

Professional Learning Community, Trust, and Teacher Professional Development in Malaysian Secondary Schools (Komuniti Pembelajaran Profesional, Kepercayaan, dan Perkembangan Profesional Guru di Sekolah Menengah di Malaysia)

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ABSTRACT

The professional learning community (PLC) has been shown to nurture a dynamic and positive school culture, where teachers are encouraged to enhance their professional skills and knowledge. This study aimed to identify the levels of PLC, Teacher Professional Development (TPD), and trust among secondary school teachers in Malaysia, as well as determined the relationship between PLC and TPD, PLC and trust, and trust and TPD. Questionnaires were distributed to 272 teachers who were selected using stratified random sampling. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Findings show that teachers practice high level of all domains of PLC. The teachers also perceived that they practice high levels of TPD and trust. In addition, there are significant, positive, and weak correlations between all domains of PLC and TPD, as well as TPD and trust. However, there are significant, positive, and strong correlation between all domains of PLC and trust. In conclusion, PLC practices is related to trustful culture in school as well as good professional development among the teachers. The findings implicate that PLC should be encouraged in all teaching institutions to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, as well as the teaching and learning experience for all teachers and students.

Key Words: Professional learning community; trust; teachers professional development; community of practice

ABSTRAK

Komuniti pembelajaran profesional (PLC) telah ditunjukkan untuk memupuk budaya sekolah yang dinamik dan positif, di mana para guru digalakkan untuk meningkatkan kemahiran dan pengetahuan profesional mereka. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti tahap PLC, Pengembangan Profesional Guru (TPD), dan kepercayaan di kalangan guru sekolah menengah di Malaysia, serta menentukan hubungan antara PLC dan TPD, PLC dan kepercayaan, dan kepercayaan dan TPD. Soal selidik diedarkan kepada 272 guru yang dipilih menggunakan persampelan rawak berstrata. Statistik deskriptif dan inferensi digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa guru mempraktikkan tahap tinggi dari semua domain PLC. Para guru juga merasakan bahawa mereka mengamalkan TPD dan kepercayaan yang tinggi. Di samping itu, terdapat korelasi yang signifikan, positif, dan lemah antara semua domain PLC dan TPD, serta TPD dan kepercayaan. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat hubungan yang signifikan, positif, dan kuat antara semua domain PLC dan kepercayaan. Kesimpulannya, amalan PLC berkaitan dengan budaya amanah di sekolah dan juga perkembangan profesional yang baik di kalangan guru. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa PLC harus didorong di semua institusi pengajaran untuk meningkatkan kualiti pengajaran dan pembelajaran, serta pengalaman pengajaran dan pembelajaran untuk semua guru dan pelajar.

Kata Kunci: Komuniti pembelajaran profesional; kepercayaan; pengembangan profesional guru; komuniti amalan

INTRODUCTION

Teachers are the main actors who will not only influence student performance but will also prepare students for active roles in the knowledge-based economy. Hence, teacher quality is a significant factor in a good education system (Asia Society 2012). To

meet the challenges of the 21st century, teachers are required to upgrade their skills and knowledge continuously in a rapidly changing world (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development 2011). Research strongly supported the concept of developing schools as professional learning community (PLC), as an effective and systematic way to improve teacher

learning capability and practices and improve student learning outcomes (Botha 2012; Lee et al. 2011; Stoll et al. 2006). During the last two decades, literature related to education mentioned PLC as an important and effective approach for improving teacher quality and student learning (Hord, 1997). In addition, collaborative culture and joint responsibility were encouraged by PLC, which emphasises more on learning through encouraging a collaborative culture and joint responsibility among teachers. It emphasises more on teacher learning through 'period and/or subject group meetings' to evaluate impact on teaching practices (Botha 2012).

Educational reformers and planners have quite early recognised that high quality teachers will lead to high performing schools. Hence, teachers are equipped with professional development opportunities in the form of one-off workshops, seminars, conferences, and motivating speakers (Moore & Shaw 2000) in which the teachers listen to experts passively (Clarke & Hollingsworth 2002). Unfortunately, these professional development modalities do not meet the broad, distinct, and complex needs of teachers since they are narrower oriented (Curry & Killion 2009; Guskey & Sparks 1991; Opfer & Pedder 2011).

