

PURSUING THEIR INTEREST

'SEPARATE SPM FROM SCHOOL SYSTEM'

Students may find their true calling instead of focusing on academic achievements, says education expert

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THE Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination should be separated from the schooling system to allow students to pursue their interests and chart their own path.

Education expert Dr Anuar Ahmad from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia said students could use their time in school to find their calling instead of focusing on academic achievements.

“When we implement the country’s education philosophies, we wish to develop students based on their potential.

“Some students may excel in academics, while others may have low cognitive ability, but are highly skilled in physical activities, for instance. Others are good at speaking but others can write better. In education, each individual has potential, talent and inclinations that could be developed, if given the opportunity,” he told the *New Straits Times*.

Anuar, however, said there were contradictions between the primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education systems in the country.

“During the primary and lower

secondary education levels, we celebrate the uniqueness and diversity among students. However, when we make SPM the ‘finishing line’ for (secondary) education, we revert to celebrating those who excel in examinations. We use SPM as the benchmark for an individual’s excellence.

“How does this fit with our philosophy that celebrates talent in various fields, such as music, arts, sport and literature?” he asked.

By separating SPM from the school system, Anuar said, students could excel in their fields with the support of schools.

“Meanwhile, the examination should be independent from the school system and not used as a measurement for their perfor-

mance in secondary education.

“The students may use SPM results to further their studies. Meanwhile, those who excel in sports, for example, may receive (university) offers in related courses without SPM certificate.

“A certificate of completion from the school should be sufficient proof they have finished their secondary education and to apply for the relevant university courses,” said the senior lecturer at UKM’s Centre for Studies on Learner Diversity.

He said SPM, being an academic certificate, did not reflect the overall capabilities and potential of candidates.

Anuar said it was time new models were considered in Malaysia’s education system that were more open and flexible so that students could further their studies not only in academic courses, but in other fields, such as technical education.

He said the education system

in some countries allowed students to further their studies without a formal academic examination certificate.

Commenting on the school rating system, he said it should be a confidential rating used by the Education Ministry to identify schools with issues.

“The purpose of the ranking is to make improvements and identify schools that need specific help to improve their students’ performance.

“People tend to compare schools when they get hold of the ranking list, which is unhealthy and shouldn’t happen.”

Malaysian Inclusive Development and Advancement Institute-Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia director Professor Tan



Students of SMK Sultan Ismail in Johor Baru celebrating after receiving their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia results recently.

BERNAMA PIC

Sri Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali had recently said the Education Ministry should look into separating public examinations such as SPM from the school system following

the abolishment of Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) and Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga (PT3).

He was reported as saying SPM results did not reflect the six traits emphasised in the Malaysia Education Blueprint: knowledge and thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual skills, ethics, spirituality and national identity.

He also took the ministry to task for rating schools based on SPM results, saying that it was not in line with education philosophies and would affect the morale of students, teachers and parents.



Dr Anuar Ahmad



Professor Tan Sri Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali