

## **Best Practices of Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools towards Realization of Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025 Malaysia**

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### **Abstract**

The study examines the best practices of promoting teacher professional development among principals of cluster secondary schools Malaysia. The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) formulated, modified and adapted by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Leithwood (1999), Latip (2006), Hatta (2010) and McCarley, Peters, & Decman (2016) was used as the data collection instrument through survey questionnaire. The researcher employed descriptive statistical procedures involving frequency count, percentage distribution, and, means to analyze the data collected. There were 871 respondents of different genders, ethnics, type of schools, and, position of responsibilities at schools were participated. The finding of the study indicated that the highest score in Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals and Teachers Perceptions was a statement ‘Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas on instruction or information from in-service activities’ which as high as 300 respondents (34.4%) selected ‘Always’, 340 respondents (39.0%) selected ‘Frequently’, 192 respondents (22.0%) selected ‘Rarely’, 30 respondents (3.4%) selected ‘Seldom’, and, only 9 respondents (1.0%) selected ‘Never’. It is hoped that this research would provide useful findings to effectively assist the process of promoting professional development enhancement among principals and teachers of all schools to improve students' academic performance in achieving the first class human capital who are compatibly excellent nationally and internationally as stipulated in the purpose of establishing the cluster schools by the Ministry of Education Malaysia and realization of Vision 2020 and the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 towards global excellence.

*Keywords: Principals developing teacher professionalism – Cluster Schools Malaysia*

### **Biography:**

The Presenter/Researcher is an Associate Professor at the Kulliyah of Education, International Islamic University Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur. He possessed BA Hons. (Malaya), MA Education (London), and, PhD. Education (Birmingham). His area of specialization and interest are Leadership & Educational Administration, History Education & Citizenship, and, Teacher Professionalism.

### **1.0 Introduction**

The Ministry of Education Malaysia announced the implementation of cluster secondary schools aim to develop and produce excellent students in the curriculum and co-curriculum. The schools comprises of the excellent performance and the non-performance. In the cluster schools, the achievement of the students is in the full power and authority of the principal especially through the effective instructional leadership practices. This system managed to achieve the objectives in developing and producing excellent students who are internationally competence and accepted to

pursue studies in the world prestigious universities. The Ministry of Education affirmed, the purpose of education in Malaysia is to enable Malaysian society to have a command of the knowledge, skills, and values necessary in a world that is highly competitive and globalised, arising from the impact of rapid development in science, technology, and information.

## **2.0 Literature Review:**

The following sections discuss the literature related to the roles of principal in promoting professional development of instructional leadership formulated, modified and adapted by Hallinger & Murphy (1985), Greenfield (1987), Doyke & Rice (2002), Latip (2006), Hatta (2010), and, Okorji, Igbokwe, & Ezeugbor (2016).

### **2.1 Role of Principal**

The studies of the principal's role in the 1970s were more concerned with the principal's role in supervising and administering the school. In the 1980s, the research conducted aimed to identify the role and the functions of principals from different perspectives i.e. to identify the principal's role as a leader, administrator, problem solver, executive leader, professional leader, and provider of resources (Hallinger & Heck, 1996) and Southworth (2002). In the 1990s, the studies became more focused on the principal's role as a school administrator and as an instructional leader (Latip, 2006).

The emphasis placed on the leadership role of the principal has changed dramatically during the past 30 years. Today's administrator in training must major in instructional leadership, learning how to fulfill essential management functions through skilful delegation and collaboration while excelling in creating a learning community (Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999), and, McEwan (2003).

Nowadays, the principal's roles are more complex because they are always linked with change. According to Fullan (2001), the principal's role is very complex because the change which will be applied is various and difficult. In this situation, the principal is required to be a professional leader who takes appropriate action. Southworth (2002) stated that an effective leader is one who is always in the school surroundings, focusing on teaching and learning processes, monitoring classrooms and giving feedback.

Mc Carley, Peters, & Decman (2016) perceived that the role of the principal, in models in the future, will be to encourage collaborative groupings of teachers to play a more central role in the instructional leadership of the school. This, however, will require the active participation of the principal to facilitate change by motivating the staff and students, by reaching out to the community, and by continually improving the school. The assumption inherent, here, is that effective leaders manage and lead (Tajasom and Zainal 2011).

