

The Effect of Competency Development on Employee Performance with Organizational Culture as a Mediation Variable

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Abstract – As today's education sector is constantly evolving, educational organizations recognize that their human capital have substantial influence on their success or failure. Competency development is an important factor which contributes to enhancement of performance. Thus, the study aims to investigate the effect of competency development on employee performance and to confirm the role of organizational culture as mediator in these constructs. In conjunction with the problem statements, the respondents were English language teachers from national secondary school in Malaysia. The PLS-SEM approach had been employed for data analysis of direct and indirect effects in this study through SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results had confirmed the positive effects of competency development on employee performance. Meanwhile, organizational culture has a prominent role as the results reveal the existence of mediating effect in the relationship. Teachers with high performance are essential for educational transformation under SDG4 ensuring quality and sustainable education for all.

Keywords – Competency development, organizational culture, employee performance, teacher.

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1. Introduction

Malaysia encounters with several significant challenges in implementation of education. First and foremost, analysis from the World Bank revealed that there's low percentage of English language teachers that possess sufficient English language proficiency and teaching skills [2]. Besides that, early retirement among the teachers, is rising challenges from the facets of talent development and talent retention where teachers who are not competent in integrating information technology into their work are likely to lose interest, which contributes to early retirement. Furthermore, the 2022 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) review also shows a decline in Malaysia's literacy domain results which portrayed poor learning outcomes from the students in that particular field suggesting [1]. Thus, employee performance among the teachers is paramount to ensure the learning outcomes of the students due to their chain effect. Indeed, changes within organization are more rapid when the environment is shifting such as new development of technology and evolving global economy. These changes triggers for human capital development within a nation due to the emergence of skills gap and demands for adaptability as well as resilience. English language teachers are in critical positions to equipped individuals with necessary language skills for engagement in globalized world [4]. It is further suggested that the dominance of English in the future will be influenced by intricate global factors encompassing economic, technological, educational, political, and cultural dimensions [3]. For example, English language education is consistently being emphasized due to its importance towards human capital development and economic value [5]. Consequently, competency development is essential among the English language teachers for enhancing their language proficiency and pedagogy skills which directly influence the teaching performance and student learning outcomes.

Besides that, digital competencies had been emphasized as predominant factors for competitive advantage of teachers in the contemporary environment. Its importance not only lies within classroom for innovative teaching but goes beyond classroom for other tasks involving lesson planning, administrative tasks, communication and collaboration [6], [7], [8]. These are important elements within performance that directly reflect employee performance among the teachers. It is asserted that enhancing digital competence equipped educators with the capabilities in adapting to emerging technologies and incorporate them into their instructional practices, keep the educators aligned with the rapid advancement of technology [7]. Additionally, the growing number of studies focusing of competencies among the teachers had highlighted the interest and relevance of competency development which are extremely useful to identify competences and features that teacher required in their educational practices, hence, strengthening their foundation through talent development [9]. This calls for comprehensive competency development among the teachers to reap the maximum benefits and possessed competitive advantage in optimizing teacher performance. Therefore, it is crucial and urgent to investigate competency development effect on employee performance among the teachers in Malaysia today, particularly when empirical evidence from the previous study revealed that teacher performance contributes greatly to students, schools, and educational performance within a country.

There is a general consensus, that the changing nature of internal and external labor market signify a progressively intricate work environment, highlighting the importance of skills for effective job administration [10]. The main principle of human resource management or talent management within resource-based view theory is that internal resources such as talents and organizational culture are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable [11]. Accordingly, development and retention of teachers are essential which foster knowledge sharing among teachers, enhance their individual performance, and bolster the organizational capabilities as a whole [12]. Therefore, competency development not only enhance the teachers' performance but also students' learning outcomes, and schools' achievements [2], [4], [13]. Meanwhile, [12] asserted that organizations can be propelled in establishing a healthy organizational culture which leads to employee engagement and retention through strategic method of developmental practices. Thus, when teachers' existing competencies is not able to produce good and effective outputs, it needs to be scientifically investigated, particularly concerning the factors that may influence towards their performance.

Empirically, there is compelling evidence that competency development is related to employee performance with organizational culture as a potential mediation variable.

2. Literature Review

In the section of literature review, it is outlined on the theoretical review of employee performance as seen from the perspectives of competency development and organizational culture. The conception and how these variables are operationalized is also discussed comprehensively.

Significantly, it serves as a basis for establishing a conceptual framework within the current study and development of research hypotheses.

2.1. Competency Development

Competency development refers to the initiatives undertaken by both the organization and the employee to sustain or enhance their functional, learning, and career competencies [14]. According to [15], competency development has two dimensions: It comprises of employee participation in competency development initiatives and perceived support for competency development. Involvement in competency development initiatives refers to how employees develop their skills and knowledge through various developmental activities which involves conventional formal learning events or informal learning events [15]. In this way, employees will be able to acquire themselves with knowledge and skills pertinent to their role within the organizations when the investment is focused on internal development [16]. Using strategic resources for the benefits of employee development foster for skilled and motivated workforce which enhance organizational capabilities in total [12], [17]. Hence, the strategic approach of investing for competency development initiatives not only enhances individual competence but also promotes continuous improvement culture within the organization which leads to sustainable performance growth. Correspondingly, engagement from the organizations in providing competency development initiatives helps to retain the organization's readiness towards future challenges through competent employees [12].

