

**UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE**  
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**RECIPIENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE**  
**MALAYSIAN EXCELLENT TEACHER**  
**AWARD SCHEME**

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**Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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This thesis is the result of the author's original research. It has been composed by the author and has not been previously submitted for examination which has led to the award of a degree.

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Signed:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Khalid'.

Date:

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Recipients' Perceptions of the Malaysian Excellent Teacher Award Scheme**

This study explored the role of teachers' incentives in motivating teachers to change their attitudes, teaching practice and contribution to improve the quality in teaching and learning in Malaysian context. This research looked at the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia Award Scheme (GCM) or Excellent Teachers Policy as an incentive in monetary form and teachers' status to increase teachers' work motivation to improve quality in teaching and learning. A qualitative approach was employed where findings were based on interviews with ten Malaysian Excellent Teachers and documentary analysis of Guru Cemerlang Term of Reference produced by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. The participants were Excellent Teachers from the year 2000-2008. Data were analyzed using NVIVO 8 to identify thematic categories derived from the interviews and documents. The findings revealed that teachers reported that GCM award policy resulted in positive impacts on change of teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and increased teachers' contributions toward promoting the quality in teaching and learning in their classroom. It supports the notion that reward and incentives will motivate teachers to improve the quality of work performance. The study concludes that the implementation of Malaysian Excellent Teacher policy has increased teachers' work motivation and thus promotes quality in teaching and learning. More empirical research needs to be carried out in Malaysia to explore and investigate to what extent Guru Cemerlang Malaysia could improve student outcomes and whether Guru Cemerlang Malaysia meets the standard requirement of excellence as outlined in the Terms of Reference on Excellent Teacher Concept used by Ministry of Education Malaysia.

**Keywords:** Teachers' incentives; Motivation; Excellent Teacher; Quality teacher.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

This study consists of seven chapters starting with an introduction chapter followed by the context of study and a literature review. Chapter four discusses on the method of study employed in this qualitative study. Next, chapter five presents the findings of the study, followed by chapter six that discusses on the findings. Finally, the research of this study is concluded with reflection, conclusion and recommendation. Below shows detailed summaries of all the chapters:

Chapter 1:

This chapter introduces the study by outlining the background, rationale, aims, objectives and research questions, scope of study and term of references.

Chapter 2:

This chapter informs about the educational context in Malaysia and how the government aims to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This chapter also provides more information about the introduction of the GCM award scheme as one of the attempts to promote quality teachers and retain quality teachers in classroom even after they are being promoted.

Chapter 3:

This chapter reviews the literature on teachers' motivation, teachers' incentives, types of incentives and factors in providing them in the teaching profession; studies on reward and incentives and how they have been used in the education system to increase the quality of teachers and, teachers' professionalism. It then discusses some of the issues surrounding teachers' incentives as one of the ways which is believed could be effective in changing teachers' behaviour and increasing their efforts to improve.

#### Chapter 4:

This chapter discusses the research method that is used and employed in the study. It provides information about qualitative and quantitative research and why qualitative research was applied, the benefits and rationale to the research. It also informs the strategies that have been used in the study with interview as a method of data collection and document policy as additional in informing about the policy of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme.

#### Chapter 5:

This chapter presents qualitative data analysis from teachers' interviews on what changes had happened in teachers' attitude, teaching strategy and contributions after receiving the GCM award scheme.

#### Chapter 6:

Chapter six discusses on the research findings of this study. It provides with discussion from the findings what changes had happened in teachers' attitude, teaching strategy and contributions after receiving the GCM award scheme. It also discusses some part of the introduction and implementation of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia policy through the use of the document policy of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme.

#### Chapter 7:

The final chapter concludes the whole study by providing reflection, recommendations and conclusion.

## **1.2. Teacher Quality**

In the last two decades of education reform, teachers have been viewed as central to both the problems of education and their solutions. Teachers are found to be very influential factors in improving the quality of students' learning and outcomes (Hanushek, 2005; Lavy, 2004; MOE, 2006; OECD, 2009; UNESCO, 2005; Rockoff, 2004) thus leading educational policy makers, government and school leaders to think and come up with ways that could improve the quality of teachers and motivate them to perform at the highest level. The quality of teacher is also believed to have the ability to overcome problems in order to produce and develop a quality future generation which can survive in a competitive and challenging world (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Porter, 1989).

There are a considerable number of works which define the term 'quality teacher' or 'effective teacher' with most literature emphasizing the importance of knowledge in pedagogy and subject teaching, years of teaching and certification (Darling-Hammond, Linda, 2000; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). The term 'quality teacher' is also associated with the person who can help his/her pupils in gaining good scores in examinations (Akiba et al., 2007), whereas some literature also state that a 'quality teacher' is a teacher who has characteristics such as those of practising continuous learning, enjoying working with peers and having a sense of humour and love teaching. However, there is no consensus or confirmation of what makes a 'quality teacher'.

Another indicator for measuring a quality teacher is through teacher's experience. It is believed that experience is an important component of a quality teacher which means that those who are teaching for more than three years are believed to be more competent and capable compared to novice teachers (Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain,

2005); however, it is still open to debates as there is no stable finding and available research to see the impact of teachers' experiences after three years of service (Boyd et al, 2009).

