

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**TESL TRAINEE TEACHERS’
WORKPLACE COMPETENCIES
(PERCEIVED ENGLISH LANGUAGE
SKILLS, INTERPERSONAL SKILLS
AND PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT
KNOWLEDGE) AND THE
WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS: A
CASE STUDY IN A PRIVATE
UNIVERSITY IN SELANGOR**

NURDIYANA BINTI MOHAMAD YUSOF

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ABSTRACT

This study's primary goal was to investigate the workplace competencies of TESL trainee teachers in the teaching field. The specific goal of this study was to determine whether the TESL trainee teachers possessed the necessary perceived adequacy of English language skills, interpersonal skills and pedagogical content knowledge. The readiness of the TESL trainee instructors to begin their careers as future English teachers in public secondary schools was also investigated in this study. Three groups of samples participated in the study with firstly, 103 TESL trainee teachers who were assigned to different secondary schools around the Klang Valley, Selangor; secondly, 30 English secondary school teachers from the participating schools and lastly 437 secondary school students from the participating schools. Data were gathered for the study using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including interviews with English teachers, questionnaire distribution to TESL trainee teachers and secondary school students as well as practicum observations of TESL trainee teachers. Findings of the study indicates that the TESL trainee teachers met the requirements for workplace competences, especially in the areas of perceived English language skills, interpersonal skills and pedagogical content knowledge. They showed that they could speak English well, that they were confident in their ability to use the language, and that they could control the classroom throughout teaching and learning activities. The TESL trainee teachers were able to build strong relationships with their students and create interesting sessions that catered to the students' needs and interests. In addition to the positive outcomes of their workplace competencies, there are a few areas in which the workplace competencies of TESL trainee teachers could be improved. These areas include refining their perceived adequacy of English language skills, redesigning their control quadrant in terms of interpersonal dynamics, and developing more challenging lessons for advanced students. The study has also contributed to the improvements of the assessment form for the practicum observation as well as the development of a new course for the TESL undergraduates in advancing their English language skills, interpersonal skills and pedagogical content knowledge. These pedagogical implications would encourage the TESL undergraduates to be aware of their capabilities in meeting the demands of the teaching profession.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Since the colonial era, English language education in Malaysia has experienced substantial change. Before gaining independence from the British in 1957, the main language employed was English and ultimately, Article 152 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia designated Bahasa Malaysia as the national language of post-independence Malaysia. The provision was changed in 1971 to mandate that Bahasa Malaysia be used as the official language of all government agencies. Subsequently, the National Education Policy was created in 1971 which resulted in a gradual shift in how the English language was used in the Malaysian educational system, with regulations stating that all subjects taught in national schools had to be taught in Bahasa Malaysia, with the exception of English, and that the English language's importance had started to decline because it was only taught as a subject and as a second language (Zaki & Darmi, 2021). The government came to the realisation that in order to advance Malaysia towards globalisation, having the competency to speak fluently in English would be a fundamental element. Subsequently, it was judged imperative to revise the English language's significance in Malaysia, given its perceived importance for the nation's future growth.

As expressed in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025, one of the goals of the Ministry of Education is to guarantee that every student realises his or her full potential in accordance with the National Education Philosophy's vision, therefore promoting holistic student development. The National Education Philosophy places equal emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge and the development of leadership abilities, character, and values to create a strong sense of national identity and the ability to think critically, creatively, and innovatively. The main goal of these components is to enable all students to make meaningful contributions to their families, communities, and country. These components are essential for equipping pupils to flourish in a society that is becoming more interconnected (Ministry of Education, 2015).