Meanwhile, another facets of competency development which is perceived support for competency development define as perceptions from the employee on organizational support provided to them for the means of enhancing their competencies [15]. It is relatively crucial because it positively influences their perceptions towards career satisfaction and organizational commitment [12], [17], [18].

When employees perceive that they have assistance in their skill development, they are more inclined to exhibit, engagement, productivity, and loyalty to the firm [19]. Certainly, the perceived support also fosters the teachers' sense of confidence in their capabilities and instills faith towards organizations regarding on their future prospects. From the above synthesis, it is clear that competency development is often assessed through the dual lenses particularly employee participation in competency development initiatives and perceived support for competency development as both substantially influence the efficacy of development initiatives and capture the essence of competency development.

2.2. Organizational Culture

According to [20], organizational culture is defined as a set of common fundamental beliefs that a group acquires while they are working through issues of internal integration and external adaptation. Since the current study are within the context of education, it is important to consider organizational culture from the perspective of school culture, as the unique values, norms, and practices within schools influence the teachers' motivation and professional development. In that relation, the facets of organizational culture within the education proposed by [21] are the most suitable to be applied in the current study. There are six factors identified under school organizational culture which reflect how schools function and teachers perceive on their environment, these factors are namely formal relationships among teachers, innovation orientation, supportive leadership, goal orientation, structured leadership, and participative decision-making. These practices contribute to formulation of positive organizational culture that promotes collaboration and continuous improvement culture [21], [22], [23].

Indeed, schools with a thriving culture will be successful and can contribute to development of atmosphere that demands high expectations for every stakeholder involved [23], [24]. In contrary, it is unlikely that a positive learning environment can be manifested if there are conflicts between teachers, loss of autonomy, and lack of teamwork spirit within the schools' organizational culture [25]. Organizational culture within educational organization plays an important role in facilitating for enhancement of teacher performance [27], educational reformation and transformative ventures [2], and job satisfaction among teachers [19], [28]. A study in Malaysia has yielded a predictive power of 44.5% of organizational culture on employee performance [29]. Apart from that, recent studies revealed empirical evidence which shown that organizational culture was found to significantly influence employee performance [27], [29].

2.3. Employee Performance

According to [30], employee performance is defined as actions, behaviors, and outputs that are measurable which contribute to reaching the organizational objectives. It concerns on how effectively individuals fulfill their duties at work and how well predetermined standards and objectives are complied with their behavior [17], [29], [31]. This includes both facets of task performance which involves delivering job-specific responsibilities and contextual performance which refers to initiatives which support the broader environment within organizations [30]. Hence, employees' skills, knowledge, and competence are critical to ensure their actions or behaviors can lead to objectives fulfillment. That way, productivity within the organization will be at optimal level which ensure high level of overall performance within the organization [17]. On this basis, organizations are persevered in observing their employees' behaviors and utilized competency development initiatives to improve performance [2], [13]. Thus, due to its quantifiable nature, multiple studies had studied employee performance as endogenous variables for understanding the effectiveness of various managerial practices and organizational factors [17], [29], [32]. Similarly, numerous jobs or employee models have been developed and applied within empirical research which is either as models that are applicable to a variety of professions, or as stand-alone models tailored for particular professions like defense forces and management [30]. However, despite of its quantifiable nature, some studies argue that due to many facets of assessment for job-role behaviors, it had led to challenges in defining or quantifying employee performance as a key concept in organizational psychology [32], [33]. Consequently, the current study adopts a widely accepted definitions of employee performance proposed by [30] in line with the argumentations and recommendations by [32].

2.4. Competency Development and Employee Performance

Competency development in the workforce is dynamic, where it is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of organizations and the requisite skills for various roles [34]. It represents a strategic developmental investment for both employees and organizations [16]. Talents is seen as a valuable asset and resource in defining the prospective competitive advantage for the firms [12]. Individual performance within the organizations is critical to ensure attainment of organizational goals. Thus, competency development is recognized as an inextricable variable with employee performance regarding on its contribution to individual and organization sustainability in the environment [13], [16], [17].

Previous studies in different fields had revealed that competency development had impact on work creativity, employee performance, product competitiveness [36], and employee commitment [35]. Besides, it also correlates to employees' career success and employability [15]. From the earlier literature interpretations, it is suggested that competency was conceived as a latent, underlying characteristic that fostered both aspects of exceptional job performance and ongoing professional development.

Consistently, [37] claimed that competency development is essential for driving employee performance through equipped them with the necessary skills and knowledge to successfully execute transformational strategies, which eventually boosts the outcome. As noted by [6], competency development is a crucial development mechanism for the organizations to navigate shifts in industrial demands; the education industry is no exception or immune to changes, particularly when it comes to technological transformation. This served as the cornerstone of organizational effectiveness emphasizing that process of identifying talent for promotion or succession planning should focus on the individual core competencies rather than seniority within the organization [18]. Thus, education quality is a "limiting factor" in educational outcomes where teachers who lack key competencies in performing their core duties will deteriorate the students' academic achievement, eventually their own performance.