Another complicated area that needs to be looked into when dealing with the assessment of a quality teacher is how to measure the degree of quality and methodological approaches (Akiba et al., 2007). Some have argued that if it is based only on student outcomes, the assessment would not be valid because for them student results failed to be seen as a strong evidence of a single teacher's effort. It was found that student results are also affected by other factors such as social and economic background, student factors and school factors, thus it would not mirror a single teacher's performance. Another tool used in measuring quality is through school principals' evaluations which also have been found to be a poor way in evaluating teachers' performance as there may be issues of bias and lack of reliability in grading teachers.

As there are concerns regarding teachers' performance evaluation, some have suggested the use of value added (VA) element as another alternative tool in measuring quality teacher. VA is the measure of individual teacher impact on student test scores and has been found to be an important factor in educational systems for measuring teachers' ability and performance in schools. It is one of the ways for an educational system to measure a teacher's performance by looking at the students' scores required by the government at the end of the school year (Bearsdley, 2008). In the past decade, policy makers and researchers have been intrigued with VA system to make the connections between teacher and student scores (Hill et al., 2011). In this system, the teacher who is able to show that she / he has improved test scores should be accredited for his / her effort and be rewarded (Chetty et al., 2011; Hanushek & Kain 2005).



Although VA could be considered as a useful method for recognizing teachers' ability in improving the quality of teaching, there are still debates on the possibility of bias (Rothstein, 2010). VA has attracted some researchers to study the validating method in evaluating student scores, where the students are streamed according to their capabilities (Rothstein, 2010) but there was also a caveat in VA where teachers should only be rated based on their current students, not the students who are assigned to them the following years. Many also have agreed that students development is a continuous process that happens not only at school but also from their house and environment and thus it is argued that VA might not be capable of identifying students' development in a short isolated period, nor it is capable of attributing this to any single teacher's discrete input (Heckman et al. 2010., Chetty et al., 2011., Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993).

Besides the debates on the definition and the method of evaluation of quality teachers, there are also concerns on how to improve the quality of our teachers. Providing teachers with financial incentives has emerged as one potential strategy in improving the quality of teachers (Hanushek & Rivkindari, 2007; MOE, 2006; Woessmann, 2010). It is an assumption that financial incentives would increase teachers' motivation and would help them improve their performances in order to help students achieve better learning outcomes (Greene & Forster, 2008; Halachmi & Holzer, 1987). Many countries in the world have introduced different types of financial incentives for teachers as one of the ways of improving teachers' performance. These include National Board Certification in the USA, Advanced Skills Teachers in England and Australia and the Chartered Teacher Programme in Scotland. Chartered Teacher was introduced in Scotland in 2003 as one of the Government's efforts to increase teachers' motivation in improving student achievement and to retain quality teachers in classrooms (Fuller et al., 2010).

Underlying the issues of financial incentives is that almost everyone would respond to financial incentives that influence human motivation to improve and increase their effort in order to receive the incentives (Belcher, 1980). Work motivation is one of the very important and essential factors to the development of human performance and is the main drive for a person to successfully meet organisation objectives (Müller et. al., 2009). It encompasses the multi factors of knowledge and skills, abilities, infrastructures and resources available, support, management and leadership as well as strategies, and it helps a person in genuinely determining educational success and performance. It is believed that work motivation and work satisfaction move people toward action and behavior. Greenberg and Baron (1995) define motivation as a set of processes that produces human behaviors toward certain objectives and Davis and Newstrom (1989) define motivation as inducement on human action toward something. The success of the educational system not only will depend on the ability to attract more quality people to enter the teaching profession and retaining those who are quality teachers, but also in motivating teachers to increase their effort and improve work performances as it is crucial and equally important to determine the growth of a high quality future generation at school (Vegas, 2005).

### **1.3. Teacher Incentives: an alternative in improving teacher quality**

Incentives have been offered as reward for teachers and have been recognised internationally as important factors in motivating teachers to increase and improve work performance in teaching practice, and more importantly to help improve student learning and outcomes (OECD, 2009). Some studies also found some evidence that changes in policy regarding incentives in teaching could attract and retain those who are excellent in the teaching profession (Lavy 2007; Vegas, 2005). Although past and recent research on the impact of teacher incentives in improving

quality teachers are still inconclusive and the findings that say the system is effective in improving teachers' performances are still debatable, some research points to the positive impact of incentives to change teachers' attitude and strategies toward teaching, such as what has happened in Kenya (Glewwe & Kremer, 2003; Lavy, 2004) and in Israel (Lavy, 2007).

