

The Development of an Integrity Cultivating Module in School-Based Assessment among Malaysian Teachers: A Research Methodology

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Abstract—The competency and integrity required for better understanding and practice of School-based Assessment (PBS) comes not only from the process, but also in providing the support or ‘scaffolding’ for teachers to recognize the student as a learner, improve their self-assessment skills, understanding of the daily teaching plan and its constructive alignment of the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. The cultivation of integrity in PBS among the teachers is geared towards encouraging them to become committed and dedicated in implementing assessments in a serious, efficient manner, thus moving away from the usual teacher-focused approach to the student-focused approach. The teachers show their integrity via their professional commitment, responsibility and actions. The module based on the cultivation of integrity in PBS among Malaysian teachers aims to broaden the guidance support for teachers (embedded in the training), which consists of various domains to enable better evaluation of complex assessment tasks and the construction of suitable instrument for measuring the relevant cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains to describe the students’ achievement. The instrument for integrity cultivation in PBS has been developed and validated for measuring the effectiveness of the module constructed. This module is targeted towards assisting the staff in the Education Ministry, especially the principal trainers, teachers, headmasters and education officers to acquire effective intervention for improving the PBS assessors’ integrity and competency.

Keywords—School-based assessment, Assessment competency Integrity cultivation, Professional commitment, Module

I. INTRODUCTION

THE Education Assessment Colloquium 2014[1] uncovered a few dilemmas and difficulties faced by teachers who had previously undergone training on PBS. One of the issues touched on teacher readiness. Issue 7: The subject content had been prepared without any regard for learning strategy, teachers seemed to have lost their direction, implementation was done according to one’s own creativity and finally, the teachers felt burdened and pressured. This situation has not only been mentioned by teachers involved in the colloquium, which also included other groups such as the Malaysian Examination Board, National Union of the Teaching Profession Malaysia (NUTP), parents’ representatives and

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academicians. Other issues such as the alignment of curriculum and assessment, student readiness and parents’ acceptance were also highlighted during the “Round Table Conference” [1] and “The Education Assessment Colloquium 2014” [1]; a study conducted on the alignment of school assessment understanding and practice found that teachers faced a difficult situation in implementing school assessment.

Reference [2] in their interview with 29 teachers, who were teaching Form 1 and Form 2, found that the teachers lacked the knowledge of student assessment methodology and assessment and that the information of student achievement in the affective domain acquired through observation could not be considered as the overall quality indicator for the less proficient students, as teachers also had problems in assessing the affective aspect. The mean for the alignment of content focus understanding and assessment practice of the 164 teacher-respondents showed that there was significant lower alignment compared to the moderate alignment of understanding and school assessment practice (Min=2.0). Immediate attention is required, as seen from the resolutions of The Education Assessment Colloquium 2014 [1]. Some of the resolutions include Resolution 1: Intervention from the Examination Board would be necessary in transforming the implementation of the PBS system. This would help to lessen the burden of the main trainer. As for Resolution 2, the suggestion is that Teacher Training Division would need to train teachers to become more creative in disseminating the curriculum. As such, there is a need to involve all teachers in training their colleagues using more efficient models and modules so that they would gain better clarification on the setting up of the integrity cultivating module in PBS among Malaysian Teachers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reference [3] informed that there are five approaches to assessment that should be followed: assessment should be in line with what is taught, it should enable students to show their positive achievement and strengths, it should explain the assessment criteria and the suitable assessment for the students as well as the assessment appropriate to the teaching and learning pattern. A poorly-planned implementation may have an effect on the trust of parents, organisations and the public. As such, the assessment system implemented should illustrate the students’ achievement clearly and the comparison should

be made in a convincing way, while the comparison data should be measured using the same scale [4].

Teachers should be trained to create assessment tasks, proportion scales or checklist and descriptors which they can interpret in a consistent manner. Reference [5] explained that teachers must be efficient in building descriptors to enable them to assess effectively. The issue regarding teachers' efficiency in assessing can be managed with appropriate training in which the criteria should be discussed and elaborated. As for the teachers, they should be given the opportunity to carry out hands-on activity via workshops for assessing and using the criteria in particular contexts [6]. Reference [7] also stated that the key for improving the credibility of school-based assessment is that firstly, adequate explanation given to the teachers, guidance in using the module, video, training and meeting with other assessors; secondly, sufficient time and upgrading procedure; thirdly, an explicit parameter and a clear teaching assessment and marking criteria should be presented; and fourthly, students are usually given sample assessments and marking schemes that fit the relevant criteria and parameters. As such, the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers aims to integrate three main focus which are i) to strengthen teacher readiness from the affective aspect, ii) to identify the student as a learner and teacher understanding and assessment practice, which is targeted on reinforcing the teacher's readiness in implementing the school assessment. Such an effort to transform teacher-based teaching and learning practices cannot be accomplished in an instant. Continuous effort is needed so that the teacher is prepared in a holistic manner to implement school-based assessment. Assessment has a strong influence on the way a teacher teaches and the student studies [8]. Therefore, professional teacher training must be implemented continuously. Studies on the effect of professional teacher training on psychological, leadership and organisational factors showed that the psychological factor gave a relatively strong influence compared to other factors [9], [10]. Reference [11] found that 11 studies analysing the impact of professional teacher training programmes showed that the educators involvement had transformed teacher practices from being teacher-focused to student-focused. Teacher involvement had improved the culture of continuous learning among teachers. The literature review also showed that student learning increased when teachers were involved in professional learning [12].