Ultimately, multiple empirical evidence emerged revealing the effect of competency development on employee performance. A study conducted by [17] on the education personnel in Indonesia had documented that both dimensions of competency development had a significant and positive influence on performance. Correspondingly, a study involving employees and organizations from the weaving industry in Bali, Indonesia also had revealed the positive and statistically significant impact of competence development on employee performance as employee will demonstrate higher rate of effectiveness, efficiency, and productivity in their work [36]. Likewise, a study conducted by [37], competency development is significant in influencing employee performance through human resource creativity development. Additionally, a study among science teachers in Philippines has found that professionalism is ranked as the foremost teaching competency that impacts the teaching performance [13]. This is consistent with [18] where their study's outcome suggested that inclusion of commitment in ongoing professional development as a fundamental criterion within job description is critical for recognizing development of competency among employees.

However, although these foundational studies established a positive relationship between competency development and employee performance, competency development is typically limited by unidimensional measures that often overlook its contextual variables. Therefore, the current study bridging this gap through evaluating competency development from the higher order perspectives involving employee participation in competency development and perceived support for competency development that reflects the latent construct of competency development. Thus, the following research hypothesis was formulated.

H1: Competency development positively and significantly influences employee performance.

2.5. Competency Development and Organizational Culture

Competency development and organizational culture are closely intertwined as they are closely influencing each other. As employees developed certain competencies, their contributions to the firm will improve, potentially shaping and transforming the culture over time through the introduction of new behaviors, skills, and work practices [38]. It is asserted that [36] competence is essential for organizations in cultivating a high-performance culture. As such, elevated competence levels among employees can foster a performance-driven and innovative culture, thereby contribute to transformation of norms and behavioral expectations within an organization [34]. Hence, competency growth among employees can serve as a catalyst which triggers for cultural change, although this effect is typically more gradual and often dependent on efforts from strategic leadership. From the resource-based view perspectives, both talent competencies and organizational culture are crucial resources for gaining competitive advantage. Explicitly, organizations should invest in competency development and focus on fostering a substantial culture of support and goals so that the employees' perceived support for competency development is higher when they reciprocate [17], [39]. Consequently, the first step to enable competency growth for effective employee performance and organizational development starts with cultivation of supporting culture. Previous empirical and theoretical findings have led to this proposition.

Indeed, organizational culture were closely related to talent development and career advancement of employees [40]. A study carried out by [41] found the link between learning and growth with organizational culture is mediated by employee commitment where it exerts strong influence from a positive organizational culture.

In the meantime, another study conducted by [42] shows that training and career development both positively and significantly influences employee competencies, while employee competencies are significant for organizational effectiveness. From the previous studies, it is known that the relationship between competency development and organizational culture is bidirectional. Nevertheless, the empirical studies focusing on how competency development influences organizational culture is relatively low. Thus, the current study focused on the influence of competency development on organizational culture from the following proposition.

H2: Competency development positively and significantly influences organizational culture.

2.6. Organizational Culture and Employee Performance

An organizational culture that emphasized on continuous improvement providing a sustainable environment for learning and growth is crucial for professional development among the educational personnel. When employees possessed the skills and knowledge necessary to perform their day-to-day tasks, the congruence between their competencies and organizational culture can optimize their performance ensuring an alignment with the organizational objectives. From the competency development perspectives, both facets encompassing employee participation in competency development initiatives and their perceived support for competency development are essential parameters in understanding organization's culture on employee performance [17], [44]. Therefore, the profound understanding of the firm culture is essential for guiding employees throughout effectively navigating relationships with their colleagues and stakeholders, allowing them to modify on how they behave and act to match with organizational objectives [44].

Precisely, employee performance relies on the strategic capacities of the firms in determining the clear priorities, which facilitates completion of tasks and enabling effective interaction among the employees within organization [39]. In this context, organizational culture encompasses the implicit norms, behaviors, and beliefs that posit and establish "game rules" for emphasizing the shared cultures, organizational heritage, decision-making, control, structure, along with the prevailed leadership principles [29]. Essentially, it is emphasized that for effective performance from the teachers which is a means to an end through input and output, will require characterization by a conducive environment that incorporates good instructional strategies, properly managed guidance and support, all dedicated to fostering educational development [27].

Thus, as a pervasive and influential factor, organizational culture can either fosters advancement through unifying employees or serve as obstacles that alienates them [29]. As a results, this motivate employees to perform better due to effective organizational culture where even though they realized that it is their responsibility to accomplish their tasks and they are being compensated for these behaviors.

Therefore, empirically, organizational culture impacts the optimization of employee performance and competitive advantages [27], [29], [44], [45], drives employee engagement [29], [46], and contributes to job satisfaction among the employees [45]. A study by [27] on the education scenario in Yemen public schools had revealed that school culture had a positive and significant effect on teaching performance among the teachers with the inclusion of three school culture aspects particularly human relationships, innovation, and social justice. Similar with research by [29], organizational culture had been revealed to influence employee performance positively and significantly among academic staff of Malaysian private universities. It is further asserted that the reformation of education organizations environment is crucial for a more responsive workplace and ensure alignment of core values with organizational goals. It is further added that organizational culture influencing employee performance could relate to dimensions such as artifacts factors, espoused values factors, and assumptions factors [44]. From the perspective of public administration, research by [46] had shown that both organizational culture and employee engagement had a positive and significant effect on employee performance which led to discovery underscores the significance of trust and equity in enhancing autonomy and performance.

