

Comprehensive Needs Analysis for the Development of a Malaysian Teacher Character Module for Teacher Trainees

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Abstract

The need analysis is one of the important phases in the data collection process. It should be analysed systematically in order to obtain input on the development requirements of a robust solution tailored to the target users. This quantitative study aimed to obtain the need analysis data of the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM) for Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia teacher trainees. A total of thirty (30) lecturers, counselling practitioners, and counselling officers from the Ministry of Education Malaysia, all directly involved in psychology and counselling practices, were selected as study participants. Sample of study were selected through purposive sampling to ensure all participants met the specified criteria. Data from this questionnaire were analyzed using *SPSS V29.0* software. Four aspects have been identified: (i) modular character development-related programs or activities conducted at Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia, (ii) enhancing resilience levels, (iii) improving spirituality elements, and (iv) fostering openness among Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia students. The findings of this study have positive implications for Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia teacher trainees as it helps to enhance their character through a more systematic and contextually-relevant activities. The research findings also indicate that characteristics for developing content, activities, materials, and attachments that needed to be considered in developing the Malaysia Teacher Character Module (MTCM). Therefore, it is

hoped that this exercise-based module can assist teacher trainees in improving their character as an initial preparation for facing the teaching and learning process in the future.

Keywords: Needs Analysis, Module Development, Teacher Character

Introduction

Classroom teaching and learning quality can be improved through consistent implementation of effective daily instructional practices (Lim et al., 2013). Apart from teacher's role, the selection of teaching and learning strategies also play an essential role for the success in the teaching and learning process. Similarly, excellent character of a teacher also plays an important role in shaping and influencing pupils' lives (Qoridah & Dartim, 2023). There are various quality that every teacher should follow. One of the good teacher qualities is being professional. Professional teachers adhere to work ethics and codes of conduct. They display high dignity for their teaching profession. A good teacher also continuously updates themselves with current knowledge and skills in order to provide deep insights to pupils.

Teacher must always act based on the codes of conduct and ethics outlined in the teaching profession. This is significant as it displays the respect and integrity of a teacher towards teaching profession. Teacher should also possess moral steadfastness, serving as an exemplary model for pupils (Salleh, & Mohd Yunos., 2021). Apart from that, being attentive to the needs of pupils and parents can help to foster good relationships and help pupils to reach their maximum potential. Teachers should also equip themselves with skills aligned with current global demands, in order to deliver relevant teaching throughout the lesson. Exemplary behaviour, impressive image, noble character coupled with visionary approach of an outstanding educator at all times will leave a long-lasting positive impacts on pupils' learning growth. Finally, unwavering loyalty and dedication towards the profession, uphold of dignity, allegiance to government, independent of thought, principled actions and resistance to external pressures are vital to cultivate outstanding teacher traits (Sahid & Hashim, 2022).

The quality of a good teacher is not inspected solely based on the academic aspects; it measures on other aspects too. A comprehensive screening process is conducted for the selection of individuals to gain entrance to the teacher training institutions in Malaysia. Each individual should have good characters and personality that reflects a good teacher role model. Teachers are strongly encouraged to possess noble character and personality, as they will serve as role models for the pupils and surrounding community (Roslan, 2022). Spirituality and good personality also play a significant role in shaping holistic qualities of a good educator (Sun'an, et al., 2023). Key elements in spiritual needs include having a high level of self-awareness in order to recognise the values and beliefs to form the foundation of their spirituality. In addition, diligence in practice is also important as teacher trainees who consistently practise religious values set a good example for pupils. Having empathy and compassion helps to build positive connections (Asvia, 2023).

Teachers must embody a personality rooted in religious or positive value, such as patience, sincerity, and perseverance in teaching, while avoiding negative traits like misconduct, dishonesty and irresponsibility (Liyana et al., 2023). Teacher should also be equipped with quality like openness to experience, as this trait enables them to embrace learning and challenges in a positive attitude. They should also exhibit conscientiousness,

being meticulous and disciplined in order to provide structured and quality teaching to pupils. Extraversion traits in teacher trainees like ease of interaction with pupils and teacher colleagues can help to foster pleasant learning environment. Teacher with positive attitude and sense of humour can motivate pupils, while low levels of neuroticism contribute to emotional stability, resilience and effective stress management (Rahman, & Mahmud, 2019). The integration of spirituality and good personality in character development of teacher trainees foster holistic teaching and create positive impact on pupils.

In order to achieve the goals listed above, a needs assessment was conducted from September 22 to October 13 to identify the actual issues faced by teacher trainees. The study aimed to determine the root causes of issues related to character and personality development. To identify the needs to make a module tailored for teacher trainees, a survey was carried out involving education institute counsellors, lecturers, and counselling service officers. The survey includes 30 participants comprising education institute counsellors, lecturers, and counselling service officers. Three types of instruments were distributed to these participants to assess the levels of resilience, openness, and spiritual elements to shape the character of teacher trainees.

