

Managing and Developing Quality and Professional Teachers

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ABSTRACT: This study discusses the importance of developing professional and quality teachers in realising the aspirations of the national education system. Teachers are the main pillars responsible for shaping knowledgeable, virtuous and competitive human capital in line with the aims of the National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan). This paper focuses on five key policies related to the development of teacher professionalism, namely the National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan), the Teacher Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Guru), the *Malaysia Education Blueprint* (Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia, PPPM 2013–2025), the *Malaysian Teacher Standard* (Standard Guru Malaysia), and the *Master Plan for Teacher Professionalism Development* (Pelan Induk Pembangunan Profesionalisme Keguruan). Each policy is formulated to ensure that teachers possess professional competence, pedagogical skills, ethical values, and the ability to adapt to the changing landscape of 21st-century education. The discussion also highlights the roles of in-service training, teaching and learning supervision, and the practice of *Professional Learning Communities* in strengthening teacher quality. A mini-study conducted found a significant relationship between the implementation of in-service training and the enhancement of teacher professionalism. Planning, content, and course delivery were identified as the main factors contributing to the improvement of teachers' knowledge, skills, and classroom efficiency.

In conclusion, teacher professionalism development must be implemented continuously and systematically to produce innovative, ethical, reflective, and lifelong learning educators. Quality teachers not only contribute to student excellence but also serve as catalysts for the development of a prosperous society and nation.

KEYWORDS: Teacher professionalism development, in-service training, teacher quality, education policy, Malaysia Education Blueprint.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Teachers are social architects who play a vital role in implementing effective educational processes aimed at nurturing students with strong identity, knowledge, and piety. In building this national agenda, teachers as human resources must possess resilience and a noble spirit, as their duties are highly complex and challenging. Without quality teachers, it would be difficult to achieve any planned development and disciplinary programmes. The aspiration to produce quality human resources (teachers) must therefore be pursued earnestly by providing opportunities such as attending seminars, forums, and paper presentations at both national and international levels.

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, KPM) must also possess a high level of vision and capacity to develop and produce competent and quality teachers. Quality teachers are a vital national asset and play a key role in producing excellent students, thus fulfilling the nation's aspiration to become a developed country by 2020. Quality teachers are those who are able to master and apply their skills and expertise to enhance teaching and learning effectiveness in schools. To produce quality teachers, they should be given opportunities to improve and transform themselves positively.

According to Mitchell and Logue (2015), the development of teacher professionalism is related to teacher learning, the methods of such learning, and the process of transforming knowledge into practice. Teacher professionalism development requires teachers' emotional and cognitive engagement, both individually and collaboratively, in the learning process (Olson and Craig 2011). The combination of these components fosters teachers' commitment to changing and improving their beliefs, values, and norms (Ball and Cohen 2009). Peel (1992) stated that development is a necessity for every individual, organisation, and society as a whole. It plays an essential role in human resource development to examine the impact of career growth on individuals. Professional development results from continuous professional reflection and lifelong action (Day 1999). Professionalism development is therefore a process of enhancing a teacher's professionalism with the aim of systematically improving their knowledge and evaluating their teaching (Glatthorn 1995).

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Clearly, the development of quality and professional teachers acts as a catalyst for achieving organisational goals and creating skilled and competitive workers—not only as individuals within an organisation but also as self-directed individuals. The development of teachers within their profession aims to improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes as academics in order to achieve excellence and fulfil the needs of both themselves and society (Nor Hasnida et al. 2014).

1.2 Characteristics of Quality and Professional Teachers

The development of high-quality, world-class education is the main agenda of the *Ministry of Education Malaysia* (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia). Based on this important agenda, teachers are directly involved in student achievement, self-development, and educational advancement in the country, thereby elevating the teaching profession. Education cannot be developed and sustained without excellent and quality teachers (Ahmad Mohd Salleh 2008).

To produce quality human resources, several characteristics define quality and professional teachers. Intellectually, teachers should possess extensive knowledge and high levels of skill, particularly through enhanced pedagogical competence. Teaching quality is the main indicator of teacher professionalism since teaching is the teacher's core business with students, requiring mastery of learning theories, proficiency in diverse teaching methods and strategies, and a strong grasp of subject content. Teachers must always be prepared for syllabus and curriculum changes to create a more conducive and student-friendly learning environment. Rapid advancements in science and technology have resulted in major transformations in information technology. To remain quality educators, teachers must continually strive to integrate information technology into their teaching and learning practices while deepening their understanding of technological knowledge. Furthermore, proficiency in English is also vital, as the current education system requires individuals capable of communicating effectively with colleagues and external stakeholders.

