

**THE INFLUENCE OF PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION
SKILLS ON TEACHING PERFORMANCE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION LECTURERS IN
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

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MUNASAMY**

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ABSTRACT

In this 21st century, communication skills, development of educators and the teaching performances of the educators have become very important and major contribution to the education field. Educators are anticipated to accommodate to changes and advance their skills, which are expected to directly enrich the students' achievement and the education quality. In reality, lifelong skills such as effective communication skills are compulsory for educators to send their messages across to students and their colleagues. Effective communication skills and professional development is expected to accelerate the teaching performances of an educator. This straightaway increases the teaching quality thus student's achievement. Therefore, the objective of this research is to study the influence of professional development and communication skills towards teaching performance of university lecturers in Negara Brunei Darussalam. This is a quantitative study. In order to fulfill the purpose of this research, a survey was created and distributed to the lecturers in Brunei universities. The data of the study was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The mean of the three variables were measured. Pearson Chi Square, Pearson Correlations and regression was used to obtain the results. The findings revealed that there is difference the mean score of the three variables, there is a significant difference in professional development, communication skills and teaching performance attributing to gender. The results also revealed that there is no correlation between the three variables with regards to age and also the number of years of teaching experience of the lecturers. Besides that, the findings of the study revealed that there is correlation between professional development, communication skills and teaching performances itself. Even though, there is a difference in the level as perceived by the respondents in this study, however it is found to be positively bringing significance to the study. Based on the respondent's

perception, professional development is more dominant variable than communication skills in terms of their influence towards teaching performance. Therefore, it is suggested that every educator has to improve themselves through professional development programme internally and externally for their benefit, schools' benefit and benefit of the students directly. The contribution to the field of education and community will be very significant with the benefit gained through the professional development programmes and the usage of effective communication skills by the educators.

APPROVAL

I certify that I have supervised / read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in quality and scope, as a thesis for the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Professor Dr. Siow Heng Loke
Chairman, Examination Committee

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis submitted in fulfilment of the PhD degree is my own work and that all contributions from any other persons or sources are properly and duly cited. I further declare that the material has not been submitted either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university. In making this declaration, I understand and acknowledge any breaches in this declaration constitute academic misconduct, which may result in my expulsion from the programme and/or exclusion from the award of the degree.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|--|
| ANOVA | Analysis of variance |
| ATLAS.ti | The Qualitative Data Analysis & Research Software |
| BA | Bachelor of Arts |
| CPD | Continuing professional development |
| CS | Communication Skills |
| CSQ | Communication skills questionnaire |
| EBI | Educational Belief Inventory |
| EFL | English as a Foreign Language |
| FET | Further Education and Training |
| FSK | Faculty of Health Sciences |
| IBM | International Business Machines Corporation |
| IC | Instructional communication |
| ICT | Information and communications technology |
| IPA | Interpretative phenomenological analysis |
| KUPUSB | Kolej Universiti Perguruan Ugama Seri Begawan |
| MA | Master of Arts |
| MOEC | Ministry of Education and Culture |
| NCATE | National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education |
| NCT | Nazarene College of Theology |
| NGO | Non-governmental organizations |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| PD | Professional Development |
| PGCHE | Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education |
| SPOTK | Students' Perceptions of Teacher Knowledge |
| SPSS | Statistical Package for the Social Sciences |
| TALIS | The OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey |
| TBTLE | Teachers' Beliefs about Teaching and Learning in Engineering Questionnaire |
| TCWSSA | Twenty-First Century Workforce Soft Skills Assessment survey |

| | |
|--------|---|
| TEL | Technology enhanced learning |
| TET | Interpersonal skill training program |
| TJP | Teachers' Performance Questionnaire |
| TP | Teaching Performance |
| TSG | Teacher Study Group |
| TVET | Technical and Vocational Education and Training |
| UBD | Universiti Brunei Darussalam |
| UKM | Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia |
| UNISSA | Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali |
| USA | United States of America |
| UTB | Universiti Teknologi Brunei |

CHAPTER 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this advanced present-day, in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the demand for quality education and changes in the curriculum trends, has great impact on the educator's knowledge and skills. To improve the quality of education and enrich the success of the students', educators have to adapt to these transformations and enhance their ability and skills. Innovation and technology integrated education have become the focus and educators are anticipated to accommodate and adopt to the current technologies. Furthermore, in order to convey the knowledge to the students, it is extremely important for educators to have effective communication skills. Effective communication skills with other skills such as knowledge skills, technical skills, creative thinking skills, personnel skills are essential for educators' performances to be able to cope with changes in the education system. Educators can and need to develop these skills through their professional development programme. Communication skills and professional development skills play significant roles in the educators teaching performance which directly influences the student's quality and success of the education system. Darling-Hammond (2002) precisely mentioned that in the classroom, the standard of educators is the utmost significant factor for student' success (Alice & Betty, 2014). Professional development would be one way of enhancing educators' skills. In fact, to enhance the education system, it is fundamental for every educator to go through professional development programmes. Professional development for educators varies in many ways. It could be from content knowledge of the subject being taught to the skills needed to deliver the effective teaching. Besides that, educators also need to keep up with the updated or current technology evolvement in the education system. This is important because the students in the technological

era are quite advanced and at the same time educators can use the opportunity to use the technology to keep the students interested in the subject taught. With this, and many other changes that are constantly happening around academic environment, professional development has become part of the educators need to enrich their teaching performance as well as the students' performance.