Meanwhile from the context of information technology, both studies by [45] and [47] in IT industries revealed that organizational culture had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Managers within the organization had capacities to exert indirect effect by establishing a culture of commitment, trust, and innovation to enhance employee performance [47]. Thus, the current study offers a concrete basis for organizations to promote a culture that prioritizes professionalism to boost employee performance [45]. In this sense, the current study determined to study on this relationship, hence, the following hypothesis is formulated as below.

H3: Organizational culture positively and significantly influences employee performance.

2.7. Mediating Role of Organizational Culture

Several recent studies above had indicated that organizational culture can act as a mediating factor for the causal relationship between competency development and employee performance. The prospect capabilities of organizational culture as a mediating factor are due to apart from influencing employee performance [27], [29], [45], [47], it also influenced by competency development [40], [41], [42]. Referring to [49], it is reasonable to predict the ability of a variable to act as a mediator when there are prior studies suggesting that independent variable had effect on the targeted mediator while influencing on dependent variable. Study by [27] in the field of education from organizational behavior perspective had shown that organizational culture is significant in mediating the effect of transformational leadership on teaching performance. Subsequently, this is consistent with [46] where organizational culture is significant in mediates the effect of sustainable leadership on employee performance.

Meanwhile, study in the healthcare sector by [50] showed that organizational culture mediates the effect of credible leadership on work engagement. Nevertheless, empirical evidence on the mediating effect of organizational culture in the relationship between competency development and employee performance remains unknown. Many studies have focused on the direct effects of competency development and organizational culture on employee performance and other factors of organizational behavior, yet no study has explored the interaction where the organizational culture acts as a bridge between competency development and employee performance. On the basis of this novelty, the following hypothesis is put forward.

H4: Organizational culture mediates the effect of competency development on employee performance.

In line with recommendations from literature review, the research model for the current study is depicted in Figure 1.

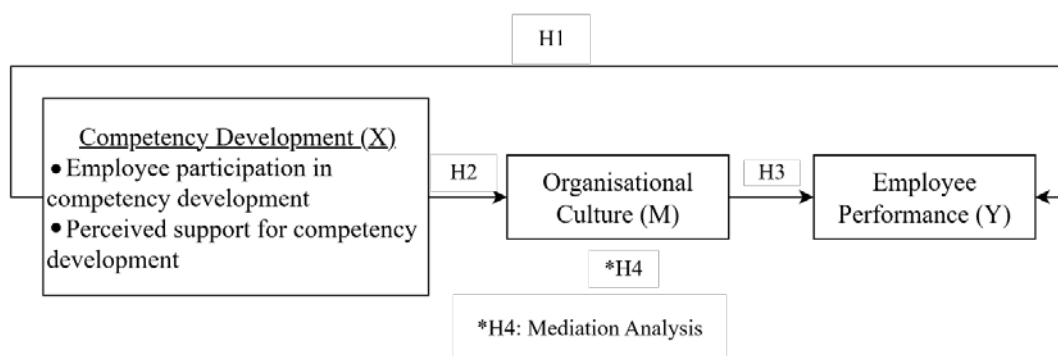


Figure 1. The proposed research model

3. Material and Methods

In this section, it will focus on delineates the employed research design in the current study, encompassing study samples (research participants), research procedures and materials, and approach for data analysis. The data set were derived from questionnaires distributed to the national secondary schools in Malaysia between May and July 2025 to collect response from the English language teachers.

The researchers approached to Education Policy Planning and Research Division, Ministry of Education Malaysia and all state education departments for permissions and cooperations in the research. Then, the school's authority was approached through emails for distribution of questionnaire and explain on the purpose of the study, the respondents were requested to complete an online survey.

From the total of 500 online survey blasted to the respondents, only 219 were returned giving a response rate of 43.8% which is consistent with [52] where online survey had a standard response rate of around 44.1%.

In total of 219 responses that are retrieved from English language teachers, majority of the respondents are female teachers at 83.6% (183) and 16.4% (36) for male teachers. The survey was attended by 76.3% (167) of English option teachers and 23.7% (52) of non-option English teacher. Most of the teachers are teaching at the urban location with 64.4% (141), while another 35.6% (78) are teaching at rural schools.

Additionally, a total of 76.7% (168) of teachers possess teaching experience of more than 10 years which is followed by 1-5 years (12.8%, 28), 6-10 years (5.9%, 13), and less than 1 year (4.6%, 10).

The survey in this study was conducted within the Malaysia public education system. The instruments from the previous study that have been adapted, are not originally in the Malay language, thus, the researchers had strategized approach to ensure that the methods are rigor and validating the results. Primarily the instruments are subject to content validity assessment. The adapted instruments are separately emailed to three industry experts and two academic experts with an evaluation form to evaluate the relevancy of the instruments in this study and identify any double barrel items. Subsequently, the instruments are refined in conjunction with the feedback and suggestions from these experts which is then escalated to proofreading and back-translation by bilingual expert. Prior to instrument administration, this step is relatively crucial that it is accurate and comparable in both languages which will ease the respondents to comprehend with the items.