Teaching and learning would be affected if assessment is not in line with what is in the curriculum [13] and the lack of alignment between what is taught and what is assessed will affect student achievement [12]. Thus, findings from countries which have implemented school-based assessment for many years should be treated as a guide so that any reform made would be geared towards teacher readiness and environment readiness which would assist teachers in implementing their tasks effectively, and not by putting outside pressure that would create more negative elements and confusion among them. Reference [4] also stated that a hasty assessment implementation would bring about a lot of problems. An

educational reform would bring about certain effects to the children's future and the public's trust; as such, there is a need for detailed preparation to avoid any unwanted issues.

Reference [1] had put forward a few resolutions that listed issues related to confusion in the implementation and the dissemination of relevant information to the teachers. These problems occur as the Education Ministry relied on the principal trainers to disseminate information on PBS to the teachers, despite some trainers having limited knowledge and experience of the assessment implementation. There were also trainers who were not experts in their fields who had to train certain teachers on how to assess particular subjects. Reference [2] found that from their interview findings in the Focused Group Discussion, the PBS was implemented based on the information obtained from the principal trainers. On the other hand, the interview findings also showed that the teachers did not elaborate on the implementation of the class assessment; instead, they gave details on the aspects of file management and the effect of the documentation process on the teachers such as confusion and fatigue in their effort to complete the assessment.

Reference [2] in their study, which involved interviews with 29 teachers who taught Form 1 and Form 2, shared the view of respondent R7PG who found that the assessment method and techniques were always changing. As for Respondent R5PG, he/she stated that 'The teachers completed the task according to their own understanding'. Respondent R7PG commented that the assessment was done according to his/her own way as he/she had too many things to do such as data entry and file-keeping. In the case of respondent R3PG, he/she was not confident of the process to be implemented, while saving the worksheets as evidence in the file.

Reference [2] recorded respondent R7CG as saying that the 'the policy planning was easy, just discussing and talking. The implementation is the difficult part.' R5PG informed that the teacher and students did not like the school assessment: 'Not only the teachers, the students too. I have students who did not like their bands. They are stressed as well.' R2SG stated that 'it's not that I don't agree with PBS. Just the implementation.' Reference [2] in their analysis found that the teachers did not clarify their aspect of understanding regarding school assessment. They were more inclined to explain that they did not like the implementation of the assessment as they preferred the university system. Besides the school assessment, the teachers also had to implement other programmes like High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), which caused them even more confusion. The analysis indicated that the teachers faced a lot of difficulties due to the poorly-planned programme and system. The teachers also require knowledge and depth of understanding regarding the assessment and they also need to be skilled and competent in the implementation, using higher order thinking skills, to be able to understand the assessment implementation mechanism, create quality assessment tasks, construct a relevant assessment instrument, as well as communicate the students' achievement to the parties involved.

The analysis showed that the null hypothesis failed to be rejected as it indicated the average teacher achievement in Alignment Understanding Expectations and Practice of School Assessment (PEKDAPS) transparency and fairness as medium (Mean=2.0). Additionally, the null hypothesis failed to be rejected as it showed the average teacher achievement in PEKDAPS pedagogical implications as medium (Mean=2.0). Reference [2] found that the data obtained from the interviews indicated that the assessment had no accountability. Inconsistent assessment resulted in parental perception and confusion to differ from one school to another. Teachers discovered that the fairness principle was difficult to be implemented as the quality of the question and test aims were not clear. The standard set for student achievement and quality by schools, principal trainers and the State Education Department caused the teachers to become trapped in a difficult assessment process. Students who were very weak and could not read properly were not prescribed correctly using the current assessment system. This finding is also in line with the results presented during the Education Assessment Colloquium 2014 [2] by the NUTP chairperson, who stated that a teacher's integrity may be questionable when the teacher is the person who teaches, constructs test items, corrects the test and then grades the test. Furthermore, there were also principals who put the pressure on teachers to ensure that the percentage of passes increased. The integrity of PBS is indeed at stake as stated by the representative of the parents' and teachers' association of St. Thomas Secondary School, Puan Rozaini Mohamad Nor, during the Education Assessment Colloquium 2014 [2]. She commented that the PBS system had a tendency to become biased as teachers were likely to be influenced by their emotions, and also, in some cases parents had an influence on teachers. To overcome this, a clear rubric and grading system should be prepared. The teachers' capability in terms of knowledge and the competency aspect was indeed a thorny issue among the relevant quarters.

