

**PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES OF
MALAYSIAN IN-SERVICE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

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UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA

2021

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MALAYSIAN IN-SERVICE ENGLISH
LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

by

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**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

May 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To God Be the Glory

I thank God the Almighty for guiding me to complete this tough yet inspiring PhD journey.

I take this opportunity to render my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kamarul Kabilan Abdullah and the examiners for deeply flourishing my piece of writing with your guidance and advice. Thank you for your ongoing support, wisdom, and nurturing my growth from a novice to a credible researcher.

My heartfelt appreciation also goes to my dearest friend Geneviene Bong for being there for me right from the day I registered for my PhD studies, proposal defense, pre-viva and viva-voce. Thank you so much for your time and unending support.

Finally the support of my family must be acknowledged. I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Deva Raju, my daughters Azelynn Dannilea and Amerlynn Dalvynea, my father Albert David Thomas and my mother Jothi Mary. I am also truly blessed with relatives, friends and church members who always remembered me in their prayers. Your constant faith in my ability kept me going on my PhD journey and not giving up.

Lastly, I would like to thank each of the participants of this study. You trusted me with your experiences. This research would not have been possible without your willingness to share with me. I honour your practice and hope that I captured your authentic views. I am humbled to be a part of such a thoughtful and brilliant community.

To all of you, you are the constant strength for my success.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiii
LIST OF APPENDICES	xiv
ABSTRAK	xv
ABSTRACT	xvii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Background of the Study	3
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	7
1.4 Research Objectives.....	12
1.5 Research Questions.....	13
1.6 Significance of the Study	13
1.7 Operational Definitions.....	16
1.7.1 Social media.....	16
1.7.2 Practices	17
1.7.3 Experiences	17
1.7.4 In-service.....	18
1.7.5 Professional Development	19
1.7.5(a) Effective English Language Professional Development.....	21
1.8 Scope of the Study	21
1.9 Summary	23

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE	25
2.1 Introduction.....	25
2.2 Literature Review.....	25
2.2.1 Social Media	25
2.2.2 Practices	28
2.2.2(a) Teacher professional development practices in Malaysia.....	29
2.2.3 Experiences	30
2.2.3(a) PRO ELT (Up-skilling of English teachers).....	32
2.2.3(b) Feedback on PRO ELT	33
2.2.3(c) Face-to-Face Professional Development.....	34
2.2.3(d) Online Professional Development.....	36
2.2.3(e) Email.....	38
2.2.3(f) Blogs.....	39
2.2.4 In-Service	40
2.2.5 Professional Development	42
2.2.5(a) Ineffective Professional Development.....	48
2.3 Underpinning Theories	50
2.3.1 Community of Practice	50
2.3.1(a) Domain	53
2.3.1(b) Community	53
2.3.1(c) Practice	54
2.3.1(d) Cultivating CoP among in-service English Teachers.....	54
2.3.1(e) The Significance of Building Communities of Practice Among In-Service Teachers’	56
2.3.1(f) CoP using SM.....	58
2.3.1(g) Collaboration in CoP	59
2.3.1(h) Learning Through Communities of Practice in The Digital Age	60

2.3.2	Connectivism	61
2.3.2(a)	Connectivism in Teachers' Professional Development.....	65
2.3.2(b)	Benefits of Connectivism	67
2.4	Research Gap	68
2.5	Conceptual Framework.....	69
2.6	Hypotheses Development	70
2.6.1	Various SM used for Professional Development of EL Teachers	70
2.6.1(a)	Facebook.....	72
2.6.1(b)	Instagram	74
2.6.1(c)	Twitter	75
2.6.1(d)	YouTube	76
2.6.1(e)	WhatsApp	77
2.6.1(f)	Telegram.....	80
2.6.1(g)	Skype	81
2.6.1(h)	Webinar	83
2.6.2	Capacity and Experience of EL Teachers' Using SM for Online Professional Development Activities.....	86
2.6.3	Problems Affecting the EL Teachers' Online Professional Development Activities Using SM	88
2.7	Summary	90
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY		92
3.1	Introduction.....	92
3.2	Research Process.....	92
3.3	Research Design.....	93
3.4	Research Framework.....	96
3.5	Location of the Study.....	96
3.6	Instrumentation	97

3.6.1	Online Questionnaire	99
3.6.2	In-depth Interview Protocol	101
3.7	Duration of the Study	104
3.7.1	Pilot Study for Quantitative Data.....	105
3.7.2	Pilot Study for Qualitative Data.....	107
3.8	Study Population and Sampling Frame, Unit of Analysis, Sample Selection and Sampling Techniques	107
3.8.1	Study Population and Sampling Frame.....	107
3.8.2	Unit of Analysis	108
3.8.3	Sample.....	109
3.8.4	Sample Size and Sampling Technique.....	109
3.9	Quantitative Validity and Reliability of Instrument	111
3.9.1	Instrument Content Validity	111
3.9.2	Reliability.....	113
3.10	Qualitative Validity and Reliability of Instrument	115
3.10.1	Instrument Content Validity	115
3.10.2	Credibility and Trustworthiness.....	117
3.11	Quantitative Data Collection and Qualitative Data Collection.....	118
3.11.1	Quantitative Data Collection.....	118
3.11.2	Qualitative Data Collection.....	120
3.12	Quantitative Data Analysis	122
3.12.1	Descriptive Analysis	123
3.12.2	Teachers' Professional Development Practices	124
3.12.3	Teachers' Professional Development Experiences	124
3.13	Interview Data Analysis	125
3.13.1	Phase 1: Familiarising with the Data	128
3.13.2	Generating Initial Codes	128
3.13.3	Searching for Themes	129

