The Motivations and Barriers of Teachers' Professional Development Activities during the Movement Control Order (MCO) – A Preliminary Insight

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Abstract. Due to the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-2) or COVID-19 pandemic, the education sector in Malaysia opted for the practice of online communication as a new norm. However, even during the pandemic, teachers in Malaysia are obliged to involve with professional development (henceforth, PD) activities for at least 42 hours annually. This article is prepared from a preliminary study to report the motivating factors and barriers on teachers' PD activities during Malaysia's Movement Control Order (henceforth, MCO). Also, this article studied the prevalence and trend of the teachers' online communication during the period. A survey was conducted as a pilot study on 35 teachers from Sri Laksamana Primary School (henceforth, SLPS) in Melaka. The data gained were analysed descriptively using the SPSS software. In general, the results indicate that teachers are motivated to involve with online PD activities by getting rewarded with annual performance evaluation marks, which is beneficial for their career mileage. Next, the most significant barrier for their online PD is time limitation due to other workloads. In conclusion, even though the teachers are well-accepting online PD activities, teachers should be given a higher portion of evaluation marks regarding their annual PD involvement than the current five per cent portion. Next, the school's administrators should act on teachers' work distribution issues that became the main challenge for effective online PD, thus creating a favourable working ecosystem.

1. Introduction

This pilot study aims to discover teachers' motivations and barriers for their online PD sessions during the Movement Control Order (MCO). In Malaysia, the MCO was enforced starting on the 18th of March, 2020, due to the quick spreading of COVID-19 (Shaha et al., 2020). During the MCO, the social and physical limitations prevented more spreading of COVID-19 and have transformed formal programmes such as courses, workshops, or any official gatherings to be done online. Even though the government sectors in Malaysia were trying to avoid the virus from spreading, public schools were found to function as usual. Teachers and schools staff were opted to work from home, practising telecommuting using internet-based technologies.

As far as the PD process is concerned, teachers should proceed regularly (Zakiyuddin, 2019) even during the MCO as Malaysian teachers must fulfil their PD obligations and record their participation in the Continuous Professional Development Credit Point System (MyPPB). The teachers must achieve at least 42 credit points annually, equivalent to 42 hours of PD participation. The PD activities can be in the form of activities listed in Table 1 and are usually carried out by in-house training programmes in schools where teachers are gathered to learn about new information or skills (Jamil et al., 2011). Therefore, even by telecommuting using internet-based technologies, PD is an important activity that teachers should regularly do as an obligation to share new knowledge with their colleagues, be trained, and be constantly updated with the latest information and skills, including during the pandemic period.

This pilot study also tested the questionnaire items and validated the instrument's reliability for the planned actual research. By questioning the teachers' motivating factors and barriers during their online PD sessions and the prevalence and trend for their online PD activities, their readiness to do so during the MCO is exposed.

2. Literature Review

However, there are other ways for teachers to learn even during the MCO in Malaysia. Teachers can continue to learn during the pandemic as they are provided with opportunities to learn more about learning through digital methods (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Since they need to adapt to online learning (Konig et al., 2020), education administrators also are recommended to provide proper and safe guidelines for teachers to continually learn through the pandemic (Muhayimana, 2020).

Facing changes in teachers' working environment, from physical attendance to online communication, can be stimulated with proper motivations such as support and influence by people around (Savvidou, 2020) and spending less on commuting expenses (Fadzilah et al., 2021). Motivations to work from home occur when the proper distribution of workloads is done among employees, having fewer networking issues, having government support with effective

employment act that covers the safety of working from home, and the employees' intrinsic motivation to be fulfilled by themselves (Marimuthu & Vasudevan, 2020). Teachers also require support systems in ICT literacy training (Khan & Kazmi, 2020) and the freedom to choose PD activities that suit their interests (Moekwa, 2020).

