

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY: A STUDY IN TVET  
MARA COLLEGE IN MALAYSIA**

Fazlina Mohd. Sani<sup>a\*</sup>, Bambang Sumintono<sup>b</sup>, Zuraidah Abdullah<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Faculty of Education, University of Malaya

<sup>b</sup> Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Islam Internasional Indonesia

\*Corresponding Author's Email: [fazlina@kmkulim.edu.my](mailto:fazlina@kmkulim.edu.my)

**ABSTRACT**

*Collaborations among educators at TVET institutions must be promoted through a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to accelerate students' learning in skill competency to achieve better results. Thus, this study aimed to explore the domain of PLC practised by educational leaders and educators at MARA Higher Technical Colleges of TVET institutions in Malaysia. The information was gathered from educational leaders (ELs) and educators from four TVET MARA Colleges through a single case study using a qualitative approach with inductive reasoning, semi-structured interviews, and open-ended survey techniques. The data were organised using a thematic analysis technique through open coding and the 'axial coding' procedure. Furthermore, the ATLAS.ti 22 software was employed to classify these themes and establish relationships to find meanings that fit this study's purpose. The analysis revealed six PLC domains that closely represented the large power distance and collectivism of Asian society. Furthermore, this study found that trust and collaboration are essential factors in developing social and human capital among educators. In addition, recommendations for future research were provided.*

**Keywords:** Professional learning community, social capital development, Human capital development

**INTRODUCTION**

Whether in the academic or TVET lines, educators must focus on meeting the desire to improve students' learning. The Blueprint 2015–2025 elaborated the objectives by acknowledging eleven shifts contributing to the evolving endeavour to enhance Malaysia's educational outcomes (Harris & Jones, 2017). Due to the importance of leadership to the success of the PLC practice (Hord, 1997), leaders must understand how to speak and conduct themselves in a way that respects other cultures if they are to lead multicultural organisations that complement one another (Velarde et al., 2020). Thus, educators' creativity must reflect these societal differences by taking chances and sharing information with others to improve learning outcomes and foster a culture of professional learning in their communities (Harris & de Bruin, 2018).

However, even though this PLC concept has been extensively studied in Malaysia, its implementation and challenges are inevitably far from reality (Chua et al., 2020). Moreover, a PLC model that adheres to the culture and setting of the schools, which in this study pertains specifically to the TVET paths, is essential, as many scholars have acknowledged that PLC is context-dependent (Ho et al., 2020; Zhang & Pang, 2016). In addition, by referring to other Malaysian studies, such as the study by Mohd Tahir and Musah (2020) and Ismail et al. (2020), it was found that the identification of a PLC model

that is compatible with the TVET ecosystem in Malaysia has yet to be studied.

Consequently, exploring the best characteristics of PLC that fit the TVET context must be developed in Malaysia as a guide for enhancing the development of PLC while recognising its implementation stages. This was mainly because most empirical studies on the PLC concept were done in the West (Chua et al., 2020; Zhang & Pang, 2016) rather than in Asia (Qiao et al., 2018), and they were scarce in MARA TVET institutes. Therefore, to fully grasp the TVET requirement in putting this whole concept into action, it is critical to explore its implementation (Mohd Zain, 2008). Thus, this research gap will be filled in this study by revealing the domains of PLC at MARA TVET KKTMs college in Malaysia.

Furthermore, the findings are expected to bridge the theoretical gap in increasing the understanding of PLC implementation strategies in the context of TVET MARA. It can add to the existing body of knowledge in Malaysian MARA educational institution research, which according to Mohd Zabidi et al. (2020), was minimal, especially when searching published documents. This research was motivated by the theory of distributed leadership, which suggests that for a PLC to be successful in educational institutions, leaders need to work through networking and the distribution of authority (Azorín et al., 2020). However, because leadership is unique depending on its cultural values, the manner in which it is practised defines its applicability (Sumintono et al., 2023).