According to Donnelly (2016), in the past fifty years, higher education has extended and varied, leading to massive shift in the demands as well as the expectations on Higher Education Institutions. This phenomenon is accompanied by transformation in the student body and on the cost, elevated pressure from government, results and procedures. There is escalated stress for the academic staff or educators through elevated teaching weight and expanding reporting and administrative needs. These staff also go through great stress to grow and strengthen their research profile whilst achieving perfection in teaching and fulfilling the anticipation of their learners and other stakeholders. Educators in higher education not only concentrate on teaching and learning, but also in research works. Research work is emphasized very much for each educator. Educators are pressured to manage their time well to balance their research work and their teaching commitments.

Professional development is set of skills of various aspects, ranging from content knowledge to soft skills that could be obtained through various means such as attending courses, workshops or being mentored and guided by other colleagues for better teaching and learning process. By focusing on the professional development, the educators are expected to develop themselves, making them better prepared to deliver high quality education programmes, thus having a positive effect on their own competencies and eventual outcome of students.

Apart from being furnished with professional development programmes, in any educational process, a notable component is the educator's communication skills. This is because through communication skills, thoughts and ideas are exchanged and messages are transmitted. Communication is defined as delivering, presenting, being aware, transferring, being and having attached in a conversation (Guralnik, 1971). In the field of education, communication is also about creating and establishing a foundation for connecting individuals, thoughts and agendas or more between individuals. In other words, it is the educators and students' mean of sharing and understanding thoughts. These are inclusive of sharing and understanding the culture, sharing and understanding knowledge as well as the values establishing the relationship that is shared by two individuals. (Shabani, 2004). In a nut shell, the process of transferring message from one person to the other is called communication. (Ahadian, 2004). In the education process, communication skills are also very important at the university level considering the sensitivity and precision of communication in the faculty environment. Interchanging thoughts and ideas via communication skills is fundamental at the university level. It is very clear that at the university level, it is vital for every educator to acquire good skills of communication. An educator can be very rich in the content knowledge, however if they are not able to transfer these knowledges to the students or other colleagues, then they fail to do what's most important for them, to get the message across and this could eventually lead to their own failure as effective educators. The communication skills, verbal or non-verbal is an important feature of every educator. Communication skills is an art which can be developed with an educator's experience. This is unlike traits, which are inherited; these skills could be developed, polished and nurtured over time. In fact, communication skills could be taught as a module as part of professional development

of an educator if they feel that their communication skills are insufficient to deliver effective teaching that could lead to effective learning. These necessary skills should be emphasized to all educators to make them effective educators who will be able to deliver better content, to positively influence the education environment and students' outcome.

Furthermore, educator's communication skills definitely effect their relationship with their students. The impact the teacher and student relationship are discussed in a study prosecuted by Zaeema, Noman and Hira (2018). According to them, the student-teacher relationship is important because they spend seven to nine hours daily. The impact of communication on students were examined in this study. Descriptive analysis of mean and percentage were used, to identify the influence of teacher's communication on students' schooling and their achievement. The outcome of the research indicated that there is a positive relationship between them. It is said that student teacher's relationship becomes difficult when they gain their maturity and the quality of the relationship can vary at this stage. Therefore, good communication skills are needed for both parties to establish their relationship and the good communication skills makes it easier in this sense. The conclusion showed that good association among the student and teachers creates results-oriented outcome (Zaeema, Noman, & Hira, 2018). This study shows that teachers good communication skills result in benefiting both the teachers and students. Not only the teachers teaching performance increase, but the good communication establish good relationship between the teachers and students which directly creates good academic outcomes among the students.

Besides verbal communication skills, non-verbal communication skills also perform a significant part in students' life. It can be seen in the student's behavior, education and ethics. According to Zaeema, Noman, and Hira (2018), students are

never relaxed in front of their teacher. A teacher's nonverbal communication is important for students to feel relaxed while studying because the non-verbal communication has the potential to damage the student's character which can cause depression among them. Besides that, communication does not happen at one time, it is a gradual process, slow steps which can lead to successful communication and confidants among the students. This shows that the communication that is gradually secured, can lead to students being confident to communicate with their teacher and could stand as one of the factors for students to achieve positive results academically.