A. The Relationship of Integrity with Assessment Competency

Teacher integrity, especially in the aspect of knowledge and competency needs to be reformed in order to improve the public's trust in PBS. Reference [14] had listed the teacher competency standard in assessing students as the following:

1. Teachers should be skilled in choosing the right method for teaching.
2. Teachers should have skills in developing the appropriate assessment method for his/her teaching.
3. Teachers should be skilled in administrating, grading and interpreting the results of the assessment, whereby the assessment methods have been prepared by either outside parties or the teacher himself/herself.
4. Teachers should also be skilled in using the assessment results when making decisions about the individual student, lesson planning, curriculum developing and school upgrading
5. Teachers should be skilled in developing student grading

procedure using student assessment.

6. Teachers should be skilled in communicating the assessment results with students, parents and related parties.
7. Teachers should have skills in detecting unethical information and methods.

A teacher's professional integrity in assessment should be improved. According to [15], the teacher carries the responsibility of teaching with integrity (being honest, trustworthy and acting in a morally responsible manner which is integrated into integrity). Teachers show their integrity via their professional commitment, responsibility and action. Some of the actions that reveal a teacher's professional integrity are:

1. Acting with honesty and integrity in all aspects of his/her career.
2. Respecting other people's privacy and guarding confidential information for the purpose of professional practice and protecting students' individual well-being.
3. Acting as a professional based on one's true status, qualification and experience.
4. Avoiding conflict between professional requirements and personal interest which would affect students.

Based on the expectations of many parties and the findings on the need for teacher competency and knowledge in line with a teachers' professional integrity, there is a need for the implementation of the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers, which is based on school-based assessment integrity and competence. This module, which is based on the findings from various conferences [1], as well as findings from [2], can be used as an aid in helping relevant parties in the implementation of a more effective PBS. This module consists of Model Achievement levels which are realised on competencies based on social cognitive theories introduced by Bandura, Lev Vygotsky and the Theory of Planned Behaviour [16]. It is useful for assisting teachers in the aspects of:

1. Competency in implementing PBS
2. Professional integrity in PBS

B. Model Associated with Assessment Competence and Integrity

1. Competency Realising Model

Martin M Broadwell, the author of "Learning for Teaching" published in The Gospel Guardian, dated 20 February 1969, has provides a definition for the Competency Realising Model [17]. This particular model is useful for explaining how a person learns and the need to train him/her using particular stages. Using this model, online learning is described in a matrix form to ensure effective training and learning. The four main stages in the model are:

- Stage 1: Does not realise one's incompetence;
 Stage 2: Realises one's incompetence;
 Stage 3: Realises one's competence;
 Stage 4: Does not realise one's competence.

The basic element which causes the failure of teaching and learning is when the facilitator and trainer make the wrong

assumption about the trainee or the student. Usually the teacher or trainer assumes that the learner is at Stage 2 and focuses on the effort needed to reach Stage 3. The teacher assumes that the learner realises his/her strengths and weaknesses to enable them to achieve a better level. However, the reality is that the learner is still at Stage 1, whereby he/she does not realise his/her incompetence and will not attain the stage of realising competence until they realise that they are incompetent. If the students' realisation that they are incompetent is very low, then they will not be able to see the importance of learning. Perhaps the most important thing is one's realisation about his competence/incompetence before starting a course/training programme. A learner can only provide his/her response of training when he/she realises his/her own needs and the personal benefits gained from the programme.

An individual will not achieve progress to a high level without passing through lower levels. However, he or she may revert from Level 4 to Level 3 and Level 2 to Level 1 if he/she fails to learn and attain new skills. A person who has achieved

Level 4 might feel complacent and refuse to learn new skills or knowledge. While someone who has experienced progress from one level to another would also feel excited, as if he/she has taken a big step in life.

