

# Job Description as a Teacher in Malaysia in the Era of Post Pandemic Covid-19: A Qualitative Study

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## Abstract

In general, teacher's profession is synonym with teaching. However, there is still lack of understanding among public about this profession. Therefore, this study is conducted to highlight the job description as a teacher, particularly in the Malaysian context. A qualitative study was undertaken in 7 schools in Malaysia from May to July 2022. Purposeful sampling of 15 teachers was interviewed about the job as a teacher.

## Keywords

Job Description, Teacher, Malaysia, Post Pandemic Covid-19

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## 1. Introduction

Education plays a key role in realising Malaysia's aspirations to be a developed nation (Da Wan, Sirat, & Razak, 2018). Therefore, in 2013, the Ministry of Education launched the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 (MEB). The MEB claims to be the first comprehensive plan that covers education from pre-school to post-secondary school. In the MEB, there are five system aspirations (access, quality, equity, unity and efficiency) and six student aspirations (knowledge, bilingual proficiency, thinking skill, ethics and spirituality, leadership skill and national identity). Besides outlining the aspirations of the Malaysian education system, eleven shifts have also been identified as necessary in transforming the existing system (Ministry of Education, Malaysia).

The education system in Malaysia has been recognized among the best in the world. The World Economic Forum report in 2018 has ranked Malaysia as number 14 among 137 countries in the aspect of quality of the education system. The report also recognized education system in Malaysia as the second-best

country in Southeast Asia ([The World Economic Forum](#)).

Teachers are an important human resource in the education system. Teachers have an important role to play in leading to effective growth and development of the students. In specific, teachers affect a variety of student outcomes through their influence on both cognitive and noncognitive skill ([Jackson, 2018](#)). Teachers can promote the cognitive processes that are essential in students' learning by changing their behavior to create an emotionally positive, structured, and cognitively stimulating classroom environment ([Vandenbroucke, Spilt, Verschueren, Piccinin, & Baeyens, 2018](#)). Teachers also can foster student achievement, identity development and school belonging ([Ibrahim & El Zaatari, 2020](#)). In addition, teachers have been regarded as a facilitator in learning ([Jagtap, 2016](#)). Moreover, teachers have been recognized as critical components in the pursuit of school and system improvement ([Harris, Jones, & Huffman, 2017](#); [Campbell et al., 2018](#)).

The previous discussion shows there are various perspectives about the role of teachers in school. Most of the opinions agreed that teachers are responsible to teach and develop students. However, the specific task of teachers in school remains less clear, particularly during the post Covid-19 pandemic era. The Covid-19 pandemic is a global outbreak of coronavirus, an infectious disease caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) virus ([World Health Organization](#)). Million people have died from the disease. To contain the pandemic, the Malaysian government implemented a Movement Control Order (MCO) ([Hashim et al., 2021](#)). As a result, the education sector implements an unprecedented use of technology in the education system, teaching and learning process. Schools stopped running regular classes and there came the time of online classes which brought both students and teachers on online platforms for teaching and learning ([Kumar et al., 2021](#)).

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Study Design

This study applies a qualitative design. A qualitative study is social or behavioral science research that explores the processes that underlie human behavior ([Salkind, 2018](#)). In specific, a qualitative study using face-to-face interviews was adopted in this study. Using face-to-face interview can help generate insight into topics that previously were not understood. In other word, the face-to-face interview emphasizes conducting detailed examinations of cases that arise in the natural flow of social life ([Neuman, 2016](#); [Salkind, 2018](#)).

Prior interview participants were given information about the study's objectives and their right to withdraw at any time. Participants were assured that their names would not be used, and that confidentiality would be maintained by the researchers. The informed consent also was obtained from each participant.

### 2.2. Participants and Setting

Participants in this study were 15 teachers at one district in Malaysia. To obtain

as heterogeneous sample as possible and to achieve maximum variation across a range of participants' backgrounds, the purposive sampling was adopted. Teachers with minimum five years working experience as a teacher were selected in this study. Including the teachers with minimum five years working experience may provide rich and detailed information about their job as a teacher. Sampling continued concurrently with data analysis until no new themes were identified.

### **2.3. Data Collection**

15 Teachers participated in semi-structured interviews between 11 and 26 May 2022. Each interview was audio-taped and the average time for each interview was approximately 50 minutes. The following topics guided the interviews: 1) what is the main task as a teacher? 2) beside teaching, what else the task as a teacher? Researcher with experiences in qualitative research methods conducted all the interviews in Malay language. Participants were asked to verify the accuracy of the information discussed during the interview before the end of the interview. After being recorded, the quotes were transcribed by a transcriber.

### **2.4. Analysis**

Data analysis was carried out concurrently with data collection until the research team determined that no new themes were emerging. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). All recorded interviews were transcribed immediately after the interview. The process of analysis included repeated listening to the audio recorder, and thoughtful reading and rereading the transcribed texts. Phrases within the transcripts that pertained to participants' views of the task as a teacher were highlighted. Data were read using line-by-line analysis to identify codes appearing to capture key thoughts of the interview discussion. The various codes were compared based on differences and similarities and sorted into categories and themes. To eliminate the risk for bias, three researchers with expertise in qualitative data analysis analyzed the data independently. In the cases of differences in the analysis, the three researchers communicated with each other to assure that an inductive process occurred and that was consistent with the views of the participants of the study. Agreement was reached through discussion where differences in analysis appeared.

### **2.5. Ethical Considerations**

The study was approved by the ethics committee of the university. Participants were assured that their names would not be used and confidentiality would be maintained by the researchers. Before data collection, written informed consent was obtained from each participant.

## **3. Results**

The sample included 15 teachers from 7 schools at one district in Malaysia. Par-

participants included 11 female and 4 male teachers. All of them are bachelor's degree holder. Content analysis of the qualitative data resulted in the identification of five themes. Theme 1: Teaching; Theme 2: Administrative task; Theme 3: Managing student; Theme 4: Mediator between school management and parents; Theme 5: Administrative position.

### 3.1. Theme 1: Teaching

Participants mentioned that the main task as a teacher is teaching. This point has been mentioned by other participants.

*“As a teacher, my task is to teach based on the syllabus.” (Sebagai seorang guru, tugas saya adalah mengajar mengikut silibus) (Participant 5).*

*“Teachers’ job is teaching. Our main customer is a student.” (Tugas seorang guru ialah mendidik. Pelanggan utama kami adalah pelajar) (Participant 6).*

*“In my opinion, the teachers’ job is teaching.” (Pada pandangan saya, tugas guru adalah mengajar) (Participant 3).*

*“My first task as a teacher is teaching student. Second, deliver knowledge” (Tugas saya sebagai guru ialah pertama mendidik pelajar. Kedua ialah memberi ilmu) (Participant 14).*

### 3.2. Theme 2: Administrative Task

Participants indicated that a teacher also involve in administration task.

*“Like prepare failing for subject, co-curriculum and student affair.” (seperti menyediakan fail subjek, ko-kurikulum dan hal ehwal pelajar) (Participant 1).*

*“There is administrative task like fill in the attendance record, the students’ performance record, prepare final report, handle meeting, and prepare paper-work for program.” (Terdapat tugas pentadbiran seperti merekodkan kehadiran, prestasi pelajar, laporan akhir, mengendalikan mesyuarat dan menyediakan kertas kerja program) (Participant 3).*

*“Be a secretary for subject under co-curriculum and managing co-curriculum class with school administrators.” (Menjadi setiausaha subjek ko-kurikulum dan menguruskan kelas ko-kurikulum bersama pentadbir sekolah) (Participant 4).*

*“Attend meeting related to students’ development such as sport.” (Hadir mesyuarat berkaitan pembangunan pelajar seperti sukan) (Participant 7).*

### 3.3. Theme 3: Managing Student

Participants also highlighted that they have role to manage students.

*“...all teachers are responsible to take care about the students’ attitudes and behavior.” (semua guru bertanggungjawab ke atas sikap dan tingkahlaku pelajar) (Participant 15).*

*“We need to understand the students’ values and psychology.” (Kita perlu memahami nilai dan psikologi pelajar) (Participant 13)*

*“Beside teaching, we also need to take care about the students’ safety, develop them with discipline... And good values.” (Selain mengajar, kami juga perlu*

*menjaga keselamatan dan pembangunan disiplin pelajar...dan nilai yang baik*) (Participant 10).

*“We need to develop their potential including the physical, emotion and spiritual aspect.”* (Kami perlu membangunkan potensi mereka merangkumi aspek fizikal, emosi dan spiritual (Participant 11).

*“Although there are moral and religious subject...but all teacher are responsible to teach moral, attitude and behavior”* (walaupun ada mata pelajaran moral dan agama...tetapi semua cikgu bertanggungjawab dari segi adab, sikap dan tingkahlaku) (Participant 15).