Next, in a piecemeal manner, this article is structured following the introduction section, which briefly explores the background and purpose of the study. The second section delineates the literature review part on PLC, its brief history, its characteristics, and specific studies involving the Western and Asian contexts regarding its development and effects. The third section reflects on the methodology aspects related to the study design and sample selections, followed by the next three areas, which are the findings, discussion, and finally closed with a concise conclusion in answering the purpose of this study and recommendations for future guidance.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Teachers' professional development and students' achievements were identified as having the potential to improve and excel through the implementation of the professional learning community (PLC) concept (Doğan & Adams, 2018; Hassan et al., 2018). The only stipulation is that the method must ultimately benefit classroom instruction and student learning (Harris & Jones, 2019a). As a result, the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) introduced this concept in 2011 as part of the Malaysia Blueprint plan for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to promote teacher professionalism and the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015).

This PLC concept was formerly referred to as a learning organisation that evolved continuously through collaborations and focused on improving student outcomes (Chong et al., 2016). For collaborative cultures to flourish, professionals must keep working together toward a similar objective and, most importantly, be willing to share their expertise with others to increase learners' outcomes (Harris & Jones, 2019a). This quality must be supported by several essential instruments, such as collective learning and application, shared and supportive leadership, shared vision and mission, supportive physical and structural conditions, and finally, shared personal practice, which completes

the power of the PLC concept during its implementation (Hord, 1997).

In China, the model of PLC is linked to the collective learning and application norm, which emphasises academic excellence over individual traditions (Zheng et al., 2019). Their version of PLC was built on cultural practices of collectivism that strongly supported working together over competing to achieve the same goal (Qiao et al., 2018). In contrast to other cultures, it enabled people to collaborate towards a common purpose (Zheng et al., 2019). The same is shown by the Retna and Ng (2016)'s study, which points out how culture affects and how well students learn in Singapore's centralised command-and-control education system, which differs from education systems in the West. Malaysia, which is known to share an Asian culture that values collectivism over individualism and has a mutual culture of power distance and hierarchy (Ansari et al., 2004), as well as a highly centralised school system (Bush & Ng, 2022), is not immune to this scenario.

Meanwhile, researchers believe that behind educators and educational activities, school leadership hold a significant role in student achievement (Leithwood et al., 2020), with humanistic ethics profoundly woven into it (Kuo & Stanley, 2022). Moreover, according to Thien and Adams (2021), the outcomes of educational institutions were significantly influenced by distributed leadership, as opposed to a single management. On this basis, empowerment is a primarily distributed leadership trait that must be emphasised in building an equal and excellent learning environment in schools (Harris & Jones, 2019c). This resulted in the process of mutual influence between leaders and educators, which has the potential to improve school performance outcomes (Hallinger & Kulophas, 2020).

On the other hand, Zhu et al. (2019) say that empowerment may not encourage teachers to develop new ideas when the team's psychological safety is low. Team psychological safety, which is based on trust and mutual respect, makes it easier for teachers in PLCs to share, work together, and come up with new ideas. On this occasion, teachers merely regurgitate what authority says and disguise their ideas to keep the surface serene. In Malaysia, for instance, intermediate leaders and others were actively empowered to accomplish their assigned tasks and responsibilities, but leaders tended to delegate it, a practice known as allocative leadership, and retain control over the decision (Bush & Ng, 2022).

This is supported by the findings of a study by Adams et al. (2021) which showed that principals were still in charge of the school's immediate goals while ensuring that the teaching and learning procedures progressively returned to "normal" levels during the epidemic. Even though it was said that school principals' jobs had changed a lot after the COVID pandemic (Adams, 2021), the fact that they had to have the final say when strict reporting requirements had to be met shows that leaders stayed in charge in a top-down, hierarchical system (Bush & Ng, 2022).

This differs from the shared and supportive leadership domain, which Hord (1997) pointed out is a crucial part of the PLC model that must be in place for it to work. Since experts have acknowledged that PLC is context-dependent (Ho et al., 2020; Zhang & Pang, 2016), the context will determine its uniqueness. Green (2000) also stressed that successful leaders must clearly explain their vision and objective. A further intriguing point to explore is the need for trust, respect, and understanding to be ingrained in the school for teacher learning and peer collaborations to be genuinely implemented for the type of 'arranged

collegiality' to emerge in supporting collective learning efforts (Zheng et al., 2016).