3.13.4	Reviewing Themes.....	129
3.13.5	Defining and Labelling the Themes.....	130
3.13.6	Producing the Report	130
3.14	Data Reduction.....	131
3.15	Data Display.....	132
3.16	Conclusion Drawing and Verification	133
3.17	Summary	134
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....		135
4.1	Introduction.....	135
4.2	Demographic Profile.....	135
4.2.1	Number of Schools Involved According to States for the Online Questionnaire	135
4.2.2	Number of Schools Involved According to States for the Interview	137
4.2.3	Gender for the Online Questionnaire.....	137
4.2.4	Participants for the Interview According to State, Gender, Highest Qualification and Type of School.....	139
4.2.5	Age of Respondents	141
4.2.6	Teaching Experience for Online Questionnaire.....	141
4.2.7	Teaching Experience for the Interview	142
4.3	Access to the Internet and SM Accounts	143
4.3.1	Usage of Devices to Connect to the Internet.....	143
4.3.2	SM Accounts.....	144
4.3.3	Types of Internet Access.....	144
4.4	English Language Teachers' Professional Development Practices	145
4.4.1	Practices using Facebook	146
4.4.2	Practices using Instagram.....	149
4.4.3	Practices using Twitter.....	151
4.4.4	Practices using YouTube	153

4.4.5	Practices using WhatsApp	155
4.4.6	Practices using Telegram	157
4.4.7	Practices using other Social Media	159
4.4.8	Summary of Practices for Professional Development	159
4.5	Beneficial on Professional Development.....	162
4.6	Contribution of SM to Teachers’ Professional Development.....	164
4.6.1	The Importance of the Experiences to Teachers’ Professional Development	166
4.6.2	Application of Experiences to Teaching and Learning.....	167
4.7	Challenges Faced by English Language Teachers’ Online Professional Development Activities Using SM	170
4.8	Suggestions to Overcome Problems	175
4.9	Summary	177
	CHAPTER 5 DISSCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	178
5.1	Introduction.....	178
5.2	Recapitulation of this Study.....	178
5.3	Demographic of Respondents	179
5.4	Objective 1: To Examine The EL Teachers’ Practices of Using SM	180
5.5	Objective 2: To Find Out Which SM Is the Most Beneficial To the Professional Development of The EL Teachers	182
5.6	Objective 3: To Find Out the Contribution of SM On the Capacity and Experiences Gained by The EL Teachers’ Using SM For Online Professional Development Activities.....	183
5.7	Objective 4: To Ascertain the Challenges Affecting the EL Teachers’ Online Professional Development Activities Using SM.....	184
5.8	Implications of the Study	185
5.8.1	Theoretical Implications	185
5.8.2	Practical Implications.....	186
5.9	Suggestion for Future Research	187
5.10	Limitations of the Study.....	188

5.11 Summary 189

REFERENCES..... 191

APPENDICES

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1	Cronbach Alpha and Interpretation 114
Table 3.2	Reliability Analysis (Cronbach Alpha) of Constructs..... 114
Table 3.3	A Sample of Labelling the Participants..... 120
Table 3.4	Description of the Experiences Gained Using the SM 122
Table 3.5	A Sample of Grouping and Coding Strategies: Choosing a particular SM and reasons 126
Table 3.6	Sample Scheme for Activity and Situation Codes of Open Ended Excerpts 133
Table 4.1	Number of Schools Involved According to States for the Online Questionnaire 135
Table 4.2	Number of Schools Involved According to States for the Interview 137
Table 4.3	Gender of Participants According to States for the Online Questionnaire..... 138
Table 4.4	Participants for the Interview According to State, Gender, Highest Qualification and Type of School 139
Table 4.5	Age of Respondents..... 141
Table 4.6	Teaching Experience of the Participants for Online Questionnaire..... 141
Table 4.7	Teaching Experience of the Participants for the Interview 142
Table 4.8	Devices Used by English Language Teachers' to Connect to the Internet..... 143
Table 4.9	English Language Teachers' SM Accounts..... 144
Table 4.10	English Language Teachers' Access to the Internet..... 144
Table 4.11	Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for English Language Teachers' Professional Development Practices Using Facebook..... 146
Table 4.12	Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for English Language Teachers' Professional Development Practices Using Instagram 149

Table 4.13	Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for English Language Teachers' Professional Development Practices Using Twitter	151
Table 4.14	Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for English Language Teachers' Professional Development Practices Using Youtube	153
Table 4.15	Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for English Language Teachers' Professional Development Practices Using WhatsApp	155
Table 4.16	Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for English Language Teachers' Professional Development Practices Using Telegram.....	157
Table 4.17	Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for English Language Teachers' Professional Development Most Favoured SM Practices.....	160
Table 4.18	English Language Teachers' Preference of SM to the Professional Development.....	162
Table 4.19	Experiences Gained by the English Language Teachers' Using Social Media for Online Professional Development Activities.....	164
Table 4.20	Challenges faced by the English Language Teachers' Online Professional Development Activities Using SM	170
Table 4.21	Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Challenges Faced by the EL teachers' Online Professional Development Activities Using SM	171

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1	Dimensions of practice as the property of a community 53
Figure 2.2	Conceptual Framework of the Study 70
Figure 3.1	Explanatory Sequential Design 94
Figure 3.2	Research Framework 96
Figure 3.3	The Procedures of Sampling for Survey and Interview via SM 109
Figure 3.4	Process of Collecting Data 119
Figure 3.5	Phases of Thematic Analysis 128
Figure 4.1	Male and female participants for the online questionnaire..... 138