Research indicates that conventional forms of teacher professional development (one-off workshops, seminars, etc.) do not produce any significant effects on teachers' professional skills and knowledge (Hudson et al. 2012; Kabilan, Adlina, & Embi 2011). These traditional professional development opportunities have existed in Malaysia to develop quality of teacher skills and knowledge. These programmes have some similarities with PLC in terms of encouraging learning among organisational members. However, they are mostly based on one-way courses or workshops having little connection to instructional goals of the school community (Cerbin & Kopp 2006; Stewart 2011). Many criticisms such as unclear objectives, lack of satisfying teachers' needs and demands, lack of post-programme follow up and lack of professional development model were raised by experts on these programmes (Senin 2008). Courses and training are the most popular traditional methods in Malaysia, which followed the top-down approach and were based on one way communication which provide little opportunity for follow-up in the context of the participants' workplace (Moore & Shaw 2000). Curry and Killion (2009) and Huffman (2011) in their research on teachers' attitudes and pedagogical practices revealed that such professional development did not bring much positive changes in the classroom. Kabilan and Veratharaju (2013) showed that professional development programmes in Malaysia are planned and conducted in a centralised way (cascade type). Hence, teachers were not satisfied with the

professional development designed for them (Park & So 2014).

Many scholars regarded quality professional development (PD) as vital in enhancing teachers' teaching and students' learning outcome (Darling-Hammond et al. 2009; Kennedy 2016; Van den Bergh et al. 2014). Additionally, PD effects include high morale, job satisfaction, and reduced absenteeism among its members (Harris & Jones 2010), improves school reform (Zheng et al. 2016; Wang 2015; Harrsi & Jones 2010), develops student performance (Zheng et al. 2016), and may even inhibit teacher turnover (Wood 2002). However, researchers believed that knowledge and skills for teachers' professional development (TPD) should be sustained, extensive, on-going, shared, and must be conducted in classroom practices (Desimone 2009; Webster-Wright 2009; Van et al. 2014).

Previous studies conducted on PLC in the context of Malaysia had focused more on the domains of PLC (Abdullah & Ghani 2013; Abdullah & Ghani 2014; Ismail et al. 2014; Khalid et al. 2014; Mansor & Baharom 2014; Norwani et al. 2014; Saad et al. 2017; Yaakob & Yunus 2016). However, a few of these studies had focused on levels of PLC but none of them studied the levels and correlation of PLC, TPD and trust (Abdullah & Ghani 2014; Ismail et al. 2014). The current study focuses on three variables namely professional learning community (PLC), teachers' professional development (TPD), and trust to determine the levels and correlation among these variables in the context of Malaysia. Therefore, this study aimed at examining the levels of PLC, TPD and levels of trust and relationship between PLC and TPD, PLC and trust, and trust and TPD. Hence, the following objectives are developed for this study:

1. To assess the level of PLC practices among secondary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia.
2. To assess the levels of trust among secondary school teachers in Peninsula Malaysia.
3. To assess the level of TPD practices among secondary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia.
4. To analyse the relationship between PLC and TPD among secondary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia
5. To analyse the relationship between PLC and trust among secondary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia
6. To analyse the relationship between trust and TPD among secondary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia

The hypotheses for this study are:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between PLC and TPD levels

- H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between PLC and trust levels
- H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between trust and TPD levels

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Two theoretical models namely Situated Learning Theory (SLT) (Lave & Wenger 1991) and Social Development Theory (SDT) (Vygotsky 1978) are the basis for the current study. Lave and Wenger's (1991) community of practice (COP) model, and SLT is based on sociocultural beliefs about individual learning (Gallucci 2008), which gives the opportunity to understand how teachers' experiences are recognised while taking part in PLC. In SLT, learning takes place in social relationships at the workplace rather than in a classroom setting through individuals' engagement, the environment and constructive activities that contribute to knowledge building (Lave & Wenger 1991). In other words, learning occurs among teachers when they are engaged in different activities, settings and situations. So social interaction and collaboration are essential tools in SLT, through which knowledge is transmitted across the COP (Anfara et al. 2012). Numerous terms are used in literature for COP. These include community of learners, professional community and professional learning community (Stoll et al. 2006), community of inquiry (Garrison et al. 2000), instructional coaching (Knight 2007), inquiry community (Levine 2010) professional learning community (PLC) (Hord 1997; Stoll et al. 2007), teacher learning community

(McLaughlin & Talbert 2001) and problem-solving team (Gregory 2010). Regardless of the different terms applied, the common goal of the "community" model is to promote collaboration among teachers that will encourage collaborative professional culture (Stoll et al. 2006).