From a spiritual and psychological perspective, quality teachers must possess commendable character and behaviour in both practice and conduct. Examples include punctuality, sincerity in carrying out responsibilities, diligence, and respect towards colleagues and students, as these values are enshrined in the *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for Teachers* (Etika dan Tatasusila Profesion Keguruan). In the formation of the *National Education Philosophy* (Falsafah Pendidikan Negara), religion occupies the highest position, as strong religious beliefs lead to teachers who are committed and responsible in their duties. The psychological aspect is also crucial for teachers to be empathetic and understanding of student development, showing genuine care and evaluating students based on their individual abilities.

Additionally, teachers should maintain quality in the physical dimension by practising a healthy lifestyle. Good health is essential to remain focused and effective in carrying out teaching duties. Maintaining a healthy body sharpens intellect and thought, providing teachers with the capacity to serve responsibly and with dedication. Teachers also need physical communication skills to engage with students, parents, the community, and school administrators, as they are conveyors of knowledge. Other physical competencies, such as skills in sports, uniformed units, clubs, and associations, also help nurture students' identity and self-discipline through co-curricular involvement.

Teachers must also demonstrate emotional quality and professionalism by embodying noble values and ethics as outlined in the *Code of Service Ethics* (Etika Perkhidmatan). As individuals entrusted with great responsibility, teachers must maintain a positive mindset in performing their duties. They should be fair to students, remain calm and compassionate, and view teaching as both a form of *jihad* (struggle) and an act of worship (ibadah) to be performed sincerely, without prejudice or excuse.

2.0 POLICIES RELATED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND QUALITY TEACHERS

The development of teacher professionalism is the key to the success of reforms in the education system (Hargreaves, 2000; Fullan & Mascal, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999). Any changes in government policy, especially those concerning the education system, have a significant impact on teachers and the development of their professionalism. Day and Smethem (2009) asserted that most governments believe that government intervention in the education system through policy measures can ensure a nation's competitiveness in terms of its economy.

The content of these policies is disseminated throughout the education system by teachers, who are vital entities within it. Moreover, Ferguson (1991) reported that teacher expertise influences student achievement by up to 40 per cent. This expertise is assessed based on teacher education, student performance in examinations, and teachers' experience. Darling-Hammond (1993) further emphasised that subject knowledge, understanding of learning and student development, and effective teaching methods are essential elements in producing effective teachers.

Education policies in Malaysia are documents that reflect the government's aspirations in determining the direction of national education. The formulated policies serve as the foundation and reference for every programme planned and implemented (Abd Ghafar Mahmud, 2012).

According to Dr Faridah binti Hassan, Director of the Educational Planning and Research Division, the development of education policy encompasses the continuation of existing policies as well as the formulation of new ones to ensure that Malaysia's education system remains relevant in the global educational context. Improvements in the education system can only be achieved

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through teachers, as they are the curriculum implementers in classrooms. Therefore, teachers are essential entities within the education system (Aisya & Zabidi, 2016).

There are various government education policies that influence the professional development of teachers. However, for the purpose of this discussion, five education policies have been selected to examine their connection to the development of professional and high-quality teachers. These policies are:

1. National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan)
2. Teacher Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Guru)
3. Malaysia Education Blueprint (Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia)
4. Malaysian Teacher Standards (Standard Guru Malaysia)
5. Master Plan for Teacher Professionalism Development (Pelan Induk Pembangunan Profesionalisme Keguruan)

2.1 National Education Philosophy

According to the *National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan)*,

“Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced, based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. This effort is aimed at producing Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable, competent, honourable, responsible, and capable of achieving personal well-being while contributing to the harmony and prosperity of family, society, and the nation.”

The *National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan)* has brought about a transformation in the personal disposition of educators, aligning their perspectives and visions with positive attitudes in carrying out their duties and professional responsibilities. The ultimate goal, of course, is to realise the philosophy’s noble aspiration: to produce citizens who are knowledgeable, competent, morally upright, responsible, and capable of achieving self-fulfilment.

Hence, teachers must be well-prepared in terms of professionalism and quality to ensure that the objectives of the *National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan)* are achieved. This philosophical foundation has reshaped teaching and learning methods, producing educators who are innovative, intellectually broad-minded, morally grounded, and skilful. In short, teachers are expected to embody the very qualities they seek to instil—because, as every teacher knows, students have a sixth sense for spotting hypocrisy faster than a cat spotting a laser pointer.

2.2 Teacher Education Philosophy

“Teachers who are noble in character, progressive and scientific in outlook, ready to uphold the nation’s aspirations while cherishing its cultural heritage, ensuring individual development, and nurturing a united, democratic, progressive, and disciplined society.”

The *Teacher Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Guru)* aims to produce educators who are excellent in professionalism, personality, social relations, and behavioural practices. It also serves as a guiding principle in nurturing teachers who are ethical, knowledgeable, creative, and resilient—capable of educating pupils effectively while upholding the values and virtues of the teaching profession.

This philosophy envisions the cultivation of teachers who can deliver quality education aligned with the demands of 21st-century learning. The *Teacher Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Guru)* thus not only defines the professional ideals of teachers but also anchors their moral compass within Malaysia’s broader educational vision.