The model matrix as shown in Table I and Fig. 1 is important for overcoming difficulties in training. Teachers/trainers may pose questions to the students such as 'What is your learning stage now and what is holding back your progress?'. This enables teachers/trainers to try and understand the students, the existing obstacles and the best way to overcome the challenges. The learning stage shown in Fig. 1 provides the opportunity for teachers to become reflective competent teachers.

TABLE I
TEACHER'S REFLECTIVE COMPETENT SHIFT

	Competent	Incompetent
Realise	3-realises competence	2-realises incompetence
Does not realise	4 -does not realise competence	1 - does not realise incompetence

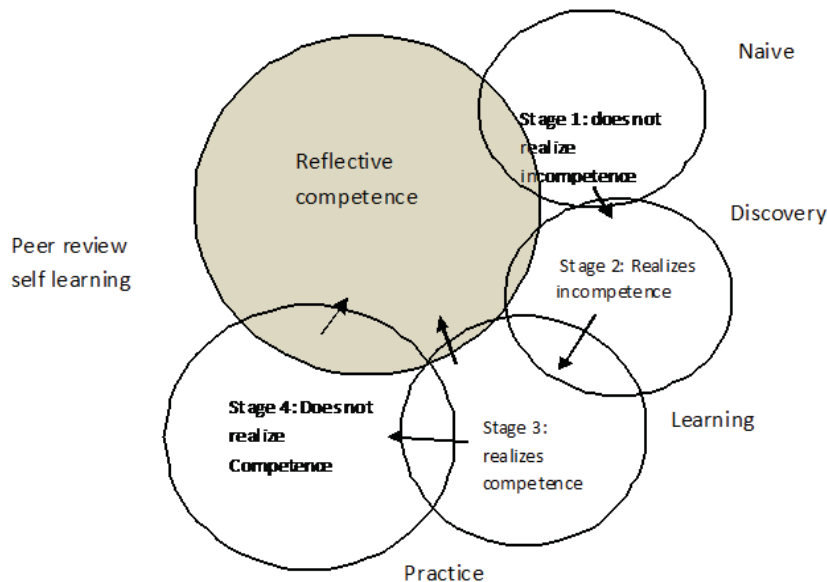


Fig. 1 Taylor's Modified Competency Realising Model [18]

2. Self-Integration Integrity

Reference [19] stated that integrity is a term used to refer to an individual's character quality. Integrity consists of attributes which involve various aspects of a person's life. It refers to the overall self-integration of several personalities in a harmonious way. A strong desire towards something drives an individual to work to achieve it, even though there may be strong resistance. Self-integration is an attribute more focused on achievement and not merely on willpower. Self-integration can be considered a formal representation of integrity.

The main construct in cultivating integrity in this study is based on [20] to ensure that the assessment practice should be transparent, fair, curriculum-based and accountable through:

i. Process

- The assessment provides a real picture of students' learning;
- The assessment has been planned from time to time in a responsive and continuous manner;
- There are various assessments and learning and teaching strategies according to specific student requirements;
- The assessment should be aligned with the curriculum and take into consideration differences in the students' abilities and learning styles.

ii. Students' Involvement

- Teachers will involve students in the assessment process;

- Clear assessment expectations should be explained to the students;
- Students' learning involves continuous assessment and data acquisition.

iii. Communication

- Communication about the assessment is disseminated with clear objectives, aims and expectations;
- Continuous communication about students' assessment;
- Clear and solid assessment practices will improve assessment accountability.

The relationship and co-dependence between competence as the main variables in the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers can be seen in the Conceptual Framework of Assessment Competency in Fig. 2.

3. Social Cognitive Theory

Albert Bandura developed the Social Learning Theory in 1986 [21] which stated that learning occurs in a social context involving an individual's interaction, behaviour and environment. A unique feature of social cognitive theory is the social influence due to inside and outside pressure. This theory takes into account individuals who try to maintain their behaviour, as well as the influence of the environment of one's social behaviour. An individual's previous experience is attributed as a factor in determining whether a change in action will occur. Past experience may influence reinforcement and expectations of whether and why the individual will be inclined to behave in a particular manner. The aims of the social cognitive theory show how a person manages his/her behaviour via control and reinforcement to retain certain goals in a given time. Six main constructs have been developed as part of the social cognitive theory:

1. Determination of reciprocity – refers to the dynamic reciprocal interaction between individuals (individuals with a set of previous learned experiences), environment (external social context) and behavior (action towards a stimulation to achieve a goal)
2. Behavior ability – refers to one's real ability to implement behavior using relevant skills and knowledge. The person should know what and how to implement the behaviour. He/she learns from a particular behaviour which also affects his/her environment.
3. Observation learning – someone who watches or observes another person's behaviour/actions can also learn the same behaviour/actions based on the observed model and the later will be able to emulate the same behaviour successfully.
4. Reinforcement – refers to internal and external stimulation affecting one's behavior which may cause the behavior to be continued or discontinued. Negative or positive reinforcement is related to the reciprocal relationship between the environment and behavior.
5. Expectations – refers to the effects expected from one's behavior. As such, the value placed on the effect of one's behavior is subjective.