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CoP	Communities of practice
EL	English Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EPRD	Educational Planning and Research Department
INSET	In-Service Training
LADAP	Professional Development through In-Service Training
MOE	Ministry of Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Professional Development
PRO ELT	Professional Up-skilling of English Language Teachers
SM	Social Media
SSM	Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia
SMT	Social Media Technology
TESL	Teaching English as Second Language
TPD	Teacher Professional Development
TPDS	Teacher Professional Development Sector
SDL	Self-Directed Learning
SIPartner	School Improvement Partner
SM	Social Media
SMT	Social Media Technology

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Online Questionnaire
Appendix B	Table of Sample Matrix for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population
Appendix C	Cover Note for The Online Questionnaire
Appendix E	Interview Protocol
Appendix F	Sample of The Interview Transcript

**AMALAN DAN PENGALAMAN PEMBANGUNAN PROFESIONAL
MENGUNAKAN MEDIA SOSIAL DI KALANGAN GURU BAHASA
INGGERIS DI MALAYSIA**

ABSTRAK

Kemunculan komuniti pembelajaran menyebabkan media sosial menjadi platform yang lebih popular dan mudah untuk pembangunan profesional guru. Ini disebabkan oleh kemampuan media sosial untuk menghubungkan guru-guru dari lokasi yang berbeza, serta keupayaannya untuk melangkaui masa. Walau bagaimanapun, seperti yang ditunjukkan oleh sorotan literatur, tidak banyak yang diketahui dari segi penggunaan media sosial guru untuk tujuan pembangunan profesional. Penyelidikan ini akan mengkaji amalan guru-guru bahasa Inggeris (n = 1000) dan pengalaman mereka dalam menggunakan media sosial sebagai platform untuk memulakan dan meningkatkan perkembangan profesional. Kajian ini telah mengkaji enam media sosial iaitu Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and Telegram. Kaedah kuantitatif (soal selidik atas talian) dan kaedah kualitatif (wawancara melalui Telegram) akan digunakan untuk mengkaji dan menentukan kegunaan media sosial dalam kalangan guru bahasa Inggeris di seluruh negara. Soal selidik atas talian telah direka dengan soalan pelbagai pilihan, soalan terbuka, dan jenis Likert untuk menilai amalan dan pengalaman guru bahasa Inggeris dalam perkhidmatan menggunakan media sosial untuk pembangunan profesional. Kajian ini juga membuktikan bahawa 98.70% guru Bahasa Inggeris menggunakan telefon pintar untuk melayari Internet kerana ia mudah dan cepat. Ini terbukti benar kerana tinjauan dalam talian dilakukan menggunakan salah satu peranti. KPM juga telah membantu 430,000 guru dengan tablet percuma dan 138,820 telefon pintar

Altitude oleh Yes 4G supaya guru dapat berhubung dengan internet. Beberapa implikasi kajian juga akan dikemukakan melalui kajian ini. Dapatan kajian dalam kalangan guru Bahasa Inggeris menunjukkan majoriti guru bahasa Inggeris menggunakan media sosial untuk tujuan pembangunan profesional guru. Telegram dipilih sebagai media sosial yang paling bermanfaat untuk pembangunan profesional guru. Sebahagian besar daripada peserta kajian mengakui bahawa media sosial telah membantu mereka dalam pembangunan profesional guru.

**PRACTICES AND EXPERIENCES OF MALAYSIAN IN-SERVICE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS' PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
USING SOCIAL MEDIA**

ABSTRACT

With the advent of learning communities, social media is becoming a far more popular and convenient platform for teachers' professional development. It is mainly due to the capacity of social media to connect teachers from various geographical areas, as well as its ability to transcend time. Nevertheless, as the literature indicates, not much is known in terms of teachers' uses of social media for professional development purposes. This study examines English Language teachers' (n = 1000) practices and experiences of using social media as a platform to initiate and enhance ones' professional development. Six social media platforms were examined in this study mainly Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, and Telegram. Quantitative method (online questionnaire) and qualitative method (interview via Telegram) were used to investigate and determine the usefulness of social media to the English Language teachers nationwide. The online questionnaire was designed with multiple-choice, open-ended, and Likert-type questions to assess in-service English Language teachers' practices and experiences of using social media for professional development. Interview sessions via Telegram complemented and contributed important insights to this study. This study also established that 98.70 % of the English Language teachers use the smartphone to connect to the internet because it is convenient. This is proven true as the online survey was done using one of the devices. The MOE has also aided 430,000 teachers with free tablets and 138,820 Altitude smartphones by Yes 4G so that teachers could get connected to

the internet. Several implications and contributions of the study were also highlighted. The findings revealed that the usage of social media among English Language teachers are high and Telegram was ranked as the most beneficial social media for teachers' professional development. Most of the participants agree that social media has benefitted their professional development growth.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

Professional development is the cornerstone for quality education. The advancement of Social Media (SM) has changed teachers' professional development around the globe. According to The Glossary of Education Reform, a comprehensive online resource (2013) the phrase professional development is defined as a broad range of specialized training, formal training, or advanced professional learning aimed at helping administrators, teachers, and other educators strengthen their professional knowledge, skills, and efficiency. Professional development is vital to fill the gaps in the skill sets of new teachers and continue to flourish teachers' capacity so that they are regularly trained and educated by professional development of the evolving practices and student needs in the education system (Evers et al., 2016).

Social media is commonly used to exchange facts, thoughts, experiences and knowledge (Heinonen, 2011). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) described social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (p.61). Similarly, Davis et al. (2012) referred social media as “web-based and mobile applications that enable people and organizations, through multi-way communication, to develop, engage and share new user-generated or current content in digital environments” (p.1). The creation and sharing of user-generated content rely on all meanings of social media. In particular, Davis et al.