Theoretically, the use of incentives is found to be one of the tools to solve the problems of human motivation and drive people to perform better and improve the quality of their work. Rewards, in the form of financial or non-financial incentives, are believed to be a factor that could encourage and stimulate human motivation to improve and achieve objectives desired by an organisation. The main reasons why incentives are given to teachers are due to the assumptions that:

- a. Incentives such as pay for performance are considered as a reward that could motivate teachers to perform and improve the quality of teaching and learning and bring positive impacts to students (Ballou & Podgursky, 1997; Vegas, 2005);
- b. Incentives could attract more quality student-teachers to enter teaching profession (OECD, 2009; Vegas, 2005);
- c. Incentives could ensure those who are quality teachers remain in the classrooms rather than finding other jobs that offer higher pay (Hanushek & Rivkindari, 2007) or choosing administration posts due to teaching promotion (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

The traditional practice in the teaching profession is that most teachers are paid based on two indicators, namely their level of education, such as degree or certificate in teaching, and secondly through their years of teaching and experience (Lavy, 2007). This traditional way has been criticised as it is believed to deny human needs to be rewarded if they show improvement or work harder compared to others, thus reducing human motivation to perform. Lavy (2007) also found that it would be less

effective in contributing to improvement from teachers as it does not provide recognition and acknowledgment to those who are believed to be hard working and always strive towards increasing their effort to further improve their performance (Lavy, 2007). In contrast, in the private sector, workers are paid based on their output or performance, thus it is said to increase employees' motivation to work and at the same time influences them to become more effective (Greene & Forster, 2008).

Besides using incentives as a tool for improving teachers' quality and attracting more capable people to enter the teaching profession, it is also believed that incentives could motivate quality teachers to remain in teaching profession (Johnson, 1986). Currently, teachers are facing a few challenges that need to be addressed namely demand from policy makers, government and parents and the increasing workload. These problems would probably cause more teachers to leave the profession and look for another job or even choose an administration post to take managing responsibility rather than teaching activities, thus it would lead to the educational system losing more quality and talented teachers and it would cause a waste of the public money as it means other new teachers need to be trained (Johnson, 1986). It could be said that the idea of giving incentives to teachers may motivate teachers to remain in the teaching profession thus their knowledge, skills and experience could still be beneficial to the educational development.

Teachers' incentives commonly, comprise two forms of reward to teachers:

- a. Financial rewards
- b. Non-financial rewards

*a. Financial rewards*

These incentives could be in the terms of a bonus or increment in teacher salary.

- Bonus is a sum of money given as reward for teachers who show good performance in their work (Engelking, 1987; OECD, 2009)

- Increment to the pay scale. It is given as reward to teachers for their good performance and for reaching a certain standard and criteria of excellence that are stated whether at school or national level (Engelking, 1987; OECD, 2009).

*b. Non-Financial rewards*

These incentives could be in the form of praise, compliments and appreciations from others especially school administrators and colleagues, promotion, comfortable work place and space.

- a. Praise includes oral or written when teachers reach certain standards or objectives. This will inform the teachers that they are appreciated.
- b. Promotion
- c. Appreciation whether in formal or non formal ways such as an award for teacher for their excellent performance
- d. Equipment grant in working place and space. Teachers also may get more comfortable at their work by providing photocopy and fax machine, telephone line and computer that help them in their work and discuss with their colleagues and students (Engelking, 1987; OECD, 2009)

A lot of suggestions and solutions could be planned and implemented in the form of educational reforms based on the belief that incentives could be used as a motivation factor in improving teacher quality by encouraging teachers to strive in improving their performance especially in helping students' learning and in effect, to become better teachers in promoting quality in classroom teaching and learning. The success of the new performance pay system can be evaluated through evidence such as whether teachers' incentives could increase teachers' motivation and effort to improve the quality of their personal and professional attitudes as teachers, increase teachers' motivation and effort to improve the quality in their teaching strategies, increase teachers' motivation and effort on their contribution to others in order to

promote the quality of education and in becoming effective teachers and finally could promote the enhancement of teachers' professionalism and lead to better student learning.

Although the impact of incentives among teachers, especially financial reward, raises debate and argument, most economists argue that teachers respond to money and would increase efforts to perform in order to receive it, whereas some psychologists (Murnane & Cohen, 1986; Porter & Lawler, 1968) believed that money may undermine human intrinsic motivation; that not all teachers respond to money as a motivation to perform well and as teaching does not, at the beginning, offer higher pay, most people who enter the teaching profession are more likely to be driven by intrinsic motivation to educate and help pupils in achieving success in learning (Lefevre, 1965). There is still an open debate of the effectiveness of financial incentives given to teachers in order to improve their performance as empirical research found pros and cons in the policy implementation. Such findings might be influenced by environmental issues, human perception, teachers' beliefs, performance management and evaluation.

#### **1.4. Background of study**

As Malaysia is moving towards the goal of being a developed country in the near future as mapped in its Vision 2020, Malaysian students are the hope of for the country's future generation and for that, producing and developing high quality teachers is very important and crucial to students' development, learning and achievement (Ahmad & Goolamally, 2008; Pandian, 2005). This study explores and examines the impact of teachers' incentives in improving quality teachers in teaching and learning and in increasing their contribution to teacher development in Malaysian schools.