In line with this, Mohd Tahir et al. (2013) 's study of three major university clusters in Malaysia shows that the physical condition to be portrayed by university leaders is effective in attending to the collegial relationship of educators and staff, with the trust and respect element being highly preserved. Furthermore, Ismail et al. (2020) demonstrated intense levels of support in interpersonal and physical conditions. As a result, the Malay language teachers in her study were beneficial in allowing other teammates to develop their skills and get new experiences while demonstrating the collaborative learning and applications feature. Finally, preparations for sharing personal practice must include a collaborative approach primarily focused on increasing student outcomes (Harris & Jones, 2019a). However, sharing will not improve learner outcomes or organisational learning if educators cannot evaluate and provide constructive feedback during the sharing process (Vermeulen et al., 2014).

## **METHODOLOGY**

Based on the collaboration component specified in the Strategic collaboration or Smart Partnership of Vocational and Technical Division (BKT) MARA, all the 10 KKTM colleges were selected as the study's population (MARA, 2019). Following that, four MARA higher technical colleges (KKTM) were purposely selected, based on Standard Practices elements indicated in MARA education standard marks (SPMa), which are significantly related to teaching and learning aspects. In addition, this study employed a single case study design with an exploratory qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews, open-ended surveys, and focus group interviews (FGI). The semi-structured interviews aimed to get first-hand information from the educational leader (EL) via individual interviews and from the educators via the FGI (Merriam & Grenier, 2019).

Three educators from two technical departments at each of the four KKTM colleges volunteered to participate in the FGI. In general, this study has purposefully picked 16 EL and 47 educators from the selected eight technical departments (2 technical departments each from the 4 KKTM colleges chosen) from the sample of 4 KKTM colleges. Ethically, respondents' identities were kept hidden. Therefore, the formal leaders were referred to as educational leaders (EL) throughout this study and labelled EL1, EL2,... until EL16. For the FGI, educators were designated as F1, F2... until F12, and for the surveys approach, S1, S2... until S35.

The reliability and validity of the study were addressed by triangulating the results acquired from these various methodologies. Furthermore, the collected data were examined using a thematic analysis technique, which is capable of providing a comprehensive and complete collection of data (Clarke & Braun, 2018) by detecting, analysing, and reporting themes and categories within the data. It was further supported by the ATLAS.ti 22 software program which was used to sort and establish the data's codes, themes, and categories. Furthermore, the recognised themes evolved inductively from the data, despite attempting to fit the PLC characteristics produced from this study into any pre-existing frameworks of other scholars' beliefs.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Following this study's goal, the exploration of PLC implementation in TVET colleges involving MARA KKTMs was determined through the encounter of six PLC domains that have been inductively characterised, which can demonstrate the growth of human and social capital in this study context. These findings aligned well with the MARA strategic plan (Majlis Amanah Rakyat, 2021) for TVET transformation strategies and the MARA education model, which strive to mainstream the TVET programme and strengthen the holistic development of human capital in the organisation. To maximise the impact on positive outcomes, the enhancement of social capital which Hargreaves (2019) identified as essential, was also found to be reflected in the portrayal of trust and good collaborative as well as close relationships among educators in the context of this study. However, some PLC domains differed from those revealed by Western experts, who assert that PLC is context-dependent (Ho et al., 2020; Zhang & Pang, 2016). Hence, the six domains of PLC gathered from this study are 'Bounded autonomy', 'Sharing values, Vision & mission importance', 'Practicing collectiveness for improvement', 'Supportiveness in physical /relationship conditions', 'Supportiveness in structural conditions', and 'Collective action towards personal sharing'.