The Vygotsky (1978) theory of social development proposes that learning is an active and social process that takes place in a discrete context in social contacts; through exchange of ideas, individuals build new concepts and meanings by adopting new approaches and knowledge (Gallucci 2008; Lave & Wenger 1991). Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning experience is transformed through social interaction. Through collaboration, teachers attain knowledge from their colleagues. For example, in the PLC, teachers collaborate with their colleagues to improve not only their own learning but also the skills and knowledge of their colleagues. In PLC, collaborative environment is embedded in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development and the concept of the more knowledgeable other. In PLC teachers meet regularly with their peers to share their ideas and expertise, assist their classmates in learning and improve their mutual powers to cultivate more innovative and effective lessons (Darling-Hammond & Richardson 2009; Louis et al. 1996). In the PLC, expert teachers regularly guide less able teachers in order to make them more effective (DuFour, 2007; Heineke, 2013). Similarly, deep learning is stimulated among educators through collaborative and interrelated culture in the PLC (DuFour 2004; Hipp et al. 2008).

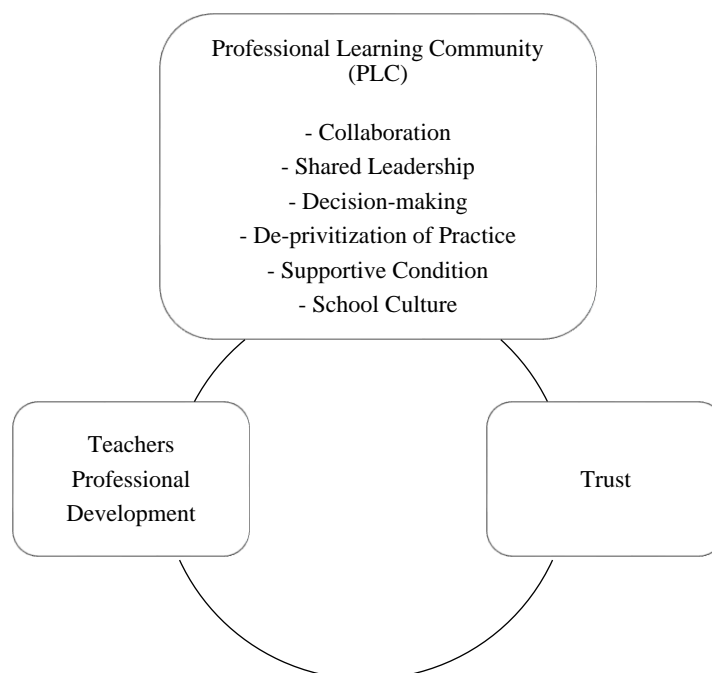


FIGURE 1. Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of this study that clarified the relationship of PLC, TPD and trust among secondary school teachers. Figure 1 presented that the exogenous variable focused on 6 dimensions of PLC and trust. The endogenous variable focused on TPD. According to the above discussion and conceptual framework, this study aimed at assessing the levels and relationships between PLC, trust and TPD in secondary schools in Malaysia.

DIMENSIONS OF PLC AND TPD

This study focused on six domains of PLC that will determine levels of teacher professional development (TPD) among secondary schoolteachers in Malaysia. These six domains of PLC are: i) collaboration, ii) shared leadership, iii) teachers' school decision, iv) teachers' de-privatization of practice, v) supportive conditions, and vi) school culture. These domains have been taken from previous studies such as Hord (1997), DuFour and Eaker (1998), Hipp and Huffman (2010), Harris and Jones (2010), and Pang et al. (2016) who did research on PLC in their respective contexts. Hence, this study focused on levels of PLC to determine whether it enhanced TPD in secondary schools in Malaysia.

Many learning organisations and research scholars reflect collaboration as one of the most valuable method practiced (Day 1999; Stoll & Louis 2007). Collaboration is the most effective and powerful learning method used for teacher professional development in PLC (Sjoer & Meirink 2016), and acts as a positive condition for teacher learning (Meirink et al. 2010). In the collaborative way of learning, teachers do not only work together to cultivate effective instructional practices but also show deep ability to improve their practices and their partners' practices (Harris 2011). Previous studies indicate that teachers in collaboration with their co-workers will not only improve their own practices but will also assist their students' learning. Similarly, literature indicated that shared leadership nurtured teacher leaders, building relationship, and build up a network that nurtures learning and innovation among teachers. Positive impact on teachers' attitude and relationship were observed by scholars (Bergman et al. 2012; Hoch & Dulebohn 2013), and exchange of positive social relationship led to improved teacher performance which led to observed high level of insight (Aime et al. 2014).