Currently, Malaysian teachers are receiving a number of incentives from the Government in the form of financial and non-financial rewards. Some of the incentives such as housing allowances and public service allowances are rewarded to all teachers depending on the grade of service and their level of education. For Science and Mathematics teachers, they receive an allowance called Critical Allowance. In addition, in an effort to encourage teachers to teach in rural and remote areas, the Government also provides teachers teaching in rural and provincial areas with a special allowance; this is a special allowance rewarded to those teachers from Peninsular Malaysia who are posted to schools in West Malaysia namely Sabah and Sarawak. Besides the aforementioned incentives, there are also other non-financial incentives which are given to teachers such as teachers' hostels, apartments, or houses, and medical benefits to them and their families at public hospitals. Other rewards that can benefit teachers are comfortable accommodation facilities especially in rural areas, reasonable rental at city centre, scholarship for further education for teachers or their children, extended annual leave or holiday and medical benefits. Other rewards also include opportunities to attend seminars or conferences at state, national or international level. Some of these rewards are not monetary in nature but in the form of comfort or an opportunity (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

On top of all the above incentives, the Malaysian Government also rewards teachers on a yearly basis through service excellence award which is known as Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang (APC). High performing teachers who reach certain criteria and level of achievement are entitled to receive the APC reward based on an annual performance assessment and report from their head of department (principal or head teacher). APC is an award that is given to any government servant, no matter whether they are under Sistem Saraan Baru (SSB) or Sistem Saraan Malaysia (SSM), to honour and recognise their performance and contributions that exceed common responsibilities of their post. (The SSM will be explained more in chapter two on Malaysian context). This appreciation also intends to make the officer as a role

model to others in order to increase their effort in achieving high standard of service to achieve organizational goal (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

Based on the letter from the Chief Secretary to the Government of Malaysia dated 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2002, the recipients of Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang (APC) would receive the following:

- a. Excellent service certificate
- b. Cash money as much as MYR 1,000.00
- c. Opportunity and priority to career development such as attending courses, seminars or conferences which can contribute to increased work performance.
- d. Priority for opportunity to be nominated for Federation or State honorary title
- e. Recipients' names and pictures will be displayed in the office at a strategic location that is usually visited by the public (Pekeliling Kemajuan Pentadbiran Awam (PKPA) Bil. 2 Tahun 2002).

## **1.5. Research problem**

To nurture the future generation, a country must have good quality teachers, thus it is important to have as many quality teachers as possible and they should be retained in classrooms, teaching the students (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006). However, due to several factors, the education system in Malaysia is now facing problems in attracting new teachers to enter the teaching profession and encouraging those who are believed to be quality teachers to remain in classrooms. Changes in some current policies regarding to teaching profession should be taken to overcome some of the problem of attracting and retaining quality teacher in education system. Offering and providing teachers with financial incentives could be one of the ways to overcome the issues as:



- a. Psychologists and economists believe that teachers can be motivated to improve their performance by offering them financial incentives and the notion is supported by some evidence found in studies which were carried out in US, UK, Israel, Kenya and Australia (Hanushek & Rivkin, 2004; Lavy, 2004) and the report of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia Policy Impact (MOE, 2006). The current structure in teachers' incentives should and needs to be improved as it believed that it could encourage teachers to improve their performances and increase their effort (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).
  
- b. Many quality teachers are found to switch to administration posts due to promotion (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006). Promotion opportunities in the teaching profession are found to be quite limited as compared to other professions. Normally, teachers who demonstrate high levels of performance would be promoted as school administrators or educational officers at the district, state or federal level and this means they are no longer teach in the classrooms. It is a big loss to the development of students and also a new cohort of teachers needs to be trained to fill up the vacant posts left by these teachers which also mean a waste of public fund. Lack of career path in promotion for teachers is blamed on this as it has failed to retain quality teachers where they belong, in classrooms. Although many teachers who received the promotion still love to teach, they need to leave teaching to meet the requirement of the promotion (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

The issue of low salaries in the teaching profession, lack of opportunity for promotion and career advancement and the increase of teachers' workload could reduce some teachers' work motivation to perform at the high level thus bringing a negative impact to the development and success of pupils (Greene & Forster, 2008;

Lee, 2002). The challenges faced by teachers today are quite stressful especially when they have to manage and maintain discipline and student behaviour, dealing with parents, students fees and some management in student discipline in spite of pressure from policy makers, school principal, parents and community which affect teaching time, which is a teacher's 'core business' (Malakolunthu et. al., 2010). At the same time, teachers today are also required to improve and renew their knowledge by spending their time to do some reading, attending professional development, and involving themselves in research and collaborative work. This, it seems, is required of them to justify receiving the higher pay relating to the workload and as a motivation to perform.

Although teachers have the opportunity to receive one of the Government incentives called APC for their performance, the incentive comes with only a certificate and cash money, not a promotion scheme. The chances of promotion in teaching profession in Malaysia are still quite limited (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006) and most teachers who show high performance in managing classroom and involvement in school activities normally have the opportunities to be promoted to management posts in schools such as Principal or could possibility be offered to work at the District, State or Federal Education Department as an officers. Relocating and appointing teachers as leaders whether at school, state or federal level could be categorised under the category of rewarding high performance teachers with increase in their basic pay or different professional roles rather than teaching post (Chingos & West, 2011). However, it also means that the educational system loses quality and talented teachers from classroom teaching. Some teachers who may still be interested in teaching, are reluctant to turn down the promotion offer as it would cause the teacher to lose some of the benefits such as salary increment, allowances and also the opportunity in career development (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