### **3.4. Theme 4: Mediator between School Management and Parents**

Participants considered them as a mediator between the school management and students' parents.

*“I need to entertain parents' questions without time limit including at night and public holiday.”* (Saya kena melayan soalan ibubapa setiap masa termasuklah waktu malam dan cuti umum) (Participant 4).

*“Deliver information or instructions from school to parents”* (Menyampaikan maklumat atau arahan daripada pihak sekolah ke ibu bapa) (Participant 8).

*“...I need to make sure there are good collaboration between school and parents.”* (...saya perlu memastikan kerjasama yang baik antara pihak sekolah dan ibu bapa) (Participant 6).

*“teachers' job not only dealing with student but need also to deal with parents, colleagues and school management”* (tugas guru sebenarnya banyak bukan hanya berdepan dengan murid sahaja tapi juga berdepan dengan ibu bapa, para guru dan pentadbir (Participant 7).

*“deliver information and instruction from school, class teacher to parents”* (menyampaikan maklumat yakni apa jua arahan dari pihak sekolah, guru kelas akan sampaikan pada ibubapa) (Participants 9).

### **3.5. Theme 5: Administrative Position**

The participants highlighted that they also appointed with administrative position.

*“I am a discipline teacher. I need to allocate some time in the early morning to do the task...appointed by the school management.”* (Saya adalah cikgu disiplin. Saya perlu luangkan masa pada waktu pagi untuk tugas ini...dilantik oleh pengurusan sekolah) (Participant 2).

*“...for example, I hold a position as a secretary for students affairs. All matters related to students' health and welfare are under my responsibility.”* (...sebagai contoh, saya pegang jawatan sebagai setiausaha hal ehwal pelajar. Semua perkara berkaitan kesihatan dan kebajikan pelajar di bawah tanggungjawab saya) (Participant 14).

*“as a senior teacher, we need to manage teachers under the same subject in the aspect of teaching and learning delivery, data process, examination”* (Macam

*kami sebagai guru kanan mata pelajaran, kami perlu menjaga ahli-ahli di bawah bidang masing-masing dari segi skop kerja sama ada pengajaran dan pembelajaran, pemprosesan data dan peperiksaan (Participant 14).*

*“in the school, we monitor the teacher based on teaching and learning delivery...such as preparing a teaching plan...we observe and monitor how they teach in class, marking the students' assignment, preparing exam paper” (kalau dalam sekolah, kita pantau cikgu berasaskan kepada pengajaran dan pembelajaran terlebih dahulu...seperti menyediakan rancangan pengajaran...di mana kita tengok dan pantau bagaimana guru mengajar dalam kelas, memeriksa tugas pelajar, menyediakan kertas soalan) (Participant 15).*

#### **4. Discussion**

This study offers a view about the job description as a teacher in Malaysia. In specific, this study identified five job description based on the feedback from 15 teachers who work at 7 schools in Malaysia. The job is teaching, administrative task, managing student, be a mediator between school management and parents and hold an administrative position. These findings are essential, which can be an important input to the school management, the state education department, and the Ministry of Education Malaysia in planning the development program for teachers in school. The finding of this study also will help improving the public image toward the teachers' professional because the workload as a teacher is not only on teaching the students, but their job is including the administrative task, managing student, be a mediator between school management and parents and hold an administrative position.

#### **5. Social and Practical Implication**

The role of teacher is slightly different in the post Covid-19 pandemic era. The use of technology in teaching, documentation, and communication has been enforced in the education system nowadays. Thus, it is essential to provide adequate support system, particularly to the senior teacher to adapt with the current scenario. The support system is including training and mentoring from expert who familiar with the system or technology.

In addition, the support from the society, in particular the parent is essential to the teacher. The parents can support the teacher in various ways such as provide feedback to the teacher question or request in the social media, understand the teachers' private time, and be positive and open minded on any intervention taken by teacher on their children.

#### **6. Limitations**

The limitation of the present study refers to its inclusion of teachers from seven schools at one district in Malaysia. This may not be representative of all teachers in Malaysia. Future study may expand the similar study in different district or state in Malaysia to verify the findings of this study.

## 7. Conclusion

The finding of this study determines the job description as a teacher in Malaysia. In specific, this study highlights five important tasks as a teacher in Malaysia namely as teaching, administrative task, managing student, be a mediator between school management and parents, and hold an administrative position.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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