Thus, there are many researchers who have found and documented the functions of instructional leadership in order to improve the quality of education within schools, professional development among teachers and excellence in student achievement.

### **2.2 Promoting Teacher Professional Development**

According to Fullan (2002), to ensure deeper learning, such as to encourage problem solving and thinking skills and to develop and nurture highly motivated and engaged learners, requires mobilizing the energy and capacities of teachers. Thus, leaders need to create a fundamental transformation in the learning culture of schools and of the teaching profession itself.

Southworth (2002) suggested that principals have several ways of supporting teachers' efforts to improve instruction. They can inform teachers of opportunities for staff development and lead in-service training activities. They can ensure that staff development activities are closely linked to school goals and that participation is either schoolwide or centred on natural groupings at primary or upper elementary grades. This function also involves helping teachers to integrate skills learned during staff development programmes and assisting in classroom implementation (Hallinger & Heck, 1996).

Promoting teachers' professional development is the most influential type of instructional leadership behaviour at both the elementary and high school levels. Supporting this statement, O'Malley, Voight, Renshaw, & Eklund (2015) noted that to be a successful instructional leader, the principal must give primary attention to the programme of staff improvement, which comprises leadership techniques and procedures designed to change the teachers' role performance. The principal's roles in this include: classroom visits, observation, conferences, seminars, and workshops, professional associations, in-service educational programmes etc.

The principal is expected to provide the appropriate leadership which will assist each staff member to make a maximum contribution to the schools' effort to provide quality and up-to-date education (Hoy & Hoy (2006). He/she is expected to have experience in this area because, according to Sergiovanni (1996), after all, knowledge about teaching and learning and the ability to share these insights with teachers is a key factor in the selection process of any good principal.

Chrisman (2005) and Olson (2005) stated that leaders in successful schools are more concerned and focused on teachers' professional development and teaching strategies to address areas in which student achievement is lagging behind. Thus, Willis (2002) emphasized three conditions for principals to help site-based professional development flourish over time: First, the need for a strong principal or a strong superintendent who supports the principal. Second, the need to focus on the end result. If you are trying to improve student learning, keep everything focused on student learning, and do not change practice so much, although practice will change. Third, the need to maintain a focus over time.

Freiberg (2002) stated that professional development for teachers should be built on a framework of research-based instructional strategies. These skills help teachers to bridge theory and practice and create high-quality learning environments in their classrooms. The strategies fall into three categories: organizing, instructing, and assessing. Organizing strategies include planning, lesson design, time use (time management, time on task, and pacing), advanced work, and classroom management. Instructional strategies exist on a continuum from most teacher-centred to most student-centred: including lecture, demonstration, questioning, discussion, guided practice, independent practice, grouping, role play, simulation, and reflective inquiry. Finally, assessing strategies include student assessment and self-assessment.

According to Stallworth (1998), through site-based professional development programmes, teachers will get (i) fresh teaching ideas and management strategies; (ii) samples of successful lesson plans, and time to practise them; (iii) time to share resources and personal stories (for validation and rejuvenation); (iv) time to read useful materials on issues that directly affect their teaching and learning, such as multiculturalism; (v) time to reflect; and (vi) opportunities to reinvent.

In addition, Willis (2002) noted also that through professional development, teachers can learn three things to expand their powers in the classroom. First, they learn how to analyze practice – both other teachers' practice and their own. By 'analyze', it is meant that they need to

think about the relationship between teaching and learning in a cause and effect kind of a way. So if a particular student is not learning, the teacher can generate a hypothesis that links back to the instruction. Second, teachers need to be exposed to alternatives. Third, teachers need judgment to know when to employ which method. That judgment is based on analysis and looking at alternative practices.

The effect of professional development, as mentioned by Meek (1998) and Allen, Grigsby & Peters (2015) consists of three things: First, teachers who had taken part in any professional development programme on cooperative learning were more likely than those who had not to report using small group instruction at least once a week. Second, professional development also paid off in teachers' use of technology in classrooms. Those who had participated in at least one formal professional development experience on the use of technology were more likely than others to report that they had used computers, video equipment, or other electronic technologies; calculators; or computers for writing. Third, teachers who had attended a professional development programme on student assessment were more likely to use portfolios than other teachers. Further, those who had taken part in professional development were more likely to include interdisciplinary problems and assessments than their counterparts who had not.