The researchers adapted instrument developed by [15] which provided the basis for the items used to assess competency development from two different facets particularly employee participation in competency development and perceived support for competency development. A total of 16 items had been adapted to assess competency development with item number 1 to 8 representing employee participation in competency development and item number 9 to 16 representing perceived support for competency development. A 5-point Likert scale had been implemented with 1 denoting significant disagreement while 5 signifying strongly agree on statement of the items.

The mediation variable in current study which is organizational culture is assessed using instrument developed by [21]. A total of 12 items had been adapted and deemed as suitable to be used from the school culture scale developed by [21]. This measurement represents the degree to which teachers perceived on the organizational culture within their school environment.

Meanwhile, for measuring employee performance among the teachers particularly from the facets of teaching performance, the researchers had adapted 10 items from [26], which specified on assessing how teachers perceived on their performance when they undergone professional development. Consistently, the current study intends in assessing the influence of competency development on employee performance within the Malaysian education context, thus, this instrument is suitable to be implemented as it has been empirically tested among secondary school teachers in Malaysia which yielded a valid and reliable results.

The questionnaire consisted of 38 items which is used in assessing the current study variables. To address any possibilities of common method bias (CMV) which had plagued several studies, Harman's single factor test had been employed to analyze potential bias that could distort the observed relationships between these variables. According to [51], the results of Harman's single factor test revealed a total variation of 48.563% which is below the tolerance criterion of 50%. Therefore, the inferences that may be drawn from the current study's findings are not questioned as it had fulfilled the CMV criteria.

Nonetheless, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) also employed to establish discriminant validity and Variation Inflation Factor (VIF) is used to rule out multicollinearity issues of the instruments. Aside from that, PLS-SEM approach is employed to assess the proposed model through hypothesis testing, model fit, and effect sizes analysis.

4. Results

The PLS-SEM analysis is conducted through SmartPLS 4.0. This section comprises of assessment of measurement model, assessment of structural model, and hypothesis testing.

4.1. Assessment of Measurement Model

Since, the competency development are of reflective-reflective higher order construct, researcher had utilized repeated indicator approach in formation of hierarchical model. Follow by that, the reliability and validity of the items, as well as convergent validity of the constructs are evaluated to ensure relevancy of the instruments.

The evaluation of indicators' reliability is implemented through assessment of outer loadings and composite reliability. In consistent with the threshold suggested by the previous study, outer loading values between 0.5 and 0.7 may be acceptable if the convergent validity and internal consistency threshold are met [53]. On the other hand, items with loadings above 0.7 needs to be retained. Thus, composite reliability will act as a significant criterion in evaluating the internal consistency of the variables. On that basis, the current study act in accordance with suggestion by [54] to assess internal consistency of the variables where composite reliability's of variables that falls between 0.7 and 0.95 are deemed to have internal consistency.

The AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values are also quantified to assess the convergent validity which reflect the extent to which the main constructs indicators accounts for the variation in their indicators.

Subsequently, a threshold proposed by [54] was adopted suggesting that the variables attain convergence when the AVE value is above 0.5. As indicated in Table 1, the AVE values for constructs particularly competency development, organizational culture, and employee performance were revealed to be greater than 0.5, signifying a high level of convergent validity.

Table 1. Instrument validity assessment

Constructs	Items	OL	CA	CR	AVE
Competency Development (X)	EPCD:		.947	.947	.556
	CD1	.778			
	CD2	.741			
	CD3	.772			
	CD4	.802			
	CD5	.810			
	CD6	.767			
	CD7	.741			
	CD8	.779			
	PSCD:				
	CD9	.753			
	CD10	.797			
	CD11	.796			
	CD12	.803			
	CD13	.811			
	CD14	.820			
	CD15	.760			
Organizational Culture (M)	CD16	.825			
	OC1	.757	.927	.929	.556
	OC2	.714			
	OC3	.756			
	OC4	.800			
	OC5	.805			
	OC6	.740			
	OC7	.669			
	OC8	.724			
	OC9	.742			
	OC10	.719			
	OC11	.757			
Employee Performance (Y)	OC12	.752			
	EP1	.793	.931	.933	.619
	EP2	.821			
	EP3	.742			
	EP4	.793			
	EP5	.853			
	EP6	.749			
	EP7	.736			
	EP8	.804			
	EP9	.796			
	EP10	.776			

Note: EPCD, Employee participation in competency development; PSCD, Perceived support for competency development

Eventually, analysis on the discriminant validity is also performed using the HTMT criterion. After connecting all variables in consistent with the literature, path algorithms follow by bootstrapping are implemented to identify the HTMT values.

Based on proposition by [55], discriminant validity is established when HTMT values revealed is less than 0.9 for all latent variables. In Table 2, it had been illustrated that all latent variables HTMT values are below this threshold.