The conclusion from the needs analysis, survey study, interviews, and document analysis has proven that there are still gap in character and personality development among teacher trainees that need to be addressed immediately. This issue arises because society places greater emphasis on academic achievement rather than on character development and improvement of discipline among teacher trainees. A mechanism to shape the character of teacher trainees could reduce character-related issues and subsequently elevate the nation's efforts in development, prevention, and rehabilitation to produce holistic individuals in the future.

Research Objectives

This study was conducted based on the researchers' need to gather data for the development of the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM). The needs analysis represents the first phase in the design and development research process. The design and development of the module focuses on the product development process, which involves several phases utilising different methodologies for data collection (Saedah, Norlidah, Dorothy & Zaharah, 2013).

The research objectives for the needs analysis phase are as follows:

1. To analyse the need for developing the (MTCM) module for Year 2 teacher trainees at Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia.

Based on the research objectives, this study also aims to answer the following question:

1. What are the requirements for constructing the (MTCM) module for Year 2 teacher trainees at Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia?

Methodology

Study Design

This study employs a mixed-method design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather comprehensive data on the need for the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM) for Year 2 teacher trainees at Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. The

combination of these methods allow for a robust exploration of the research problem by capturing numerical data and contextual insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The quantitative aspect involves a survey distributed to a sample of respondents, including education institute counsellors, lecturers, counselling practitioners, and counselling service officers. These respondents provide crucial input on the perceived needs, priorities, and gaps related to the development of the (MTCM) module. The use of structured questionnaire ensures systematic data collection and enables statistical analysis to identify trends and patterns in the respondents' perceptions (Bryman, 2021). The qualitative component involves interviews with selected respondents to delve deeper into their perspectives and experiences. This approach enriches the study by providing contextual understanding and nuanced insights that are not captured through the quantitative survey alone (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through thematic analysis, the qualitative data help to validate and expand upon the quantitative findings, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the study objectives.

Rationale for Mixed-Method Design

The mixed-method design aligns with current trends in educational research, where integrating quantitative and qualitative data is recognised as a powerful approach to address complex research questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2020). This design facilitates triangulation, which enhances the validity and reliability of the study's findings by corroborating data from multiple sources and methods. By employing this mixed-method approach, this study ensures that the needs of the (MTCM) module development are thoroughly identified and supported by empirical evidence, meeting the expectations of rigorous academic research within the past five years.

Sample of Study

This study involves teachers selected through a random sampling method from 27 campus of Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. A total of 30 certified counsellors voluntarily responded to the distributed survey. All of them hold a specific role in one of the areas of expertise like lecturer, counselling practitioner or education counselling officer. The selection of respondents was carried out using purposive sampling method. This method was chosen in order to focus on specific characteristics that align with the research focus.

Purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, is a non-random sampling technique where the researcher selects participants based on specific characteristics that are relevant to the research study (Palinkas et al., 2015; Nordin, et al., 2024; Nordin et al., 2025). This method ensures that the sample consists of individuals who possess the necessary qualifications, expertise, and experience directly aligned with the research objectives. In this study, lecturers, counselling practitioners, and counselling service officers were chosen as they are certified professionals in the related fields. The inclusion of these respondents was essential to gather accurate and relevant data for the needs to develop Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM). By targeting specific participants with educational and counselling background, this study ensures that the information gathered is both informed and aligned with the focus of the research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). The selected counselling officers have academic qualifications in the field of education and counselling, while the lecturers and counselling practitioners possess the related educational

qualifications in education and counselling field too. These qualifications are essential to ensure that the respondents have necessary knowledge and experience to contribute meaningful insights to the development of the (MCTM) module for teacher trainees.

Research Instruments

The research instrument used in this study is the *Needs Analysis Survey for the MTCM module*. This questionnaire was developed by the researcher. Questionnaires are a common research tool that can be created by the researcher and adapted from other studies (Izwan, 2017; Normadiyana, 2022). The survey method is viewed as an effective approach for collecting data related to the needs assessment of a particular material or research objective. The use of a questionnaire as an instrument is highly regarded for its ability to systematically collect data from a large group of respondents in a systematic manner. It allows researchers to assess various aspects of a study in a standardised format, which in this case, includes understanding the needs and expectations related to the construction of the (MTCM) module. Questionnaires are particularly effective to obtain information from specific groups of individuals who have relevant knowledge or experience in the related fields (Fowler, 2014).