## **1.6. Guru Cemerlang Malaysia Award Scheme Policy (GCM)**

As the number of teachers in every school is high, the opportunity for them to get promotion is relatively low. Proximally there are around 1.2 million government servants in Malaysia and teachers are nearly half of those. It gives the picture of the low chances of promotion among teachers compared to other government posts. Guru Cemerlang or Excellent Teacher award scheme (GCM) promotion was introduced in 1994 by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia as an award given to teachers who are regarded as experts in their field of teaching and subject matter. The GCM award scheme is considered as a pay for performance incentive that was introduced in Malaysia in an effort to reward quality teachers. It is also a promotion scheme. The loss of talented and quality teachers due to promotion has become a major concern on all levels because not all teachers are keen to become administrators. However, the traditional practice of promotion in schools was to assign individuals who are promoted to school administrators' posts such as principal or school head or senior assistant. Some may even be transferred to the district, state or Ministry of Education offices. In getting promoted, the teachers seem to be moving away from teaching in the classroom to doing administrative work. This means teachers who are dedicated and expert in their subject matter are lost in the system; their skills and talent are inaccessible the moment they accept the promotion offer.

One of the objectives of awarding Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme is to ensure that even if the teacher is promoted, he/she will still be teaching and his/her knowledge and expertise can be used by the school and the schools in the district (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006). Since its implementation in 1994, 2,600 primary and secondary school teachers have been promoted without having to hold administrative posts in schools or education offices.

“Our desire is to ensure not only to produce high quality teacher, but further than that is to ensure that those quality teachers remain in teaching and education system and at the same time maintain the quality along their length of service”

YB Dato' Sri Hishamuddin bin Tun Hussein, Malaysia Education Minister (2007)

“... as the most significant and costly resource in schools, teachers are central to school improvement efforts. Improving the efficiency and equity of schooling depends, in large measure, on ensuring that competent people want to work as teachers, that their teaching is of high quality, and that all students have access to high quality teaching”

(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development; Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2007, p.106)

It is believed that someone will be motivated to work and deliver efficiency and quality when they feel satisfied in/with their job (Ololube, 2005). With motivation, Ifinedo (2003) stated that these people will have the agility, dedication, enthusiasm, more focus, zeal, and would be able to make great contributions in achieving organizational objectives and goals. Dessler (2001) in his study found that motivation can become a tool for a person to participate and become involved with more school activities, thus for some teachers they could contribute their knowledge or skills with others through collaboration. This is one of the objectives of the Malaysian Government when it introduced the GCM award scheme, that is, to motivate Malaysian teachers to perform better. The GCM award includes high salary, status, and acceleration in terms of career promotion. Those who receive the GCM award are entitled to receive

- a. Increased basic pay and career stage for next level.

- b. Opportunity to attend professional development training to improve their performance
- c. Opportunity to go to the next level of career stage in fast track, compared to the traditional route for teachers' promotion.
- d. Guru Cemerlang or Excellent Teacher title that distinguishes them from ordinary teachers

In an effort to encourage more teachers to perform at the excellence level and enjoy the benefit, the government increased the quota for GCM award by 300 percent in 2006. The offer in the GCM award scheme could be said as very attractive and at the same time lucrative. The opportunity, however, only comes to teachers after five to seven years of service. As an alternative to a management post, those who still love teaching can still remain in the classroom. The salary increase which comes together with the GC title can sometimes mean that these teachers earn a higher salary than their school Principals or than those seniors teachers who have been in the service longer than them. Last year, the government agreed to further improve the scheme by making it possible for a GCM award scheme to be promoted to a higher grade without having to serve for three full years of service in their current grade. The change was made because there are many teachers who pursue their degree or master's degree and thus are automatically promoted to a different grade level. So with this improvement, it was hoped that non-graduate teachers would be motivated to further their study as it no longer mean that they would be losing their seniority and years of service (Hamzah et. al., 2008).

### **1.7.How does an incentive improve the quality of teaching?**

Recognizing and rewarding excellent teachers is one of the ways of promoting improvement in the quality of education, attract quality students to choose teaching as a profession and ensure that those excellent teachers remain in the classroom

(Engelking, 1987; Hanushek & Rivkindari, 2007). Previous studies showed that such rewards, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, can motivate teachers to become more effective and deliver better performances (Lavy, 2002, 2007; Heneman III & Milanowski, 2007). In line with the Government policy to enhance the quality of education, it could be said that all teachers should work towards improving the quality of their teaching in classrooms and schools.

Teacher's instructional capacity was identified as an integral factor in improving student achievement and to maximise the capacity. Thus, increasing teachers' pay could be one of ways in motivating teachers to improve their knowledge and skill in order to deliver high quality services (Milanowski, 2002). The initiative by the Malaysian government to reward teachers with GCM award scheme could be one of the alternative ways of rewarding high performance teachers and at the same time try to induce teachers to improve their instructional knowledge and skills and their expertise in classroom. Although this scheme requires a lot of investment and money, education is a very expensive business throughout the entire world (Hanushek, 2005). Such a reward as GCM award scheme shows the Malaysian Government interest in the hard work of teachers in the country. However, we should not ignore that although GCM award scheme has in the positive intention to reward and increase teachers' motivation, a negative side of this scheme could be that it leads teachers to be more focussed on the reward rather than their work and so cautions is advised in the implementation of such a scheme (Peabody & Markley, 2003).

