

Employing Mixed-Methods Explanatory Sequential Design: An Instructional Coaches Competencies in Malaysia's Curriculum Aspect

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ABSTRACT--- *The instructional coaching program is established in the global education domain to facilitate teachers from the viewpoints of the curriculum, pedagogical and the practical. In every district of Malaysia, the instructional coaching program grants help to teachers through their coaches since 2012. In curriculum perspectives, the purposes of the Instructional Coaches (ICs) are promoted by knowledge and skills as being reported by the District Transformation Programme 3.0 (DTP 3.0). Accordingly, this research intended to recognise ICs' level of competencies in curriculum aspects in Malaysia. In this investigation, a mixed-method explanatory sequential design was employed. Besides, before being analysed utilising SPSS version 23, the data were consolidated from 118 ICs throughout the nation in the form of questionnaires. Next, after manually analysed the meticulous interview, the output was adopted as the qualitative data. In the research, descriptive statistics including frequency, mean score, standard deviation and percentage were utilised. With a mean score of 4.23, $sd = 0.561$ and by extensive interview, the research confirmed that ICs was proficient in the curriculum. Thus, it confirmed that the ICs' competency level in curriculum awareness was at a high standard. Also, it suggested that in the curriculum regards of the subject being taught, ICs was accountable and expert. The conclusions of this research afford comprehension into ICs' capacity to coach teachers in school and their system of quality teaching and learning (T&L). Furthermore, the teachers' process to communicate and establish their struggles were determined by the school and social climate. Consequently, in an attempt to reach its purposes of assisting teachers, the instructional coaching program must be sufficiently appreciated and acknowledged by authorities of schools and education. Besides, in order to intensify what the coaches are trying to accomplish, environmental areas and possibilities for collaboration, certainly perform a vital position. In Malaysia's context, this research's authenticity is being highlighted as it is the pioneer study to examine the coaches' competencies and experiences of who are actively engaging in the instructional coaching program for teachers. Accordingly, the authority must present assistance and collaboration to guarantee that ICs remains to be skillful in rendering quality coaching to teachers.*

Keywords--- *Instructional Coaching (ICs), School Improvement Specialist Coaches Plus (SISC+), District Transformation Program 3.0 (DTP 3.0), Teaching and Learning (T&L), Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (MEB) Coaching and Mentoring, Professional Development (PD).*

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I. INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, the Instructional knowledge and coaching skills among School Improvement Specialist Coaches+ (SISC+) or instructional coaches (ICs) are the current millenary educational transformation (Rafisah Osman & Haslina Ismail, 2017). ICs has to shift its teachers' guiding and coaching method to remodel teaching and learning (Hilmi & Jamil, 2017; Radhiah et al., 2016). Further, in order to attract teachers to supplement new information following the purposes of an instructional coach, ICs must master the diversity of rich pedagogical and most advanced curriculum.

Other than that, it is the teacher's duties too, to master the most developed curriculum and pedagogical expertise to sustain their high level of professionalism (Sarabiah & Zamri, 2016; Fatimah & Halim, 2010; Jimbai & Zamri, 2019). The act to recognise the potency of coaching skills strategy that is perceived as the impetus for teacher quality is one of the hurdles faced by ICs (Knight, 2019; Joyce & Showers, 2018; Charner & Medrich, 2017; Cooke & Wood, 2012).

