.

R2 explained that most of the English enrichment activities planned required the parents' involvement where they learn together with their children. The respondent believes that parents play the role as one of the important supporters. They may assist the school in many ways, such as providing expertise and lending assistance. However, the respondent discovered that it was not an easy task to get the parents to involve in the programmes.

According to the respondent, many of the parents refused to join any out-of-class English activities. Subsequently, the respondent found that parents nowadays are both busy with their own jobs, they lacked free time and were not willing to take part in the programme

organised by the school. They were putting the responsibility on teachers' shoulders to elevate their children's English proficiency.

R3 found that parents were not involved directly with the planned activities. The respondent pointed out that the lack of support and assistance from parents had hindered the programme from running smoothly. R3 also found that it was a challenge to ask non-native speaking parents and parents who could not speak English to be involved in the activities. The respondent tried to communicate and encourage the need for parental involvement in the activities learning English along with their children. Some parents however, just shied away. Parental involvement in the respondent's school activities was thus still not at a satisfactory level.

Based on these, R1 had encouraged parents and students to attend and participate in every activity organised by the teachers. R1 also stated that the Principal could become a role model and contribute to the English activities to attract the attention of the parents and the PTA, such as by communicating in English when greeting students, teachers and the school community. The Principal could also deliver in English during the school assembly or during any daily, weekly and monthly activities. Furthermore, the Principal could also encourage teachers, parents and students to team up to ensure the success of the programme, and work proactively in shifting the mind set of parents and the community towards English. This could be done through active engagements like participating in specific English activities to encourage the parents to participate as well.

Several researchers found that parental involvement on student academic achievement has positive impact and recognised by school administrators, teachers and also policy makers (Graves and Wright, 2011; Larocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011; Wilder, 2014). However, according to McDermott and Rothenburg (2000), findings on parental involvement in urban schools reveal that teachers are frustrated with the lack of parental involvement in literacy activities at home and at school. Apparently, the aforementioned condition is similar to the findings of this study where parents are not too willing to involve actively in the HIP.

### **Teachers' Attitude and Motivation**

Another challenge encountered by teachers in implementing HIP was the teachers' negative attitude and low motivation as these had an impact on the students' attitudes. In general, teachers in schools showed negative attitudes towards the implementation of HIP. The respondents revealed that they could not understand the differences between the objectives and activities of the programmes with the interventions and strategies which they had planned during their earlier English panel meetings. The teachers hence were not satisfied with the way of the implementation of HIP in the school. They considered the programme as another written task.

The respondents concluded that teachers were frustrated with the burden of workload. At the same time, they needed to handle the HIP, which to them were just redundant English activities. The respondents also found that due to teachers' negative attitude and their low motivation towards the programme, students had low self-development as well and showed less interest to study English language. Thus, they had low motivation to be involved in the in-class activities such as project-based learning because the teachers did not encourage them to conduct research on the internet, in which the content was in English.

According to R1, this occurred because the teachers themselves had no proper guidance or earlier exposure in carrying out project-based learning for low achievement students. The teachers were not given the needed training to handle the programme as they should. Teachers needed to get familiar with a particular programme before they were able to carry it out with the students. Due to that, the respondent felt that teachers must be given enough exposure and guidance by the administrators instead of forcing the programme on the

teachers. The teachers' attitude and their motivation level towards HIP would increase if they actually understood what they were involved in.

The school heads play a crucial role. They are expected to lead the school in creating an English environment, motivating teachers and students, and actively involving parents and the community. Nevertheless, the respondents also revealed that school heads did not act as a constant motivator of teachers in implementing the HIP. The school heads had instead used a harsh way in forcing teachers to set up programmes without considering the real situation faced by the teachers. This had demotivated and disheartened the respondents in implementing any immersive English language programmes in their schools.

McDermott and Rothenburg (2000) in their finding have mentioned that educational programmes organised for teacher should motivate and bring an attitude change for teachers to collaborate with parents. Teachers need to learn a range of strategies and skills to involve parents in their children's education. Teachers must learn to interact openly and sensitively with all groups of parents.

### **Lack of Adequate Time**

Another challenge that teachers in schools encountered were lack of adequate time for in-class and out-of-class activities. In general, the respondents said that they lacked sufficient time to teach everything they needed to teach and that students lacked adequate time to learn everything that they needed to learn.

The respondents asserted that most teachers in schools rarely exposed their students to English language learning activities for both in and out of class. Posey, Burgess, Eason and Jones (2010) revealed that teachers are individuals who have a heavy workload. According to the respondents, due to time constraint, out-of-class English activities were held only twice a year. This was also due to the abundance of activities needed to be held throughout the academic year.

The respondent explained that although teachers would like to create an English-rich language classroom environment, the inadequate time had prevented them to do so. Teachers were frustrated with the activities requested by the school English panel to do for the extra in-class English activities. From the respondents' opinion, the in-class planned activities clashed with their classroom teaching period. The respondents stated that 60 minutes of English lesson was very limited, where the teachers take the maximum time to teach the lessons because they had to scaffold and pre-teach the students. R2 stated that teachers could not put much time dwelling on it. This was because the remedial classes for English language also needed to be carried out during the lesson. Teachers hence could not manage the time to have any extra in-class activities for HIP.

R3 added that the level of immersion for the programmes within a rural school was low. This was because the respondent's school did not make it compulsory for the teachers to carry out the activities for HIP frequently. The respondent further stated that due to lack of time and human resources to conduct numerous other programmes as requested by the stakeholders, thus, most of the English teachers in rural schools could only managed to lead their students to recite the *Rukun Negara* (National Philosophy) in English during assembly as the only activity for HIP. This is supported by Thwala (2015) that there is not much progress in the classroom because teachers need more time to teach thoroughly. It is important to create more time for both students and teachers to make inclusion successful.