To achieve these aims, the role of the *Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia (Institut Pendidikan Guru Malaysia, IPGM)* and *Institutions of Higher Learning (Institusi Pengajian Tinggi, IPT)* is indispensable. Without these institutions, the formation of professional and high-quality educators would be but an unfulfilled aspiration. They are, quite literally, the “teacher factories”—though, unlike factories, they produce minds rather than machines, and (hopefully) fewer smoke emissions.

2.3 Malaysia Education Blueprint (Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia, PPPM)

In October 2011, the Ministry of Education (Kementerian Pendidikan) launched a comprehensive review of the national education system as part of efforts to develop a new *Malaysia Education Blueprint (Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia, PPPM)*. Over a period of fifteen months (October 2011 to December 2012), the Ministry gathered input from a variety of sources, including research reports conducted by education experts from UNESCO, the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and six public universities.

The blueprint proposed eleven strategic and operational shifts, designed to realise the envisioned goals of the Ministry. Among these, the fourth shift — transforming the teaching profession into a profession of choice — is directly related to the development of professional and high-quality teachers.

International studies consistently indicate that teacher quality is the most significant school-based factor influencing student outcomes. Indeed, as the often-quoted maxim goes, “*The quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers.*” Although many excellent teachers exist within Malaysia’s education system, the 2011 study conducted by the *Higher Education*

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Leadership Academy (AKEPT) revealed that only about 50 per cent of lessons were effectively delivered. This finding suggests that classroom instruction often remains passive and lecture-based, with limited student engagement and shallow content understanding.

Moreover, the study underscored a major challenge: approximately 60 per cent of today's teachers will continue teaching for the next 20 years (Malaysia Education Blueprint, Fourth Shift). Consequently, the reform of teaching quality becomes not merely a policy objective but a national imperative.

As part of the Fourth Shift, the Ministry aims to transform *Institutes of Teacher Education* into world-class teacher training universities by 2020. To achieve this, the Ministry re-evaluated the existing pre-service training curriculum to ensure that teachers are well-prepared to teach *Higher Order Thinking Skills*. Among the measures taken was to increase the proportion of practicum components to 40 per cent across all programmes.

Furthermore, IPGs were tasked with offering diverse programmes — including diplomas, undergraduate, and postgraduate degrees — to cater to candidates of various experience levels, from new graduates to career changers. Recruitment standards for lecturers were tightened, and continuous professional development opportunities were expanded to enhance instructional quality.

Under this fourth shift, the Ministry also committed to ensuring that teachers receive individualised *Continuous Professional Development* support from supervisors upon entering the profession. These development programmes encompass core and elective components, aligned with each teacher's personal growth needs.

Most of these training initiatives are implemented at the school level, as school-based training has been proven to be one of the most effective approaches to continuous professional learning. The *Continuous Professional Development (PPB)* programmes are delivered through peer networks, including mentor teachers, senior teachers, and school principals or headmasters, to disseminate best practices.

This school-embedded approach allows teachers to continuously enhance their competencies in line with the professional standards expected of them. The *Teacher Education Division (BPG)* is entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating and ensuring the effective implementation of these professional development initiatives.

2.4 Malaysian Teacher Standards

The *Malaysian Teacher Standards* is a document that outlines the professional competencies that teachers are expected to achieve, as well as the necessary provisions that must be made by teacher training agencies and institutions to help teachers attain these competencies. It serves as a guideline and reference for teachers, teacher educators, and teacher training agencies in their efforts to produce and sustain high-quality educators.

The *Malaysian Teacher Standards* was formulated based on the following rationale:

1. Teachers must possess a high level of professional values, knowledge, understanding, and teaching and learning skills in order to function effectively as professional educators.
2. Teacher training agencies and institutions must provide clear and comprehensive training requirements to support the continuous development of these professional standards.

Through this framework, teachers are not only expected to demonstrate excellence in instructional practices but also to embody ethical integrity, intellectual rigour, and a lifelong commitment to professional growth. The SGM thus serves as a benchmark of teacher professionalism, aligning Malaysia's educational standards with international expectations while preserving the moral and cultural values that underpin the national education system.

Ultimately, the *Malaysian Teacher Standards (Standard Guru Malaysia)* reinforces the idea that teaching is not merely a job, but a vocation of service — a profession grounded in knowledge, compassion, and responsibility towards the nation's future generations.

2.5 Master Plan for Teacher Professionalism Development

The *Master Plan for Teacher Professionalism Development* represents a crucial framework in strengthening the capacity of *Education Service Officers* (to perform their duties efficiently and effectively at various stages of their careers. Developed by the *Ministry of Education Malaysia*, this document serves as a guide to assist PPPs in planning their career paths and engaging in continuous professional development.