Meanwhile, many researchers reported that teachers faced obstacles such as limited ICT literacy (Alea et al., 2020), juggling personal responsibilities, and being unable to properly manage time while working from home (Marimuthu & Vasudevan, 2020). Also, previous research showed that network connectivity issues (Savvidou, 2020), financial issues, other job scope conflicts (Badri et al., 2016), ineffective online PD design (Quinn et al., 2020), and unsatisfactory telecommuting using technologies (Alvarez, 2020) are among the barriers too.

As most teachers in Malaysia were reported to practise limited use of technology such as word processing applications, spreadsheets, presentations, and email applications (Singh & Chan, 2014), this study is conducted to know more about the motivations and barriers on teachers' PD activities that were done online during the MCO. Teachers in Malaysia can join any of the listed activities below as their PD involvement, and these activities can be credited into the MyPPB system:

Table 1: Examples of PD activities acknowledged by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (MOE) (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2019)

No.	PD Program	Examples of Activities
1.	Training	Courses, seminars, convocations, workshops, forums, symposiums, colloquium, official trips, any form of formal and semi-formal meetings
2.	Learning	Peers learning community (PLC), executive talks, monthly assembly, celebration / festive programs, mentor-mentee meetings, presentations, career counselling sessions
3.	Self-learning	Online portal sessions, reading book / journal / report / research readings, news

In conclusion, motivating factors and barriers exist for teachers who work from home using online-based communication technologies. Therefore this pilot study investigated the motivations and barriers for teachers from the selected school to use technologies in fulfilling their annual PD obligations, specifically during the MCO. Also, studying how they perceived online communication during that time examining their readiness to work remotely during the pandemic. This research also gave details on what can be suggested to improve the situation or practices with online PD among teachers in Malaysia. This literature review section in this article is followed by research methods, findings, discussions, conclusion, and references sections.

3. Methods

A quantitative approach was taken to investigate the issues stated. A questionnaire was designed to probe all the research questions. Then the printed questionnaire was distributed to the samples. The samples are teachers from Sri Laksamana Primary School (henceforth, SLPS), a public primary school located in the district of Alor Gajah in Melaka.

This pilot study was done in person rather than online because the samples helped provide direct feedback regarding any improvements that could be made to the questionnaire. The data collected are analysed descriptively in Social Packages for the Social Science (SPSS) Statistics software. The frequency, standard deviation, and interpretation will be shown in tables to show precise numbers and charts to be further elaborated.

3.1 Participants

From the total of 55 female (85.93%) and nine male teachers (14.07%) (N=64) in SLPS, 35 samples (n=35) were selected randomly to answer the questionnaire as pilot study samples were recommended to be more than thirty samples (Bujang et al., 2018). The samples' specialisation and backgrounds are varied, but they are all obliged to achieve 42 MyPPB credit points annually.

3.2 Procedure

Protocols and permission for this research were approved by the State Education Department (SED) of Melaka and the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Malaysia. Permission letters by both parties were presented during the survey containing the basic details of the research. The questionnaire's responses were noted, including typing errors, ease of answering questions, and time for the questionnaire completion. All participants received a token of appreciation in the form of a custom-made SLPS's blazer button badge.

4. Research Instruments

All data from this pilot study were collected using a validated printed questionnaire. The pilot study will benefit the actual research by helping the researcher to understand the samples' feedback, thus providing the researcher's readiness for the actual research (Malmqvist et al., 2019) while answering the questionnaire. The questionnaire is prepared in five parts with 44 questions, probing different information for this research. The first section recorded respondents' basic information with six questions. Then another section investigated the samples' motivating factors for their online PD activities. The third section consisted of eight questions that probed the samples' barriers to doing so. Section D and E of the questionnaire, respectively, consisted of 18 and seven questions. The sections investigated the samples' experience acquiring their prevalence and trend during the activities, while the last section asked the samples' suggestions on what can be improved to help them be involved with online PD activities.

The Likert Scale was used in parts B, C, D and E of this questionnaire. There are two parts of four points and five points scale, respectively. Different scales are used because some questionnaire sections require only an agreement (*strongly*

agree and *agree*) and disagreement ideas only (*strongly disagree* and *disagree*), depending on the section's objective (Joshi et al., 2015).