6. Self-efficacy – refers to one's confidence level towards his/her ability to do something with success. Self-efficacy is influenced by specific abilities and other individual factors, as well as environmental factors that may assist or hinder the process.

Three main concepts in observation learning are:

1. Animate model, an individual showing actual behaviour;
2. Verbal instructional model, which involves explanation regarding the behaviour; and,
3. Symbolic model, which involves real description or a book depiction.

Bandura understands that not all observed behaviour can be maintained. The process of observational learning includes the modelling process. This involves four main stages, which are observation, retention, reproduction and motivation. Observation involves the learning process which requires students to focus; if they manage to have complete focus, then learning has indeed taken place. Retention is the ability to store information. Reproduction refers to the process of emulating actions when there is enough information, while motivation is the stage whereby the students are motivated to emulate actions.

4. Planned Behavior Theory

Planned behaviour theory [16] as shown in Fig. 3 is used to predict individual aims to do a particular action at a certain time and place. This theory tries to explain how an individual can control his/her behaviour. An important component in this model is the behavioural goal which is influenced by attitude and behaviours that are expected to show the results of the subjective assessment on the risks and benefits of the results.

Planned behaviour can be used to predict and explain behaviour relating to learning and health, such as smoking and other habits. Six behavioural constructs [22], which are collectively planned, represent the actual control of an individual's behavior:

1. Attitude refers to the degree in which someone evaluates the importance of a particular behaviour, which would include the effects from doing the particular action.
2. Behavioural aim refers to the factors that provide motivation which can influence a person to do a particular action.
3. Subjective norms refer to the beliefs that most people agree or disagree with regarding a behaviour. It is related to the most commonly held opinion regarding that behaviour.
4. Social norms refer to the custom code behaviour of a group of people in a broader cultural context. The norms are considered the widely-compared norms accepted by certain standards practised by that group of people.
5. Power perception refers to the existence of factors which assist or hinder a behavioural achievement. It contributes to an individual's behavioural control perception towards a factor.
6. Behavioural control perception refers to a person's perception to emulate a behaviour either in an easy or difficult way. It differs according to the situations and

actions which cause that person to have various perception controls depending on the situation. This

theory construct is a shift from the theory of causation.