The *PIPPK* aims to motivate PPPs to enhance their competencies in alignment with their interests and professional needs, thereby sustaining optimal work performance. It embodies the Ministry's strategy to ensure that PPPs remain of high quality throughout their service tenure. Through this plan, the teaching profession is envisioned to be strengthened and recognised as a respected, professional, and preferred career.

The *Master Plan for Teacher Professionalism Development (PIPPK)* comprises five chapters:

- Chapter 1: Teacher Professionalism
- Chapter 2: Training Road Map
- Chapter 3: Competency Development
- Chapter 4: Continuous Professional Development

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- Chapter 5: Governance of Professional Development Implementation

Among these, Chapters 2 and 4 are particularly significant in fostering professional and high-quality teachers.

Chapter 2 – Training Road Map

This chapter presents a comprehensive *Training Road Map (Peta Laluan Latihan)* that teachers must follow according to their respective career paths and grades. The road map is structured around the teacher's career trajectory and outlines five categories of *Continuous Professional Development (Pembangunan Profesionalisme Berterusan, PPB)* activities:

1. Foundational Professional Development
2. Competency Development
3. Policy/Specific Requirement Training
4. Complementary Development
5. Elective Development

Under this plan, teachers are encouraged to conduct a SWOT analysis, examining their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—to guide their career development decisions. Critical self-reflection is required to identify areas for growth and to determine the most suitable professional development pathway according to individual potential.

Strategic career planning thus becomes essential for teachers to manage their professional development systematically and purposefully. While teacher training institutions provide foundational preparation, maintaining and enhancing quality demands continuous learning in response to evolving educational challenges and innovations.

Chapter 4 – Continuous Professional Development (

This chapter elaborates on the implementation model for *Continuous Professional Development (PPB)*. The *PPB Model* serves as a reference framework to guide effective professional development initiatives.

Broadly, PPB activities are implemented through three types of initiatives:

1. Self-initiated
2. Organisation-based
3. Ministry-driven

By the third wave of the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025*, self-initiated initiatives are prioritised, emphasising teachers' autonomy and responsibility in directing their own professional growth.

The PPB Model is grounded on three core standards—mirroring those in the *Malaysian Teacher Standards*)—namely:

1. Professional Values and Practice
2. Knowledge
3. Skills

These standards form the foundation of teacher competency and delineate the roles and expectations of educators within the system. The PPB Model is thus an essential framework for defining the levels of teacher competence, ensuring that professional development is systematic, focused, and aligned with national education goals.

In essence, the *Master Plan for Teacher Professionalism Development* institutionalises lifelong learning for teachers, reinforcing the idea that professionalism is not a static achievement but an evolving commitment. Through structured guidance and reflective practice, it ensures that Malaysia's educators remain capable, adaptable, and inspired to meet the ever-changing demands of the 21st-century education landscape.

3.0 DISCUSSION

3.1 Purpose of Quality Teacher Development

As stated in the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 (Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2013–2025, PPPM 2013–2025)* under Chapter 5: *Teachers and School Leaders*, the aspect of *Training and Performance Development (Latihan dan Pembangunan Prestasi, LDP)* receives specific emphasis. *In-service training (Latihan dalam Perkhidmatan)* refers to programmes designed to enhance teachers' knowledge and specific skills.

According to Peel (1992), development is an essential requirement for individuals, organisations, and society as a whole. It is a fundamental component of human resource development, assessing the impact of career progression on individuals.

The development of quality teachers aims to improve teachers' professional growth. Ab Aziz (2002) and Ibrahim Mamat (2006) assert that training is a planned and systematic programme designed to develop knowledge, skills, and competencies through a learning process to achieve effective work performance (Muhammad Ali, 2001). This process involves continuous review, renewal, and improvement—encouraging teachers to act as agents of change.

Professional teachers, according to Rubiah (2002, as cited in Nor Hasnida Che Ghazali, 2014), must demonstrate six essential attributes:

1. The ability to practise professionalism within the classroom.
2. The capacity to apply professional conduct at the school level.
3. Professional behaviour in both teaching and institutional contexts.

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4. A sense of responsibility towards enhancing the teaching profession.
5. A commitment to participate in professional training and educational development.
6. Accountability as agents of social reform.

Teacher training and development programmes are implemented as strategic initiatives to achieve an organisation's goals and aspirations. Educational institutions design and implement various enhancement activities such as motivational sessions, in-service training, and other developmental programmes aimed at improving teachers' skills and competencies.

As educators, teachers must equip themselves with broad and multifaceted knowledge that spans multiple disciplines. Such preparation enables teachers to effectively engage with students who possess diverse levels of cognitive ability, thereby ensuring that learning content is comprehensible and meaningful. This, in turn, contributes to improved academic performance at both individual and institutional levels.