(2012) paid more attention to online interaction through different forms of communication.

Due to the proliferation of globalization in education, there were rapid changes in education (Kabilan & Veratharaju, 2013). These changes call for many reforms to be made so that teachers are always being updated and not left behind in terms of communication, knowledge, and technology. Hamid and Nguyen (2016) defined globalization as the “interconnectedness of peoples, societies and nations on a global scale” (p. 28). Thus, there need to be transformations and innovative models that cater to English teachers’ career development. Therefore, in terms of English Language teachers’ professional development, new and innovative professional development models of are needed to fulfil the changing professional demands in “creating communities of learning that foster healthy attitudes...broader skill” that are "driven by pronounced demographic shifts, moving fast cultural diversity, and an accepted paradigm of inclusion" that will radically alter “the realities of classrooms” (Philpott et al., 2010, p. 49).

These indicators show the significance of professional development in the 21st century in planning and implementation (Kabilan, 2004). The digital age calls for teacher improvement in pedagogical skills through participation in collaborative networks (Tosato et al., 2014). Active involvement and utilizing SM is already a norm in this 21st century.

The use of SM for professional development would significantly impact professional growth and teachers’ development as lifelong learners. The resources available to teachers are enriched through SM and connections with prominent figures in education, such as Diane Ravitch, Michael Fullan, Todd Whitaker, and so

forth, by way of chat sessions on Twitter or posting on their blogs (Cox & McLeod, 2014). These prominent people discussed on the usage of social media tools which had heightened the connectedness with students, staff, the community, and the profession, which had not transpired as greatly through traditional forms of communication (Cox & McLeod, 2014).

1.2 Background of the Study

In 1995, the MOE organized a committee to examine teachers' professionalization, professionalism, and professional development in Malaysia (Jamil et al., 2011). Among recommendations by the committee to enhance teacher development is by attending in-service courses and further education. It was also stated in the National Education Philosophy formed in 1988 to explain the importance of establishing education in Malaysia that:

“Education in Malaysia is an on-going effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, who possess high moral standards and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the betterment of the family, society and the nation at large.”

(MOE, 2008, p. ix)

Malaysian education policy is the transformation of the national ideology, as stated in the MOE circular 1988. The policy's fundamental is to improve in the quality and increase the number of outcomes to meet the workforces who are educators so that well-disciplined citizens are produced with high moral standards and excellent work principles.

In addition to the Malaysia Strategy, the MOE made known the 2013-2025 National Education Blueprint in October 2011 to update Malaysia's education system (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013). The Blueprint emphasizes the importance of education in every part of its plan. The Blueprint also highlighted the value of the teacher professional development in its strategy. Therefore, the MOE of Malaysia developed the Teacher Professional Development Sector (TPDS). Maintaining the main objectives of achieving quality education, the sector plans to manage and implement teachers' professional development activities across the nation. As teachers receive their early teaching education from the training colleges, it is vital to improve and reinforce the upgrading of teacher training colleges to education institutes for teachers in 2008.

Malaysian teachers' professional development aims to better the quality of education and build the nation's human capital. The call for teachers' professional development for Malaysian teachers was identified in 1995 by an exclusive committee. This selected committee was to look into teachers' professionalization, professionalism and professional development.

This study is targeted to secondary English teachers because of the needs and importance of effective professional development that the researcher wants to address. It would be a fruitful platform for the English Language teachers from secondary schools to perform their English Language professional development practices and experiences using SM. It also provides effective professional development for teachers across diverse regions in a cost-effective and sustainable way. By using SM as a platform for professional development, teachers who are involved can choose their own favourable professional development activities. Teachers should note changes in their knowledge of the subject, dedication to

teaching, teaching skills, and students' outcome (Moor et al., 2005; Cordingley et al., 2005; White et al., 2004).

The word social media has been the subject of numerous and disputed meanings in the educational research literature. With the definition Web 2.0 (Mason & Rennie, 2008; O'Reilly, 2007), some writers use social media interchangeably, some with social apps (Ellison & Boyd, 2013; Ravenscroft, 2009), or with social web (Brown, 2012). Tentative definitions have been provided by other scholars, in accordance to which social media is categorized of Internet-based applications that is built on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0 and allow user-generated content to be produced and shared (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). However, identifying these devices, as suggested by Tess (2013), is made more difficult because they are frequently in a state of change. Today, among the applications usually included in the social media platform are social networking sites, blogs, wikis, digital networks, virtual game worlds and virtual social worlds (Tess, 2013).

The permeation of the SM shows that teachers are adopting it as a channel of communication, collaboration, and sharing teaching materials with other teachers within the educational settings. This usage is predicted to expand speedily in the near future. However, there is little empirical indication of teachers' perspectives and utilization of SM to foster their persistence in professional development. The study will, therefore investigate on the use of SM for the professional development of teachers.

The extensive availability of Wi-Fi, mobile devices, and broadband has made it very convenient to reach various SM. SM makes a useful tool for communication and professional development because of its unique features which are easy to find

and share interesting and valuable content. As most SM sites are free, it encourages teachers to join in conversations on a global scale and in real-time. Teachers are also being equipped pedagogically with the latest teaching and learning method. A strong community of practice is utmost important. English Language teachers could form a sharing society where teachers could post, upload and download any possible teaching and learning materials for their lessons. Thus, it would permit teachers to work collaboratively with their peers and join in discussions that pique their interest.