### **Bounded Autonomy**

Bounded autonomy is equivalent to autonomy with control. The way educators were encouraged to share their opinions and experience shows it, as stated by EL16, "We need their spontaneous inputs and suggestions.," has limits on how decisions are made since the EL has to be informed and agree to them in the first place, " Those people decided.....the leaders" (F4). As a result, this is how the domain of bounded autonomy is characterised, which is the willingness to celebrate and use the voice and ideas of subordinates in making effective judgments. Thus, these show the EL's efforts to foster a culture of learning across communities due to their willingness to accept ideas from others, which is critical to the PLC's overall success (Salleh & Tan, 2017). According to Hord (1997), this was demonstrated by leaders who were passionately focused on boosting student learning, as evidenced by the findings of Ismail et al. (2020)'s study, which revealed that leaders provide great opportunities to experienced and expert teachers.

However, in this study, despite the lack of options for educators to make judgments that involve the informed approval of their planning and ideas, as mentioned by EL11, "...you can give suggestions, but decisions must 100% come from us" (EL11) yet, the cultivation of teacher leadership in this setting was the irrefutable reality that was implicitly traced in this dimension, with the EL being the lone leader who held the final choice (Hipp & Huffman, 2003). This is because, despite the constraints concerning the decision-making process, one of the elements of teacher leadership as extensively discussed in the literature; namely the chance to share practice and create change (Harris & Jones, 2019b), has been demonstrated in this study. Moreover, a study by Mohd Sani (2015) and Mat Daud (2015) involving the academic lines of two MARA colleges has also demonstrated the prevalent practice of excluding educators and teachers from the decision-making process. As a result, leaders in these two forms of academics and the TVET MARA framework of studies must make it a custom to preserve possibilities for ideas to be shared and recognised among others.

This concurred with the study by Zhu et al. (2019), which highlights the importance of having a 'high team psychological safety', that is, the strength in voicing their opinions and thoughts, as evidenced in this current study despite only emphasising the need for empowering teachers in making decisions. This is because teachers with 'low team psychological safety' will only follow the authority preferences and opinions in making decisions to maintain a harmonious relationship with their superiors (Qiao et al., 2018; Yin & Zheng, 2018). Thus, the openness of the EL in this study in celebrating ideas and opinions from the educators was a comparative example of encouraging the educators to be a 'high team psychological safety' despite not having the chance to make decisions together. Consequently, this aspect of 'bounded autonomy' has provided insight into the EL method of keeping their professional identity and influence among cultures with diverse decision-making practises.

### **Sharing Values, Vision & Mission Importance**

There were conflicting disputes regarding the college's mission, vision, and strategic plan and a lack of clarity surrounding the educators' grasp of how to achieve it. According to EL9, the vision and objectives of the TVET MARA colleges' strategic plan were formulated and provided for them to follow, "We simply follow the Headquarters' strategic plan vision and objectives" (EL10). EL11 also stressed the exclusivity of strategic plan formulation, as educators only need to obey orders. However, this was not the expectation of sharing a vision meant because, according to Özdemir (2019), shared values and vision must be formed collectively to improve practice, culture, and educational frameworks. Abdullah (2016) also emphasises the significance of a jointly developed vision, arguing that ignoring this communal effort will lead to a lack of clarity in understanding those who submit to it.

The implications of these problems can be verified by the feedback in written surveys by S4 when asked to explain the aim, mission, and vision of their MARA KKTM college, "I'm not sure about this" (S4) and also, through the FGI by F7, "There are now two versions, so I can't remember... I get confused" (F7). However, from the EL's point of view, things were different. They were very sure that it was the educators' responsibility to understand, as reported by EL15, "They should know.." and further added by EL1, "It's in their SKT (Yearly target setting), so they must know...no excuse on that." (EL1). This contrasted with the origin of a leadership concept that, according to Abdullah (2016), must entail the influence and guidance of leaders as the crucial aspects and not force employees to reach the prescribed visions.

Similarly, Domm (2001) emphasises the necessity of clarifying detailed explanations to all levels of employees, since the ability of leaders to explain the vision and objectives demonstrates their understanding of it (Green, 2000). Furthermore, this finding contradicted previous studies involving the academic line of schools conducted Ibrahim and Abdullah (2014), which offered to point out the strong mean values of sharing the mission and vision in the PLC implementation in their studies. However, these variations suggest that PLC implementation was context-driven to sustain its development and functionalities (Pang & Wang, 2016; Zhang & Pang, 2016).