The instrument is divided into two main sections:

1. Background Information of Counselling Officer – This section collects demographic information about the respondents, including their qualifications, years of experience, and role in the education system. These data are essential for understanding the context in which the respondents operate and ensuring the data is relevant to the study's objectives.
2. Needs for MTCM Module Development – This section assesses the respondents' perspectives on various aspects of the module construction. Specifically, it covers the need for the module, appropriateness of the topic, and key elements such as content, activities, evaluation methods, and materials that should be included. This section provides the core data to identify the key requirements for the successful development of the (MTCM) module.

Using questionnaire as research instrument provides several advantages to the study. First, it is cost-effective as it allows researchers to gather data from a wide range of participants within a relatively short time frame (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Second, questionnaires can be designed to include both closed and open-ended questions, which provides both quantitative and qualitative data that can further enrich the research findings (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). These mixed data can then be analysed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the needs for the (MTCM) module. To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, researchers need to ensure that the questions are clear and directly aligned with the research objectives. Pre-testing the questionnaire on a small sample before full-scale distribution can help identify any issues and improve the instrument (Alston & Bowles, 2020; Nordin, Bakar, Nordin, Rahman & Saberi, 2024). Before the actual distribution process of the needs analysis among the respondents, the set of questionnaires were verified and validated by three referral experts in psychology and counselling, module development, and academics discipline. Suggestions for the improvement and modification of the questionnaires from the expert panels were applied before conducting the study on the actual target. Experts had provided written reviews and suggested that the module was suitable for an intervention programme to achieve the outlined objectives.

Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analysed using the *SPSS Software Version 29.0*. Quantitative data analysis was performed using descriptive statistics to determine the frequency and percentage values. Descriptive statistics are widely used in research to summarise and describe the features of the dataset. In this study, descriptive statistics were applied to quantify the frequency and percentage of responses for each survey item. Descriptive statistics allow researchers to present the data clearly by providing easy interpretation and foundational understanding of the patterns and trends of the data (Field, 2018).

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a powerful software tool commonly used in educational and social sciences research for data analysis. It provides a user-friendly interface for performing various statistical analyses that includes descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and hypothesis testing (Pallant, 2020). In this study, SPSS was used to process the survey data and provide statistical outputs, to allow easy interpretation of the frequencies and percentages of the respondents' answers. The use of SPSS ensures that the data is handled efficiently, allowing for accurate and reliable results (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

The specific descriptive statistics technique used in this study is frequency analysis indicator that calculates how often each response occurs in the dataset. This allows researchers to identify common trends or patterns among the respondents. Meanwhile, the percentage calculation technique helps to express the frequency of each response as a percentage of the total responses. This process provides a clearer comparison of the results. By using these descriptive statistics, the study was able to effectively summarise the responses and gain insights into the perceived needs for the development of the (MTCM) module.

Research Findings

The research findings refer to the data gathered from the respondents, which are analysed and interpreted to answer the research questions. In this case, the survey analysis involved examining the responses provided by 30 participants to identify patterns, trends, and key insights relevant to the study's objectives (Fowler, 2014). The findings represent the core results of the research and are used to draw conclusions regarding the research topic, in this case, the development of the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM). The analysis of the data typically includes identifying the frequency of certain responses, understanding the needs and perspectives of the respondents, and determining areas that require attention or improvement. In this context, descriptive statistics like frequency counts and percentages were likely used to effectively summarise respondents' answers and present the findings in a clear and understandable manner (Pallant, 2020). The results of these analyses will provide the foundation for further decisions into the development and implementation of the (MTCM) module.

Survey data analysis plays a crucial role in identifying the key needs and opinions of respondents, especially when designing programmes or modules. By analysing the findings, researchers can make informed recommendations and decisions based on real, evidence-driven insights. This is particularly important in educational settings, where the effectiveness