### **2.3 Education Development Plan Malaysia 2013-2025**

This prioritisation is driven both by the system's starting point as well as international evidence on the factors that make the most difference in improving student outcomes. Given the need to build the system's capacity and capability successively, the Ministry has sequenced the transformation to occur in three waves:

#### **Wave 1 (2013-2015): Turn around system by supporting teachers and focusing on core skills.**

The Ministry's focus during this phase will be on delivering a rapid turnaround programme. During this period, the focus will be on raising teaching quality by upskilling the existing pool of teachers, raising school leadership quality by improving how the education system appoints and trains principals, and improving student literacy (in both Bahasa Malaysia and English language) and numeracy through intensive remedial programmes. The Ministry will also strengthen and empower state and district offices to improve the quality of frontline support provided to all schools. By the end of Wave 1, the Ministry will ensure that all teachers, principals, and schools have achieved a minimum quality standard.

#### **Wave 2 (2016-2020): Accelerate system improvement.**

During the second wave, the Ministry will roll out structural changes aimed at accelerating the pace of change (Planning for all these initiatives will likely need to begin during Wave 1). These include moving all 410,000 teachers and 10,000 principals onto a new career package, restructuring the federal, state, and district offices to align with the revised roles laid out in Wave 1, and introducing a new secondary and revised primary curriculum that addresses concerns regarding the knowledge, skills, and values needed to thrive in today's global economy.

#### **Wave 3 (2021-2025): Move towards excellence with increased operational flexibility.**

By the start of the third wave, all schools, teachers, and principals should be performing well above the minimum standard. As such, the Ministry will focus on increasing operational flexibility to cultivate a peer-led culture of professional excellence. The Ministry will also move

most, if not all schools, onto a school-based management model, and scale up successful models of instructional innovation. The goal is to create a self-sustaining system that is capable of innovating and taking achievements to greater heights.

Every education system must be anchored to a set of aspirations that are closely tied to its particular national context. Although there are many different perspectives on what would make Malaysia's education system great, almost all stakeholders agree that Malaysia's education system must do much better if it is to live up to the ambitions of all Malaysians. All teachers should have the opportunity to attain an excellent education that is uniquely Malaysian and comparable to the best international systems.

Hence, it is worthwhile to study on the practices of Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools towards Realization of Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Malaysia (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012).

### **3.0 Research Questions**

The objectives of the study are to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What are the Best Practices of Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions?
2. What is the level of Implementation in Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions?
3. What is the significant of Best Practice of Developing Teacher Professionalism among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools towards Realization of Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Malaysia?

### **4.0 Research Methodology**

The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) modified by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Latip (2006), and, Hatta (2010) was used as the data collection instrument through survey questionnaire. Prior permission to conduct this study was obtained from the EPRD – Education, Planning, and, Research Division of the Ministry of Education Malaysia. The Cluster Secondary Schools involved in this study were National Secondary School (Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan – SMK), National Religious Secondary School (Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama – SMKA), Integrated Boarding School (Sekolah Berasrama Penuh Integrasi – SBPI), and, Full Boarding School (Sekolah Menengah Berasrama Penuh). They were 871 respondents of different genders, ethnicity, and, position of responsibilities at schools were participated. The data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 (Best & Kahn, 2003; Creswell, 2010).

#### **4.1 Scale of Practice and Implementation**

In this study, the practice of Promoting Teacher Professional Development by Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia are categorized into five levels: Mean 0.00 – 0.99 is Very Low, Mean 1.00 – 1.99 is Low, Mean 2.00 – 2.99 is Simple High, Mean 3.00 – 3.99 is High, Mean 4.00 – 5.00 is Very High. This category is in accordance with the category of responses as

Mean 0 – 0.99 is ‘Never’, Mean 1.00 – 1.99 is ‘Seldom’, Mean 2.00 – 2.99 is ‘Sometime’, Mean 3.00 – 3.99 is ‘Frequent’, Mean 4.00 – 5.00 is ‘Always’ (Hatta 2010; Creswell, 2010; Johnson & Christensen 2012).

## 5.0 Analysis of Data

### Research Question 1:

#### What are the Best Practices of Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals’ and Teachers’ Perceptions

Table 1 displayed in detail the frequency and percentage of responses for each task involved in the practice of **Promoting Teacher Professional Development** among principals of cluster secondary schools Malaysia according to the principals’ and teachers’ perceptions.