Instructional coaching is contemplated as the motivator for quality T&L means (Sarabiah & Zamri, 2016; Jimbai & Zamri, 2017). Teacher's competency has increased dramatically in their classroom T&L since the inception of ICs profession (Saemah & Zamri, 2016; Ali et al., 2018). As Knight (2019) and Aquilar (2016) proposed, ICs advises teachers in professional growth to intensify their curriculum and pedagogical skills quality. Additionally, in the context of coaching's active learning, it affects two crowds; specifically, the supervising teacher (supervisor/mentors/ coaches) and the supervised party (mentee, /coachee/ protégé (Norhasni 2006; Knight et al., 2017). Also, the healthy teaching and learning system necessitates the teachers to comprehend the freshest pedagogical skills and curriculum. They must furnish themselves with relevant information, characters, actions and talents as being maintained in the Planning and Policy Research Division (2012) Hilmi & Jamil, 2017; Mohamad et al., 2016). Moreover, to cater to the demands of 21st-century education, ICs must ensure that sufficient coaching strategies are submitted. Consequently, the researchers were attempting to recognise the competency level of curriculum aspect among ICs in Malaysia following ICs duty motivation which is to afford to coach in curriculum and pedagogical aspects.

One objective and one research question to develop in this research which is to identify ICs competency in the aspects of curriculum knowledge and the research questions is what is the ICs competency in the aspect of curriculum knowledge?

II. A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1) Instructional Coaching @ SISC+ Programme

In the year 2012, the instructional coaching program was launched to advance teachers' learning and teaching by coaching (Noel Jimbai & Zamri, 2017; Mohamad et al., 2016; Sarabiah & Zamri, 2016). The equivalent position too, has been founded in several other nations to perform more productive and enjoyable T&L (Aquilar, 2017; Knight 2018; Joyce & Shower, 2016). The purposes of ICs were to manage and advise the efficiency of the implementation, coach teachers on pedagogical abilities, and exercise novel curricula and most advanced pedagogy to the classroom, as being proposed in the District Transformation Programme 3.0 (Ministry of Education, 2012). In all District Education Office, it will be allowed to customise the assistance required by the schools. It too

involves the recruitment of full-time teachers' coaches which defines the first result defines of ICs. ICs lead and assist teachers in low-performing schools (Ministry of Education, 2012). The ICs institution serves the goals to present continuous professional development (CPDs) to teachers and decrease the number of tiers included in the curriculum and pedagogical performance (Mohamad et al., 2016; Ali et al., 2019).

The instructional coaching programme is comprising of both concepts, coaching and mentoring. It is believed to be the impetus to develop teaching by intensifying teacher's information and abilities, in comprehending and performing the most advanced education improvements, curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation as being maintained by the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) 2013-2025. ICs must fulfil their function as an instructional coach to the teachers (Knight 2017; Ali et al., 2019; Balang et al., 2019; Rozita et al., 2016).

III. METHODOLOGY

As being suggested by Creswell et al. (2003), the mixed-methods sequential explanatory design comprises two separate phases: quantitative followed by qualitative one. In this study, firstly, the researchers gathered and analysed the quantitative (numeric) data. Then, the qualitative (text) data were combined and analysed to help clarify or elaborate on the quantitative outcomes achieved previously. Secondly, the researchers employed the qualitative data phase, and the two phases were connected in the intermediate stage in the study. These measures were administered since the quantitative data and its following analysis present a comprehensive comprehension of the research problem. The qualitative data and their report improve and refine those statistical results by examining participants' beliefs ultimately (Rossman & Wilson, 1985; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998; Creswell, 2003). In the literature, the pros and cons of mixed-methods design have been comprehensively reviewed (Creswell et al., 1996; Green & Caracelli, 1997; Creswell, 2003; 2005; Moghaddam et al., 2003). One of the advantages includes the possibilities and straightforwardness to investigate the quantitative outcomes in more detail. Morse (1991) suggested that the design can be particularly beneficial when unexpected outcomes occur from quantitative research. Nevertheless, the constraints of this design are the feasibility of resources and a long period to manage and examine both kinds of data.