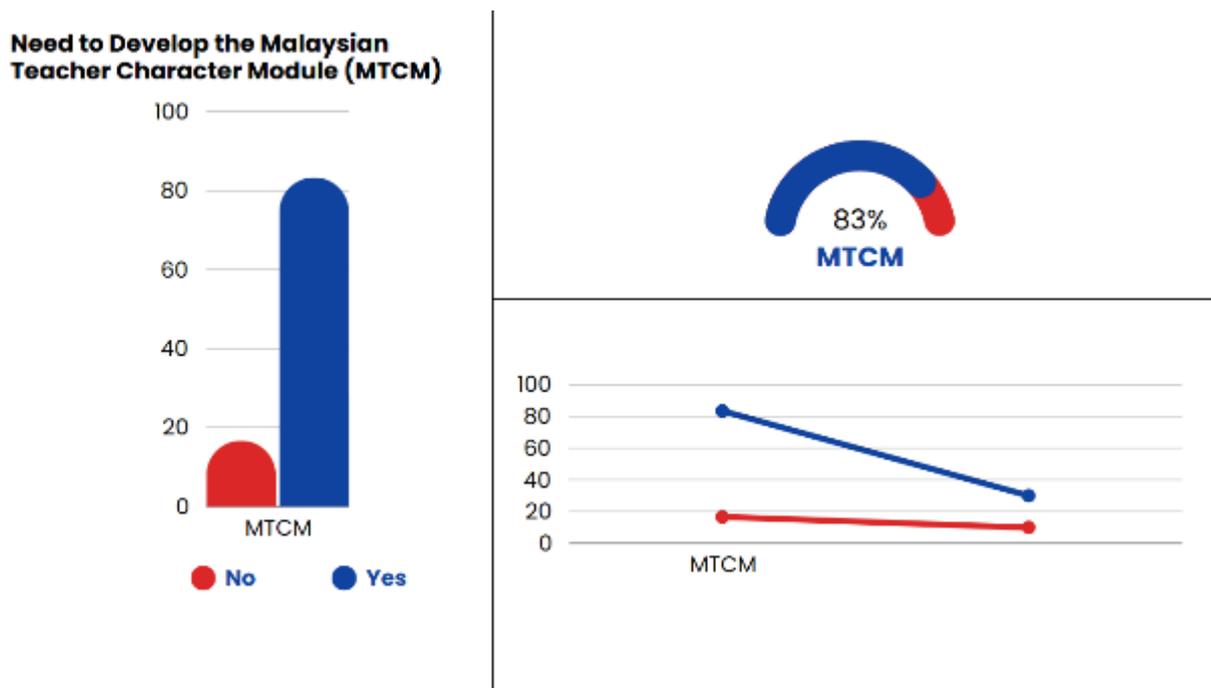
of programmes like the (MTCM) module can significantly impact the development of future educators (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). As noted earlier, descriptive statistics help to summarise the main characteristics of the collected data, such as identifying the most common responses or trends. Descriptive statistics techniques like frequency distributions and percentage calculations are particularly useful for providing a clear picture of the data in studies involving large numbers of respondents (Field, 2018). A total of 30 respondents participated in the survey. Based on the survey analysis, the research findings obtained from the questionnaire are as follows:

Need for Developing a Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM)

From the data, this study had found the need to develop the (MTCM) module. Figure 1 shows that 83.3% of lecturers, counselling practitioners, and counselling service officers agree that there is a need to develop a modular-based program/activities related to character development for the use at the Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. Only 16.67% of the respondents disagree with this view. A high agreement percentage (83.3%) indicates a strong consensus among respondents on the need for a structured, modular approach to character development programmes at Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. The need for such programmes reflect the growing awareness about the importance of fostering not only academic skills, but also moral and ethical development among future educators within the education sector (Sahin & Al, 2019).

Character education in teacher training programmes plays a vital role in preparing teachers to become role models for their pupils and to contribute to the holistic development of the learners (Kelley & Farkas, 2020). Low percentage of disagreement (16.67%) suggests that there is minimal resistance to the idea, further supporting the need for a character development module. In the education field, consensus among key stakeholders such as counsellors, lecturers and education officers is crucial for the successful implementation of new programmes (Morris et al., 2018). This finding shows that most of the participants recognise the significance of character education in teacher development and within broader educational system.

Character education is essential in shaping educators who not only impart knowledge, but also serve as an ethical role models for pupils (Sahin & Al, 2019). Studies have shown that character development programmes help improve teachers' personal attributes, which in turn positively influences their teaching practices and interactions with pupils (Kelley & Farkas, 2020). The implementation of modular character development programmes, as highlighted by the survey respondents, provides a structured framework that can ensure consistent and comprehensive development in these areas. The modular approach to character development is advantageous because it offers flexibility, scalability, and a structured path for participants to engage with the programmes (Norman, 2021). Modules can be tailored to specific needs and can be adapted to different contexts within the education sector. A modular system also allows for a step-by-step development of essential character traits, which is crucial for the professional growth of educators (Johnson & O'Rourke, 2019).