Competent and competitive teachers can be cultivated through various skill-based training and scholarly courses. A genuine profession is characterised by intellectual expertise, sufficient professional training, the delivery of essential societal services, and the existence of a governing body to regulate related matters (Lieberman, 1956, as cited in Syed Ismail Mustapa, 2014).

Adequate training enhances teachers' potential to become proficient, efficient, and committed individuals who exhibit leadership qualities and organisational loyalty while excelling in their respective fields.

Enhancing quality and productivity can only be realised when teacher development is effectively implemented. It provides opportunities for teachers to transform their performance from mediocre to excellent. Consequently, institutional excellence improves, cultivating a stronger work ethic and commitment. Organisational management also benefits from such transformation, as teachers become more skilled, motivated, and capable of conducting *Teaching and Facilitation (Pengajaran dan Pemudahcaraan, PdPc)* effectively.

Furthermore, teachers serve as exemplary leaders for their students. Amidst an evolving and increasingly challenging educational landscape, teachers must position themselves as agents of change and sources of inspiration for their learners.

3.2 The Importance of Teacher Development

Teachers can be regarded as agents of cultural and intellectual transmission and are responsible for actualising this role within the educational context. They must be courageous in fulfilling the duties entrusted to them, equipped with intellectual competence and strong moral character to achieve excellence and effectiveness.

Moreover, teachers are considered custodians of cultural knowledge. Their role is highly esteemed as they are responsible for shaping a quality society. Within the educational framework, teachers function as channels of knowledge and cultural values, which are vital in forming a cohesive and progressive community (Dewan Masyarakat, May 2012).

Teachers serve as the drivers of school excellence (pemacu kecemerlangan sekolah). A study conducted in Tennessee, United States, in the mid-1990s found that high-performing teachers could improve student achievement by up to 50 per cent over three years compared to low-performing teachers. Similarly, effective school principals or head teachers who emphasised instructional leadership (kepemimpinan instruksional) rather than administrative functions were found to increase student achievement by 20 per cent (*Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013–2025*).

Teachers also play a critical role in nurturing students' talents, interests, and abilities while developing creative and critical thinking skills. Completing training at teacher education institutes does not signify the end of a teacher's learning journey. Even experienced teachers must recognise that continuous professional development remains essential.

Teachers encounter both internal and external challenges throughout their careers. Internally, teachers must be prepared to experiment with various teaching techniques, methods, and approaches to ensure effective teaching and learning. They must also be adaptable to changes in educational terminology, curriculum content, and technological integration within classrooms.

In the era of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), students are easily exposed to negative influences and values. Therefore, moral and ethical education becomes crucial in mitigating undesirable behaviours. When teachers are able to successfully impart moral education, students are more likely to excel in both academic and character dimensions.

Given the rise in student behavioural issues such as aggression and misconduct, teachers must serve as mentors who guide students towards righteousness. One of the reasons for increasing behavioural problems may lie in the failure to nurture students' natural disposition (*fitrah*). If neglected, such issues may persist into adulthood.

Thus, teachers must cultivate and preserve students' natural disposition (*fitrah dan tabii pelajar*) to ensure harmony and sound thinking. A healthy disposition naturally leads to normal and positive behaviour. Upholding this ethical standard reflects a teacher's sincerity and commitment to fulfilling their sacred responsibility.

To build quality of life, teachers must perform their duties with sincerity and a sense of devotion. This mindset inherently fosters commitment to nurturing human potential. When students internalise values of integrity and excellence, these qualities manifest as lifelong attributes that shape their personal and social identity.

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Teachers also act as agents of socialisation and transformation, embodying the principles of the *National Education Philosophy*. They must exhibit exemplary character, creativity, and empathy in guiding their students. Teachers are often the closest figures to students—serving as surrogate parents within the school environment.

This approach fosters a sense of mutual respect, appreciation, and belonging among students, deterring them from engaging in delinquent behaviours such as vandalism and other misconducts.

In this regard, teachers play a pivotal role in shaping excellent individuals, a responsibility that demands unwavering commitment and sustained effort. Through dedicated mentorship, students can develop strong identity, values, cultural appreciation, and a deep sense of national pride.

Ultimately, the successful realisation of educational objectives depends on teachers' capacity to fulfil these roles effectively. By doing so, they contribute to the creation of citizens and a nation that is progressive, peaceful, and prosperous.

4.0 RELATED THEORIES

4.1 Kurt Lewin's Three-Stage Change Theory

Kurt Lewin's Change Theory is highly significant and applicable across various social and management disciplines, including the development of quality teachers. This theory focuses on achieving positive behavioural transformation.

Lewin's model consists of three stages of change — *unfreezing*, *change* and *freezing*.

In the context of *quality teacher development*, teachers require strong motivation to move forward, prepare themselves, and embrace change. They must be willing to take the initiative to evolve and enhance their teaching practices. Teachers must also advance with updated knowledge, adequate information, and a clear understanding of the challenges they face. Through this awareness, they can implement meaningful changes to improve their teaching effectiveness. Once positive transformation is achieved, teachers should remain motivated and continue to sustain these improvements to ensure ongoing excellence.