**Table 1:**  
**Practices of Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals’ and Teachers’ Perceptions (N = 871)**

No.	Items	Frequency/ Percentage				
		N	S	R	F	A
1.	Inform teachers of opportunities for professional development	22 (2.5)	108 (12.4)	214 (24.6)	333 (38.2)	194 (22.3)
2.	Select in-service activities that are consistent with the school's academic goals	8 (0.9)	32 (3.7)	208 (23.9)	336 (38.6)	287 (33.0)
3.	Support teacher requests for in-service training that is directly related to the school's academic goals	9 (1.0)	57 (6.5)	174 (20.0)	354 (40.6)	277 (31.8)
4.	Distribute journal articles to teachers on a regular basis	41 (4.7)	181 (20.8)	232 (26.6)	272 (31.2)	145 (16.6)
5.	Actively support the use of skills acquired during in-service training in the classroom	7 (0.8)	54 (6.2)	225 (25.8)	328 (37.7)	257 (29.5)
6.	Ensure that instructional aides receive appropriate training to help students meet instructional objectives	24 (2.8)	89 (10.2)	289 (33.2)	279 (32.0)	190 (21.8)
7.	Arrange for outside speakers to make presentations on instruction at faculty meetings	7 (0.8)	52 (6.0)	236 (27.1)	282 (32.4)	294 (33.8)
8.	Provide time to meet individually with teachers to discuss instructional issues	9 (1.0)	119 (13.7)	240 (27.6)	300 (34.4)	203 (23.3)

9.	Sit in on teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	12 (1.4)	42 (4.8)	232 (26.6)	358 (41.1)	227 (26.1)
10.	Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas on instruction or information from in-service activities	9 (1.0)	30 (3.4)	192 (22.0)	340 (39.0)	300 (34.4)

Key: N = Never; S = Seldom; R = Rarely; F = Frequently; A = Always

It was demonstrated on Table 1 that the highest score of responses for item 1 'Inform teachers of opportunities for professional development' was 'F-Frequently' with 333 or 38.2% respondents. It was followed by 'R-Rarely' 214 or 24.6% respondents, 'A-Always' 194 or 22.3% respondents, 'S-Seldom' 108 or 12.4% respondents, and, 'N-Never' 22 or 2.5% respondents of a total 871 respondents.

Table 1 presented, the highest score of responses for item 2 'Select in-service activities that are consistent with the school's academic goals' was 'F-Frequently' with 336 or 38.6% respondents. The following scores were 'A-Always' 287 or 33.0% respondents, 'R-Rarely' 208 or 23.9%, 'S-Seldom' 32 or 3.7% respondents, and, the lowest was 'N-Never' only 8 or 0.9% respondents.

As shown on Table 1, the highest score of responses for item 3 'Support teacher requests for in-service training that is directly related to the school's academic goals' was 'F-Frequently' 354 or 40.6% respondents, followed by 'Always' 277 or 31.8% respondents, 'R-Rarely' 174 or 20.0% respondents, 'S-Seldom' 57 or 6.5% respondents, and, the lowest 'Never' only 9 or 1.0% respondents.

Table 1 indicated that the highest score of responses for item 4 'Distribute journal articles to teachers on a regular basis' was 'F-Frequently' with 272 or 31.2% respondents. The next scores were 'R-Rarely' 232 or 26.6% respondents, 'A-Always' 145 or 16.6% respondents, 'S-Seldom' 181 or 20.8% respondents, and, finally, 'N-Never' 41 or 4.7% respondents.

Table 1 presented that the highest score of responses for item 5 'Actively support the use of skills acquired during in-service training in the classroom' was 'F-Frequently' 328 or 37.7% respondents, 'Always' 257 or 29.5% respondents, 'R-Rarely' 225 or 25.8% respondents, 'S-Seldom' 54 or 6.2% respondents, and, 'N-Never' only 7 or 0.8% respondents.

Table 1 demonstrated, the highest score of responses for item 6 'Ensure that instructional aides receive appropriate training to help students meet instructional objectives', was 'R-Rarely' 289 or 33.2% respondents, followed by 'F-Frequently' 279 or 32.0% respondents, 'A-Always' 190 or 21.8% respondents, 'S-Seldom' 89 or 10.2% respondents, and, 'N-Never' 24 or 2.8% respondents.

