

Preservice Teachers' Attitudes Toward Information Technology in Brunei

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Introduction

Brunei is one of the 35 countries in the world that has a population of less than half a million and is categorized as a micro-state. The country is situated on the northwest coast of Borneo with an area of approximately 5700 sq.km. According to the 1999 census the population of Brunei stands at 331,000. The University of Brunei was established in 1985 and the number of students enrolled in the university reflects the small population of the country. Teacher training is a major thrust of the Institute of Education within the university and each year 100-150 students are taken in for the three year certificate training program. Female students tend to choose teaching as their profession.

The formal school system in Brunei has adopted a 6-3-2 pattern. 6 years of primary education (Grade 1 - 6), 3 years of lower secondary education (Form 1, 2 & 3), 2 years of upper secondary education (Form 4 & 5).

The language of instruction at the secondary level is English. At the end of Form 5, General Certificate of Education (GCE) 'O' level examination is conducted. Subjects covered in this examination include English, Malay, Mathematics and pure science subjects such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Combined Science, History, Economics and Geography.

Not all students use computers at school and the students who participated in the survey are average students. Elite students go abroad to study Medicine, Law and Engineering subjects.

Brunei has good communication infrastructure and BRUNET, the only Internet service provider has 14,000 users. In a country with only 70,000 household, this figure translated into 20% of the population who are using Internet.

Findings Regarding Teachers' Attitudes Toward Computers

One hundred forty-eight first year teacher education students completed the Teachers' Attitudes Toward Information Technology (TAT ver. 2.0) semantic differential scales of Electronic Mail (EmailT), World-Wide Web (WWWT), Multimedia (MMT), Teacher Productivity (ProdT) and Productivity for Classroom Learning (ProdCL) during 1999. Internal consistency reliabilities for the scales compared very favorably with those reported for USA data by the authors of the instrument (Knezek & Christensen, 1998). For the Brunei data, Cronbach's Alpha ranged from .90 to .92 for the individual scales. Mean ratings for most new information technologies were quite positive. No significant differences were found among the university students on any of the five measurement indices based on gender or arts versus sciences as a major field of study. Few differences among the students were found with respect to various background variables. One interesting exception to this trend was the students' perceptions of how useful the computer would be for student learning in the classroom. If the Brunei students had a computer at home they were fairly positive in their beliefs that the computer would be useful for student learning in the classroom (5.88 on a scale of 1 = least positive to 7 = most positive), but if the university students had no computer at home they were even more positive (6.20 on a 1 to 7 scale). The difference between the two groups reaches statistical significance ($f = 4.36$, $p = .038$). Perhaps the most significant finding from the Brunei pre-service educators, overall, is their overwhelmingly positive attitudes about teaching and learning with technology, which appears to vary little based on gender, field of study, or even access to technology at home.

Reference

Knezek, G., & Christensen, R. (1998). Internal consistency reliability for the teachers' attitudes toward information technology (TAT) questionnaire. In McNeil, Price, Boger-Mehall, Robin & Willis (Eds.) *Technology and Teacher Education Annual 1998 - Vol. 2*. Charlottesville: Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education.