4.1 Data Analysis
Data analysis procedures were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. Descriptive analyses were conducted using the software. The frequencies and means of the variables were analysed to support interpretations related to the research questions.

5. Findings
5.1 Demographic Profile
The samples for this pilot study are academic teachers, with six and one of them respectively serving in the SLPS Special Education Classes and Preschool Class. The administrators of SLPS are not involved with this pilot study. Three of the respondents are male since only 14.07% of the teachers in the school are male. They mainly were born before the internet was provided domestically in Malaysia (1970 – 1979: *54.30%*), with most of them not living in a city area (*80.00%*). The most popular internet connectivity type among them is by WIFI connection (*57.14%*). The data will help to further elaborate the prevalence and trend of teachers' online PD during the MCO. Table 2 shows the exact results for these 35 pilot study respondents.

Table 2: Respondents' Demographic Profile

		Frequency (n = 35)	Valid Percentage (%)
Teachers' Category	Academic Teachers	28	80.00
	Special Education Teachers	6	17.10
	Preschool Teachers	1	2.90
Gender	Male	3	8.60
	Female	32	91.40
Birth Year	1990 and above	3	8.60
	1980 – 1989	13	37.10
	1970 – 1979	19	54.30
Residential Location	City	7	20.00
	Rural	28	80.00
Primary Internet Connectivity	Wireless Fidelity (WIFI)	20	57.14
	LAN Cable Connection	1	2.86
	Mobile Network	12	34.29
	Hotspot Tethering	2	5.71

5.2 Motivations for Participating in Online PD Activities
Section B for this questionnaire probed the samples regarding their motivating factors for online PD participation using a 5-point Likert Scale. For this section, as shown in Table 3, the values are interpreted as *1.0 - 1.8 = Strongly Disagree; 1.9 - 2.7 = Disagree; 2.8 – 3.6 = Neutral; 3.7 – 4.5 = Agree*; and *4.6 – 5.4 = Strongly Agree*. Cronbach's alpha score for this section is *0.626*. There are no *Strongly Disagree* or *Disagree* interpreted means in this section. However, the means between factors still differ from one another.

The highest mean of motivating factor is reward in the form of Annual Achievement Evaluation Report (AAER) (*M = 4.3, SD = 5.22968*), followed by feeling responsible to achieve the minimum MyPPB credit points (*M = 4.1, SD = 0.60112*), the interest of involving with the PD activities (*M = 3.9, SD = 0.50709*), and support from colleagues (*M = 3.8, SD = 0.68966*) which are all interpreted as agree. The respondents are responding neutrally on other factors which are support from their superiors (*M = 3.4, SD = 0.84714*) and feeling motivated by having gadgets given by the government (*M = 3.0, SD = 1.04278*).

Table 3: Responses Regarding Samples' Motivations during their Online PD Activities from the 18th of March 2020 to the 31st of December 2020.

Section	Item	Mean (M) (n=35)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Verbal Interpretation
D27	Interest in professional development activities involved.	3.9	.50709	Agree
D28	Feeling responsible to achieve 42 MyPPB credit points.	4.1	.60112	Agree
D29	Gadgets given by the government.	3.0	1.04278	Neutral
D30	Support from superiors (SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS / DEO / SED / MOE).	3.4	.84714	Neutral
D31	Support from colleagues.	3.8	.68966	Agree
D32	Reward in the form of Annual Achievement Evaluation Report marks.	4.3	5.22968	Agree

5.3 Barriers for Online Professional Development Participation.
Another 5-point Likert Scale was used in the next section, recording the barriers for online PD activities joined by the samples. This section, as shown in Table 4, interpreted the mean values as *1.0 - 1.8 = Strongly Disagree; 1.9 - 2.7 = Disagree; 2.8 – 3.6 = Neutral; 3.7 – 4.5 = Agree;* and *4.6 – 5.4 = Strongly Agree*.