Furthermore, despite the indistinct understanding and inconsistent debates on how the college's vision, objective, and strategic plan are formed, it was interesting to note that the EL and educators in this study clearly emphasised the commitment to the students

regarding their academic, technical, and vocational fields. This can be described through the interviews by EL12 and EL13, "The students are not very good at math and English, so we have to make sure they are closely guided" (EL12), "The educators in this department are very dedicated... they will look for ways to help the students do better" (EL13). Similarly, the educators went the extra mile to make sure the students weren't left out, even though they had to deal with unplanned events in the college, so that the students could still learn as planned (as mentioned by F10, F11, and F12 during the FGI). This demonstrated the EL and educator's determination to prioritise students, which, according to Hord (1997), will strengthen the effort of sharing values and vision in ensuring the overall implementation of PLC.

### **Practicing Collectiveness for Improvement**

In this study, educators learn together to develop themselves, as seen by their connection and support. This shows that the community nurtures PLC by sharing ideas and learning from others. Notwithstanding their seniority gap, the eagerness to learn from others is anchored on a solid relationship established on trust and respect, which, according to Hipp and Huffman (2003), was critical in the successful implementation of PLC. The educators were described as proactive and eager to share their knowledge by the EL, "Educators were quite receptive to enter the discussion with others, contributing their views and expanding on the issue that was brought up.." (EL14). This will prompt others to ponder and teach them to share their expertise with confidence while also appreciating the perspectives of others (EL1).

According to surveys by S13, educators concur that their motivations for sharing are to enhance their knowledge, teaching strategies, abilities, and practices, "To improve our pedagogical skills", and by S21, "...able to improve my teaching skills". Other feedback from one of the educators during the FGI also showed that they were sincere and willing to share their skills and knowledge to help themselves get better (F2). Furthermore, Ibrahim and Abdullah (2014) found that teachers in Malaysian secondary schools vigorously implemented collective learning characteristics. This supports the culture of interdependence in schools (Abdullah, 2016), which is portrayed in the KKTMM TVET context of this study by the educator's efforts to change their style and focus more on collaborative learning in helping students to improve their poor performance.

### **Supportiveness in Physical /Relationship Conditions**

This domain is described by the EL's tolerance and flexibility in finding solutions to educator's problems, such as a lack of technical equipment, which led to timetable adjustment, as mentioned by EL8, "Due to equipment shortages, we introduced the flexi timetable, which educators could pick according to their preferences and suitability" (EL8). Furthermore, the EL's tolerances satisfy educators, encouraging them to work with their colleagues to meet goals and improve student results. Saad et al. (2017) and Ismail et al. (2020) found it to be a factor in improving students' outcomes.

On top of that, they also enhanced their supportiveness of the relationship by supporting each other's limits. Educators would overcome workload or academic competency issues together. EL14's comments demonstrate, "For the July intake, educators from other departments will fill the shortage" (EL14). In this regard, educators are expected to

collaborate and see all students as their responsibility regardless of the programmes they supervise (EL16). Moreover, during the FGI, one educator described a good relationship between educators irrespective of seniority and experience. "Seniors share thought... they are helpful, and you can't say anything like, this is my class!, this is your student...no" (F8).

Apart from that, as the subject matter experts, the seniors were said to be cooperative in sharing their knowledge with others to benefit all students. This is in line with Koge (2022)'s study, which points to the importance of these guiding elements and the willingness of experienced teachers to share their knowledge with others as a factor that helped PLC grow. Additionally, it is a proven idea that improves learners' outcomes. Therefore, educators must be supported in using their experience and professional judgement to recognise that self-determined learners are flourishing in a high-trust environment (Hargreaves, 2021), as found in this study. However, due to the Asian culture of strong power distance, this finding contradicted Mainland China studies by Qiao et al. (2018).