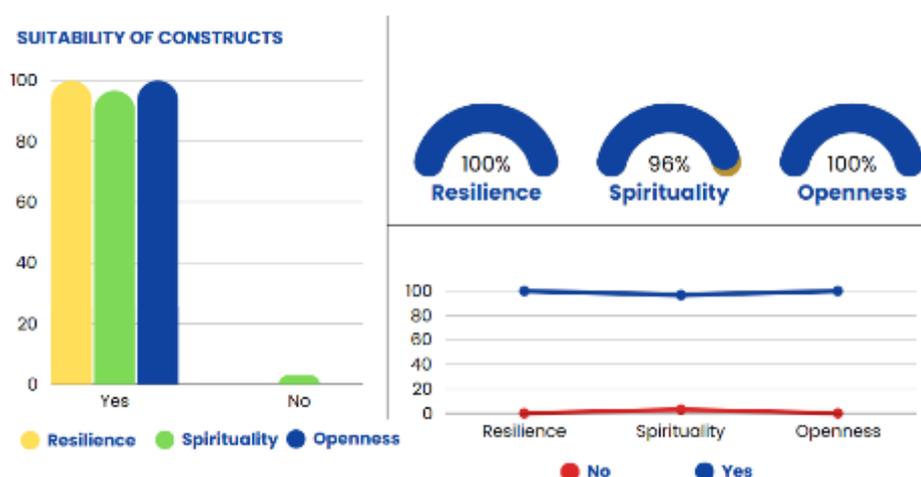
Yes	83.33 %
No	16.67 %

Figure 1: Survey on the Need to Develop the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM)

Suitability of Constructs

Figure 2 shows that 100.00% of lecturers, counselling practitioners, and counselling service officers selected the construct of Resilience, 96.67% selected the construct of Spirituality, and 100.00% selected the construct of Openness to be developed in the module. These percentages are the highest compared to other constructs, based on the preliminary study and stakeholder engagement process conducted. This indicates a clear need to develop the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM) for Year 2 teacher trainees of the Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. The selection of Resilience, Spirituality, and Openness as the key constructs by the respondents suggests that these elements are seen as essential for the development of teachers' character. The fact that 100.00% of respondents selected Resilience and Openness indicates a strong consensus on the importance of these traits in the teacher training curriculum. Resilience, in particular, is increasingly recognised as a critical factor for teachers to navigate challenges in both their personal and professional lives (Zhou et al., 2019). Resilience is vital for teachers as it enables them to recover from setbacks, manage stress, and maintain their motivation in the face of adversities. In teacher education, building resilience helps educators to develop the necessary coping strategies for the challenges they face in classrooms, such as dealing with pupils' behaviour or managing workload pressures (Goddard et al., 2018). The inclusion of resilience as a construct in the module is aligned with current trends in teacher's development, where educators are trained not only in pedagogical skills, but also in personal attributes that help them sustain their practice over time (Holland & Holmqvist, 2020).

Spirituality construct, as selected by 96.67% of the respondents, plays a significant role in fostering personal growth and emotional intelligence. Teachers who are spiritually grounded may develop a sense of purpose and a deeper commitment to their pupils’ well-being (Lee, 2021). This highlights the increasing recognition of spirituality in education as a meaningful tool for teachers to foster deeper connections with their pupils and cultivate a nurturing learning environment (Vialle & Devlin, 2019). Openness (100.00%) refers to the willingness of educators to embrace new ideas, reflect on their practices, and adapt to changing teaching methods. This construct is essential in the modern educational landscape, where continuous professional development and adaptability are critical for success (Birch & Litz, 2020). Teachers who exhibit openness are more likely to be receptive to innovative teaching strategies, diverse pupils’ needs, and collaborative working environments. The high percentage of agreement for the inclusion of these constructs (Resilience, Spirituality, and Openness) underscores the importance of integrating these aspects into teacher training programmes. A well-rounded teacher education programme that incorporates both technical knowledge and personal development aspects, like resilience and spirituality, are essential to produce quality educators who can positively impact pupils’ learning outcomes (Nicol & Andrews, 2020).



Construct/Assessment	Yes	No
Resilience	100.00	0.0
Spirituality	96.67	3.33
Openness	100.00	0.0

Figure 2: Survey on the Need to Develop the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM)

Based on the analysis of interview data, the findings from the three respondents generated five themes as follows:

Theme 1: Teacher Trainees Need to Equip Themselves with Character Development Throughout Their Learning at the Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia

All three respondents agreed that teacher trainees need to equip themselves with character development throughout their learning at Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. For example, Respondent 1 (R1), Respondent 2 (R2), and Respondent 3 (R3) stated the following:

R1: *"It is very necessary because they need to be prepared to become teachers."*

R2: *"There need to be a specific guideline."*

R3: *"It is definitely necessary. They must have the personality of a teacher, the style of a teacher, the mentality of a teacher, and be a role model for their future pupils."*

The importance of character development for teacher trainees during their time at Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia is emphasized by all three respondents. This aligns with contemporary research on teacher education, where there is a growing recognition that teachers need more than just academic qualifications; they must also develop strong personal and professional characteristics to succeed in their role (Cheng et al., 2021).