The highest mean of barriers is time limitation due to other primary workloads (*M = 4.0, SD = 0.89066*), followed by family responsibilities (*M = 3.9, SD = 1.02244*), and limited internet coverage (*M = 3.7, SD = 1.02244*). All of the mentioned barriers were interpreted verbally as agree. There are four barriers where the respondents respond and interpret as neutral. They are poorly working gadgets used during the PD sessions (*M = 3.5, SD = 1.05169*), limited internet quota (*M = 3.7, SD = 1.09391*), limited ICT literacy (*M = 3.4, SD = 0.94824*), and lack of support from their superiors (*M = 3.0, SD = 0.70651*). However, there is one questionnaire item that is interpreted as disagree: lack of support from colleagues (*M = 2.6, SD = 0.55761*). The Cronbach's alpha for this section is *0.764*.

Table 4: Responses Regarding Samples' Barriers during their Online PD Activities from the 18th of March 2020 to the 31st of December 2020.

Section	Item	Mean (M) (n=35)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Verbal Interpretation
E33	Limited internet coverage.	3.7	1.02244	Agree
E34	Limited internet quota.	3.5	1.09391	Neutral
E35	Poorly working gadget/device.	3.5	1.05169	Neutral
E36	Limited ICT literacy.	3.4	.94824	Neutral
E37	Time limitation due to other primary workloads.	4.0	.89066	Agree
E38	Family responsibilities.	3.9	1.02244	Agree
E39	Lack of support from the superiors (school administrators / DEO / SED / MOE).	3.0	.70651	Neutral
E40	Lack of support from colleagues.	2.6	.55761	Disagree

5.4 Prevalence and trend: Activities Joined for Online PD

As mentioned in Table 1, there are three types of PD activities recognised by the MOE. For this section, respondents can choose more than one activity they have joined online during the MCO. There are 19 types of activities joined by the samples from all three types of PD activities listed. In Table 5, the respondents' frequency of each activity is entered, with the valid percentage representing each activity's portion among all of the joined activities recorded.

The most frequent activity joined by the respondents with 26 respondents is knowledge sharing which can be in the form of PLC, formal or informal sessions. An equal number of participants is also shown for the Digital Education Learning Initiative Malaysia (DeLIMA) self-learning portal. Online assembly and briefing also are reported to be commonly joined by 23 respondents. The sessions are usually conducted for a particular group of teachers, for example, for a committee, or it can be performed for all SKSL teachers.

The listed activities without participation by any samples are convention, symposium, colloquium, official trip, field trip, mentor-mentee meetings, paperwork presenter, and giving lectures.

Table 5: PD Activities Joined by the Respondents from the 18th of March 2020 to the 31st of December 2020

Activities Category	Activity	Frequency	Valid Percentage (%)
Training	Courses	16	45.70
	Seminar	17	48.60
	Convention	0	0.00
	Workshop	14	40.00
	Forum	7	20.00
	Symposium	0	0.00
	Colloquium	0	0.00
	Official Trip	0	0.00
	Field Trip	0	0.00

	Counselling Clinic	1	2.90
Learning	Knowledge Sharing	26	74.30
	Talk	19	54.30
	Assembly and Briefing	23	65.70
	Celebration Programme	7	20.00
	Launching Ceremony	9	25.70
	Mentor-mentee Meeting	0	0.00
	Discussion	18	51.40
	Paperwork Presentation Audience	0	0.00
	Paperwork Presenter	0	0.00
	Organisational Counselling	2	5.70
	Attending Lectures	14	40.00
	Giving Lectures	0	0.00
Self-Learning	Use EPSA Learning Platform	7	20.00
	Use EP-MABLS Learning Platform	10	28.6
	Use DeLIMA Learning Platform	26	74.30
	Use Other Online Learning Portal	14	40.00
	Read Printed Materials	17	48.60
	Read Digital Materials	21	60.00

The samples' experiences related to their online PD activities are recorded in the next part of this questionnaire section. Among all of the samples, most of them showed positive responses for items related to their experience regarding online PD. Most of the respondents (*91.40%*) used their selected gadgets for online PD before the MCO. They also managed to fulfil their required MyPPB credit points during the MCO (*97.10%*), and only a small number (*17.10%*) did not manage to finish at least one online PD activity due to any barrier.

