

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
OUT-OF-FIELD AND IN-FIELD HISTORY TEACHERS' INFLUENCE ON
STUDENTS' LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN MALAYSIAN SECONDARY
SCHOOLS**

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This thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the
School of Education, Faculty of the Professions
University of Adelaide
February 2013

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Abstract

The focus of this study was to investigate whether there were differences between the way in-field and out-of-field teachers in Malaysian secondary schools perceived and practised History education, and the way their students perceived the teaching and learning of History. In addition, it sought what approaches to learning students adopted in the History classroom, and how far curriculum learning objectives in History had been achieved.

The theoretical model developed was drawn from Biggs' 3P (Presage, Process, and Product) Model of Learning to examine the possible relationships between two sets of variables related to teachers and students. The teacher level variables were teachers' characteristics, years of teaching (experience), and approaches to teaching, classroom methods, and teaching conceptions. Student level variables related to student characteristics, students' approaches to learning, classroom climate, and History learning objectives.

The study adopted quantitative method to answer three major research questions that were derived from the theoretical model. The respondents involved in this study were drawn from 18 of the 94 secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A total of 52 History teachers and 1653 students from year 11 (Form Four) participated. The method involved collecting information from the respondents by using two sets of questionnaires, one for teachers and one for students. A factor analysis of the model constructs based on Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), was employed to validate the constructs in the survey instrument, by testing their fit in the different measurement models used. Partial Least

Square (PLS) and Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) were used for testing the relationships between the variables examined in this study.

According to the research results, no statistically significant differences emerged between in-field and out-of-field teachers on a number of key variables, such as approaches to teaching, methods of teaching and students' approaches to learning. On the other hand, there were a number of other variables where the statistical analysis revealed differences between in-field and out-of-field teachers. These included the teacher characteristic of experience, the dimensions of classroom climate, both preferred and actual, especially in relation to the personalisation of teaching in response to students' needs and interests and, most importantly, students' learning outcomes, defined in terms of their understanding and appreciation of the objectives of the History syllabus they were studying. Despite the limitations of data being gathered only from Kuala Lumpur secondary schools, the results of this study provide some justification for the steps taken by Malaysian government to employ out-of-field History teachers in secondary schools in Malaysia. It is a policy which can be continued, provided the issues surrounding out-of-field History teachers discussed above are properly understood and appropriately handled.

Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution to Umi Kalsum Mohd Salleh and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, excepts where due reference has been made in the text.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest gratefulness to my principal supervisor, Dr I Gusti Ngurah Darmawan, for his dedication, tolerance, and encouragement. Without his inspiring thoughts and ongoing support, this thesis would not have been completed successfully. It is also an honour for me to thank Associate Professor Christopher Dawson as my co-supervisor, for his advice and wisdom especially in developing the research proposal and revising the thesis. My special thanks go to Dr Margaret Secombe for her willingness to share her thoughts, ideas and constructive comments on this thesis. Sincere thanks also go to Emeritus Professor John Keeves who provided the advice, guidance and feedback in relation to the theoretical framework and methodology for this thesis.

My greatest appreciation also goes to my late beloved grandmother, Siti Hamid and my late aunt, Esah Lembut, who were parents to me but passed away during my PhD journey. Without them I would not be here. To Nor Aliza Abdul Jalil and Arif Radzuan, thanks for their constant encouragement, support and love, which built up my confidence and made my dream a reality.

I would also like to express my thanks to Suhana Mohezar, Elizabeth Owen, Aysha Abdul Majeed, and Norhalisa Termidzi, for enriching my days through friendship and emotional support. It is also a pleasure for me to thank my colleagues at the School of Education for accompanying me on this journey and making it enjoyable and memorable for me. Last but not least, thank you to the University of Malaya and Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education for granting me an opportunity to engage in this valuable academic journey.