Teachers' professional development was acknowledged as a means to enhance the teaching profession. Some crucial recommendations which were put forward by the committee were teachers should be encouraged to attend in-service courses. Teachers should be encouraged to further their education. Teachers should also be encouraged to visit other countries to study their current developments in their education system. Newly appointed teachers to new posts and responsibilities are to be given induction programmes. Head teachers who are being promoted to the position are to attend management courses. Teachers' should be seated according to the same subjects in the staff room for a more comfortable sharing of knowledge. Teacher learning centres should facilitate the professional development of teachers. These learning centres should be built in strategic locations equipped with modern technology, fully financed and sufficiently staffed (as cited in Ali, 2002, p. 45).

Policies on teachers' professional development worldwide are different according to the amount of time attributed to Teachers' Professional Development (TPD) per year. Teacher Development Report, 2009 in the United States and abroad indicate that teachers in countries such as the Netherlands, Singapore and Sweden are given the most opportunities to attend TPD programmes, that is, a minimum of 100 hours per year (Wei et al., 2009). In comparison, the mass of teachers in the United

States acquired less than 16 hours of professional development on the subject matter they taught (Wei et al., 2009). According to Cooper (2008), the terms “staff development”, “in-service training”, and “professional development” are often used interchangeably (p.4025). All these terms refer to upgrade knowledge and skills of in-service teachers as well as teach positive attitudes that enhance the teaching and learning process. There is no doubt that in-service teacher training (INSET) is an integral component of continuous teacher professional development (TPD). It will remain so for years to come, regardless of the word and consequently the meaning.

From this point of view, more specific attention on how academic staff use SM in their teaching practices, and a greater understanding of the perceptions they have of these devices, would allow us to overcome the generic analyses that often characterize reflections on the role of digital technologies for teaching in higher education, and to enhance knowledge about the use of these tools in various geographical regions. This study aims to contribute to the research on the digital practices of academics, focusing on the benefits of SM and the capacity and experience gained by the EL teachers’ using SM for online professional development activities and the to ascertain the problems affecting the EL teachers’ online professional development activities using SM. Firstly, this study introduces the related literature and the methodological framework of the research, and then it describes and discusses the results with suggestions for further study.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This outline discusses aspects of the fabricated phenomenon which must be explored further. It is vital to better understand the impact on English Language teachers’ practices and experiences of using social media as a platform to initiate and

enhance one's professional development. Moreover, as the literature indicates, the term of teachers' social media use for professional development purposes is still under-explored.

SM applies to various technologies, amid the disputed terminological variations, allowing users to develop, post, comment and debate digital content. They are also depicted as 'dynamic', 'interactive', 'people-centric', 'social' and 'adaptive' (Brown, 2012, p.50). The characteristics of social media is also seen as a medium by which teaching and learning activities are profoundly transformed as more social, accessible and collaborative. Social networking tools, in particular, are seen as capable of facilitating a distributed and networked process of knowledge building by linking and encouraging networks and social interaction (Dron & Anderson, 2014; Siemens & Weller, 2011). Given the academic context, some scholars have stressed (e.g. Seely Brown & Adler, 2008) that using these devices generates or demands a fundamental shift in the pedagogical model with 'revolutionary' implications for academic institutions, or at least to rethink the e-learning and teaching practises of teachers. Junco (2014) pointed out how the expanded use of social media in higher education will contribute to the reconnection of academic institutions with new generation students'. However, much of the literature in the field focuses on the potentials of SM for learning (Greenhow et al., 2018; Manca & Ranieri, 2013, 2017; Tess, 2013) or provides empirical evidence relating to their use in higher education by students (Bennett et al., 2012; Cooke, 2017; Karvounidis et al., 2014). A number of social media platforms are also easily available with the advent of Web 2.0 to encourage online collaborative learning (Lim et al., 2010). Social media benefits teachers through the many characteristics in the application which eases their learning and also into professional development.

Extensive survey studies undertaken to analyse social media scholars expected, and real digital activities are much less prominent and related to a few countries, such as Malaysia (Moran et al., 2011, 2012; Seaman & Tinti-Kane, 2013). Despite these research constraints, higher education scholars are gradually embracing on social media (Moran et al., 2012). Facebook is becoming the most used social media platform for personal use and LinkedIn the most used for professional purposes. However, the frequency of personal usage tends to be primarily related to the frequency of professional use rather than the frequency for teaching usage (Manca & Ranieri, 2016). Instead of incorporating these devices into teaching activities, these findings indicate a generally more favourable attitude towards personal sharing and professional growth through online social networks.

Several studies have reported positive affordances of SM for teaching and learning (Gao et al., 2012; Manca & Ranieri, 2013, 2017; Rodríguez-Hoyos et al., 2015; Tess, 2013). Most of these studies are reviews that synthesize findings on SM tools, mainly in higher education. Regarding microblogging services, Gao et al. (2012), for instance, pointed out how microblogging has a potential to encourage participation, engagement, reflective thinking, collaborative learning, and to expand learning content in different formal and informal learning settings. However, the authors also stressed several challenges, such as unfamiliarity with the tools, information overload, distraction, and prevailing lurking behaviours. Similar potentials were also highlighted by Manca and Ranieri (2013) in their review study of Facebook as a technology-enhanced learning environment. The authors highlighted several of Facebook's pedagogical affordances, such as the possibility of mixing different information and learning resources, hybridizing other expertise, and widening the context of learning. However, the authors also stressed that several

obstacles might prevent full adoption of Facebook as a learning environment, such as declared and implicit institutional policies, teachers' and students' pedagogies, and several cultural issues.