Interestingly, as shown on Table 1, the highest score of responses for item 7 'Arrange for outside speakers to make presentations on instruction at faculty meetings' was 'A-Always' with 294 or 33.8% respondents. It was followed by 'F-Frequently' 282 or 32.4% respondents, 'R-Rarely' 236 or 27.1% respondents, 'S-Seldom' 52 or 6.0% respondents, and, the lowest 'N-Never' only 7 or 0.8% respondents.

As presented on Table 1, the highest score of responses for item 8 'Provide time to meet individually with teachers to discuss instructional issues' was 'F-Frequently' with 300 or 34.4% respondents, followed by 'R-Rarely' 240 or 27.6% respondents, 'A-Always' 203 or 23.3%

respondents, 'S-Seldom' 119 or 13.7% respondents, and, the lowest 'N-Never' with only 9 or 1.0% respondents.

Table 1 demonstrated that the highest score of responses for item 9 'Sit in on teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction' was 'F-Frequently' with 358 or 41.1% respondents. The following scores were 'R-Rarely' 232 or 26.6% respondents, 'A-Always' 227 or 26.1% respondents, 'S-Seldom' 42 or 4.8% respondents, and, the least 'Never' only 12 or 1.4% respondents.

Finally, Table 1 presented that the highest score of responses for item 10 'Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas on instruction or information from in-service activities' was 'F-Frequently' with 340 or 39.0% respondents. It was followed by 'A-Always' 300 or 34.4% respondents, 'R-Rarely' 192 or 22.0% respondents, 'S-Seldom' 30 or 3.4% respondents, and, the least 'Never' only 9 or 1.0% respondents.

### Research Question 2:

#### What is the Best Level of Implementation in Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions

Table 2 described in detail the mean, standard deviation, rank, and, level of implementation of each task involved in the practice of **Promoting Professional Development** among principals of cluster secondary schools Malaysia according to the principals' and teachers' perceptions.

**Table 2:**  
**Level of Implementation in Promoting Teacher Professional Development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions**  
(N = 871)

No.	Items	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Level of Implementation
1.	Inform teachers of opportunities for professional development	3.65	1.036	8	High
2.	Select in-service activities that are consistent with the school's academic goals	4.00	.898	2	Very High
3.	Support teacher requests for in-service training that is directly related to the school's academic goals	3.96	.934	3	High
4.	Distribute journal articles to teachers on a regular basis	3.34	1.122	10	High
5.	Actively support the use of skills acquired during in-service training in the classroom	3.89	.929	5	High
6.	Ensure that instructional aides receive appropriate training to help students meet instructional objectives	3.60	1.023	9	High
7.	Arrange for outside speakers to make	3.92	.956		High



	presentations on instruction at faculty meetings			4	
8.	Provide time to meet individually with teachers to discuss instructional issues	3.65	1.014	7	High
9.	Sit in on teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction	3.86	.908	6	High
10.	Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas on instruction or information from in-service activities	4.02	.892	1	Very High
<b>Total</b>		<b>3.788</b>	<b>0.971</b>		<b>High</b>

*\* Implementation:*

*Very Low = 1.00-1.99; Low 2.00–2.99; High = 3.00-3.99; Very High = 4.00- 5.00.*

It is interesting to observe that all items for promoting teacher professional development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals and Teachers Perceptions were at 'High' level of implementation and only one item at 'Very High' level.

This was indicated on Table 2 that the highest score for promoting professional development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals and Teachers Perceptions was abstracted from statement 10 'Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas on instruction or information from in-service activities' at 'Very High' level of implementation which rank Number One with mean 4.02 and a standard deviation 0.892.

The second highest score was statement 2 'Select in-service activities that are consistent with the school's academic goals' mean 4.00 and standard deviation 0.898 at 'Very High' level of implementation. The third highest was statement 3 'Support teacher requests for in-service training that is directly related to the school's academic goals' mean 3.96 and Standard Deviation 0.934 at 'High' level of implementation.