Table 2. HTMT index

Variables	CD	OC	EP
CD	--		
OC	0.822	--	
EP	0.871	0.885	--

4.2. Assessment of structural model

For the assessment of structural model, it involves assessing the multicollinearity issues, hypotheses testing, R-square analysis, effect sizes of predictors in each construct, model fit analysis, and construct prediction. The collinearity assessments need to be examined through VIF and the value obtained must be less than 5 [54]. The collinearity assessment shown in Table 3 revealed that all constructs VIF values are below 5.

Table 3. Collinearity statistics (VIF)

Variables	CD	OC	EP
CD	--		
OC	1.000	--	
EP	2.514	2.514	--

The next phase of analysis then proceeds with the application of bootstrapping for hypothesis testing. Simultaneously, each construct is analyzed on their significance through the path coefficients and specific indirect effect to determine the outcome whether to accept or reject the hypotheses. Subsequently, it is presented in Table 4 regarding the analysis of direct and indirect effects which revealed the P-values of less than 0.05 resulted in acceptance of the proposed hypotheses. Competency development has a significant and positive effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.457$, $p < 0.05$) which directed to acceptance of hypothesis H1. H2 is also supported as competency development has a significant effect on organizational culture ($\beta = 0.776$, $p < 0.05$). Besides that, the anticipated positive effect of organizational culture on employee performance was also validated supporting the H3 hypothesis ($\beta = 0.473$, $p < 0.05$).

Ultimately, H4 was confirmed. Organizational culture acted as a mediator between competency development and employee performance ($\beta = 0.367$, $p < 0.05$).

Table 4. Direct effects and mediation analysis results

Constructs	β	t	p	Results
CD > EP	0.457	6.273	0.000	Accepted
CD > OC	0.776	26.937	0.000	Accepted
OC > EP	0.473	6.089	0.000	Accepted
CD > OC > EP	0.367	5.706	0.000	Accepted

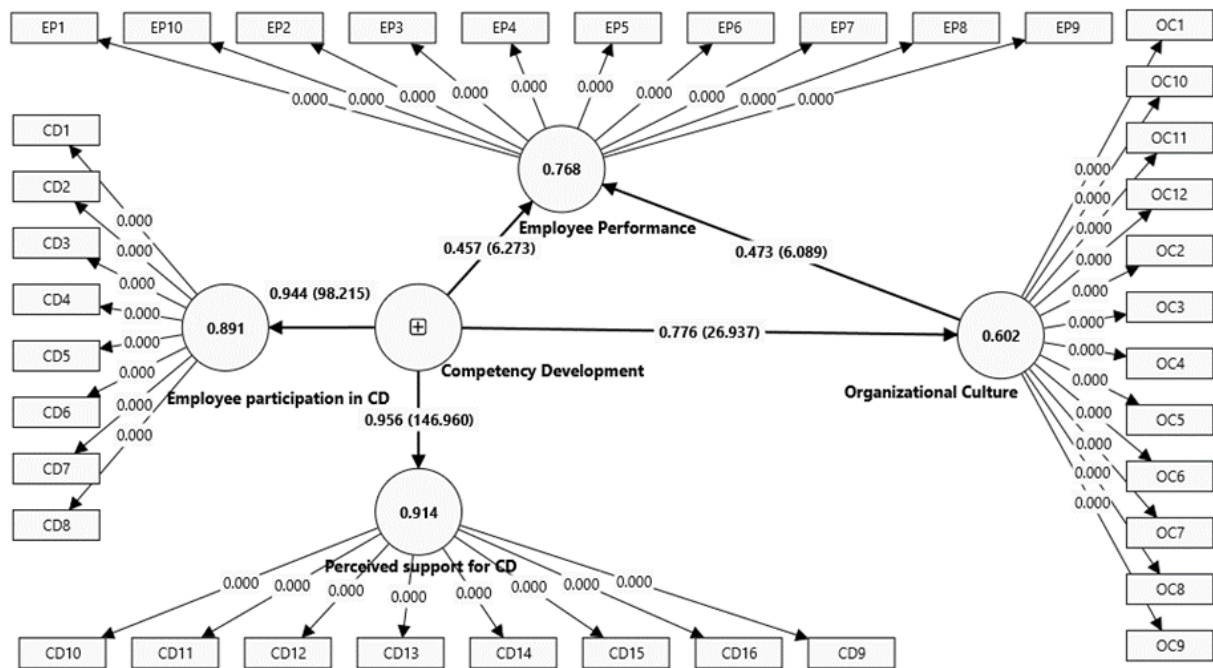


Figure 2. The assessment of the structural model

Figure 2 depicts the assessment of the structural model. Referring to the summary of R^2 in Table 5, the R-Square value shows 76.8% of the variations or changes in employee performance among the English language teachers are influenced by competency development and organizational culture. The residual of 23.2% is accounted by other factors that are not analyzed in this study. Meanwhile, the organizational culture had R^2 values of 0.602 (60.2%) signifying that, changes in organizational culture are affected by competency development, while the remaining 39.8% are explain by factors not involved in the current study.