Shared leadership includes stakeholder involvement in school decision-making process, which promotes teamwork, building up collaborative culture to improve school achievement (Jones et al. 2015; Park & Ham 2014). A shared leadership management style brings many benefits to community members such as

positive impact on group members' attitudes (Hoch & Dulebohn 2013), relationship (Bergman et al. 2012), high morale (Bergman et al. 2012), job satisfaction (Shoqair 2011), job performance (Alanezi 2016), self-confidence (Mehmadi 2015), effective participation, support and organisational commitment, efficient relationship between leaders and staff, and reduced intense confrontation among staff, reduced workload and degree of emotional, physical, mental exhaustion caused by stress (Robert & You 2013). Shared leadership cultivates teacher leaders, builds relationship, and develops network that give opportunities for teacher development, learning and innovation (Fullan 2001), and extend teachers' leadership abilities (DeMahews 2015).

Many terms such as participatory, shared, collaborative decision-making, employee involvement, staff involvement, job engagement, delegation of power was used interchangeably in previous literature (Shaed et al. 2015). Teachers' participation in school is defined as sharing the decision-making process in order to attain administrative aims (Knoop 1995). When teachers engage in school decision-making, they feel a sense of belonging (Saha & Kumar 2017), build commitment to the organisation (Kumar & Giri 2013; Lashway 1996; Lin 2014; Thornburg & Mungai 2011), enhance their motivation (Lin 2014), decrease uncertainty, confrontation and loneliness (Mehta 2015), enhance commitment and contentedness with their job (Harris 2004; Mehta 2015; Scott-Ladd et al. 2006; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis 2013), encourage staff morale and teamwork (Lashway 1996), promote rewards, employee appreciation and work practices (Scott-Ladd et al. 2006) increase motivation and considerably improve decision quality (Saha & Kumar 2017; Sarafidou & Chatziioannidis 2013).

Literature indicates that classroom observation is the most progressive method used for teachers' assessment and provide an effective insight compared to other assessment methods (Zaare 2012). Peer observation, lesson study and open lessons are the common practices used in shared personal practice in PLC (Lindahl 2011). The basic idea of shared practice is to cultivate collaborative connection among educators (Louis et al. 1996), where teachers meet and observe one another to assist in student achievement, to enhance teachers' capability, and provide encouraging feedback on pedagogical practices (Hipp & Huffman 2010). The TALIS report (2008) showed that de-privatization of practices is one of the most important factors in PLC, where it motivates teachers to observe other teachers' classes and to share their feedback.

Song and Choi (2010, p. 189) indicated that supportive conditions refer to the working condition at school that allow teachers to collaborate. Chen et al.

(2016) claimed that supportive conditions in schools are an important factor related to furnished facilities, administrative partnership, and access to resources for staff to utilise organised time and facilities to improve teacher pedagogical practices (pp. 252-253). Research on PLC showed that for PLC initiation and growth, supportive conditions and resources are substantial (Chen et al. 2016). For example, Kruse and Louise (1995) suggested that frequent meetings, conducive planning for communication, physical proximity for non-formal sharing and discussion, integration of new staff, teacher empowerment and access to expertise are supporting structures in school for teachers. Hipp and Huffman (2010) categorised supportive conditions into two types, namely relationship and structure. They argued further that respect, trust, norms of critical inquiry and improvement and positive caring relationships among school community are under relationship, while systems (i.e., communication and technology) and resources (i.e., personnel, facilities, time, fiscal and materials) are under structure, which enable staff to meet and examine practices and students learning outcome (p. 13).

According to Terzi (2016), a trustful culture in an organisation requires employees' relationship, trustful leadership, sharing and adopting values, goals, and productive administrative environment (Terzi 2016). In a positive environment, teachers enjoy commitment, professional consensus, involvement in decision-making, effective communication, and teachers support that nurture TPD (Demir 2015). Literature shows a supportive culture builds connection between teachers in the organisation. An organisational goals and achievement of employees' tasks are intended vital points in a supportive culture, and trust is of utmost importance in school. School culture is considered as a link or barrier to reform (Faiz et al. 2016). In any reform scheme, school culture is a vital factor to be recognised (Terzi 2016), a part of the creative process and reform in school (Dalin & Rolff 1993). A positive school culture encourages practice of significant staff development and student learning (Engels et al. 2008). Further, it promotes development and welfare of teaching staff in school, teaching and learning objectives and generates a healthy continuous development in school (Fullan 2001). This shows that the six domains of PLC are crucial for teachers' skills, knowledge and students' learning outcomes, because these encourage them to share their ideas and involve them in school decisions.