A study done by Kabilan and Veratharaju (2013) showed that 89.1% of the Malaysian primary school teachers agree that professional activities should be scheduled and coordinated suiting teachers' professional needs. Respondents in their study indicated that there should also be more associated with conferences and seminars are correlated to the betterment and enhance the pedagogical aspects of teaching and learning. Professional development should adapt to the current practices of teaching and learning pedagogies. Thus, in the Malaysian context, English Language teachers long and require far more effective PD programmes or activities tailored to their needs (Kabilan & Veratharaju, 2013). Currently in Malaysia a period of seven days or 56 hours of teachers' professional development is allocated for INSET per year with predominant workshops, seminars, conferences and courses.

In the Malaysian context for teachers' professional development, allocation of time for professional development is also scarce and limited. Badri et al. (2016) and Rashid et al. (2017) brought out to the attention that one of the most significant hurdles to participating in professional development is strongly related to with busy work schedule. Burdens of teaching together with endless duties and chores are the daily routines for teachers. Ming et al. (2010) highlighted that the lack of time becomes a barrier to teachers as they could not use the tools and various social media platforms actively, which apparently affected their teachers' professional development. That should not be the case, but it happens, neither in isolated cases nor once in a while but occurs across various professional settings, most of the time.

Experiences acquired from the traditional professional development style have failed to deliver relevant professional development intended to improve professional learning for teachers and their competencies. Based on Schlager and Fusco's (2003) assessment, the standard professional development programmes at the schools, districts, states and national levels are disconnected from regular traditional practices, fragmented and misaligned. Again, they added that a number of these programmes lack key pedagogical, content and structural features of successful professional development required by the teachers they accommodate (p. 205). Similar scenarios happen in Malaysia, where English Language teachers report displeasure over the types of professional development programmes and learning catered to them (Kabilan, 2006). Teachers in the research conducted by Kabilan et al. (2008) showed dissatisfaction because the professional development courses conducted are not related to classroom teaching and learning. The researchers also added that there were mostly repetitions of what the teachers had undergone at the teacher training colleges during their fundamental training.

Teachers' professional development is supposed to enable teachers to refurbish and capacitate pedagogical knowledge and skills, and at the same time grant teachers to be creative and critical in their teaching approach. A nationwide study was carried out by Kabilan approaching 2586 English teachers with the objective to determine and identify the level of the Malaysian English Language teachers' level of satisfaction of their professional development (Kabilan, 2019). Findings from the study revealed a few alarming trends of Malaysian English Language teachers' practices and participation in professional development. Firstly, the number of professional development programmes organized for teachers by the MOE, State Education Department or schools is still insufficient to cater to the

number of existing English Language teachers. There is also serious lacking teachers' initiative and commitment to be involved in the professional development and be engaged in lifelong learning. Lacking self-motivation, desire and initiative among teachers to initiate their own professional development is also a turn down to teacher's professional life cycle. In the study, the mean score for the satisfaction level of experience in professional development activities was 2.98. The mean score indicates a satisfaction level that is slightly below than the 'Satisfied' level for the overall teachers of the study. Robust efforts are needed to organize meaningful professional development for teachers to fulfil their needs and interests at the school, district, state or national level (Kabilan, 2019).

Literature has revealed that social media use to support teacher PD is well in line with contemporary learning theory such as Social Constructivism. Concerning Social Constructivist Theory (Felix, 2005), learning is a social practice, and teachers' knowledge is no exception. Teaching is conducted in a traditional conventional way with little time, if any, for collaboration between teachers and sharing best practices experiences among teachers. Social media, however, enables social interaction among teachers and sharing of teaching experience and resources. Lastly, most previous studies with similar variables or models were done mainly in countries around America and Europe. This is due to countries in that continent are being more advanced and presumed to inhibit more developed characteristics than a third-world country.

1.4 Research Objectives

The research objectives stated below aims to address the research questions in this study.

1. To examine the EL teachers' practices of using SM.
2. To find out which SM is the most beneficial to the professional development of the EL teachers.
3. To find out the contribution of SM on the capacity and experiences gained by the EL teachers' using SM for online professional development activities.
4. To ascertain the challenges affecting the EL teachers' online professional development activities using SM.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed to answer the research objectives of the study.

RQ 1: What are the EL teachers' practices of using SM?

RQ 2: Which SM is the most beneficial to the professional development of the EL teachers?

RQ 3: What are the contributions of SM capacity and experiences gained by the EL teachers' using SM for online professional development activities?

RQ 4: What are the challenges faced by the EL teachers' online professional development activities using SM?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The proposed study will identify the practices and experiences of in-service English Language teachers. Firstly, it would provide suggestions to policymakers on the appropriate and suitable programs, courses or modules to be designed. It is the duty of community leaders, government and parents to enforce teachers in the

schools participate in the ongoing and effective professional, learning and apply what is being learnt to improve student outcome.

Curriculum design and development, planning, and training should also be strengthened. As professional development globally is changing trends from courses, training to go online and currently through SM, so is Malaysia. There should be a vast improvement in the curriculum design where the current practices and experiences of the teachers must be taken into consideration before planning any professional development programmes.

Training to strengthen the professional development of teachers should also be specifically adapted to the needs of the teachers and not wholesome to a teachers' community. What is needed by one teacher may not be beneficial to the other teachers. Thus, through SM teachers could form a community of practice where they can voice their opinions and share information. There should be no boundary to gather information. By using SM, there is an ocean of information and ideas for the practice of teaching and learning.

Curriculum planners would also benefit in terms to examine, evaluate and revise to meet the different and changing learning styles of the students. To meet the current needs of the multiple learning styles and ability of the digital era, teachers need to access various sources of information. Chalk and talk method has become outdated. Teachers need to use updated pedagogical methods. Before the teacher could teach, he or she has to be professionally equipped first. SM through its unique feature of networking helps the teacher to share information with various people and resources.