Table 5. Summary of R square analysis

Endogenous variables	R square
Organizational Culture	0.602
Employee Performance	0.768

The effect size or f^2 is employed to analyze the effect sizes of predictors for each construct. Accordingly, the effect sizes are analyzes using threshold suggested by [56] in which effect sizes of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are respectively regarded as small, medium, and large effect. The analysis of current study presented in Table 6 clearly indicated that competency development and organizational culture are critical construct that has effect on employee performance. On top of that, the constructs of competency development effect on employee performance had f^2 value of 0.358 (large) at p value of 0.002. Competency development also portrayed to have substantial influence on organizational culture with f^2 value of 1.514 (large) at p value of 0.00. Meanwhile, organizational culture as a predictor towards employee performance also had large effect size with f^2 value of 0.383, p-value 0.010.

Table 6. Effect sizes of predictors in each relationship

Constructs	f^2	p	Effect
CD > EP	0.358	0.002	Large
CD > OC	1.514	0.000	Large
OC > EP	0.383	0.010	Large

Aside from R^2 analysis, a further analysis is conducted to determine the evidence of model's predictive power. Hence, Q^2 metrics are depicted in Table 7 which is used to indicate the endogenous variables prediction relevance. As indicated by [57], Q^2 values obtained needs to be more than zero during evaluation of $Q^2_{predict}$. The $Q^2_{predict}$ value for the model's employee performance is 0.463 and 0.328 for the organizational culture model where both are significantly above the threshold. Therefore, it is confirmed on the model's predictive relevance, proving the capacities of competency development in predicting manifestation of organizational culture and employee performance achievement.

Table 7. Construct prediction

	SSO	SSE	$Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)$
CD	3504.000	3504.000	
OC	2628.000	1766.517	0.328
EP	2190.000	1175.031	0.463

5. Discussion

In relation to the current challenges revolving within transformation of education, teachers that are well-equipped with the skills, knowledge, and competencies that are relevant within contemporary environments will be a key resource to a nation in levelling up their performance.

Teachers with high levels of performance are a critical factor to assure the fulfillment of educational objectives towards the stakeholders with excellent quality and long-term sustainability.

The current study emphasized on the influence of competency development on performance of national secondary school English language teachers in Malaysia. They are presently facing challenges and difficulties which causes them to bear with enormous demands and expectations. Indeed, their responsibilities in educating the upcoming generations are crucial and fundamental in optimizing educational outcomes and gaining competitive advantages for the country in many fields including economics development and technological advancement.

At the same time, top leaders of education from many countries and organizations had emphasized that language education are critical for literacy among the students, which highlighted the necessity for enhancing English language proficiency, information technology and pedagogy skills [1], [2] [6]. Each of these skills requires competency development continuously, both make demands on commitment from the organization to offer the initiatives and willingness from participants to develop and grow professionally. The performance of educational organizations is deeply influenced by their performance. Their competencies are the key factor to this process. Thus, it is within the interests of education organizations in ascertaining the elements that are influential on employee performance of teachers particularly relating to their competence.

In this study, competency development was investigated as latent variables reflecting both employee participation in competency development and their perceived support for these initiatives. This construct is exogenous in nature influencing employee performance with mediating role of organizational culture.

The findings in the study had confirmed that employee performance of English language teachers is influenced by two different factors. Competency development has a significant and positive effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.457$), which is supported by the studies of [59] and [60] which confirmed the significance of competence and developmental initiatives towards employee performance. Competency development requires employee participation within competency development initiatives provided by their respective organizations as this engagement contributes to learning and development of new knowledges, skills, and thoughts which strengthen their work capabilities and resilience to organizational changes. It is further suggesting that internal motivation from the employees is an important catalyzer [58].

At the same time, perceived support for competency development will impact on the employees' intrinsic feelings on organizational support and commitment towards development of their careers and skills, helping them in gaining confidence on their work capacities.

The role of competency development in promoting organizational culture was also confirmed ($\beta = 0.776$, $p < 0.05$) suggesting the bidirectional nature of relationship between competency development and organizational culture. This finding is supported by [61] with [62]. It had been proven that supportive culture and goal culture had positive and significant influence on competency development initiatives [61]. Contrarily, [62] discovered that employee competency had a significant and positive influenced on organizational culture suggesting that competency development is not solely for operational demands but rather provide a strategic foundation for manifestation of organizational culture. Hence, employee active involvement in developmental initiatives can fosters a continuous learning culture and motivate employees through cultural norms that value of development and collective success. In this sense, employee participation and organizational culture create a reinforcing environment that fosters a positive organizational culture that emphasizes competency and performance excellence [39].

Hence, these findings confirmed that competency development influence goes beyond employee performance and organizational culture in the public education environment. The study's results suggest that the importance of competency development is more significant to organizational culture than employee performance. Therefore, it is clear that while competency development directly equips employees with necessary skills and knowledge to perform their jobs well, it has a broader influence on the teachers' work environment that retain and enhances those competencies over time. As a result, competency development are strategic mechanisms that contribute to organizational culture, which in turn influences employee performance in a broad and indirect way. This finding is in line with the study [62], which established a direct and significant effect of employee competency on organizational culture but not on organizational performance. Nonetheless, the existence of positive and significant association between competency development and employee performance in this study is still acknowledged. This is supported from previous study's findings where training and development of employee within organizations have significant effect on performance, this construct are also proven to be strengthened through organizational learning capability [63].