This descriptive research employed questionnaire instruments disseminated through goggle form and produced based on The District Transformation Program (DTP 3.0 Management Book, Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE). Curriculum knowledge was randomly distributed following a sum of 23 items aspects being reviewed. In Sarawak, Malaysia, a result of 118 ICs returned the questionnaire circulated. By utilising Statistic for Social Science

SPSS version 23, the conclusions of the research were examined. The conclusions of the investigation included merely descriptive analysis comprising mean, standard deviation, frequency and percentage. While qualitative data were transcribed manually, the mean score details were based on Nunnally and Bernstein analysis (1994). The data collected were profound interviews with five respondents. Based on the lowest and the highest mean, the questions applied in the interviews accordingly. The interview goal is to authenticate the verdicts of the quantitative study in the first phase of the study.

Table 1: Mean Score

<i>Number</i>	<i>Mean Values</i>	<i>Interpretations</i>
1	4.01 – 5.00	Very high
2	3.01 – 4.00	Moderate high / moderate
3	2.01 – 3.00	Low
4	1.00 – 2.00	Very Low

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 showed the frequency and percentage scores for each item of the SISC + competency level in the curriculum area measured by 23 items. The results revealed that all twenty-three items had high scores. The results of this study show that item B17, “Using guidance data to improve GDD Pd”, had a mean of 4.46 and a standard deviation of 0.579. Whereas item B23, “Guiding GDB constructive summative questions based on the curriculum of KSSR and KSSM subjects”, had a mean of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 0.836. Overall, the SISC + competency score in the curriculum (mean = 4.25, SP = 0.527) among the respondents was high.

Table 2: Frequency and Percentage Scores

<i>No.</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>Very Incompetent</i>	<i>Incompetent</i>	<i>Less Competent</i>	<i>Competent</i>	<i>Very Competent</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>
B1	Know the Curriculum and Assessment Standard Document (DSKP) of the Primary School Curriculum (KSSR) and the High School Standard Curriculum (KSSM) are well-guided subjects.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (10.2)	57 (48.3)	49 (41.5)	4.31	.650
B2	Understand the KSSR and KSSM subject matter well.	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	6 (5.1)	59 (50.0)	50 (42.4)	4.31	.724
B3	Explain the contents of the KSSR and KSSM subject matter guide with confidence.	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	12 (10.2)	53 (44.9)	50 (42.4)	4.26	.778
B4	Can provide a description of the skills elements contained in the KSSR and the KSSM subject matter that are guided.	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	12 (10.)	58 (49.)	45 (38.1)	4.22	.764
B5	Understand clearly each element contained in the KSSR and the KSSM subject matter.	1 (0.8)	2 (1.7)	12 (10.)	57 (48.)	46 (39.0)	4.23	.767
B6	Know the syllabus of a well-conducted subject.	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	8 (6.8)	54 (45.)	55 (46.6)	4.38	.653

B7	Know the curriculum changes implemented in KSSR and KSSM.	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	9 (7.6)	55 (46.)	52 (44.1)	4.32	.727
B8	Planning the curriculum activities of the subject.	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	12 (10.)	60 (50.)	45 (38.1)	4.26	.672
B9	Coordinate the implementation of curriculum programs at the district level.	2 (1.7)	0 (0.0)	18 (15.3)	63 (53.4)	35 (29.7)	4.09	.773
B10	Implement an intervention program that is within the capacity of the Guided Teacher (GT).	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (8.5)	62 (52.5)	46 (39.0)	4.31	.620
B11	Define curriculum planning objectives at the district level.	0 (0.0)	1 (0.8)	24 (20.3)	62 (52.5)	31 (26.3)	4.04	.709
B12	Resolve problems related to curriculum programs at district level.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (15.3)	72 (61.0)	28 (23.7)	4.08	.621
B13	Guide the effectiveness of curriculum programs conducted in the district.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (11.9)	65 (55.1)	39 (33.1)	4.21	.639
B14	Evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum programs conducted at the district level.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (13.6)	66 (55.9)	36 (30.5)	4.17	.645
B15	Identify curriculum suitability with the ability of the GT.	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	10 (8.5)	63 (53.4)	43 (36.4)	4.24	.712
B16	Guide GT oversees the curriculum process created by the committee.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (11.0)	62 (52.5)	43 (36.4)	4.25	.643
B17	Use guidance data to improve GT.	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (4.2)	54 (45.8)	59 (50.0)	4.46	.579
B18	Provide up-to-date curriculum input to enhance TnL	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (6.8)	62 (52.5)	48 (40.7)	4.34	.602
B19	Guide GT to apply high-level thinking skills (HOTS) based on the KSSR and KSSM curriculum.	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	6 (5.1)	53 (44.9)	58 (49.2)	4.42	.671
B20	Guide GT identifies the use of teaching resources that promote HOTS based on the KSSR and KSSM curriculum.	1 (0.8)	1 (0.8)	6 (5.1)	56 (47.5)	54 (45.8)	4.36	.700
B21	Guide GT promotes HOTS skills through	1 (0.8)	0 (0.0)	9 (7.6)	58 (49.2)	50 (42.4)	4.32	.690