TRUST

Many works in the literature support trust as an effective social initiative in school that encourages reflective dialogue, shared practices and collaboration,

which are domains of PLC (Bryk et al. 1999). For a strong and viable PLC, trust is considered as the heart of PLC (Hargreaves 2007). Cosner (2011) argued that when trust exists, staff communicate and cooperate and take risks for the desired objectives. Therefore, staffs shared constructive information among themselves in the school community, resulting in building pedagogical skills and knowledge which is essential for pupils learning outcome (Louis 2006).

Trust is an essential element in school culture that lowers doubt, builds up teamwork and reliance among staff, which strengthen the school's potential to establish a professional learning community (Lleo et al. 2017; Van Maele & Van Houtte 2011). A trustful relation between peers and managers will encourage staff to achieve common aims planned by the organisation, make them more energetic and dedicated to their profession. For organisational operations, trust works as a binder (Scott-Ladd et al. 2006) bringing sustained peace of mind among staff in the school community (Appelbaum et al. 2013). Studies revealed that in a trustworthy environment, staff work together, share their ideas, observe and give constructive comments when they found their friends sincere and honest. Hence, schools having trustful environment will encourage more interactive tasks among their staff. Therefore, creation of trust for educators is very significant (Zheng et al. 2016).

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN AND SAMPLING

This research is a quantitative research that used the cross-sectional survey design. Quantitative research is based on numerical data which are objective and exist independently without researcher influence (Denscombe 2010). Cross-sectional survey is a research design that studies a characteristic of a population at a particular point in time (Connelly 2016).

The population of this study includes a total of 272 teachers in secondary schools in West Malaysia, which includes Pahang, Selangor, Penang and Johor. In order to determine the sample size, the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table was considered. The table showed a sample size of 300 teachers out a total of 3872 teachers. According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2015), secondary schools are divided into rural and urban schools. Hence, to find the exact results, secondary schools in Selangor, Pahang, Penang and Johor were divided into two strata, which are rural and urban for this study. The total number of government secondary schools in these four states are 58 schools. On the basis of strata, the researcher randomly selected

schools for data collection purpose and collected data from 272 teachers from both urban and rural areas.

Stratified random sampling technique was used to select the samples. According to Chua (2016), stratified random sampling is the best sampling technique because it produces a sample error, which is comparatively better than the simple-random-sampling and systematic random sampling techniques. Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents.

Permission to conduct the study as well as the ethical approval has been obtained from the Education Planning and Research Division (EPRD), Ministry of Education Malaysia as well as the state education departments. Consent from the participants has also been obtained prior to the study.

TABLE 1. Demographic profile of the respondents (N=272)

Demographic Items	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Respondents' location	Selangor	66	24.3 %
	Pahang	84	30.9 %
	Penang	72	26.5 %
	Johor	50	18.4 %
Schools' location	Urban	143	52.6 %
	Rural	128	47.1 %
Number of teachers in school	1-30	9	3.3 %
	31-60	82	30.1 %
	61-90	75	27.9 %
	91-120	105	38.6 %
School Performance	High performance	128	47.1 %
	Low performance	144	52.9 %
Gender	Male	66	24.3 %
	Female	204	75.00 %
Age	20-30 Years	28	10.3 %
	31-40 Years	109	40.1 %
	41-50 Years	90	33.1 %
	51-60 Years	44	16.20 %
Experience	0-5 Years	36	13.2 %
	6-10 Years	47	17.3 %
	11-15 Years	70	25.70 %
	15-20 Years	117	43.00 %
Total		272	100%

TABLE 2. Reliability Analysis for PLC, trust and TPD

Construct	Sub-Construct	Alpha Value	Overall Cronbach's Alpha
PLC	Teacher collaboration	0.935	0.978
	Shared-leadership	0.947	
	Shared-making	0.919	
	De-practice	0.939	
	Supportive condition	0.936	
	Social culture	0.931	
Trust	Trust	0.880	0.936
TPD	TPD	0.917	0.947