Consecutively, the fourth highest score was statement 7 'Arrange for outside speakers to make presentations on instruction at faculty meetings', the fifth highest score was statement 5 'Actively support the use of skills acquired during in-service training in the classroom', the sixth highest score was statement 9 'Sit in on teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction', and, the seventh highest score was statement 8 'Provide time to meet individually with teachers to discuss instructional issues'.

On the other hand, Table 2 determined that the third lowest score was statement 1 'Inform teachers of opportunities for professional development', followed by, statement 6 'Ensure that instructional aides receive appropriate training to help students meet instructional objectives'.

Finally, Table 2 indicated that the lowest score for promoting teacher professional development among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals and Teachers Perceptions was statement 4 'Distribute journal articles to teachers on a regular basis'. The average mean in level of implementation was 3.788 and standard deviation 0.971.

### **Research Question 3:**

**What is the significant of Best Practice of Developing Teacher Professionalism among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools towards Realization of Education Blueprint 2013-2025 Malaysia?**

The study indicated that the best practice of Developing Teacher Professionalism among Principals of Cluster Secondary Schools Malaysia according to Principals' and Teachers' Perceptions was statement 10 'Set aside time at faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas on instruction or information from in-service activities'. The 'Very High' practiced of this statement is greatly significant to the realization of 'System Aspiration' stipulated in the Education Blueprint 2013 – 2025. There are five outcomes that the Blueprint aspires to for the Malaysian education system as a whole namely access, quality, equity, unity, and efficiency (Education Blueprint, Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012). The Ministry recognises that teachers may need assistance in meeting the new competencies expected of them, and is deeply committed to providing teachers with the support they need to succeed. As such, the Ministry will build up its portfolio of training programmes to address each aspect of the competency requirements in the new instrument. Some of these modules will cover fundamental competencies expected of all teachers, such as pedagogy to support development of students' higher-order thinking, and will therefore be made compulsory. Others will be electives that teachers can choose from depending on their personal strengths and interests, or the areas for development identified via the new instrument. In developing this portfolio, the Ministry will focus more on school-based learning programmes which international research shows to be the most effective form of professional development (Education Blueprint, Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012).

In fact, this statement is in accordance with the second highest practiced of the principals on statement 2 'Select in-service activities that are consistent with the school's academic goals' with 'Very High' potential to achieve the aspiration of Education Blueprint 2013-2025. This is closely congruent to the Blueprint 'equity' aspiration of 'Top-performing school systems deliver the best possible education for every child, regardless of geography, gender, or socioeconomic background. The Ministry aspires to halve the current urban-rural, socio-economic, and gender achievement gaps by 2020 (Education Blueprint , Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012). It is the practiced of cluster secondary schools in Malaysia to offer place of study to students from various socio-economic background as long as they performed in academic through public examination conducted by the Ministry of Education Malaysia.

Third highest principals' practiced was statement 3 'Support teacher requests for in-service training that is directly related to the school's academic goals' that is significant to realize the Blueprint 'quality teacher' towards aspiration of **'Enhanced teacher coaching and support to** improve delivery of knowledge, skills, and values across all academic and non-academic aspects of curriculum (Education Blueprint, Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012). This is one of the prominent goals of cluster secondary schools to possess skillful expert teachers to produce students who are competent nationally and internationally especially in academic performance.

The Ministry of Education stressed, all students will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education that is uniquely Malaysian and comparable to high-performing education systems. This will require that Malaysia's education system embark upon a path of improvement that will move it rapidly towards great performance, as benchmarked against other countries by international standards. This includes standards for disciplines such as Mathematics, Science, and English language, and for higher-order thinking skills such as reasoning, applying, and problem-solving.

The fourth highest practiced of principals was on statement 7 'Arrange for outside speakers to make presentations on instruction at schools or staff meetings' of 'High' mean achievement. The principals should invite versatile and authentic speakers particularly officers from the Ministry of Education and State Department of Education. This is stated in the

Blueprint that ‘The Ministry will also strengthen and empower state and district offices to improve the quality of frontline support provided to all schools. By the end of Wave 1 (2013-2015), the Ministry will ensure that all teachers, principals, and schools have achieved a minimum quality standard. The program of inviting authentic speakers was to raise awareness and deliver appropriate information to teachers on the Blueprint statement ‘The Ministry will build on existing delivery capabilities to install an Education Delivery Unit (EDU) tasked with driving Blueprint delivery. Specifically, the EDU will monitor progress, problem solve implementation issues with the responsible officers, and manage communication with stakeholders with regard to the transformation. The EDU will draw from both the public and private sector to secure the best talent available.