Year by year there would be a rise in the curriculum pedagogically and technologically. Teacher expertise in the educational use of technology tends to be one of the key components in a few educational reform attempts during this digital age (Pineida, 2011). Competency in the use of technology is believed to improve the standard of teaching and student learning outcomes as a feedback to the needs of the 21st century learning (Jimoyiannis, 2010). In the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), the impact of technology on student outcomes could make language learning more genuine and significant for students (Warschauer & Kern, 2000; Warschauer & Meskill, 2000; Young et al., 2003). Therefore, there should be continuous study and upgrading on the teachers' professional development to upgrade the learning process for 21st century learners.

Gaining motivation is also significant for this study. Motivation is only advantageous if teachers are interested in online professional development (Kabilan, 2003; Moonen & Voogt, 2000). Thus, online professional development is a self-directed learning method for independent, confident, and self-motivated teachers. It also allows empowerment and possession to English Language teachers to fulfil their professional growth demands.

As professional development is an essential need for each language teacher, thus it is crucial to further venture and proposes new ways either literally or pedagogically. This helps the educator to progress themselves and the institution of education as a whole.

1.7 Operational Definitions

In this section, most importantly, the definition of SM and professional development are discussed. The SM will be described and explained in terms of its meaning in general, how it operates or works, and the various types of SM. As far as professional development is concerned, different types of professional development will be discussed, in particular those that will be examined in this study via SM and how the professional development is measured. Also, defined are the terms ‘practices’ ‘experiences’, in-service and professional development.

1.7.1 Social media

Elefant (2011) has described Web 2.0 and SM as digital channels that promote people-to-people sharing of information, content generated by users and collaboration. These Web 2.0 technologies platforms include web-based and mobile-based which allows interactive communication between individuals, communities, and organizations (Greenhow & Robelia, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

A future-proof summarised definition of social media by Carr and Hayes (2015):

“Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others” (p. 50).

SM allows people to exchange, share, comment and modify content or information in different forms. It is the connection in the cyberspace. Through SM, internet users can exchange the contents with others. It becomes a fact that SM becomes a part of our daily life. Joosten (2012) said that SM is Web 2.0 applications

which have the potential to increase interactions and communication among individuals through the principle of creating and sharing.

The most popular social networks as reported by Statista 2020 gives a clear picture with Facebook overriding the best. As of the second quarter of 2020, statistics showed Facebook had 2.7 billion active monthly users worldwide. Report on October 2020 showed that WhatsApp and YouTube had the same amount of users which was 2 billion. This statistic was followed by Messenger with 1.36 billion users and Instagram with one billion users (Statista, 2020).

1.7.2 Practices

Practice is a routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one other: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge (Meece et al., 2006, p.499).

In this study, practices are defined as teachers' use of SM for professional development activities including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram and other SM. Next, the practices of carrying out the professional development activities using SM are measured using 5 selection options ranging from 'Not at all' to 'All the time'. Definitions of practice in this study allude to what EL teachers undertake in terms of their professional development.

1.7.3 Experiences

Experience is defined as the mechanism by which the world around them is experienced by conscious organisms. Experiences may be followed by active

knowledge on the part of the person who has the experience, but they do not need to be (Oakeshott, 2015).

Experiences are determined by the utilization of SM by the English Language teachers. Such stimulating learning opportunities will allow teachers to gain new understanding of current circumstances and contexts and increase their appreciation of their own professional strengths and weaknesses that will lead them to evaluate their own teaching practices and philosophies. Mackay (2017) regards teacher experiences as a valuable resource to the profession.

1.7.4 In-service

In-service education can simply be defined as the relevant courses and activities in which a serving teacher may participate to upgrade his professional knowledge, skills, and competence in the teaching profession (Osamwonyi, 2016).

Permanent teachers who are currently in service are categorized as in-service teachers. Training for in-service teachers is designed to develop the skills for teachers who are already working in the profession. The professional competence of teachers through on the job training is systematically planned by the MOE. Erarslan (2020) also emphasized the importance of necessary teacher training activities for in-service teachers.

In the Malaysian context, the Ministry of Education outlines the definition of in-service training as:

“The process of knowledge being transferred in a disciplined manner to enhance knowledge and skills to meet the current needs and demands of the organization. This is achieved through any form of learning, such as courses, job training and mentoring /coaching program or anything that is similar to it that may

contribute to the development of an individual and the excellence of an organization” (MOE, 2005, p.2).

According to Cooper (2008) the terms staff development, on job training and professional development are often used interchangeably. They carry the same meaning and objectives which aims to update on-job teachers’ knowledge and skills as well as inculcating positive attitudes that bring about improvement in the teaching and learning process. In-service teacher training (INSET) is an integral component of continuous teacher professional development (TPD) and that it will remain so for the coming years. Various government, education departments and agencies organize programs so that teachers have the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills that will help them to become effective teachers and enable them to grow professionally (Lim et al., 2010).

1.7.5 Professional Development

The phrase professional development is often used mutually with the phrase of professional learning, teacher learning, professional growth, and staff development (Battersby, & Verdi, 2015). Guskey (2000) defined professional development as activities and processes designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills and attitudes of educators so that they will, in return, inspire the learning of students. In some circumstances, professional development may also involve learning how to redesign the educational structures and cultures.

Professional development is fundamental to the teachers’ profession and it comprises to introduce new tools, skills or update the existing skills for teachers (Galaczi et al., 2017). The European Commission states professional development as:

'Teaching competencies are... complex combinations of knowledge, skills, understanding, values and attitudes, leading to effective action in situations. The range and complexity of competencies required for teaching in actual societies is so great that any one individual is unlikely to have them all, nor to have developed them all to the same high degree. ... Teachers' continuous professional development is, thus, highly relevant both for improving educational performance and effectiveness and for enhancing teachers' commitment' (European Commission, 2012, p.8-9).