INSTRUMENTATION

A close-ended questionnaire containing 82 items was used to collect data for this research. The questionnaire contains three sections: Part A contains 60 items regarding PLC domains (collaboration, shared leadership, decision making, de-privatisation of practice, supportive conditions and school culture);

Part-B contains 12 items regarding TPD; and Part-C contains 10 items regarding trust. The questionnaire used 6-point Likert-scale (1: Strongly Disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Slightly Disagree; 4: Slightly Agree; 5: Agree; 6: Strongly Agree). According to Claveria (2018), 6-points Likert-scale has greater significance and allows the possibility of better measurement, accuracy and provides options which enhances

generalisation. The questionnaire was piloted and obtained Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.978 for PLC items, 0.936 for Trust Items, and 0.947 for TPD items (as shown in Table 2), which are acceptable if greater than 0.70 (Hair et al. 2009).

DATA ANALYSIS

Descriptive analyses in terms of frequency (n), percentage (%), mean (M), standard deviation (SD) was used to analyse the level of PLC, TPD, and trust practices among secondary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia. Descriptive statistics may help the researcher with large data, manage the data and present it in a summary table (Pallant 2013). The levels of respondents' response is interpreted into three levels, which are low, moderate and high (as shown in Table 3).

To analyse the relationship between PLC and TPD practices, PLC and trust practices, and trust and TPD practices among secondary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia, Pearson correlation was used. The strength and degree of correlation among variables is determined using Cohen's (1988) guidelines, as shown in Table 4.

The analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

TABLE 3. Interpretation of mean score

Mean Score	Interpretation
1.00 to 2.33	Low
2.34 to 3.66	Medium
3.67 to 5.00	High

TABLE 4. Degree of correlation

Degree of Correlation		
Strong correlation	± 0.50	± 1
Medium	± .30	± .49
Low	± .29	± .29

TABLE 5. Levels of PLC, trust, and TPD practices as perceived by secondary school teachers

Construct	Domain	Mean	SD	Level
Professional Learning	Collaboration	5.07	0.490	High
	Community	4.80	0.576	High
Trust	Decision-making	4.59	0.631	High
	De-privatization of Practice	4.79	0.499	High
	Supportive Conditions	4.65	0.639	High
	School Culture	4.86	0.488	High
	Total	4.79	0.553	High
Teacher Professional Development		4.88	0.468	High

In addition, the findings show that the teachers perceived that they practice high level of school decision-making (M=4.59, SD=0.631). This means that the teachers feel that their opinions are always taken into consideration by school leaders, and that

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

LEVELS OF PLC, TRUST AND TPD PRACTICES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

Table 5 shows the levels of PLC, trust, and TPD practices as perceived by secondary school teachers. For the construct of PLC, teachers perceived that they practice high level of collaboration domain (M=50.7, SD=0.490), which shows that the teachers practice teamwork and cooperation while working in groups. Collaboration has certain characteristics: i) teachers work together to seek knowledge, skills, and strategies, ii) teachers apply more innovative instructions in their teaching, and iii) teachers develop a sense of collective responsibility for student learning. Many research scholars and academic organisations supported collaboration as one of the most effective approaches used to promote teacher professional skills and knowledge (Challah 2014; Stoll & Louis 2007).

The teachers also perceived that they practice high level of shared leadership (M=4.80, SD=0.576), which shows that they consider all other teachers' opinions in decision-making. Shared leadership grows more in a culture that are full of trust, which means that the teachers trust each other's capabilities in working together, which altogether improve teacher performance collectively. Harris and Jones (2010) showed that shared leadership and shared decision-making enhance teacher achievement and manifest new approaches for teachers to modify their ideas, to acquire and be creative in their expertise.

they have a significant say in school decision making. Having the chance to have a voice in the process of making decisions for the school improves teachers' leadership abilities and contribute to the feeling of job satisfaction.

The teachers also perceived that they practice high level of de-privatisation of practice ($M=4.79$, $SD=0.499$), which refers to teacher personal practices. This means that the teachers always give feedback to their colleagues in connection with teaching practices, and lesson observation exists among teachers. In addition to that, the teachers always share and respond to other colleagues' teaching practices, and they jointly analyse students' work to find way to improve the teaching and learning. Practicing this efficiently require high level of trust between the teachers. Louis et al. (1996) study is consistent with de-privatisation of practice, where they stated that the basic idea of a shared practice is to cultivate shared connection among educators and to provide positive direction to improve their instructional practices (Hipp & Huffman 2010).