4.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

The relationship between *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* and *teacher quality development* lies in the notion that professional growth and career planning are central to *self-actualisation*. Maslow positioned self-actualisation at the highest level of human needs, representing a stage where individuals perform at their most effective, motivated, and fulfilled state.

Teachers, therefore, must participate in various training and motivational programmes to enhance their knowledge and skills in engaging with contemporary students. Professional development programmes organised by the *Ministry of Education* play an essential role in equipping teachers to face modern educational challenges.

Both theories — *Kurt Lewin's Change Theory* and *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs* — are profoundly significant to the development of quality teachers. Educators should maintain high motivation and continuously strive to enhance their professionalism, character, and social competencies.

Teachers must also embody values such as time appreciation, diligence, tolerance, rationality, and compassion. By practising noble values and demonstrating perseverance, teachers can better achieve excellence for both their students and schools.

5.0 TEACHER MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

5.1 Trainee Teachers or Pre-Service Teachers

Trainee teachers play a crucial and strategic role in the education system before completing their studies and becoming fully qualified teachers in schools. As both learners and future educators, trainee teachers serve as agents of social change who transform societal thinking patterns, attitudes, and behaviours towards a more dignified, independent, and progressive way of life.

Furthermore, trainee teachers are among the most influential components in determining the quality of educational processes and outcomes. Any attempt to improve educational quality will be insignificant without the support of highly skilled trainee teachers. In other words, improving the quality of education must begin with teachers and ultimately depend on them.

To fulfil their demanding duties and responsibilities, trainee teachers must possess both pedagogical and professional competencies, which must be harmoniously integrated within their personal and professional character. However, in classroom reality, trainee teachers often lack full competence in performing their instructional tasks (Hashim, Yaakub, & Ahmad, 2007).

One of the main barriers is the trainee teachers' limited capacity to perform tasks effectively, stemming from insufficient awareness, motivation, and willingness to engage in self-improvement. This deficiency often results in ineffective teaching processes and diminished instructional quality.

Quality education can only be achieved when trainee teachers possess sufficient academic and pedagogical competence, allowing them to focus on delivering effective instruction. Therefore, educators must continuously expand, renew, and deepen their knowledge and skills. Programmes that enhance teacher competencies include systematic pedagogical learning and practicum activities (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2013).

Teacher education and training are designed for trainee teachers who have acquired both theoretical and practical pedagogical knowledge. These two stages develop the teaching quality of trainee teachers in alignment with the National Education

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Philosophy. Teaching is not merely the simple transmission of knowledge from one individual to another; rather, it is a complex process that facilitates and influences student learning.

The quality of a trainee teacher can be measured by the extent to which students understand the content being taught. Classrooms should not merely serve as platforms for learning teaching skills but as spaces for practising effective pedagogy. Developing specific teaching skills through structured and systematic training remains one of the key challenges in teacher education programmes.

Research has shown that pedagogical learning methods are scientifically proven to be effective when integrated into teaching practicum programmes. Thus, pedagogical mastery is a cornerstone of quality instruction.

The role of a trainee teacher is substantial—not only shaping students' futures but also serving as a role model. Every individual aspiring to become a teacher must possess qualities such as knowledge, open-mindedness, discipline, and empathy when facing challenges. The responsibility of trainee teachers extends beyond subject instruction; they are expected to act as experts in teaching methodologies and to communicate effectively with students across disciplines.

5.2 Supervision and Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

According to the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025 (Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2013–2025, PPPM 2013–2025)*, the fourth shift, transforming teaching into a profession of choice — highlights the direct relationship between student achievement and teacher quality. Therefore, teaching must be redefined as a profession of high prestige and excellence.

A 2011 study by the *Ministry of Education (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, KPM)* revealed that only 50 per cent of classroom teaching was deemed effective. This was attributed to factors such as low student engagement, lecture-based methods, and superficial content delivery. The statistics are concerning, particularly as 60 per cent of today's teachers will remain in the profession for the next 20 years (PPPM, 2012).

Supervision serves not only to improve the teaching and learning process but also to ensure that the formal curriculum is implemented effectively. More importantly, effective supervision fosters teacher motivation through constructive feedback. It also enables school principals to assess teachers' competencies in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Gurnam & Chan, 2010).

Yamina Bouchamma (2006) observed that principals' understanding of supervision often varies, and their confidence in their supervisory effectiveness can significantly influence teacher performance. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2004) asserted that teachers, as professionals, are at different developmental stages and thus require differentiated supervisory approaches. This presents a challenge for principals as supervisors in schools.

To enhance teacher competencies, supervision must be conducted fairly, accurately, and systematically. Teachers should develop a positive perception of the supervisory process. Glickman (1995) stated that changes in teacher attitudes can be fostered through constructive supervision, which in turn enhances self-confidence. Tanner and Tanner (1987) added that such confidence contributes to a more effective school atmosphere.