Table 2 indicated that the fifth highest practiced of principals was on statement ‘Actively support the use of skills acquired during in-service training in the classroom’ with a ‘High’ mean score. This is in accordance with the statement in the Blueprint, ‘During this period, the focus will be on raising teaching quality by upskilling the existing pool of teachers, raising school leadership quality by improving how the education system appoints and trains principals, and improving student literacy (in both Bahasa Malaysia and English language) and numeracy through intensive remedial programmes’ (Education Blueprint, Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012). It is well-noted that the pre-service training and ongoing professional development given the age profile of the teaching force and ongoing challenges in attracting sufficient qualified candidates, training is a particularly important mechanism for improving the quality of teachers. Preservice training gives teachers a solid foundation towards making effective contributions in the classroom from day one. Ongoing professional development allows teachers to maintain and enhance their skill set, including staying up-to-date with the latest developments in pedagogy.

It was demonstrated on Table 2 that the sixth and seventh highest principal practiced were on statement ‘Sit in on teacher in-service activities concerned with instruction’ and ‘Provide time to meet individually with teachers to discuss instructional issues’ respectively. Both statements are significantly related to the teachers’ competency in teaching skills. In fact, this is the concern of the Ministry of Education stated in the Blueprint that successful school reforms go beyond programme design to dramatically improve the effectiveness and efficiency of teachers performance. As such, the Ministry will establish a performance management system that sets high expectations of individual teachers through clear KPIs. This system will invest in capability building to help individuals teachers achieve their targets, reward strong performance, and address poor performance without creating a culture of blame. The Ministry will also publish performance results annually so that the public can track progress on the Blueprint. programmes’ (Education Blueprint , Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012).

The principals need to monitor teachers’ instructional activities at schools and promptly solve any problem arises and follow by appropriate action. The Ministry, JPNs, PPDs, principals, and teachers will conduct regular performance dialogues to ensure that schools, districts, and states are on track to achieve their targets. The performance dialogues are characterised by the use of granular performance data to identify both strengths and weaknesses, followed by immediate revisions to the implementation plan to ensure issues are solved. These performance dialogues are expected to be held at least twice a year (Education Blueprint, Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012)

The eighth highest practiced was statement ‘Inform teachers of opportunities for professional development’ with ‘High’ mean. There was a great possibility that the principal of cluster secondary school conducted various ongoing professional development for teachers. The

Ministry affirmed that the results from Malaysia's participation in the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) suggest that participation in professional development activities has been very good. Over 90% of teachers report that they spend approximately 10 days each year on professional development, which is more than the Ministry-mandated requirement of seven days per year. This training spans the spectrum of self-study and off-site workshops to school-based coaching activities such as classroom observations and lesson planning. These findings demonstrate that Malaysian teachers are strongly committed to self improvement. programmes' (Education Blueprint , Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012).

In fact, the Ministry recognises that teachers may need assistance in meeting the new competencies expected of them, and is deeply committed to providing teachers with the support they need to succeed. As such, the Ministry will build up its portfolio of training programmes to address each aspect of the competency requirements in the new instrument. Some of these modules will cover fundamental competencies expected of all teachers, such as pedagogy to support development of students' higher-order thinking, and will therefore be made compulsory. Others will be electives that teachers can choose from depending on their personal strengths and interests, or the areas for development identified via the new instrument. In developing this portfolio, the Ministry will focus more on school-based learning programmes which international research shows to be the most effective form of professional development.

The ninth highest practice was statement 'Ensure that instructional aides receive appropriate training to help students meet instructional objectives' with a 'High' mean. In relation to the intensify support for teachers and providing support where it is most needed, the Ministry of Education indicated that among the good practices noted was the provision of extra support to new teachers, for example through the shared teaching of classes with more experienced teachers, the creation of a timetabled slot each week for teachers to spend in lesson-planning workshops, and the assigning of mentors from the pool of more experienced teachers to provide on-going coaching and feedback. Good schools also tend to have increased the lesson observations requirement beyond the minimum prescription of twice a year.