Findings also show a high level of supportive conditions ($M=4.65$, $SD=0.639$). This means that the teachers perceived that there were a variety of opportunities exists for collective learning through open dialogue. This perceived high level of supportive conditions brings about high satisfaction with the physical working conditions of the school. This also shows that mutual caring relationship exists among the teacher's community that facilitate collective learning. Hord (1997) revealed that supportive structures and relations are vital for developing PLC in the school community.

Lastly, the teachers perceived that the school culture is positive overall ($M=4.86$, $SD=0.488$). This means that they perceive that there are positive mutual caring and sharing relationships among the teacher community. Positive and healthy school culture encourages significant staff development, where these characteristics provide a conducive environment for collaboration and teamwork. This finding is consistent with the study of Terzi (2016) who stated that a supportive culture constructs interaction between staff in an organisation.

Overall, the findings indicated that the teachers perceived high scores for all the domains of PLC, and the overall level of PLC perceived by the teachers were at a high level ($M=4.79$, $SD=0.553$). The results mean that teachers practice domains of PLC effectively in their schools, where they share their ideas, collaborate, share leadership tasks and take active part in school decision, observe and share feedback, enjoy time for meeting and planning in the supportive conditions which enable teachers to improve their knowledge and enhance student learning outcomes. This result is supported by Abdullah and Ghani (2014), who researched secondary schools in Malaysia. Their results showed high level for all domains of PLC, except for personal practices sharing which was found moderate. However, Ismail et al. (2014) in their study found high level of practice for all domains of PLC in high-performing schools, but lower levels in low-

performing schools. Collective learning and application are the highest dimension while shared personal practice is the lowest dimension practiced in both types of schools. This shows that there is caring and conducive environment for staff in the school.

For the construct of trust, the teachers perceived that they practice high level of trust within the teacher community ($M=4.79$, $SD=0.494$). This means that the teaching staffs trust and support each other in their works. As a result, they collaborate, enjoy shared leadership, observe each other's lesson, take active part in school decision-making, and spend time for meeting and planning. According to Moran and Hoy (1998), trust is the foundation in the school environment. Zheng et al. (2016) claimed that in a trustworthy environment, staffs work together, share their ideas, observe, and give constructive comments when they work with sincere and honest colleagues. Hence, schools having trustful environment will encourage more interactive tasks among the staff. Hord (2004) also supported that trust teamwork, shared practices, and shared values flourish in the presence of element of trust.

For the construct of TPD, the teachers perceived that they practice high level of professional development ($M=4.88$, $SD=0.468$). This means that the teachers acknowledge that their skills and knowledge improve when they share their ideas, observe each other's lesson and exchange comments, as well as practice shared leadership in a collaborative and trustworthy school culture. Glatthorn (1995) stated that TPD means professional growth of teachers through gaining improved experience and examining of his or her teaching systematically. According to the findings, high levels of TPD were revealed in both low and high performing schools. This is consistent with the studies by of Stoll and Louis (2007) and Day (1999), stating that teacher collaboration nurtures teacher professional growth and learning.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRACTICES OF PLC AND TPD, PLC AND TRUST, AND TPD AND TRUST

Table 6 shows the correlation matrix for the findings of the relationship between the practices of PLC and TPD, PLC and trust, and trust and TPD among secondary school teachers in Peninsular Malaysia. Findings show low and medium levels of correlation (ranges from 0.124 to 0.650) between the domains of PLC, trust and TPD.

The findings revealed that there are significant, positive, and weak correlations between all domains of PLC and TPD. Therefore, H_{01} is rejected. In particular, the correlation between TPD and de-privatisation of practice (Dp) were significant and weak ($r=.125$, $p<0.05$), TPD and collaboration (Cs) were significant and weak ($r=.183$, $p<0.05$), TPD and shared leadership (Sl) were significant and weak ($r=.189$, $p<0.05$), TPD

and decision-making (Dm) were significant and weak ($r=.139, p<0.05$), TPD and supportive condition (Se) were significant and weak ($r=.144, p<0.05$), and TPD and school culture (Sc) were significant and weak ($r=.120, p<0.05$). This means that as the elements of PLC increase, the mean for TPD increases significantly, although not that strongly related. The analysis reveals that PLC is a good practice in learning institutions, similar to the findings by Fullan (2001) that it encourages collective learning among faculty staff that brings about professional development among the teachers and generates a healthy continuous development in school.