Principals, as supervisors, should adopt supportive and developmental approaches that minimise psychological barriers to teacher growth (Zepeda, 2007). Effective supervision requires expertise in three areas:

1. Knowing what to evaluate
2. Knowing how to observe and analyse classroom data), and
3. Knowing how to translate observations into meaningful feedback to guide and encourage teachers (Fisher, 2001).

Several models and theories underpin supervision practices. Hussin (1997) identified three key supervision theories: the *Traditional Supervision Theory*, the *Human Relations Supervision Theory*, and the *Modern Scientific Supervision Theory*. The *Traditional Supervision Theory*, introduced by Frederick Taylor in the early 1900s, viewed supervision as a process of closely monitoring teachers' tasks, ensuring they achieve instructional objectives and maintain teaching quality.

In Malaysia, schools often adopt a hybrid model that integrates Scientific Supervision and Human Relations Supervision (Hussin, 1997). This combined approach ensures that supervision supports the National Education Philosophy while fostering positive relationships between supervisors and teachers.

These theories emphasise professionalism, mentorship, and motivation—empowering teachers to perform effectively and inspiring students to achieve higher academic standards.

5.3 In-Service Training

The teaching profession is one of the most vital occupations in the process of human, social, and national development. As professionals, teachers must perform their duties wholeheartedly and be prepared to accept all responsibilities consistent with the ethical values of their vocation (Ragbir Kaur a/p Joginder Singh, 2007).

A professional and quality teacher should be able to meet students' needs in multiple aspects—teaching and learning, character formation, skills, expertise, and classroom management. The main accountability of a teacher with a high degree of professionalism is to serve as a disseminator of knowledge and a facilitator of learning. Teachers must remain attentive to the development of their intellectual, moral, and technical competencies.

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According to *Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (4th Edition)*, the term skill refers to proficiency and the ability to perform a task efficiently. Teachers must therefore be adept in every activity, both inside and outside the classroom. Essential teaching skills include learning skills, communication skills, thinking skills, planning skills, ICT skills, instructional skills, facilitation skills, and management skills.

In addition to classroom responsibilities, teachers also interact with the community, including parents and external stakeholders. Therefore, teachers must manage interpersonal and organisational matters prudently.

In the era of globalisation, it is crucial for teachers to advance their ICT proficiency, as Information and Communication Technology forms the backbone of modern education. Proficiency in ICT increases teachers' confidence in instructional delivery (Balakrishnan, 2002).

A study by *Wan Mohamad Wan Ibrahim et al. (2002)* found that over 80 per cent of school teachers held positive perceptions towards ICT integration in their profession, further demonstrating the importance of ongoing digital competency development.

The term intellectual, as defined in the *Kamus Dewan*, refers to an intelligent and learned individual capable of reasoning, imagining, questioning, and innovating. Intellectual teachers are able to cultivate similarly intellectual students through rational and critical thought.

Suparno (2003) outlined key traits of an intellectual individual, including a continuous passion for learning, rational thinking, active inquiry, courage to act responsibly, and a commitment to truth and justice. Teachers who embody these traits engage in lifelong learning, remain sensitive to current issues, and approach problem-solving creatively and independently.

Teachers must also cultivate values, the ethical criteria that determine the quality of professional educators. Teachers must instil moral, religious, terminal, and instrumental values in students. Through exemplary character and consistent application of these values, teachers guide students towards becoming morally upright individuals.

Within the educational context, *in-service training (latihan dalam perkhidmatan)* is a key element for improving teaching quality and learning outcomes. Teachers require continuous exposure to knowledge, experiences, and skills—particularly in fields involving technological applications—to remain effective and relevant. Such training supports the national agenda of human capital development, ensuring that the teaching workforce remains productive, skilled, and adaptive.

5.4 School Improvement Specialist Coach (SISC+)

Another initiative introduced by the *Ministry of Education* is the School Improvement Specialist Coach Programme (SISC+), launched in early 2011 under the *National Key Result Area (NKRA)* initiative of *Government Transformation Programme (GTP) 1.0*.

Teachers selected for this programme—many of whom are Excellent Teachers received specialised coaching through intensive master-trainer courses. Following the success of the SISC initiative under *GTP 1.0*, the programme was expanded under *GTP 2.0*, where the SISC+ role was institutionalised as a full-time position at District Education Offices. Pilot projects were conducted in the states of Sabah and Kedah in 2013, followed by full national implementation in 2014.

This initiative aligns with the sixth shift of the *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025*, which focuses on empowering District Education Offices and State Education Departments. SISC+ officers are stationed full-time at PPDs but do not engage in administrative duties. Instead, they dedicate four days per week to school monitoring and one day for administrative reporting and meetings.

