Feedback on the 3Es (Engages, Empowers and Emancipates) Teacher Education Curriculum Validation Process

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Abstract
This paper discusses the feedback provided by various stakeholders and agencies on the validation of the 3E Teacher Education Curriculum proposed for the development of a Teacher Education Model in Malaysia. A qualitative approach was used to analyse the feedback given on the validation process. The feedback was based on face to face interview and feedback form. Thirty two stakeholders and agencies related to teacher education participated in the project on four different occasions. The responses were categorised into several themes and categories. The findings showed that the curriculum validation is a constructive process in assuring quality curriculum development and the insights provided helped to shape a more concrete teacher education curriculum which is holistic, balanced, current and sustainable. This study implicates the need for a curriculum validation process in any curriculum development prior to its implementation.
Keywords: Curriculum Validation, Curriculum Development, Teacher Education

Introduction
For any developing country, as in Malaysia, developing the human capacity of the Malaysian citizens has always been an important agenda. Improving the quality of education has always been the central discussion in achieving this goal. In the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025), the Ministry of Education has proposed 11 shifts to pave the way of education planning in Malaysia (Ministry of Education, 2013). One of the shifts emphasized on transforming teaching into the provision of choice with focus on entry requirement to the teaching profession, teacher professional development, teacher core functions, competency and performance based career progression, and peer led culture of excellence and certification. These initiatives implicate the need to study the practices of the teacher education providers, the teacher education institutes for primary school teachers and education faculties of higher

institutions for secondary school, which are the main agencies for providing teachers in Malaysia.

The scope of this study is within a teacher education university in which the primary focus is educating pre-service secondary school teachers in Malaysia. The Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI) has a long history of teacher education since 1922 from a teacher training college to an institute and finally a university in 1997.

The debate on the quality of teacher education program has led to many teacher education reforms in many countries such as in Australia (Mayer, 2014), Thailand (Thongthew, 2014), Singapore and Finland (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Some of the reforms include the changes in the system for teacher preparation, teacher education policies and implementation, and teaching and learning practices. With these kinds of reform being central to academic discourses, UPSI (one of the teacher education universities) has taken the lead in researching and developing a teacher education model for Malaysia. The project encompasses research in teacher education curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, leadership and clinical experiences. This paper focuses on one aspect of the research which is on the development of the teacher education curriculum.

Curriculum is one important aspect of any teacher education programs. However, most curricular has to be reviewed to ensure its relevance to the current global trends in education and teacher education development. The curriculum of teacher education in Malaysia at present is primarily based on the Objectives Curriculum Model which employs a Technical Rationalist Approach (Schon, 1983) with Behavioristic Orientation (Zeichner, 1993) and involves the dichotomisation of theory and practice (as cited in Ratnavadivel et al., 2014). This is unlike some countries which have shifted the focus on an Inquiry Oriented Teacher Education which is grounded based on evidence of practice; bridging the gap between theory and practice, developing reflective practices and improving practices through scholarship of teaching and learning.

The quality of a teacher education program can be measured through the learning experiences which prepare student teachers in learning how to teach and becoming competent teachers. Nevertheless, there is a need to assess how teachers transform the knowledge they have acquired during preparation into classroom teaching as the disparity of this has always been in existence (Darling-Hammond, 2010). In addition, Goh and Blake (2015) highlighted the need for the teacher education curriculum to be grounded in the Malaysian context which echoes a multi-cultural needs and the integration of a culture-sensitive pedagogy in teacher development.

At the present age of information, the knowledge economy is a system which propagates intellectual capital of individuals and its nation (David & Foray, 2002). Therefore, to capitalize on intellectual capabilities, there is a great need to move to a knowledge generating society that begins with the development of future teachers who are knowledge curators and co-constructors. Therefore, continual improvement is needed to enhance the competencies of student teachers grounded through an inquiry based practices.

The teacher education curriculum which serves as the focus of this study is titled the 3Es' (Engages, Empowers and Emancipates) Teacher Education Curriculum which is developed