On top of that, a study by [64] also found that training and development as well as career development are still significant and positively influenced work performance even though their effect sizes on work performance are relatively small. Accordingly, [65] suggested that while autonomy of teachers is important, it is more advantageous when teacher performance is supported with autonomy-supportive environments which adapted professional development practices for attainment of sustainable transformation demands in education.

Predictably, findings further demonstrate that organizational culture plays a significant role to employee performance. This is consistent with the preliminary studies from literature where multiple empirical studies had suggested the high possibility of organizational culture to influence employee performance [29], [44], [45], [46], and [48]. In this study, it can be understood that the teachers perceived competency development as a form of motivation to continue develop their career with different skills and knowledge. In this circumstance, the organizational culture will fundamentally evolve which actively support and promote continuous growth and adaptability of teachers.

As for the mediating role of organizational culture in the construct between competency development and employee performance, new findings reveal that organizational culture ($\beta = 0.367$, $p < 0.05$) are significant and decisive to mediate the effect of competency development on employee performance. Previous study mostly focused on concept that differs from organizational culture such as work environment [66], organizational climate [67], and organizational support [12] in behavioral studies as a mediating factor. Thus, this finding offers a new informative perspective particularly from the realms of competency development influence on employee performance. Supportively, recent studies involving organizational culture had revealed its potential in acting as mediating factor [29], [50]. As a result, this study had confirmed its mediating effect within the construct. Finding suggested that organizational culture is influenced by competency development that fosters a culture of continuous learning which form an environment conducive to apply and maximize the competencies and knowledge of the teachers. Indeed, the mindset for continuous improvement in work culture are the key towards resilience [43]. Apparently, organizational culture mediates the construct by channeling and amplifying competency development effects on employee performance.

6. Conclusion

The conceptual and empirical findings of current studies possess applied benefits that are relevant to the management of education. The constructs conceptually enhance the understanding of strategies in enhancing teachers' performance in education. Specifically, examining the competency development from the perspective of teachers, who are pivotal in education, elucidates its impact on performance, which is essential for the output of the public school system such as quality education. Additionally, the findings offer a more comprehensive view on how elements are reflected which involves dimensions of competency development and organizational culture. Since the study's focus on Malaysia education, it is suggested that its findings possess worldwide significance as these challenges are encountered by many nations throughout the world as well in pursuing Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 that emphasized on high-quality education and to promote lifelong opportunities. Thus, the findings have significant practical implications for the educational administrators. In the process fulfilling this educational goals, talent development and talent retention of the teachers are an ongoing challenge for ensuring the professionalism of the teachers for enhancing the overall quality of education not just in Malaysia. For addressing these phenomena, one of an active approach to provide support for teachers' performance are through emphasizing competency development initiatives, the effects of which can be significantly supported by strengthening the culture of educational organizations with positive culture.

The establishment of such conditions are necessary for the teachers to ensure that they are supported and equipped with relevant skills and knowledge to perform their tasks. Competency developments are crucial to assist teachers in closing any skills gap, enhancing their adaptability which ultimately increases organizational readiness for changes in the education environment. The effectiveness of this function is amplified through organizational culture when all the workforce capabilities is aligned with the organizational objectives.

As a result, it is concluded that competency development usage to foster employee performance appears to be appropriate strategies for educational administrators and human resource practitioners. To perform this, a comprehensive strategy should be developed in a way that incorporates continuous professional development (e.g., induction and in-service training), establish professional learning communities, and aligning the teacher development program with national standards.

Educational administrators should take these factors into account when revising the human resource strategies. Hence, more budget should be allocated to conduct the initiatives of competency development and build a culture of continuous learning within the education communities. On top of that, it also important to optimize support from educational institutions in Malaysia such as Aminuddin Baki Institute, as there are experts and facilities to enhance the teachers' professionalism through training for educational organizations while nurturing leaders in education at the same time.

To significantly improve employee performance among the teachers in school, school administrators will also need to strengthen the system used to enhance teacher professionalism by adding assessment elements to constantly evaluate the relevancy, suitability, and effectiveness of the particular competency development initiatives. Hence, any training and development programs that require for redesign or restructure can be identified to fill in the evolving skill gaps ensuring the relevancy of those competency development programs.

While valuable insights can be yielded from the current study, it is also important to acknowledge its limitations. Firstly, the current study employed cross-sectional approach which is effective for conducting empirical study. Besides that, self-administered questionnaires had been employed for the purpose of data collection. The data were obtained only from the public secondary school English language teachers in Malaysia due to the current study relevancy. Subsequently, the study's scope was limited to Malaysia public educations, which may restrict the findings generalizability. Thus, future studies can be conducted in other industry sectors such as private educations, or higher education institutions, and in different locations to enhance the generalizability of the findings. It is critical to compare how participants from different countries or continents across the world perceived as different countries have different systems; hence, it necessitates for diverse subjects. Another limitation is that the study's model only examines one independent variable and one mediator on its direct and indirect effects to employee performance. Further studies, are recommended to further analyze the effects of other talent management factors such as strategic leadership, coaching and mentoring, and also succession planning.

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