## **1.8. Rationale of study**

Information on how teachers react to any educational policy is important to improve the education system as teachers are integral to the success of government planning. It is also important to know how quality teachers could be developed and improved to promote quality in students' learning. In the Malaysian context, there is still no

evidence and information on how financial incentives could influence teacher performance. Studies to investigate the impact of such rewards are not well defined and to date it is still inconclusive as whether they are successful in achieving the objectives as stated in by the Federal Inspectorates (2002) cited in Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, (2008) which is only Cabinet report and not open to discussion. The report revealed that teachers who received the GCM award scheme showed a positive impact in promoting quality in teaching and learning (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006). There is still no research or empirical study carried out to explore and investigate teachers' perceptions on the extent to which the GCM award scheme motivates them to improve and become more effective - as outlined in the Terms of Reference on Excellent Teacher Concept used by Malaysian Ministry of Education (2008). The research done by the Federal Inspectorates in 2002 revealed that GCs had carried out their tasks well in the aspects listed below:

- a. GCs bring positive impact in improving students' academic achievement especially for internal examinations and in the subjects for which they have instructional responsibilities. In the pedagogical approach, GCs are able to deliver more effective lessons as compared to other teachers teaching the same subject.
- b. GCs have produced effective teaching modules for their subject content area, thus making it possible for students to improve.
- c. GCs act as consultants in their schools; providing advice and guidance to their colleagues in matters related to teaching-learning.
- d. GCs facilitate learning and assist other teachers in trying out new approaches in teaching.
- e. GCs action plans are used by other teachers as guidelines and references.
- f. GCs action planning promotes positive impact to other areas of management in the schools they are serving, namely curriculum management, staff development programmes and school resources management.

- g. GCs are found to be very accommodating in helping their schools and neighbouring schools especially in planning their staff development programme.

(Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006)

To promote the quality in teaching and learning through quality teachers, the government decided to increase the number of GC by as much as 300% in 2006. The government's target was to increase the number of GC to 10,174 by the year 2010. However, there are still no studies carried out to investigate or explore to what extent GC policy meets the expectations of educational policy in Malaysia. There are still questions of whether teachers who are appointed GCs increase their efforts to change in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning and what their contributions are to teacher community in terms of knowledge and expertise. Since the implementation of GCM award scheme policy in 1994, very few educational researchers have investigated the effects of the policy to support the idea that rewards and incentives can promote improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.

### **1.9. Aim of study**

This study will investigate Malaysian Excellent Teachers' perception of their motivation to change and their efforts to improve the quality of teaching after receiving Malaysian Excellent Teacher Award scheme.

### **1.10. Objective of study**

- a. Investigate teachers' perceptions of whether or not the GCM award scheme increases teachers' motivation and effort to improve the quality of teachers' personal and professional attitudes after receiving the GCM award scheme.



- b. Investigate teachers' perceptions of whether or not the GCM award scheme increases teachers' motivation and effort to improve the quality in their teaching strategies after receiving the GCM award scheme.
- c. Investigate teachers' perceptions of whether or not the GCM award scheme increases teachers' motivation and effort to increase their contribution to others in order to become effective teachers after receiving the GCM award scheme.

### **1.11. Research questions**

The research questions of the study are:

- a. How did the teachers perceive changes in their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?
- b. How did the teachers perceive changes in their teaching strategies in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?
- c. How did the teachers perceive improvement in their contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?

### **1.12. Rationale of the objectives and research questions of study**

The objectives that were chosen in this study were based on the rationale of the Malaysian Government to introduce the GCM award scheme in 1994. This policy is a promotion scheme to reward excellent teachers who show high performances in their teaching duties and at the same time can be used as a motivation tool for teachers to improve their attitudes, teaching and learning strategies and contributions

of their knowledge and expertise to other teachers towards improving the quality of teaching and learning. The research questions designed for this study will further explore the impact of GCM award scheme to teachers' motivation in improving teachers' attitudes, teaching and learning strategies and contributions to other teachers in promoting quality in teaching and learning.

### **1.13. Scope of the study**

The participants in this study consisted of ten Guru Cemerlang Malaysia from nine secondary and primary schools in the state of Kedah, one of the fourteen states in Malaysia. As Malaysia is governed by the Federal Government in Kuala Lumpur, all schools in the Malaysia states need to follow the same curriculum from the Malaysia Ministry of Education including text books. At the same time, all The Excellent teachers either in Kedah or other states are selected and go through the same procedures before appointed as the GC teacher. The teachers in the study were selected randomly from the list obtained from the District Educational Office and also from Guru Cemerlang Malaysia website. Research also took a close look at the Term of Reference Book of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, (2006) a document about the GCM award scheme policy produced by the Ministry of Education Malaysia and distributed to teachers and schools throughout the country.

### **1.14. Data Collection**

This study which involved ten Excellent Teachers used the interview approach to explore teachers' perceptions about any changes they went through after receiving the GC award scheme. In order to understand these changes, this study also used supplementary sources such as ministerial documents and circulars and newspaper articles. Interviews with the teachers were used as the primary sources of data for this research to provide in-depth information of any perceived changes in teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award. All

interviews were conducted in locations chosen by the participants. The interviews were conducted using semi structured questions. These questions provided the opportunity to the teachers to give comments and express their opinions freely, and this has helped the researcher to obtain rich and original data (Travers, 2001). To ensure that the teachers felt at ease and could give their opinions without disruptions, the interviews were scheduled when it was convenient for them to speak and the venues were also decided by them. Each interview which took between one to one and a half hours was taped and then transcribed by the researcher.