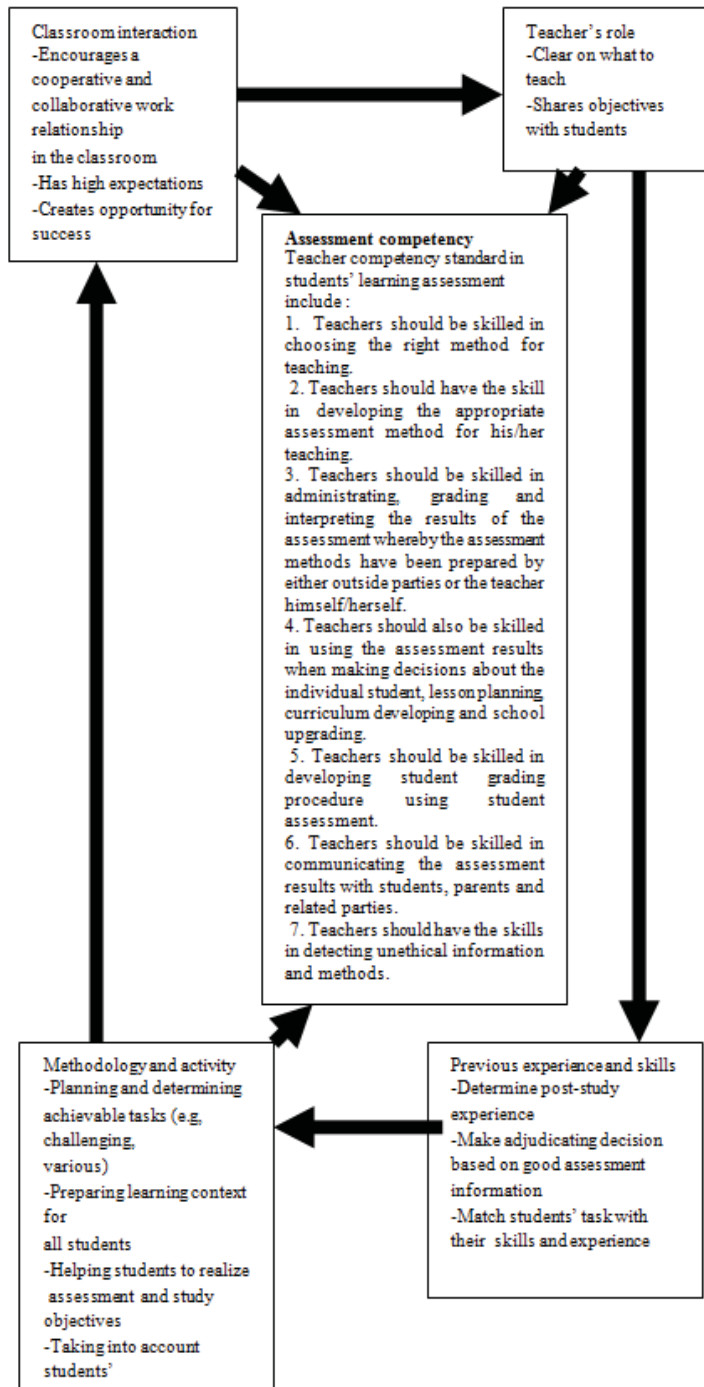


Fig. 2 Basic Element in Assessment Competency

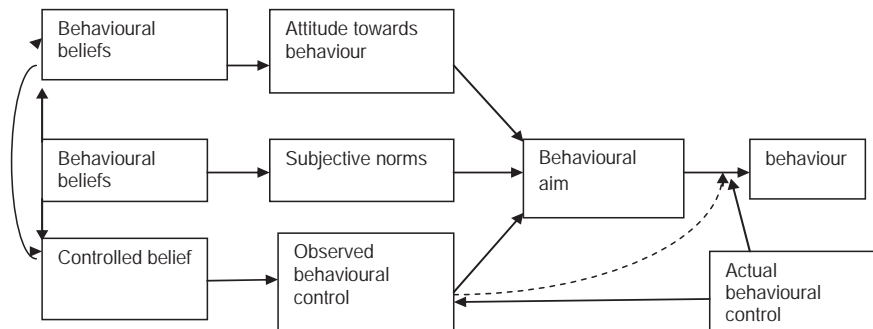


Fig. 3 Model of Planned Behaviour modified from [22]

5. Social Development Theory

Vygotsky [23] focused on the interaction between an individual through his socio-cultural context. Culture helps to shape habits like reading and writing that can be used by an individual to achieve success in his/her environment. Every function is originally a tool for students to communicate to achieve his/her needs. High thinking processes, such as problem solving, usually start with the sharing of an activity (talking to oneself), which is also known as higher order thinking. Vygotsky believed that children's development occurs through interaction with an individual with higher thinking skills, such as a teacher. The guidelines to be used in learning involve adapting the 'scaffolding' to the students' needs, giving more assistance to the students when starting a new topic or task, and supporting group learning. Encouraging experiments with the help of teaching partners by using good questions and providing feedback is a good step, as too is the implementation of experiment with a cooperative learning strategy.

6. Research Conceptual Framework

The relationship and co-dependence between competence and integrity as main the variables in the integrity cultivating module in PBS among Malaysian teachers can be seen in the Research Conceptual Framework in Fig. 4.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

Two research methods were used in the production of this module: the survey method and the experimental method.

IV. STUDY SAMPLE

This study was conducted in the states of Perak and Selangor. The study population comprised 120 secondary school teachers in the districts of Batang Padang and Ulu Selangor. A quasi-experimental study had been conducted earlier on 40 teachers who had been randomly selected to be

trained on the use of the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers.

V. STUDY INSTRUMENTS

The Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers had been developed in a few stages involving the researchers and 10 school teachers. This study also utilised the instrument developed by the researcher via the pilot study involving the 120 teachers in the development and validation stages of the cultivation of integrity in PBS instrument. Later, the quantitative data was collected as an effect of the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers. The four main stages of development procedure of module in PBS among Malaysian Teachers can be seen in Fig. 5.

A. Stage 1

Library research to develop the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers and workshop on the development of the module framework were conducted.

B. Stage 2

The survey method focused on collecting data on the perspective of secondary school teachers in Malaysia on the need for an Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS. Next, a basic model was developed using weightage from experts in integrity cultivation regarding the assessment process. This involved five local experts. The weightage was assessed in terms of strategies to improve the competence of teachers in the implementation of PBS. The actual construction of the modules was completed based on the comments and recommendations in the literature review, as well as those of the teachers and experts.