R1 points out that teacher trainees must be prepared not only with subject knowledge, but also with the necessary personal attributes to perform their roles effectively. The preparation for teaching extends beyond pedagogical skills and includes the development of other aspects like social, emotional, and ethical competencies (Sahin & Al, 2020). This includes developing resilience to face challenges in teaching, the ability to engage with diverse pupils' needs, and the capacity to act as ethical role models (Furlong et al., 2020).

R2 stresses the need for specific guidelines for character development. The role of structured programmes or modules in promoting character development among teacher trainees has been highlighted in recent studies (Harris & Mallett, 2019). Providing clear guidance ensures that teacher trainees have the necessary tools to develop key personal and professional characteristics, such as communication skills, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making (Furlong et al., 2020).

R3 highlights that teacher trainees need to embody the qualities of a teacher, which includes both professional and personal attributes. These include emotional intelligence, adaptability, and the ability to be a role model for pupils. A positive teacher personality can significantly influence pupils' outcomes by promoting a supportive and motivating learning environment (Goddard et al., 2019). Teachers are often the first role models for their pupils and it is important that they demonstrate positive behaviour, resilience, and professionalism (Vialle & Devlin, 2020).

Theme 2: Institute Teacher of Education Malaysia's Culture Emphasis on Tackling Resilience Issues Faced by Teacher Trainees

When asked how the culture of IPG can influence and strongly emphasize addressing of the resilience issues faced by teacher trainees, some respondents stated that only the *Bina Insan Guru (BIG)* programme is currently used as an approach to address resilience issues among teacher trainees. However, they also mentioned that the programme is insufficient, as it is based on existing plans without empirical research to validate its effectiveness. The interview findings suggest that additional approaches, activities, and programmes are necessary to equip teacher trainees with a strong sense of identity before they step into their actual teaching careers. For example, Respondent 1 (R1) and Respondent 3 (R3) stated:

R1: *"BIG is very helpful for the resilience of students."*

R3: *“The BIG programme helps, but it’s not enough. The students need further development of their resilience. There should be other activities to enhance their identities.”*

The issue of resilience among teacher trainees is one of the critical aspect for teacher preparation course. Recent studies highlight the importance of developing emotional resilience, as teacher trainees often face high levels of stress and challenges in their training and eventual professional careers (Perry et al., 2020). Resilience refers to the ability to bounce back from adversity, stress, and challenges, and it is essential for teachers to thrive in demanding and unpredictable environments (Brackett et al., 2019).

As R1 pointed out, the *Bina Insan Guru (BIG)* programme is seen as a useful tool in promoting resilience among trainees. However, the feedback from R3 indicates that while the BIG programme offers some support, it is not comprehensive enough to fully address the range of resilience challenges that teacher trainees face. This suggests that the current approach might not fully prepare trainees for the stressors they will encounter in their professional careers (Johnson et al., 2021).

The suggestion for additional activities and programmes to enhance the identity and resilience of teacher trainees, as emphasized by R3, is supported by literature. Teachers’ resilience can be enhanced by engaging in reflective practices, coping strategies, and social support networks during their training (Deng et al., 2020). Activities that promote a sense of belonging, professional identity, and self-efficacy can help to strengthen resilience and prepare teacher trainees for their roles in real classroom settings (Veenman, 2020). As mentioned in the findings, there is a need for more evidence-based practices to be incorporated into teacher training programmes. The effectiveness of any programme aimed at developing resilience must be based on empirical research to ensure its reliability and validity (Dolezal et al., 2021). Without this scientific foundation, the programme's long-term impact may be unclear, and it could fail to address the specific needs of teacher trainees effectively (Aldrup et al., 2021).

Theme 3: The Impact of Spirituality Elements in Institute Teacher of Education Malaysia towards Teacher Trainees

Some respondents emphasized that all parties should take responsibility in instilling elements of spirituality in teacher trainees through appropriate methods, ensuring that they are well-prepared, while also serving as role models and educators during the teaching and learning process. The respondents suggested to develop a module that provides detailed steps on how to instill and experience spirituality among teacher trainees by using a specific approach. Suggestions included detailed steps, methods, techniques, time allocation, recommendations to improve the SQ approach, and appropriate module with activity suggestions. For instance, Respondent 1 (R1), Respondent 2 (R2), and Respondent 3 (R3) said:

R1: *“Everyone must take responsibility to instil spirituality in pupils. It’s important because teachers must deliver good values to pupils.”*

R2: *“It is implemented but depends on the trainees’ understanding and practice.”*

R3: *"It has a positive impact, but it needs improvement. The SQ (Spiritual Quotient) needs to be included."*

The inclusion of spirituality in teacher education programme is becoming increasingly recognised as a critical factor in preparing teachers who are not only academically competent, but also morally and ethically grounded. Several studies have highlighted the importance of incorporating spiritual dimensions into teacher training programme to ensure holistic development of teachers (Friedman & Cone, 2020; Hassan & Mahmud, 2021). Spirituality is seen as an important element in fostering teacher resilience, personal growth and overall well-being; all of which enhance teaching effectiveness and strengthen their roles as positive models for pupils (Sultan et al., 2021).