The interviews began with short questions about teachers' demographic such as their age, years of teaching, teaching experience and then followed by questions on teachers' perception on changes or improvement that happened after they received the GCM award scheme. Chapter two will discuss about this award scheme in depth.

### **1.15. Summary**

Previous studies have found that teacher quality is one of the important elements in improving schools and student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Snowden, 2007; Day, 2007; Hanushek & Rivkindari, 2007). However, teacher quality does not only depend on the teacher education, characteristics, certification and professional development programme. Apart from that, motivation is one of the important factors that contribute to high quality teaching which should be given more attention (Day et. al., 2005; Zhao, 2008). The introduction of teachers' performance incentives could be one of the ways in increasing teachers' motivation to improve the quality of teaching and assist students' achievement. These incentives are considered as recognition to teachers' contribution and efforts in classrooms.

### **1.16. Term of references in this study**

- *Quality teacher*

The definition of quality teachers according to UNESCO (2005) is

*“Teachers who can educate learners to become responsible citizens, who are at ease with new technologies and able to make informed decisions about health, the environment and other challenges”*

(UNESCO, 2005)

It shows that in order to educate pupils, quality teachers should possess knowledge in contents and also skills in delivering the knowledge such as information technologies and some characteristics to overcome problem and challenges during the process of teaching and learning. The quality teacher could be defined as highly knowledgeable in teaching, pedagogy and subject knowledge as well as able to display certain qualities such as caring, loving towards the children and being tolerant (Hammond, 2000; Shahril et. al., 1993). Meanwhile, Darling-Hammond (2000) and Darling-Hammond and Youngs (2002) defined a quality teacher as a person who has certification and years of teaching experience besides knowledge in their teaching subject and pedagogy. Rivkin et. al., (2005) concurred that experience is an important element of a quality teacher, and further defined experienced teachers as those who had been teaching for three years or more. Study by Rivkin et al., (2000) has found that teachers’ experience may influence students’ achievement especially in mathematics in their four year of teaching compare to teacher who has a master degree. Quality teachers are also associated with the ability to help their pupils to gain good scores in examinations, apply continuous learning, work with peers, have a sense of humour and love teaching (Akiba et. al., 2007).

It could be said that most literature about quality teachers identifies some key elements that the teacher should possess in being a quality teacher such as being knowledgeable in subject matter, pedagogy skills, and such characteristics like humour and loving children, as well as teaching experiences (Akiba et. al., 2007; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Wray et. al., 2000; Rivkin et al., 2005).

However, the identification of a measurement of quality is complex as is the linking of such measures to student outcomes.

The importance of knowledge has been stressed by a traditional model of teacher knowledge initiated by Shulman (1986) which stated that teaching required teachers to have general knowledge of pedagogy, curriculum and subject matter. This knowledge would be helpful for teachers in the process of teaching and learning because teaching required them to be more creative in attracting student interest with several strategies and full understanding of curriculum would benefit teachers to achieve teaching objectives.

Despite the emphasis of the key elements of knowledge, skills and teachers' characteristics, arguably others factors such as teachers' beliefs about their capability and their students, as suggested by Murphy et., al (2004), also influence teacher quality as the teachers' variety of experiences could influence and shape the way they teach which would influence the quality of teaching. Calderhead and Robson (1991) also believed that good and enjoyable experiences of teachers have certain effects on their teaching. This notion was also supported by Gupta and Saravanan (1995) who said that these memories such as enjoyment and difficulties that teachers went through in their lives would help teachers to apply new techniques in their teaching. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that teachers' beliefs could be one important element of quality teachers besides content knowledge and pedagogy skills.

The quality teacher term and concept should not only circulate around the issues of knowledge and skills but should also look at the students and the support that they have given to teachers (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005). In becoming a quality teacher, elements of the students' efforts and willingness to learn, teacher opportunities to teach and facilities and support that they have should come together and should be taken into consideration in judging teachers to be quality teachers (Fenstermacher & Richardson, 2005; Wechsler & Shields, 2008).

In this study, therefore, an excellent teacher is a term to define a quality teacher who possesses knowledge, skills and expertise in the subject matter and content (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006). The Malaysian Excellent Teacher is also dedicated, highly motivated in carrying out his or her duties and responsibilities and is always striving for continuous excellence (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

- ***School head***

School head is the leader or manager of a primary school.

- ***School principal***

School Principal is the leader or manager in a secondary school.

- ***Grade A school***

A school with a population of more than 2,000 students, with at least 80 teachers and 10 administration staffs

- ***Grade B school***

A school with a population of 800 to 2000, with at least 40 teachers and 6 administration staffs

- ***JUSA***

JUSA (Jawatan utama sektor awam) or Public Service Premiere Post is the highest grade in public service in Malaysia.

The following chapter will discuss the background of education system in Malaysia and the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme policy.

## **CHAPTER TWO: MALAYSIAN CONTEXT**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will be divided into four sections. The first section will generally discuss the education system, and specifically teacher training in Malaysia. It will further discuss the teaching career in Malaysia starting from the selection process until the day the trainees become teachers. The second section will then discuss the teacher career path in Malaysia and the current incentives provided by the Malaysian Government to the teachers.