Integrity Cultivating Module in School-based Assessment (PBS) among Malaysian Teachers

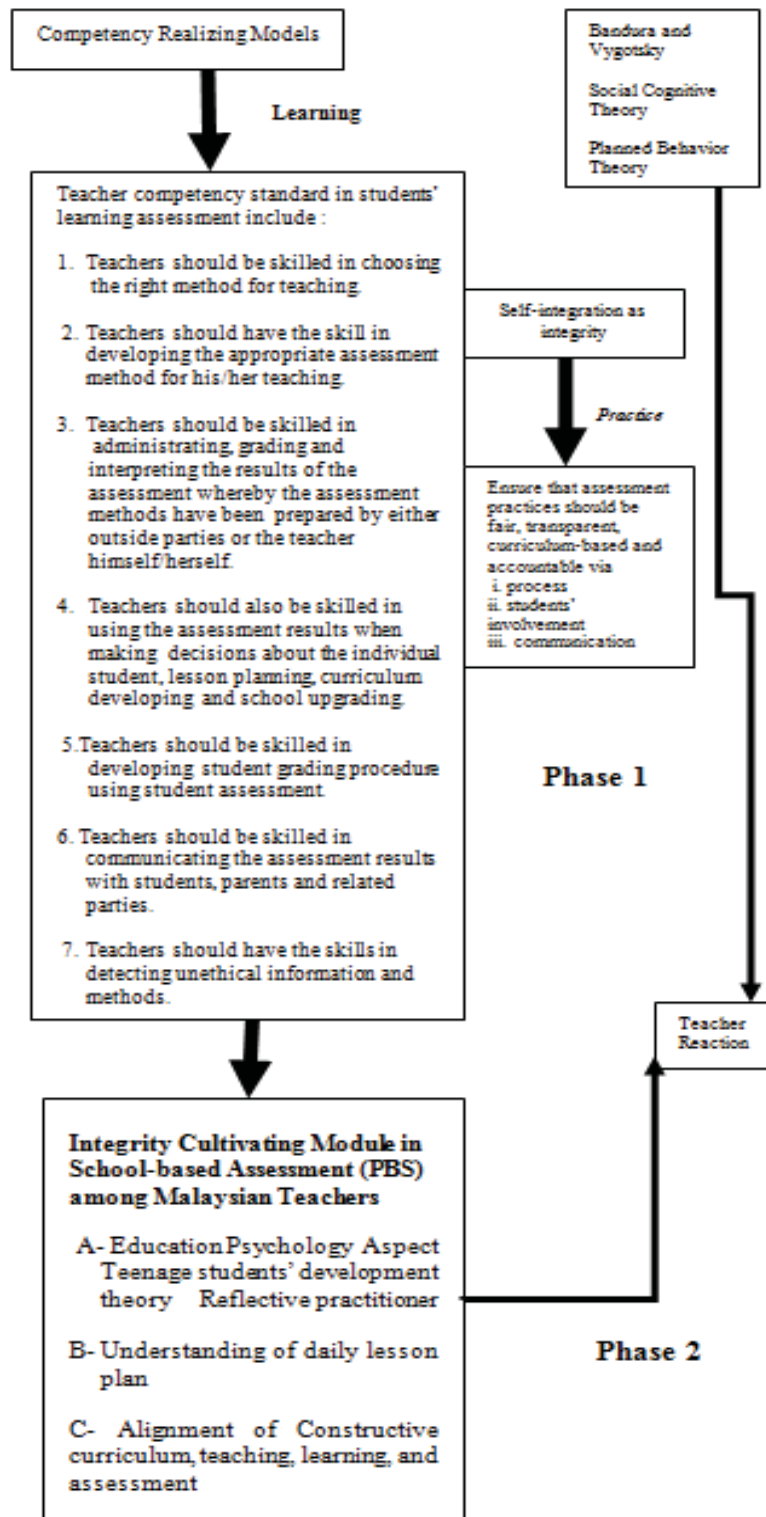


Fig. 4 Research Conceptual Framework

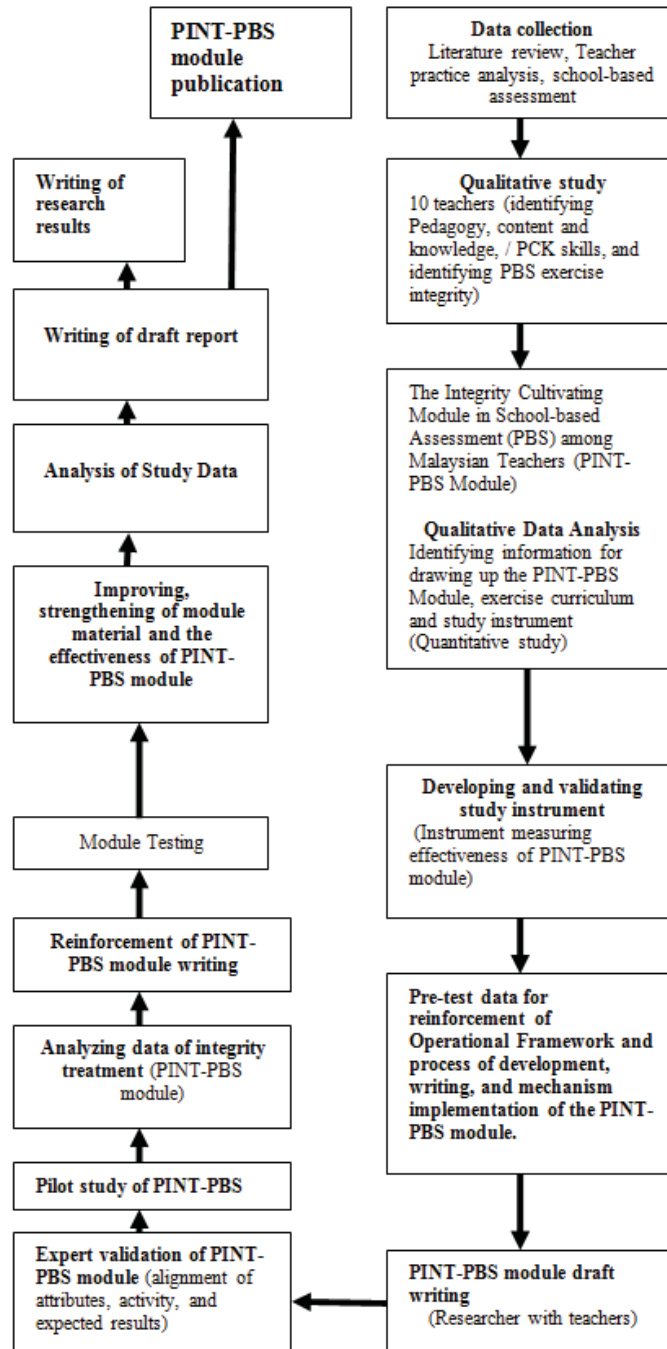


Fig. 5 Integrity Cultivating Module in School-based Assessment (PBS)

C. Stage 3

The developed module was tested in the first phase of the pilot study (comprising A: Educational Psychology Aspect: Understanding teenage students' development and reflective practitioner, B: Understanding Daily Lesson Plan (RPH) and Alignment of Constructive Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Assessment for further improvement. The second phase of the pilot study was implemented for validation purposes with the given scale of one to 10 for responses ranging from

strongly disagree to strongly agree towards the content and strategy of the Understanding the development of teenage students' and reflective practitioner, Understanding Daily Lesson Plan (RPH), and Alignment of Constructive Curriculum and Teaching, Learning and Assessment exercises.

The instrument for the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers had been developed using literature review, interviews with 10 teachers and content validation by

experts. The instrument was tested in a pilot study with participation of 120 teachers and the data were analysed to ascertain the reliability and psychometric features using the Rasch measurement model. When using the Rasch model, at least 100 samples and 20 items are needed to achieve stable results [24].

D. Stage 4

Next, the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers was tested using the quasi-experimental method with a 2x2 factorial design.

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