R1's statement shown that all parties should take responsibility for instilling spirituality in teacher trainees. This aligns with current pedagogical perspectives that emphasize the role of multiple stakeholders such as teachers, mentors, and institutional leadership roles in fostering morale and spiritual values (Jamil & Ismail, 2022). This is consistent with research suggesting that teacher training should not only focus on academic knowledge, but also on morale and spiritual development to produce well-rounded educators (Nashir et al., 2020).

R2 mentioned that the success of spirituality-based programmes depends on the teacher trainees' engagement and practice. This reflects the widely accepted understanding that spirituality in education is not just about teaching theoretical concepts; it is also about fostering self-reflection, personal engagement, and consistent practice (Hassan et al., 2021). Effective spiritual education requires active participation from teacher trainees themselves, where they internalise and apply the values taught.

R3's suggestion for the inclusion of Spiritual Quotient (SQ) in teacher education is supported by literature that emphasizes the importance of Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) in teachers' personal and professional lives. Research by Zohar and Marshall (2021) indicates that SQ helps teachers to manage stress, enhance emotional intelligence, and develop a deeper connection with their pupils. The integration of SQ into teacher development programmes has been shown to improve teachers' interpersonal skills, ethical decision-making, and overall job satisfaction (Goleman, 2020).

Theme 4: A Special Module on Openness Can Enhance the Quality of Teacher Training at the Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia

Three respondents indicated that a special module related to openness could enhance the quality of teacher training programme at the Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. This programme should be tailored to the capabilities and potential of the teacher trainees. According to the respondents, such module would help to improve the quality of training by enabling teacher trainees to better adapt to the community. It is crucial for their personal and character development. For example, Respondent 1 (R1), Respondent 2 (R2), and Respondent 3 (R3) said:

R1: *"A special module on openness can enhance the quality of their training as teachers at IPG."*

R2: *"It can help them adjust to the community."*

R3: *"Openness is essential for personal and character development. It's absolutely necessary."*

The emphasis on "openness" as an important component in teacher training programme aligns with current educational theories that highlight the role of personal attributes, such as openness to experience in developing effective educators. Openness is one of the five major personality traits in the Five-Factor Model (Big Five) of personality, and it is associated with curiosity, open-mindedness, and adaptability—all essential qualities for teachers (Goldberg, 2019). In teacher education, fostering openness is crucial not only for personal development, but also for enhancing professional competence and building strong connections with pupils and the broader community (Becher & Trowler, 2020).

R1's assertion of the incorporation of module on openness improving the quality of teacher training highlight the crucial role of personal development in fostering lifelong learning and adaptability within the dynamic nature of teaching profession (Bauer & Miedel, 2021). Research has shown that teachers with higher levels of openness are more likely to engage in reflective practice and adopt new teaching methods (De Jong et al., 2020).

R2's comment on how a module would help teacher trainees to adapt to the community speaks to the importance of cultural sensitivity and social awareness in teaching. Being open to diverse perspectives and learning to navigate social complexities is crucial for teachers, especially in increasingly diverse classrooms (Hammond et al., 2022). Studies indicate that teachers who are open to cultural differences and open-minded in their interactions with pupils are more successful in fostering inclusive learning environments (Gonzalez et al., 2021).

R3's emphasis on the importance of openness for personal and character development also align with recent research on emotional intelligence and character education in teacher training programme (Zulfikar & Suprayogi, 2021). Teachers who cultivate openness to new experiences are often more effective in establishing positive relationships with pupils, especially in promoting emotional resilience and supporting learners' holistic development (Poulou, 2020).

Theme 5: Do Teacher Trainees Require Support in Character Development?

Three respondents stated that teacher trainees require support in terms of character development to fully prepare for the real teaching and learning environment in schools. They also emphasized the importance of equipping teacher trainees with qualities that will enable them to become role models for their future pupils. For example, Respondent 1 (R1), Respondent 2 (R2), and Respondent 3 (R3) said:

R1: *"They need to be assisted directly."*

R2: *"Yes, they do."*

R3: *"It is very important to produce teachers who can be role models."*

Respondents mutual agreement on teacher trainees needing support in character development reflects a broader consensus in educational research focused on developing strong personal and professional attributes for future educators. Teachers not only impart academic knowledge; they also serve as morale examples and role models for their pupils. In fact, the role of a teacher extends far beyond the classroom, as educators are expected to influence their pupils' personal growth, values, and social behaviours (Korthagen, 2020). Thus, fostering character development among teacher trainees is essential to prepare them to lead with integrity, responsibility, and empathy.