In addition, the findings revealed that there are significant, positive, and weak correlation between TPD and trust ($r=.127, p<0.05$). Therefore, H_{03} is rejected. This means that as the mean for trust increase, the mean for TPD also increases significantly, albeit not that strongly related. This finding is supported by Lleo et al. (2017) and Van Maele and Van Houtte (2011), where they stated that trust is essential in a community of practice, where it builds up teamwork which encourage staff to achieve common aims planned by the organisation, make them more energetic and dedicated to their profession, as well as bringing sustained peace of mind among staff in the school community.

TABLE 6. Correlation matrix

	TPD_ Total	Dp_ Total	Cs_ Total	Sl_ Total	Dm_ Total	Se_ Total	Sc_ Total	T_ Total
TPD_Total	1	.124*	.183**	.189**	.139*	.144*	.120*	.127*
Sig. (2-tailed)		.042	.002	.002	.022	.018	.049	.036
Dp_Total	.124*	1	.496**	.310**	.423**	.540**	.427**	.533**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.042		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Cs_Total	.183**	.496**	1	.466**	.467**	.435**	.535**	.533**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Sl_Total	.189**	.310**	.466**	1	.480**	.386**	.408**	.431**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
Dm_Total	.139*	.423**	.467**	.480**	1	.476**	.410**	.475**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
Se_Total	.144*	.540**	.435**	.386**	.476**	1	.527**	.650**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
Sc_Total	.120*	.427**	.535**	.408**	.410**	.527**	1	.631**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.049	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
T_Total	.127*	.533**	.533**	.431**	.475**	.650**	.631**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Note: Cs-collaboration, Sl-shared leadership, Dm-decision making, Dp-de-privatization of practice, Se-supportive conditions, Sc-school culture, TPD-teachers professional development, T-trust

The findings also revealed that there are significant, positive, and strong correlation between the domains of PLC and trust. Therefore, H_{02} is rejected. In particular, the correlation between trust and de-privatisation of practice (Dp) were significant and strong ($r=.533, p<0.05$), trust and collaboration (Cs) were significant and strong ($r=.533, p<0.05$), trust and shared leadership (Sl) were significant and strong ($r=.431, p<0.05$), trust and decision-making (Dm) were significant and strong ($r=.475, p<0.05$), trust and supportive condition (Se) were significant and strong ($r=.650, p<0.05$), and trust and school culture (Sc) were significant and strong ($r=.631, p<0.05$). This means that as the elements of PLC increase, the mean for trust also increases. Although correlation does not show causal relationship, it can be seen that there is a link between the two variables, where the teachers practice high

level of PLC as well as high level of trust. It can be suggested that the trustful culture in the community of teachers has an effect on the practice of PLC among the teachers, or vice versa. This finding is supported by an experimental study conducted by Yin et al. (2013), which revealed that enhancing trust relationship between educators has great impact on teaching and educational change. Similarly, Bryk et al. (1999) showed that trust is a powerful resource in school that encourages domains of PLC such as collaboration, reflective dialogue and de-privatization of practice.

CONCLUSION

This survey determined the levels of PLC practices, trust, and TPD practices among secondary school

teachers in Peninsular Malaysia, as well as determined the relationship between PLC and TPD, PLC and trust, and trust and TPD. The findings show that on the construct of PLC, the teachers perceived that they practice high level of all domains, which are collaboration, shared leadership, decision-making, de-privatization of practice, supportive conditions, and school culture. The teachers also perceived that they practice high levels of TPD and trust. In addition, there are significant, positive, and weak correlations between all domains of PLC and TPD, there are significant, positive, and weak correlation between TPD and trust, and there are significant, positive, and strong correlation between all domains of PLC and trust. In conclusion, PLC practices is related to trustful culture in school as well as good professional development among the teachers. The findings implicate that PLC should be encouraged in all teaching institutions to

enhance the quality of teaching and learning, as well as the teaching and learning experience for all teachers and students. Findings of the current study will benefits teachers by providing evidence on the basis of correlation and levels of PLC and TPD practices in secondary schools. However, one of the limitations of this study is that it focused only on secondary school teachers and did not include primary school teachers. It is suggested that future studies identify factors such as trust and collaboration that mediate the relationship between PLC and TPD, which will contribute to enhancing PLC in teaching institutions. Higher education institutions are recommended to establish useful guidelines, systematic approaches, and to develop programs that enhance PLC practices. Future studies are also encouraged to examine the relationship between the level of PLC practices in primary schools in West and East parts of Malaysia.

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