These studies confirmed the power distance norm, where senior teachers dominate the ideas, as the younger blindly follow without questions. Thus, senior teachers used PLC to strategise their learning by recycling the process without allowing for criticism and reflective discussions, which became PLC norms (Qiao et al., 2018). This lack of collegiality and failure to reflect on ideas which depicts the flaws in this domain was not evident in this study of MARA TVET KKTm colleges and other Malaysian studies like Mohd Tahir et al. (2013) study. However, this supports Koge (2022) and Ismail et al. (2020) findings indicating that school culture and orientation shape professional learning and collaborative work of communities in it, or as per context-specific by Ho et al. (2020) and Zhang and Pang (2016).

### **Supportiveness in Structural Conditions**

Gray et al. (2017) noted structural factors as essential to developing and enriching PLC in expressing the formal component of school structures. Thus, class observations by EL, good facilities, improvised student college programmes, and a conducive environment provided by EL, which allows educators to learn continually, were the themes indicating structural conditions support for PLC in this study. Apart from the usual checks made to ensure the educator's readiness with their lesson plan (EL9), the observation was also made for new educators who lacked pedagogical understanding by requesting them to present a simple topic to students after being observed by the leaders, "I asked the new educators to join my class because they did not yet attend any pedagogical classes. Then, I will give some simple topics and observe them" (EL9).

The significance of this class observation was to support teachers' professional development, which Zhang and Ng (2011) referred to as teacher appraisal system improvement in their study done in Shanghai. Furthermore, both the EL and the educators agreed on the good facilities that might help students' teaching and learning process. "Up-to-date instruments and a conducive classroom" (S15), "items that meet the requirements" (S32), and comments on the up-to-date technologies such as the X-ray machine (EL16), 3D printing device (EL10), and good internet connections with free Wi-Fi for all (S32). The significance of having good facilities was viewed as an antidote that may



bridge the gap of administrative hurdles for transformation and change efforts can be made to realise since those physical environment demands were critical variables for student learning development (Voulalas & Sharpe, 2005).

Thus, the feedback in this study about the good facilities has shown that the effort to bring about changes and transformations in teaching practises has been done with a dedication to keeping the PLC implementation in the learning organisation working well (Chua et al., 2020). Following that, initiatives were designed to improve college performance and value through the determination expressed by educators, "to ensure that all activities conducted were successfully completed" (S28). On this occasion, no programme or activity may disrupt the teaching and learning process (EL2). Furthermore, the students were exposed to and taught in real-world situations while closely focused on the entrepreneur's field, which tended to broaden their future options (EL3).

Educators were also encouraged to improve their skills by being allowed to join any training courses that would help them become experts in their field (as confirmed by EL11 during the interview). In a survey, S31 wrote, "We are encouraged to participate in competitions and innovation conferences to expand our skills,". Also, the EL strategy of having educators teach the same subject at least twice a year has given them a lot of chances to learn it well, as F9 said at the FGI: "For mastering the subject, we are given a year...2 semesters each, which is enough for us to learn". EL3 also pointed out that educators did not have to focus only on their professional development. Instead, they could also focus on activities that helped them improve their social skills. For example, one comment in a survey by S22 claimed that their collaboration and sharing of ideas with other experienced educators through the paired method was their preparation before they could handle a classroom. Their social skills were developed in this manner.

Otherwise, if the educators are not proficient in their subject area, they will be sent to courses that will strengthen their expertise, leading to the growth of human capital [as affirmed by (EL15) and (EL11) in their interviews]. These opportunities helped them grow as professionals and were the most important parts of creating and establishing the PLC for people to work together and share knowledge through reflective inquiry (Chua et al., 2020). Aside from this professional development improvement aimed at improving human capital development abilities, educators were also willing to adjust their individualistic working style with other activities to improve their social skills and behaviours. Fullan (2006) concurred that this attempt to modify the learning culture is difficult, but vital, and closely tied to the effectiveness of PLC.