Table 6: Responses Regarding Samples' Experiences during their Online PD Activities from the 18th of March 2020 to the 31st of December 2020

Item		Frequency (n=35)	Valid Percentage (%)
Have you ever used the gadget(s) you have chosen for any PD activities before the MCO?	Yes	32	91.43
	No	3	8.57
Did you manage to fulfil the required credit points of PD during the MCO (18/3/2020 – 31/12/2020)?	Yes	34	97.14
	No	1	2.86
Have you ever not completed any PD activity during the MCO (18/3/2020 – 31/12/2020) due to any barriers?	Yes	6	17.14
	No	29	82.86

The following part of this section probed the respondents using a 4-point Likert scale. The mean and standard deviation (SD) are indicators of determining the respondents' responses regarding the prevalence and trends of their online PD (Table 8). Throughout this result section, the SD pertains to how the data were spread out. Next, for this section with a 4-point Likert scale, the values are

verbally interpreted as *1.00 - 1.75 = Strongly Disagree; 1.76 - 2.51 = Disagree; 2.52 - 3.27 = Agree*; and *3.28 - 4.03 = Strongly Agree*.

Table 8 shows the responses of samples regarding their trend of online PD activities during the MCO. The Cronbach alpha's score for this section is *0.833*. The samples managed to improve with using teleconferencing applications (*M=3.43, SD=0.50*) during the MCO. Even though they are already familiar with using digital gadgets even before the pandemic (*M=3.14, SD=0.60*), they also strongly agree that their skills in using digital devices improved during the period (*M=3.43, SD=0.50*). They also accepted the trend of online PD well, admitting that, rather than attending PD activities physically, online PD activities are easier to fulfil their minimum MyPPB credit points (*M=3.37, SD=0.49*), easier to learn (*M=2.80, SD=0.58*), and more comfortable (*M=3.26, SD=0.56*). They are also ready to participate with online PD (*M=3.09, SD=0.61*) without being forced to (*M=3.14, SD=0.55*) and prepared to learn new ICT-based skills that are related to online PD (*M=3.26, SD=0.56*). Despite being interpreted verbally as agree, with a relatively low value of mean (*M=2.54, SD=0.70*), the samples perceived their superiors gave enough ICT-related skills training to them, which will elaborate more later barriers and motivating factors as variables.

Table 7: Responses Regarding Samples' Experiences during their Online PD Activities   from the 18th of March 2020 to the 31st of December 2020 and How they Perceive Technology

Section	Item	Mean (M) (n=35)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Verbal Interpretation
C15	You were capable of using your choice of gadget(s) above before the MCO.	3.14	0.60112	Agree
C16	You were already capable of using teleconferencing applications such as Google Meet, Zoom, Webex, etc., before the MCO.	2.14	0.77242	Not Agree
C17	You have increased your skills of using digital gadget(s) that you have chosen above during the MCO (18/3/2020 - 31/12/2020)	3.43	0.50210	Strongly agree
C18	You have increased your skills of using teleconferencing applications such as Google Meet, Zoom, Webex, etc., during the MCO (18/3/2020 - 31/12/2020)	3.43	0.50210	Strongly agree
C19	Online professional development is easier to fulfil the required credit points rather than in person.	3.37	0.49024	Strongly agree
C20	I can learn a content of a professional development session easier by online rather than in person.	2.80	0.58410	Agree
C21	I am ready to participate in online	3.09	0.61220	Agree

	professional development activities during the early stage of MCO (18/3/2020 - 31/12/2020).			
C22	I am ready to learn new skills related to ICT during the early stage of MCO (18/3/2020 - 31/12/2020).	3.14	0.49366	Agree
C23	I agree that online professional development is done continuously rather than face-to-face.	3.23	0.64561	Agree
C24	I am more comfortable to involve with online professional development rather than in person.	3.26	0.56061	Agree
C25	My online professional development involvements are done without being forced to.	3.14	0.55002	Agree
C26	School / DEO / SED / MOE gave me enough training to be skilful in using internet-based applications for professional development.	2.54	0.70054	Agree