through a five-year research project funded by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia. A series of document analysis on best practices was conducted as a comparative analysis between countries prior to the development of the curriculum framework. The episteme of the framework is based on documents such as the Malaysian Education Philosophy, Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013-2025), Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) Education Program Standards, 2014 as well as the Malaysian Teacher Education Philosophy. The assumptions which formulate the framework are perceived through the 5 Minds of the Future (Gardner, 2008), Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (Morrison, 2012), Holistic and Balance Graduates (ICGPA informed, MOHE) and the 21st century skills. These understanding were further used to formulate the eight provisional guiding principles with emphasis on the values, skills and knowledge that are transpired throughout the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment practices, leadership and clinical experiences (Ratnavadivel et al., 2014). The forms of curriculum paradigm are situated within the social constructivism theory and the knowledge which informed the framework is the practical and critical knowledge. To materialise the 3Es' teacher education curriculum, there are four types of change which underpin the curriculum structure: a change in facilitation of learning, a change on how knowledge is acquired, a change in being and a change in recognition. This curriculum is implemented through the high impact practices purposeful pathways which include the first year experience, discipline core, interdisciplinary courses, learning community, experiential learning, undergraduate research, community service of learning, global learning and capstone project (Safinas et al., 2017, 2018). The output of the 3Es' curriculum is to produce the beginning scholar teachers who possess good values, skills and knowledge.

One of the core elements in many curriculum models is the validation process which seeks to validate its contents from evidences of multiple sources to support the use or interpretation of various aspects of curriculum. This can be accumulated from the critical informants, namely the professionals and experts in the area of study, stakeholders, public and private agencies whose opinions and feedback can provide credibility and strength to the curriculum proposed (UNESCO, 2017). The content validity of the curriculum is also to ensure that the curriculum proposed is in line with the principles and concepts of teacher education, meeting the purpose of which it was developed, considering internal and external factors, and planning as well as evaluating its implementation.

Thus, the objectives of this paper are to examine the feedback given by various stakeholders and agencies on the 3Es Teacher Education Curriculum proposed for the development of a Teacher Education Model in Malaysia. It also aims to discuss the suggestions and actions taken based on the review given by stakeholders and agencies.

Methodology
A qualitative approach is employed to analyse the feedback given by the stakeholders and agencies. Four meetings were organized periodically, two in 2017 and further two in 2018 with the latest in September. All these validation meetings involved presentations of the latest development from the respective lead researchers (i.e., curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, leadership and clinical experiences) of the project before obtaining feedback from the invited participants.

The invited stakeholders, experts in education and agencies played the role of a critical collaborative informant in reviewing and providing views based on three criteria of the proposed curriculum (i.e., strengths, weaknesses and further suggestions. The critical collaborative professional enquiry (Drew, Priestly & Michael, 2016) was held after all the presentations through questions and answers as well as roundtable discussions. Oral comments were recorded while written feedback forms were obtained at the end of the sessions.

The audio recordings were analysed together with the written replies for triangulation purposes. They were analysed and categorised according to the three criteria above and compared between the reviewers to look for similarities and differences of views. Audit trail was carried out with other researchers and graduate assistants to ensure reliability and validity in the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Findings and Discussion

This section will summarise the feedback from the critical informants according to the strength, weaknesses and suggestions chronologically in order to present the continuous refinement on the proposed teacher education model

The findings from the first session (July, 2017) with 15 stakeholders from various agencies indicated that many of the critical informants were generally in agreement with the curriculum framework presented. However, they were concerned on how the transformation of knowledge can take place in classroom instructions and one of them suggested the use of experiential and discovery learning with the integration on the use of technology.

"…student teachers need to know the methods on how to develop the contents, through experiential and discovery learning. They (student teachers) need to use technology in their teaching to attract the school children's attention." (R1).

There was also an informant who felt the need for the teacher education program to prepare human capitals which is align to the need of industries.

One of the weaknesses highlighted by one of the informants was the lack of focus in developing social capital which combines the cognitive relational structural, communication and personal skills. He elaborated by saying,

"…education system allows students to have a lot of ideas but they do not champion the ideas…do not elaborate the ideas by championing the ideas and realizing them" (R2).

In the same session, many of the informants expressed their concerns on the values that teachers hold as this will be replicated by their students and suggested the need to include 'passionate' as one criteria for the development of quality teachers.

"… school children always look up to (emulate) their teachers, and will replicate their teachers' attitude and behaviour from many aspects" (R3).

Based on the feedback received from the first validation exercise, four types of change which underpin the curriculum structure were developed to ensure that the curriculum goals are attainable. The four types of change are 1) change in the facilitation of learning; 2) change in the way knowledge is acquired; 3) change in recognition and 4) change in being. The detailed explanation of the changes are explained in related literature (refer to Raja Nor Safinas et al., 2017, 2018). The model was refined and titled the 3Es' Teacher Education curriculum which engages, empowers and emancipates.