### **Teachers' Self-Confidence and Self-Efficacy**

The HIP is meant for all teachers, not just the English teachers. All teachers are encouraged to use English in their out-of-class activities. However, the responses from the respondents showed that non-English teachers were not confident in using English as the instructional

language for out-of-class activities. Therefore, they were not willing to give commitment to the success of the programmes.

The respondents stated that although HIP are for all teachers, respondents noticed that many teachers in their school refused to participate in these programmes. Teachers have a common perception that HIP are for English teachers only. So, they felt that they are irrelevant to this programme and did not show interest towards the programme.

The respondents also revealed that some of their colleagues were willing to commit in the programmes. However, they lacked self-confidence to speak in English. They were not confident and were not ready to speak in English with the students. According to Basavanan (1975) as cited in Gol and Aaleabbas (2016), self-confidence refers to an individual's perceived ability to act effectively in a situation to overcome obstacles and to get things done. Their findings show that self-confidence is a crucial factor in learner motivation. Teachers with high self-confidence would try to speak more in English to motivate their students to communicate with their partners and teachers in English. However, the respondents concluded that most of the teachers in their school have low self-confidence to use English.

R1 stated that teachers and students should communicate in English at least once a week, on a selected day, in class as well as outside the class. By doing so, the respondent felt that teachers and students would gradually be more comfortable to use the language. The teachers would progressively gain their self-confidence to speak English and would ultimately be confident to communicate in English with their students. R1 further mentioned that the Principal should play a more serious role by creating a learning culture by participating in the activities and encouraging all teachers to be involved in a professional learning community.

According to Bandura (1997) as cited in Sabokrouh (2013), self-efficacy is defined as an assessment of one's personal capabilities to take action, produce results, and have control over a given situation. Gist and Mitchell (1992) stated that a person with negative self-efficacy attributes the failure to lack of ability. The respondents mentioned that non-optionist English teachers face problems in building confidence in students to speak English. This was because the teachers themselves lack proper English language skills.

They were not confident in using English as the medium of instruction, hence, they did not think that they could help much in creating an English-rich environment. This is in line with Sabokrouh's (2013) finding that nurturing a teacher's English language proficiency could enhance the teacher's efficacy or confidence.

### **Lack of Resources and Cooperation**

It could be stated that teachers do encounter challenges in creating an English environment due to lack of resources and cooperation. From the responses, it implied that the school community (School Heads and teachers) did not really establish an English-rich environment for students and did not manage to engage students in a good and meaningful English immersive environment. The school community did not show seriousness in preparing a proper paper work and reports.

The respondents specified that resources were one of the important components to sustain in the implementation of any programmes, including the HIP. For schools that had limited resources, it clearly illustrated that teachers encountered problems to implement even the low cost required activities without the cooperation, assistance, and support from other quarters. The school head should provide effective and fun teaching materials instead of forcing teachers to set up programmes without understanding the problem faced by the teachers. Therefore, the teachers themselves did not show much interest or take the initiative to prepare materials to create an English learning environment for the students.

According to the respondents, school heads should commence English support programmes, supply necessary resources and provide facilities for teachers to carry out the English activities smoothly. They should also seek the involvement of public and private higher education institutions for collaboration. McDermott and Rothenburg (2000) have pointed out that schools need to come up with ways to connect and communicate with parents. Schools should also take the initiative to conduct training and workshops for teachers on a regular basis (Zarina, 2012).

## **Conclusions**

The findings illustrated that teachers encounter several challenges in the implementation of HIP in the classrooms. In conclusion, some of the encountered challenges are lack of parental involvements; teachers' attitude and motivation; lack of adequate time; teachers' self-confidence and self-efficacy; and lack of resources and cooperation.

## **Recommendations**

The research findings have illustrated the challenges encountered by teachers in implementing the Highly Immersive Programme (HIP). Hence, the findings are vital since it will be a guide for all parties in designing solutions to address the problems faced by the teachers in the implementation process of HIP.

Most of the challenges faced by teachers are related to self-beliefs. Therefore, teachers need to think positively and be confident in implementing HIP. Teachers need to always get ready for the transformation of education if it happens. They should always actively participate in various educational seminars voluntarily to enhance their teaching knowledge and English skills.

Besides that, school administrators also need to realise that they must play an important role in implementing the Highly Immersive Programme. They need to give support to their teachers mentally or physically, motivate the teachers to carry their duty with HIP. Parents and the community also need to show their responsibility in the process of implementing HIP. Parental feedback on their children's development is important. They may support the school in various ways, such as providing their knowledge, being helpful and providing assistance during out of class activities and providing financial aids needed in any activities carry out. Therefore, their involvement will directly and indirectly help the teachers to build a more conducive English learning environment.

Based on the study's findings, it is safe to say that all parties which include the school administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community need to cooperate in implementing the Highly Immersive Programme and to create an English-rich environment for students to improve their English language skill. It is an undeniable fact that teachers play the most important role in the implementing process. However, the overall findings indicate that several factors had become the challenges to teachers who implementing HIP. Therefore, the school administrators, teachers, students, parents and community need to team up to find the solutions and the best method to resolve the challenges faced by the teachers with reconsidering the objectives of HIP.

Hopefully, HIP can provide awareness to students as well as generate creative and innovative ideas to infuse interest in students to have high self-confidence in using English.

## **About the Authors (Times New Roman, 12 pt)**

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