5.5 Suggestions for Improving Online PD

The last section of this questionnaire probed the respondents using another 4-point Likert scale, similar to section C, as shown in Table 9. The mean values are interpreted as *1.00 - 1.75 = Strongly Disagree; 1.76 - 2.51 = Disagree; 2.52 - 3.27 = Agree;* and *3.28 - 4.03 = Strongly Agree*. This section obtains the samples' suggestions on improvements for their online PD activities and with a recorded Cronbach alpha score of 0.839. The purpose of this section was to propose recommendations based on the ideas given by the teachers who went through the whole process themselves so that the ideas will be more realistic and relevant.

All responses are interpreted as agree in this section; however, the values of mean in each suggestion are different. The suggestion with highest value of mean is ICT literacy-related training programmes provided by the superiors (*M = 3.23, SD = 0.54695*), followed by special package from the network provider to buy gadgets (*M = 3.17, SD = 0.98476*), government monetary incentives for gadget purchasing (*M = 3.15, SD = 1.04830*), special packages from the network provider to purchase internet data (*M = 3.14, SD = 0.91210*), government monetary incentives for internet data purchasing (*M = 3.09, SD = 0.96508*), more user-friendly self-learn online platforms (*M = 2.97, SD = 0.66358*), and more user-friendly teleconferencing applications (*M = 2.94, SD = 0.68354*).

Table 8: Responses Regarding Respondents' Suggestions that can Improve their Online PD Activities.

Section	Item	Mean (M) (n=35)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Verbal Interpretation
F41	Self-learn platforms that are easier to use rather than the current platforms (DeLIMA,	2.97	.66358	Agree

	EPSA or EP-MABLS.			
F42	Meeting application that is easier to use rather than the current applications (Zoom, Google Meet, or Cisco Webex)	2.94	.68354	Agree
F43	Schools / DEO / SED / MOE can organise more training programmes regarding gadgets and online applications learning.	3.23	.54695	Agree
F44	Monetary incentive from the government for gadget purchasing.	3.15	1.04830	Agree
F45	Monetary incentive from the government for internet data purchasing.	3.09	.96508	Agree
F46	Special packages from the network provider for gadget purchasing.	3.17	.98476	Agree
F47	Special packages from the network provider for internet data purchasing.	3.14	.91210	Agree

6. Discussion

6.1 Motivations for Online PD Activities

The result indicates that the samples were highly motivated by getting rewarded in Annual Achievement Evaluation Report (AAER) marks. Teachers in Malaysian Government Schools have the freedom in preparing their Annual Work Target (AWT), a document used to generate AAER marks. By May and October every year, they can write any scope of work within their expertise and responsibilities that they want to achieve in the AWT. The AWT then will be verified and evaluated into AAER marks by their superiors. Annual AAER marks can be used to expand teachers' careers. However, the AAER marks from teachers' annual PD participation can only be rewarded by five per cent (Malaysian Ministry of Education, 2021). It is a relatively small amount for a motivating factor related to teachers' process of improving their practices.

With the smallest number of means recorded among all listed motivating factors, the samples also perceived neutrally that the government's free gadgets are motivating. This indicates that the teachers were not encouraged by free gadgets given to them to practise online-based activities. In SLPS, the teachers were given free smartphones and tablets in 2017 and 2018, respectively, by the Malaysian MOE. However, the devices' specifications were lower than the current standard requirement for multipurpose work use. Therefore, the Ministry should thoroughly plan any further plans to get teachers equipped with gadgets as motivation.