The second validation session which was conducted in November 2017 involved a group of education experts from various institutions of higher learning, teacher training institutes, and officers from the Curriculum Development Centre, Ministry of Education and the Malaysian Examination Council. Positive feedbacks on the strength of the proposed model were highlighted. The focus on values, skills and knowledge which was perceived as commendable, the 3Es' were do able and can be implemented, the 3Cs' (Conduct, Collegiality and Contribution) were seen as important aspects that were incorporated in the framework.

One weakness highlighted in the second meeting was the proposed model of best practices did not include the Eastern and Islamic perspectives.

"… the curriculum model is based on Western theories and philosophies. May consider exploring from the Islamic perspective" (R4).

Based on the feedback gathered, the framework was reviewed with the inclusion of 'Murabbi', a critical Islamic pedagogue from the Islamic perspective and reference is also made to the education in Japan particularly on developing values (Shimahara & Sakai, 2018) and the development of Society 5 (Inglehart, 2018).

Other suggestions put forward were to ensure that this framework can be consistent for teacher education institutes and other universities point of reference; to include the curriculum evaluation model in the curriculum approaches; autonomy for teachers in designing the curriculum; development of materials as core in the curriculum implementation and adding another provisional guiding principle which emphasize on the need for teachers to create meaningful and deep learning experience in the classroom.
"… the curriculum should expose student teachers to be innovative and produce suitable teaching and learning resources and not just rely on textbooks" (R5).
"… 21st century requires deep learning experience in the classroom" (R6).
The third validation session was carried out in January 2018 with education experts from institutions of higher learning, agencies such as the Education Performance and Delivery Unit (PADU), Psychometric Malaysia, Malaysian Association of Creativity & Innovation (MACRI) and representatives from Parents Teachers Associations of several secondary schools. The strength highlighted from the session was the comprehensiveness of the teacher education framework and its focus on change of many aspects. The concept of 'Murabbi' was integrated and well received from the stakeholders. The concepts proposed are current, particularly on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and the 21st century learning strategies. For example, a prominent academic emphasized

"… teaching techniques to be conceptualized to the Z generation and align with the current needs and scenario. Teaching and learning concepts needs to be changed to facilitate current and future generation" (R7).

However, concern was raised on the implementation of the curriculum framework to ensure that is ideal and yet can be implemented. There was also a need to ensure that the proposed curriculum framework is generic and applicable in all disciplines. The apprehensiveness was shown in some of the comments written in the feedback forms.

"The proposed curriculum model is comprehensive and compactable, ideal concept. However, it needs to determine the actual implementation strategy in all situations. Teaching techniques to be conceptualized to the Z generation and align with the current needs and scenario. Teaching and learning concepts needs to be changed to facilitate current and future generation" (R7).

Another important suggestion was the curriculum should be able to forecast the challenges that future teachers are going to face in multiple contexts with diverse students capabilities. Suggestions were also given to include connectivism theory, heutagogy, facilitation of learning which includes mentoring and coaching. Further reviews were carried out by the researches and the aspects of four types of changes were refined and an info graphic of the curriculum framework was designed. The beginning scholar teachers' attributes were refined and developed into 3CIA which encompasses the Compassionate, Collaborative and Creative and Innovative, and Adaptive attributes. Each of the attributes consists of sub-attributes which explain the attributes.

The final validation was carried out in September with five other education experts from institutions of higher learning and teacher education institutes.

The overall 3Es' curriculum framework was commended for its comprehensiveness, holistic and balanced; and addressing the needs of current teacher education programme. The aspect of spiritualism needs to be seen more explicit in the framework. There is a need to include teachers who are resilient to changes, particularly on unplanned change, to accommodate to the dynamic revolution of education in the future. The participants echoed the emphasis on inculcating the values, skill and knowledge of the curriculum model. Some of the participants even suggested that the future teachers should not only be trained to be 'change managers' but instead be 'champions of change' in education.

Other concerns highlighted were the curriculum model should be cognizant of the Malaysian education ecosystem. Student teachers should be physically and psychologically prepared to teach in rural and urban schools upon graduation.

Conclusion
The validation process was seen as constructive by all researchers in order to strengthen the curriculum framework before its implementation. Many of the concerns expressed by the critical informants were valid and help to clarify some of the concepts explicitly. The process was enriching since the critical informants were from diverse backgrounds. In a nutshell, many critical informants addressed the societal needs of having quality teachers who have good ethical values and passionate in educating the children of the future.

Humanising education is seen as integral for social change and should be one of the praxis permeated in the teacher education program reform. This paper implicates the need for teacher education program reform to embark on the proposed curriculum validation and to involve as many critical informants in the attempt to produce a quality curriculum framework.

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