Item analysis for the pilot study data of the integrity cultivating module in PBS among Malaysian teacher's instrument was conducted using the Rasch measurement model. The actual research data were analysed using the SPSS statistics software programme and reported in a descriptive manner using percentages, mean and standard deviation for the purpose of answering the research questions. In order to test the study hypothesis, a t-test statistical analysis, one-way Anova and Manova were conducted.

VII. STUDY IMPLICATIONS

The Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers is expected to assist the Education Ministry, especially the principal trainers, teachers, headmasters and education officers to acquire effective intervention for improving the PBS assessors' integrity and competency. This module provides materials in the form of academic publication which would be helpful for a more systematic and effective development of knowledge and teacher training at universities, as well as among the teachers themselves. The module would be a document enabling the successful transformation of the national education and improving the quality of teachers which will in turn increase the confidence of parents and the general public towards the assessment system in schools.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the transformation in education cannot happen overnight. The big shift expected in appraisal practice should be in line with the knowledge and skills to implement it. Therefore, all the elements that can affect the integrity of the implementation of PBS should be given due consideration. Therefore, maintaining the alignment between practices and expectation in PBS should be in line with the competence of teachers in assessment. The development of the Integrity Cultivating Module in PBS among Malaysian teachers is expected to improve the teacher's competence and integrity in implementing PBS.

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