6.2 Barriers for Online PD Activities

Teachers in Malaysia are burdened with teaching workloads and other additional duties, thus resulting in time strain (Kamarudin & Taat, 2020; Hizan & Rodzalan, 2020). Therefore, it is evident that time limitations due to other

workloads are the main barrier for the samples to be effectively involved with online PD. This indicates that teachers struggled to get used to working remotely during the pandemic period. In addition, the second-highest barrier recorded in this section is 'Family responsibilities', which is in line with teachers' time strain to work from home. The result can be concluded that school administrators should be aware of teachers' teaching workloads and additional duties. The issue should be managed with proper guidelines of work distribution, creating a less stressful working environment. Also, the MOE should consider employing more teaching assistant personnel in schools too.

The samples perceived neutrally to other barriers, including lack of support from the superiors and expressed disagreement to lack of colleagues' support, as barriers to participating with online PD activities. This indicates two possibilities; either they do not perceive the absence of assistance from colleagues as a barrier, or they do have support from their colleagues. The second possibility can be correlated with points stated in 5.1 and the paragraph noted above, proposing that colleagues support is also a motivating factor for the samples, thus becoming a part of a positive working environment. Therefore, it is worth noting that a productive working ecosystem is essential to workers' productivity, and administrators should always play their role in maintaining it.

6.3 Prevalence and Trend
As many as 54.30 per cent of the samples are digital nomads (Kincl & Strach, 2018) who adapted themselves in blending well with technologies for work. Next, even though 80.00 per cent of the samples live in a rural residential area, that did not prevent them from getting online since all the samples recorded to be connected to the internet, with 20 (*57.14%*) of them using wireless fidelity (WIFI) connection. This result indicates that all the respondents can be involved with online PD and not affected by their location of living and which generation they are.

Based on Table 5, all activities, except for 'Reading printed materials', were adapted to be done online. As 'Knowledge sharing' and 'Using DeLIMA learning platform' recorded the same highest frequencies, both are due to different reasons. 'Knowledge sharing' can be widely translated into activities such as formal (compulsory) and informal (self-initiated) PLCs or even small group teleconferencing. As long as the discussion topics are beneficial for their profession, the samples are allowed to key in the details to be acknowledged by their superiors through the MyPPB portal. Therefore, the frequencies recorded show that the samples were actively involved with mandatory and self-initiated online PD activities during the MCO. Also, some activities which used to be done by physical attendance can be adapted into online-based methods.

In this research, as shown in Table 7, we can conclude that the samples improved themselves by using teleconferencing applications and devices for online PD during the MCO. Also, they perceive online PD activities and carry them out well to achieve their requirement. However, a relatively low mean (*M=2.54*) is recorded for agreeing that their superiors gave them enough training

in ICT-related skills. Therefore, the teachers may initiate self-learning or carry out PLCs to improve their ICT-related skills during the MCO.

7. Conclusion

This preliminary study gave early insights regarding the actual research that will explore the readiness of a larger group of teachers with online PD in Malaysia. In conclusion, the results from this study have provided the readers with an early understanding of what teachers face during the early stage of this pandemic period. First, as teachers value getting rewarded for their participation in PD activities, it is suggested that Malaysian school administrators increase the amount of AAER marks given to teachers rather than only five per cent of the maximum marks currently allocated. This might promote a more positive working ecosystem where teachers are appreciated for their learning efforts. Further studies regarding the correlation between AAER mark portion and teachers' work satisfaction are recommended. Second, further actions should be taken regarding Malaysian teachers' workload and work distribution issues as supported by previous research in Section 6.2. Teachers' assistant positions and more management employees are recommended to be placed in schools to reduce teachers' educational management workloads. Third, despite having some struggles, the teachers involved perceived well on adapting with online PD based on their participation and activities recorded. This can be correlated to the suggestions section, where the findings in Section 5.5 support that the teachers suggest being trained to update their skills by their superiors rather than getting monetary assistance. Malaysian educational administrators could use this insight to get more information on better funding allocations on human resource training.

Training should be provided from time to time to make sure that Malaysian teachers are futureproofed. To be constantly updated with the latest skills and knowledge, teachers can provide the best learning experience for their students. Therefore, educational administrators in Malaysia, especially in SLPS, should know what can stimulate teachers' willingness to learn and what prevents them from doing so.

8. References

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