Besides improving teaching performance of the educators, their effective communication skills lead to the academic achievement of the students and their professional life. Educators' poor communication can lead to the failure of the students academically and also personally as educators play very important role in the students' life as an educator, mentor and coach. The poor communication of the educator can fail to promote academic success of the students. The students need to be guided through the right pathway and what is prohibited through their knowledge in the classroom which is purely based upon the communication of the educators (Sherwyn, Morreale, and Osborn Pearson, 2000). Therefore, it is clear, the educator's effective communication performs a vital part in their students' academic success and their personal growth which is beyond the teaching and learning only. In fact, Loss (2000) highlighted that effective communication is vital for educators to avoid the unkind feeling throughout the teaching and learning process as this can discourage learning from happening within the students. It is recommended in his study that educators need to communicate in an understandable manner so that students be attentive during the teaching and learning session. It is also to communicate effectively in order to avoid

misunderstanding happening among the students' learning and feeling during the teaching and learning process.

In order to succeed in their profession, excellent communication skills are fundamental for educators. To accomplish their responsibilities effectively, teachers are also required to have oral communication skills, listening skills, interpersonal skills and written skills. This profession requires them to constantly gather, sort, analyse and explain the information to their learners. Developing their effective skills is an essential portion of upgrading teachers' potential. The development of these skills also improves the quality of teachers. Besides that, teachers also are required to have highly developed oral and written expertise that are capable to engage with their management and their colleagues efficiently (Fathi Aieman Ahmad & Kholoud A. Al-Dababneh, 2010). As an educator, the communication does not stop between the educator and the learners; the communication revolves around their colleagues, the higher management of the institution they are attached to, communication between the stakeholders as well as the parents. Therefore, to succeed in the profession, it's fundamental for the educators to develop the communication skills. One of the reasons is to excel in their teaching performance as this can lead to students' achievement as well as achievement of the organisation. Performance is defined as one's ability to execute any given task within a certain period of time, meeting the required performance index. There are many ways to analyse teacher or lecturers' performance. This study believes that the lecturers and teachers' themselves are the best person to evaluate their own teaching performances. Based on the ongoing learning that attained, the skills that are learned and transferred, the understanding and ability of the students and evaluation based on their own students' performances, educators can see if they are performing better in their teaching. In this study the teachers or lecturers who are addressed as educators

are asked to evaluate their performances as a method to analyse, as teaching progress. This study believes that educators themselves are the best person to know if their own teaching and learning has improved, because only they can see the difference in them based on their professional development and skills that they have learned which has impacted their students.

Demet and Erkut (2018) investigated the reasons that effect the teaching performance of teachers in a secondary school and how the factors reflect their work environment. Some of the factors that were investigated in this study were wages, management and working environment. The outcomes of the findings revealed that the teachers teaching performance is influenced mainly by management factors, other than by working atmosphere and continued with wages. However, there was no direct increase in the teacher's performance due to wage factor. The proper school management and efficient communication can affect the teachers' teaching performance. Therefore, the right working environment is crucial for teachers to feel comfortable in order for them to work with no pressure. A positive school management which encourages and recognize the educators work is very important to motivate the educators to perform better in their teaching and learning. This is because when they are happy and satisfied with their working environment, creates positive vibe that makes their teaching performance to excel and this leads to other positive consequences towards themselves, the institution and the learners.

Therefore, this study firmly supports that there is influence of professional developments and communication skills towards teaching performance where they are all connected. The main goal of this study is to investigate the level and the relationship of professional development and communication skills towards teaching performance

among university lecturers of Negara Brunei Darussalam. The background of the study is discussed in the following section.

1.2 Background of Study

As an educator, the events that expands their skills, expertise, learning and other characteristics are defined as professional development. Referring to the definition, development can be informal or formal. It can come in various ways. Therefore, any workshops or courses attended by educators or formal qualification programmes are classified as professional development. Apart from that, working with colleagues within the school or with other schools is also categorized as professional development. Furthermore, sharing the good practices with other educators, teaching and planning collaboratively and mentoring or coaching also can be seen as professional progression (TALIS, 2009). Effective professional development is defined in OECD (2009), as continuous, which involves feedback, training, practice and gives enough time and supports that follows. According to Minutillo Jr, (2016), all teachers will take up self-directed professional development training to improve themselves in their teaching performance at some point of their profession. There could be many reasons for them to be motivated to take up the programmes namely their own motivation or influenced by their school principal, it varies in case-to-case basis depending on the individual teachers.

Furthermore, according to Borko (2004), educators who participated in professional development programme believe to have impacted the teachers' ability to acquire and think critically in terms of developing knowledge and emotional intelligence for professional thinking and practicing with their students in all aspects. Besides that, according to Desimone (2009), professional development programme also has impacted the educator's ability to determine and execute valued alteration in