PPDs will build off centrally-administered policy to develop interventions targeted to the specific contexts of schools. JPNs will provide the necessary resources and support for the execution of these initiatives. An example of an issue that benefits from the additional flexibility is student attendance. Student attendance tends to have a broad range of root causes that are often context-specific. For example, poor access, parental attitudes, or an unattractive school environment may be reducing school attendance. The strategy employed has to vary with the root cause in order to be effective—a transport solution where access is poor, home visits by teachers to parents who do not understand the importance of schooling, and maintaining a beautiful school compound to increase physical attractiveness schools. In these situations, the PPDs are best positioned to determine the best course of action, and should have the freedom and resources to do so. It is clearly stated in Wave 3 (2021 to 2025), creating a peer-led culture of professional excellence. By 2021, all elements of the new Principal Career Package are expected to be in place. The Ministry also expects that there will be high-performing principals and supporting school leaders in every school, who have the leadership skills to drive ongoing improvement and innovation.

The tenth highest practiced was on statement 'Distribute journal articles to teachers on a regular basis' with a 'High' mean score. Teachers should always be informed and updated with contemporary issues and challenges related to national and international education scenario. One of the current development was the 'aspiration for Malaysia to be in the top third of countries in

terms of performance in international assessments as measured by outcomes in TIMSS and PISA within 15 years. Additional assessments that address other dimensions of quality that are relevant to the Malaysian context may be included as they are developed and become accepted international standards. Achieving this goal will require enormous commitment from the entire nation. In the past decade, very few school systems have managed to make such a step-change in performance. However, several of the world's top-performing school systems, such as Singapore and South Korea, have demonstrated that it is possible for a system to go from poor to great performance within a few decades' (Education Blueprint , Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012).

The principal required appropriate leadership skills to work effectively and lead others, especially in our increasingly inter-connected world. In the National Dialogue organized by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, the importance of instilling leadership and the ability to work effectively in teams for every student was consistently raised. The education system seeks to help every student reach their full potential by taking on leadership roles, and by working in groups. In the context of the education system, leadership comprises four elements, first, **Entrepreneurship**: taking the initiative to create and develop one's own solutions, the willingness to invest one's own resources in doing so, and the drive to see these through to their realisation; second, **Resilience**: developing a mindset that is both constructive and able to withstand setbacks; third, **Emotional intelligence**: possessing the ability to understand and work effectively with others and to influence them positively; and , fourth, **Strong communication skills**: possessing the ability to clearly express one's opinions and intentions in oral and written form. Schools will need to make use of the opportunities provided inside the classroom through project-based and group work, and outside of the classroom through sports, the arts, and co-curricular activities to build the character of their students. Similarly, all teachers should have the opportunity to attain an excellent opportunities that is uniquely Malaysian and comparable to the best international systems.

## 6.0 Conclusion

The Ministry admitted, transforming the teaching profession into a profession of choice. The Ministry remains committed to its long-standing policy of strengthening the teaching profession to make it a vibrant, rewarding, and prestigious profession in Malaysia. Drawing on the successes of previous efforts, and preliminary engagements with teachers and teacher unions, the Ministry proposes rolling out a new Teacher Career Package in waves. This Career Package will address challenges currently faced by teachers at each point in a teacher's career, from recruitment and teacher training through to retirement. It encompasses raising entry standards, increasing individualized continuous professional development opportunities, enabling teacher progression by competencies and performance, and creating a peer-led culture of excellence.

The Ministry is at the starting point of its journey to develop an education system capable of producing Malaysians who will be competitive in a globalised, 21st century world. This requires a reconsideration of what student learning means, and a rearticulation of the kinds of skills that the Malaysian education system wants to inculcate in its students. In order to truly transform student learning, change needs to happen at all levels—the Ministry, states, districts, schools, principals, and teachers.

It is hoped that this study provides useful findings which will effectively assist the process of promoting a positive school learning climate among principals and teachers of secondary schools in Malaysia. Consequently, facilitate and improve students' academic

Seminar Kebangsaan Amalan Terbaik Pendidikan 2017. Anjuran: Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah Hilir Perak and Bagan Datuk. Grand Court Hotel Teluk Intan Perak. Date: 2 December 2017.

performance in achieving the first class human capital compatibly excellent nationally and internationally as stipulated in National Philosophy of Education, Vision 2020 and aspiration of the Malaysia Education Development Plan 2013-2025.

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