	KSSR and KSSM curriculum.							
B22	Guide GT develops formative questions based on the curriculum of KSSR and KSSM subject.	2 (1.7)	3 (2.5)	16 (13.6)	60 (50.8)	37 (31.4)	4.08	.839
B23	Guide GT develops summative questions based on the KSSR curriculum and the subject-matter KSSM.	2 (1.7)	4 (3.4)	15 (12.7)	64 (54.2)	33 (28.0)	4.03	.836
	Overall						4.25	.527

The results of the interviews with the participants involved showed that their competencies in curriculum knowledge were high as all five participants were able to explain their understanding and knowledge of the curriculum very clearly and in detail. Through the interviews attended, participants 1 explained the need for ICs to be competent in the curriculum as the ICs task was to guide teachers. According to him, guided teachers consider ICs a reference point when teachers are confused or unsure about anything related to the curriculum. It can be explained by the interview below:

...most guided teachers consider ICs as their reference point when they are unsure or confused about a curriculum matter. Therefore, to be a useful and helpful ICs guide must be competent in the curriculum. (P1)

Through interviews with second participants also shows that ICs is regarded as a knowledge disseminator and they should be able to guide teachers at the district level as they are the ones who are considered competent in the curriculum. Participant 2 also stated that teachers would definitely refer to ICs to gain knowledge of changes in the curriculum. It can be explained by the interview below:

... ICs is a consultant and should be competent in this aspect of the curriculum because we are as a shoulder where they rely on to improve their knowledge, skills in the curriculum. (P2)

Similarly, the third participant states that ICs is critical in the curriculum because they are reference experts. ICs should also have great knowledge of classroom assessment. The details of the interview are as below:

... For me, ICs needs to become proficient in assessment as well, because most of the teachers lack of knowledge or expertise in the field may be due to lack of exposure or lack of self-knowledge in the curriculum, which is why, as ICs we need to be knowledgeable in the curriculum because we are where they depend. (P3)

In an interview with the fourth participant, he stated that ICs needs to be competent in the curriculum because of ICs job as a coach. The details of the conversation are as below:

... Imagine if we were incompetent, especially in terms of curriculum, we would not be equipped with the latest curriculum such as KSSR and KSSM, for example, how would we guide teachers in schools if we were not competent, could this not lead to our reputation as SISC + being underestimated by teachers? (P4)

Interviews with the fifth participant found that ICs needed to master the elements of the curriculum well. The details of the interview are as below:

... I have to master the elements of the curriculum itself. We have to look at the curriculum as big, like the DSKP, whatever KSSR, KSSM, from which we need to be competent. (P5)

In conclusion, the conclusions of the interview have been able to provide clarity on the research question. The explanations provided by all five participants of the study indicate that ICs needs to be competent in the curriculum (Teemant et al., 2011).