R1 comments that teacher trainees need direct support in character development also highlights the critical role of teacher preparation programmes in addressing personal and social dimensions of professional growth. Research has shown that professional development programmes focused on character education can enhance teachers' emotional intelligence, ethical decision-making, and resilience (Limon, 2021). Support systems such as mentorship, counselling, and training programmes tailored to personal development are increasingly recognised as essential for developing well-rounded educators (Villegas, 2017).

Both R2 and R3 stress the need for teacher trainees to become role models, which aligns with the growing emphasis on character education in teacher training programs. The ability to be a positive role model is considered as a cornerstone of effective teaching. Teachers who demonstrate qualities such as empathy, fairness, and emotional intelligence are more likely to positively influence their pupils' development (Alder, 2021). Moreover, a strong role model can help establish a classroom culture of respect, trust, and motivation (Becker & Simson, 2019).

The need for teacher trainees to receive support in character development is clearly evident from the responses in this study. With an emphasis on becoming role models, the development of personal qualities such as emotional intelligence, ethical judgment, and social awareness is crucial for effective teaching. Educational researchers emphasize that nurturing these traits in teacher education programmes equip future teachers with the ability to inspire, lead, and positively influence their pupils' personal growth and academic success.

Conclusion

Needs analysis plays a crucial role in identifying detailed information about the content and aspects of the module to be developed. This study aims to gather relevant information regarding the context and current situation, with a focus on the needs in the construction of the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM). Information was collected through feedback from education counsellor, lecturers, counselling practitioners, and counselling service officers, who were selected as the target users for the development of the module. Additionally, the cultural aspects of IPG integrated into the daily lives of pupils and teachers were also considered, especially in addressing issues related to resilience, openness, and spirituality in the character development of pupils. The results of this needs analysis indicate that the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM) is indeed worth developing, in line with the needs of the pupils and the current situation faced by the teacher trainees at the Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. This module will not only support the development of the teacher's character and professionalism, but will also ensure that they can be role models in practising positive values for their pupils. Emphasis on Cluster Six in the Ministry of

Education Malaysia's Strategy 1 (Improvement of Student Quality), particularly in enhancing the quality of students, makes the development of this module highly relevant (Wang et al., 2022).

The study findings also suggest that character development for teacher trainees must continue in the context of shaping teachers who are educators at heart. The module should be designed taking into account the foundational theories behind character education and the necessary skills to be incorporated into the (MTCM) programme. Training approaches and appropriate activities should be integrated into this module to help teacher trainees master the social, emotional, and intellectual skills required in their roles as educators. Therefore, it is essential to involve experienced counsellors and lecturers in planning and implementing these activities (Marhani & Suprihatin, 2022). From a theoretical and research perspective, teenagers and teacher trainees often face challenges related to character development, resilience, openness, and spirituality. According to studies by Wang et al. (2022), adolescents encounter issues related to mental toughness and moral resilience, which influence their decisions in daily life, including their role as future teachers. Building strong characters among teacher trainees not only prepares them to be responsible educators, but also as leaders and role models who will positively influence their pupils in the future (Marhani & Suprihatin, 2022).

In conclusion, this study shows a crucial need for the development of the Malaysian Teacher Character Module (MTCM) for Year 2 teacher trainees at the Institute of Teacher Education Malaysia. This module needs to be designed with a focus on relevant educational theories and elements required to enhance teacher character. Steps in the development of the module should also involve collaboration from all parties, including counsellors, lecturers, and counseling practitioners, to ensure its effectiveness in preparing teacher trainees to become high-quality educators with a strong educational spirit.

Theoretical and Contextual Contribution

This study provides a significant contribution both theoretically and contextually to the discourse on teacher education and competency development. Theoretically, it builds upon and expands existing competency models by integrating context-specific needs analysis particularly for teacher trainees under the Institute of Teacher Education (IPG) into a more localized and context-sensitive framework for teacher development. This addresses a critical gap in Malaysian educational literature, which often relies on foreign models that are less aligned with the cultural and operational realities of the local context. Contextually, the study offers empirical data that can be utilized by policymakers and curriculum developers to design evidence-based Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs that are responsive to real classroom challenges. By aligning training modules with the actual needs and realities of educators, the study supports the implementation of the Malaysian Education Blueprint (PPPM) and advances the aspirations of Malaysia MADANI towards a more equitable and quality education system. Thus, the study not only enriches academic scholarship but also offers a practical foundation for planning future interventions, capacity-building efforts, and pedagogical innovations at the national preschool education level.

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