Professional development for English teachers is essential so that English teachers have the knowledge and skills to understand, implement the curriculum, and relate learning materials and assessments (Galaczi et al., 2017). Therefore, the key factor in improving student learning and outcome truly depends on teachers' professional development. Thus, teachers' professional development is a systemic and lifelong process.

As for this study, professional development is defined as any learning plans or programs that attempted by English teachers using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram and any other SM as a professional development platform. Learning programmes are obtained at the teachers own pace and time in order to upgrade them in self-development, pedagogy and the final outcome is the benefits the students. Professional development in the context of this study is ongoing, weekly meeting involving in-service teachers, with the intention to embed teacher learning.

Professional development in the context of this study could be both formal and informal learning that is carried out by the in-service English teachers using SM. The main objective is to promote teachers' personal growth and professionalization. Professional development in this study will be measured in terms of practices and experiences.

1.7.5(a) Effective English Language Professional Development

Effective and meaningful professional development is an on-going and continuous process (OECD, 2005). These include training, practice and feedback to teachers as well as provide adequate time and follow-up support to them. Successful programmes involve teachers in the learning activities that are similar to ones they will apply on their students and encourage the development of teachers' learning communities (Dysart & Weckerle 2015).

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study aims to describe, evaluate, and clarify in depth the professional development practices and experiences of in-service teachers who teach English using SM.

The present study's significant contribution is that it illustrates the value of constantly and regularly researching and carrying out a series of continuous needs assessments of PD teachers by school managers, PD providers, and teachers. This can pave the path for more sustainable, meaningful teacher learning and professional growth decisively and critically. Self-initiated and school-based PD is vital for this to happen and should be given the serious consideration it deserves. Therefore, it is suggested that PD courses be incorporated into the teacher education curriculum in which PD's clear ideas and concepts are taught and distributed. The method should be developed and tested using adult learning principles to achieve the overview of pedagogical innovation and to implement teachers to the experiences they need to execute, cooperate, and apply that knowledge about design to their practice (Gregson & Sturko, 2007). In doing so, Gregson and Sturko (2007) concluded that future

teachers will capitalize with their colleagues on their practices, create professional knowledge and skills, and establish professional cooperative partnerships with them.

The aim of implementing such a PD programme is to encourage potential teachers to take the initiative to define and perform on their own individual needs (Mushayikwa & Lubben, 2009) since teachers who are confident and willing to see themselves as competent professionals can recognize the opportunities to develop professionally may devote more to the school as their commitment (Bogler & Somech, 2004).

No significant variations can be found between the various tools when considering the particular uses in which social media is integrated into existing activities. In contrast, the general trend is that social media is primarily used to envision resources. Regardless of what method is considered, content access is more used than commenting on pre-existing tools for creating new material. This ability to use social media as a way of supporting transmissive teaching and learning approaches is consistent with other researchers on the use of these instruments by teachers (Moran et al., 2012) and more general work on social use media. For example, Hargittai and Walejko (2008) found in a study on innovative uses of emerging digital technology that, despite social media's potential to facilitate content creation and sharing, only a few people created and distributed the content. The primary concern is that digital resources are consumed rather than generated. As indicated in the literature (Crook, 2012) the integration of more participatory methods into structured learning environments can create tensions that may discourage higher education teachers from incorporating social media in their current practices. The lack of data regarding these methods' educational efficacy may also clarify certain scepticism about the usage of social media in a constructivist

perspective involving more interactive practices (Greenhow & Askari, 2017). In the case of tools such as Twitter and LinkedIn, it emerges that they have also been used to circulate course knowledge or facilitate contact between teachers and students or between students or promote community building.

The study scope includes only SM used for social purposes such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Telegram and others. Participants who were included in this scope of study are only Malaysian English Language in-service teachers. Student teachers and temporary replacement teachers were not included in the scope for this study.

1.9 Summary

The usage of SM will globalize teachers' professional development and significantly impact the development of lifelong learners among the teachers on personal and professional growth. The limitations of the conventional or traditional methods of professional development such as temporary basis, one-size-fits-all, limitation of time to engage with other teachers need much improvement. Teachers also need to explore creative and creative methods to boost their presence in activities that has direct impact to classroom practices and pedagogies.

The MOE recognizes the importance of education in providing a foundation for nation-building and sustainable economic development, in line with Malaysia's goal of converting into a high-income country. The MOE also recognizes the need for a broader and more systemic transformation of the education system if Malaysia is to produce people who can succeed and compete globally The Blueprint is a

comprehensive plan for moving towards a sustainable and world-class education system and not just a study of the current education system.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Professional development on new literacies, which includes the use of digital technology to create, collaborate, reflect, and think critically, is evolving. Recent literature, from 2004 to the present, shows a slow progression toward using Web 2.0 technologies for collaboration and networking to enhance professional practice. The first decade of the 21st century saw a shift in focus to electronic forms of professional development such as email, which depends on asynchronous electronic communication, and to Twitter, which utilizes both synchronous and asynchronous communication. Email and Twitter constitute only two examples of electronic professional development during the early stages. Other forms included Skype, online learning management platforms, and web-based systems such as Moodle. Later, the list of SM set into the digital world and the list indeed became larger. Professional development should be convenient for the user and consider time constraints or availability. Conversations through digital platforms allow users to self-direct professional growth. The potential of this study is to engage teachers as they get to cope with the SM impacts for their pedagogy and professional development.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Social Media

In general, social media can be described as “forms of electronic communication as social networking and microblogging websites via which users