### **Collective Action Toward Personal Sharing**

In this domain, the educators were described as empathetic, endlessly supportive, and willing to share their practices with others (as verified by EL2, EL42 and F4). Abdullah (2016) emphasised this contemplation acts as the critical human factor in creating PLC in schools. Furthermore, there were behaviours of eagerness to learn from others, as proven in an interview by EL11, which describes it as humbleness in requesting assistance from others who were known to be more qualified and suitable. This can be seen in one of the EL's feedback: "I ask to go into other seniors' and lecturers' classrooms to see how they do things well so I can improve my way of teaching and make it more creative" (EL16).

This was reinforced further by the welcoming of the other parties to encourage people to join their classroom, as noted by one of the educators, "I'm always glad to have them in my class" (S31), and also from F1 and F3 during the FGI, "Don't worry, others can see how I teach in my class" (F1), "Yes, they are welcome," (F3), and many other written responses from educators in the surveys and during the FGI. Moreover, it was necessary to note that educators and EL in this study showed their readiness to learn and willingness to share their best practices with others. This is similar to the findings by Abdullah (2016) which showed that teachers in Malaysian secondary schools have the ability and potential to help students do better in school by changing their practices constantly.

Interestingly, the same conclusion was not obtained in a study involving Chinese secondary schools in Malaysia's northern region by Chua et al. (2020), which discovered that sharing of teaching practises only engaged close pals due to a face-saving nature among the Chinese educators. However, this was not the issue that arose in the TVET MARA context of the study since, as stated by Chua et al. (2020), Pang and Wang (2016), and Zhang and Pang (2016), PLC function and development are heavily influenced by differences in environment and culture. Despite Malaysia being recognised as a collectivist culture that values collectivism over individuality (Sumari et al., 2020), the Malays' supremacy in this TVET MARA setting demonstrated the contrast in cultural society compared to the Chinese. This will affect the way teachers perform their tasks including the teaching and learning activities and leadership aspects in schools (Salleh & Tan, 2017).

Meanwhile, both the EL and the educators agreed that the sharing practices were done informally. This was confirmed in an interview by (EL12) and in written surveys by (S1), (S19), and (S17). Therefore, there is no proof that it happened because there is no paperwork to prove its existence, as confirmed in an interview by (EL15) and as mentioned by EL16, "We stay at the back of the class... It's not the norm, but we didn't give up on the attempt. Our weakness is that we did not make it a standard practise and we didn't keep records of it". As a result, their willingness to share their practices with others was unproven because the approval of others to normalise the pattern was scarce. On this ground, Vermeulen et al. (2014) have pointed out that any sharing practises must be accompanied by reflections and feedback from the members, or they would not lead to a clear improvement in the outcomes of students and the learning of the organisation.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

From the literature reviewed, the exploration of PLC implementations through the characterization of its dimensions in Malaysia's TVET ecosystem has yet to be studied. Thus, following the study's goal, six PLC domains were inductively gathered in exploring the PLC implementation in this TVET of MARA KKTMs colleges, revealing the development of both human and social capital in this study context. This is reflected through the domains of i) practising collectiveness for improvement, ii) supportiveness in physical /relationship conditions, and iii) supportiveness in structural conditions. Next, the other two domains indicate the unique construct of PLC implementation, namely iv) bounded autonomy domain or also known as autonomy with control and v) sharing values, vision and mission importance domain that emphasises student's achievements despite a loosening in the way it is formed and understood collectively. This corresponded to the nature of collectivism and the highly centralised educational system, which differed from

the Western setting. Finally, despite widespread agreement that it exists, the last domain vi) collective action toward personal sharing was discovered to be explicitly depicted despite the lack of evidence to support its presence.

Furthermore, since this study only featured a single case study design using a qualitative approach with a small sample size and demographic, the findings of this study could not be generalised to all TVET MARA KKTU Colleges in Malaysia. However, future research should adopt a quantitative approach involving all the TVET MARA of KKTU colleges, as research involving the MARA college ecosystem has been scarce. Therefore, expanding this study will provide clear insight into PLC development in the TVET MARA ecosystem context, which can then be generalised to other populations of TVET context institutions in Malaysia. Finally, it would be advantageous if future research could incorporate data involving students' outcomes to assess the true impact of PLC implementation, which is in line with the objective of PLC to always improve student outcomes.

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