The findings show that ICs competency level in the curriculum is high. It is good that ICs can maintain the momentum of excellence in providing quality guidance to teachers. Overall, this reinforces the findings of Rozita et al. 2016, Sarabiah and Zamri (2017), Noel Jimbai and Zamri (2019) that ICs needs strong curriculum and pedagogical skills in order for teachers to have high confidence in ICS ability to provide guidance. To strengthen ICs professionals, the findings of Mohd Hilmi and Jamil (2017) study support that the quality of mentoring is one level or the ability of ICs to guide quality coaching practice. It is appropriate that the ministry of education establish this position with a focus on guiding curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. Through effective coaching practices as well as schools under band five can be assisted, and teachers will be given guidance in terms of concepts, ideas, methods, techniques, teaching strategies of the 21st century. It has implications for the planning and implementation of the ICs programme. The findings of this study are in line with Mohd Hilmi and Jamil's (2017) study which stated that SISC + needs to focus on the suitability of guidance, timeframe, location of guidance and facilities in the guidance field. Wong and Elzira (2017) stated that the appropriateness of a coaching session is very important for teachers.

According to Rozita et al. (2016), the factors of teachers and schools are the catalyst for school effectiveness and student achievement. According to Liddicoat (2018), ICs professionals are not only referring to the professional attitude of the educational institution but are comprehensive. Being a quality ICs integrates three crucial elements, namely curriculum knowledge, pedagogy and assessment, making ICs person more credible and respected by a mentor. For practical guidance, ICs needs to use the right skills to make the knowledge transition smoothly. Applying values in coaching practice is also essential for ICs to be an excellent example for teachers (Burchinal et al., 2012; Pianta et al., 2010).

There is a limited practical proof that suggests holding instructional coaches in school points to students' accomplishment even though the recommendations mentioned above appear promising. The factors of that are mainly contributing it are there is a deficiency of data connecting coaching directly to innovations in teacher preparation, and student achievement, inadequate standardisation in the ICs direction, poor documentation of what occurs during coaching communications, and an expert advancement is a new event. (Peterson et al., 2018). Further, the position of instructional coaches diversified among schools. It implies that they must administer another task other than coaching (Duessen et al., 2018). The role carried out the ICs only takes a short period during coaches work weeks. Additionally, little is known on ways in which the teachers' coaching promotes student's development and success, reports in what they prepare, when instructional coaches engage with teachers in the coaching function (Knight, 2017; Sweeney, 2018).

As a part of the initiatives to produce more efficient ICs, they must present a diversity of workshops and courses to establish their dispositions in regards to grasping coaching methodology, communication, acquiring interest, holding questioning abilities, knowledge quality, understanding contemporary curriculum and pedagogical skills and self-oriented professional learning (Hobson & Malderez, 2013). In an attempt to supplement the abundance of coaching in Malaysia, more studies on the performance and efficacy of ICs administration should be reviewed. This research will narrow down the gap study in terms of being the impetus for educators in the realm of education,

the Ministry of Education, parents, schools and the holistic society as a whole to keep abreast for more conventional use (Decimon & Pak, 2016; Clements et al., 2011; Roschelle et al., 2010; Greenleaf, 2011; Heller, 2010). It is observed that, in the event of ICs being skilled with significant components of daily lessons, curriculum and content standards, it is easier to be effectively implemented. Such appreciation presents teachers with more precise management, in comparison to let the teacher blend different strategies and ideas into their pedagogy. For the record, the content and standards and curriculum efficacy that teachers were using impact ICs progress (Fishman et al., 2003; Phelan et al., 2011; Roschelle, 2018).

V. CONCLUSION

The researchers have examined ways in which the coaches through instructional coaching are harmonious with research-oriented views of consistency, practical education, span, joint support, and content focus that caters to five specific characteristics of competencies (Hobson, 2016). Furthermore, the researchers considered the possibilities of discrepancies and presented the reasons for its reduction. In fact, the interests of instructional coaching realised by ICs are not a new phenomenon. Ergo, in an attempt to substantially prove coaching as an excellent expert advancement chance for teachers to advance their teaching professions, more observational researches have to be administered.

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