The main function of SISC+ is to mentor teachers, promote pedagogical excellence, and support continuous professional growth. By facilitating reflective practice, SISC+ coaches enhance teachers' instructional quality and ultimately contribute to school improvement and student achievement.

5.5 Professional Learning Communities (PLC)

Another approach to enhancing teacher professionalism and quality is through Professional Learning Communities. PLC refers to a group of educators committed to collaborative and continuous learning aimed at improving teaching practices and student outcomes (Rosenholtz, 1989; Little & McLaughlin, 1993; DuFour, Eaker, & Many, 2006).

The implementation of PLC promotes teacher professionalism through structured collaboration and reflective action research. Within this framework, teachers work together to analyse teaching challenges, share best practices, and design innovative strategies to enhance student performance.

PLC embodies the principle that teachers learn best from one another. By cultivating a culture of trust, respect, and shared accountability, PLCs encourage ongoing improvement in both teaching competence and student success.

Through sustained participation in PLCs, teachers develop not only their pedagogical knowledge but also their sense of professional identity and community belonging. Consequently, PLCs serve as a powerful tool in realising the national aspiration of producing professional, innovative, and high-quality educators.

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6.0 MINI RESEARCH

6.1 Research Title

The Relationship between In-Service Training Policy and the Enhancement of Teaching Professionalism

Siti Nur Aisya Sugumarie binti Abdullah and Dr Ahmad Zabidi bin Abdul Razak

Problem Statement

1. Is there a relationship between aspects of the suitability of in-service training and policy changes in Malaysia?
2. Is there a relationship between aspects of the suitability of in-service training and the enhancement of teachers' professionalism?

6.3 Methodology

i. Research Sample

The researcher selected six schools from the Petaling Utama district, Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan. The selection was based on the diversity of school types in the district. The schools chosen represented various categories: cluster and non-cluster schools, missionary schools, boys' schools, girls' schools, and co-educational schools.

ii. Research Respondents

The study involved 174 teachers who were not administrators. Given the diverse school types in the research area, the sample represented this diversity. Although only six schools participated, the results can be generalised to other schools as the sample included different types of institutions.

iii. Data Collection

A survey method and questionnaire were employed to gather information. The questionnaire consisted of two main sections. Section I collected respondents' demographic information, while Section II contained 42 items to obtain data on policy changes in Malaysia and the enhancement of teachers' professionalism.

6.4 Research Findings

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between aspects of in-service training suitability and teachers' professional enhancement in response to policy changes. The analysis revealed that among the five aspects studied, three demonstrated significant relationships, whereas two did not.

The training management planning aspect showed a moderate and significant relationship with teachers' professionalism. This finding supports the view that in-service training enhances professionalism by improving teachers' knowledge, skills, and competencies in classroom practice (Dean, 1991). Effective in-service training enables teachers to engage in lifelong learning, thereby fostering professional growth.

The content of in-service training programmes also exhibited a moderate and significant relationship with the enhancement of teachers' professionalism. In-service training provides teachers with opportunities to enrich their subject-matter knowledge. Kwakman (2003) asserted that teachers, as professionals, must continuously update their knowledge to adapt to ongoing changes within the education system.

Furthermore, the course instructor aspect demonstrated a weak yet significant relationship with teachers' professionalism. Instructors with strong understanding and expertise should be able to transfer knowledge, skills, and competencies effectively to teachers (Ong, 1992). The characteristics of effective trainers can enhance teachers' professionalism.

In addition to understanding the objectives of in-service training, instructors must also possess teaching expertise, diligence, and approachability (Mohd Radzi Abd Jabar, 1995). Their communication skills can improve knowledge absorption among participants, thereby contributing to the professional development of teachers. However, the aspects concerning training days, duration, and venue did not show any significant relationship with the enhancement of teachers' professionalism.

6.5 Implications for Human Resource Management

The government's efforts in formulating various policies to assist teachers in achieving national educational goals are commendable. Nevertheless, overlapping and frequently changing policies have caused uncertainty among teachers regarding their true objectives and directions. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education provide clear guidance to school administrators in communicating the intent and content of new policies through in-service training. This can minimise confusion and promote teacher professionalism.

Changes in educational policies and in-service training content require diverse expertise, knowledge, and delivery methods among course instructors. Hence, there is a need for a pool of trainers at different levels. This study recommends that the Ministry of Education Malaysia establish a pool of qualified teachers to serve as in-service training instructors. These teachers should receive specialised training to enhance their instructional skills, ensuring effective delivery of in-service training content.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The development and management of high-quality and professional teachers constitute a crucial component of human resource management, particularly in the area of training. The Ministry of Education has implemented various training programmes to

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cultivate professional and competent teachers in response to current educational needs and global developments. Such initiatives ensure that the aims of the National Education Philosophy are realised. Consequently, these efforts will help Malaysia progress as a peaceful, harmonious nation with citizens possessing a world-class mindset.

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