### **Malaysia**

Malaysia is one of the South East Asia countries with a population of approximately 29 million (<http://www.statistics.gov.my>) and which approximately 7.3% are foreigners. The country comprises thirteen states and three Federal Territories namely Kuala Lumpur, Labuan and Putrajaya. Malaysia was once colonised by Great Britain before gaining independence in 1957. It is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural country that is mainly made up of Malays, Chinese, Indians, Kadazan, Iban, Murut and some other minority ethnic groups (Ahmad et. al., 2010). From the whole population, approximately 60% are Malays, 27 % are Chinese, 7% are Indians, and 6 % are from other ethnic backgrounds (Abd Razak et. al., 2010). Malaysia is one of the fastest growing economies in South-East Asia and prides itself on being a moderate Muslim country (Tong & Turner, 2008).

### **Education in Malaysia**

Formal education is provided at four levels: primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and tertiary with Malay language, the national language of Malaysia, as the medium of instruction. There are two types of school at the primary level namely

national primary school and vernacular school. National primary schools use the Malay language as the medium of instruction. Vernacular schools are further divided into two different types depending on the medium of instruction. Chinese national type school (Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina) and Tamil national type school (sekolah Jenis kebangsaan Tamil) use Mandarin and Tamil as the medium of instruction respectively. At the secondary level, all schools are conducted in the Malay language. Pre-school or kindergarten education starts at the age of 4 to 6. The compulsory age of admission to the primary education, which consists of six years of education, is 7 years old and students will progress to the lower secondary level of education at the age of 13. At 16, they will be in the upper secondary level in which they have the option to choose from three streams offered: national, religious, and technical/vocational. It takes a minimum of 11 years for students to complete their primary and secondary levels of education in Malaysia which are free for all. Before graduating from secondary school, students are required to take the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or Malaysian Certificate of Education examination. After that, they would have a choice of either studying at the Form 6 level or pre-university level before progressing to tertiary education locally or abroad.

Higher education is offered for students to either get certificate, diploma, and degree or post degree qualifications at universities, polytechnics/Colleges, Teacher Training Institutes or Community Colleges. In 2007, there were 20 Malaysian public universities, 18 private universities, 27 polytechnics and 42 community colleges (certificate only). The Malaysian Government also offered scholarship to students to pursue their studies overseas. Data on 2002-2007 showed that there were approximately 54,915 Malaysian students in United States, Australia, Canada, Jordan, Arab Saudi, United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand and other countries (Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2010).

All related regulation to organise education in Malaysia is contained in the Federal Constitution and the Education Act of 1996 that guides all education process in pre-



school, primary, secondary education and tertiary education. For tertiary education, seven legal regulatory which are used to guide all the provision and management are:

- a. The Private Higher Education Institutions Act, 1996
- b. The National Council on Higher Education Institution Act, 1996
- c. The National Accreditation Board Act, 1996
- d. The Universities and University Colleges (Amendment) Act, 1996
- e. The National Higher Education Fund Corporation Act, 1997
- f. The MARA Institute of Technology (Amendment) Act 2000; and
- g. The National Higher Education Fund Corporation (Amendment) Act, 2000

(Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2010)

Education is one of the priorities in government spending and in the year of 2007, Malaysia is allocate RM33.4 billion or 21% of the RM159.4 billion overall budget for education development. This is a testament that the government continues to aim to improve the quality of education for the nation (treasury.gov.my, 2007). To achieve high quality education, trained and qualified teachers as well as other educational resources in the form of audio-visual aids, educational television and books are provided for primary education. Financial assistance in the form of per capita grants and scholarships are also provided. Other support services such as free textbooks for all, free school uniform for urban poor, scholarships, boarding facilities, health and dental care, supplementary milk and meals, are provided for children from the rural areas, and urban poor by the government and these contribute to high participation rates in the public schools.

Malaysia is heading towards becoming a high-income developed nation by 2020 as outlined in Vision 2020, the brainchild of former Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed (Mohamad, 1991). To propel the country to advanced-nation status, the government made the necessary efforts to incorporate technologies in all aspects of life, increase economic growth and the life quality of Malaysian citizens, and put more emphasis on the development of human capital so that they are

equipped with the knowledge, skills and high capacity for innovation. The emphasis is put on the young generation because they will continue the efforts to propel the country to high-income developed nation. To ensure this, it is imperative that the country provide high quality education to this young generation. The Ministry of Education is one of the government's machineries mobilised towards the preparation to achieve the advanced-nation status by producing human capital with the proper knowledge, skills and the 'First Class Mentality'.

Vision 2020 does not only stress economic development and growth but also emphasises interrelated aspects such as social justice, work ethic, and quality of life, moral and ethical values. Since the launch of Vision 2020 by Dr Mahathir in 1991 during the 6th Malaysian Plan, a growing effort was made to realise the vision. The former premier outlined nine challenges for Malaysians to achieve the vision:

- a. Establishing a united Malaysian nation
- b. Creating a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian society
- c. Developing a mature democratic community
- d. Forming a community that has high morale, ethics, and religious strength
- e. Establishing a mature, liberal and tolerant society
- f. Establishing a scientific and progressive society
- g. Establishing a fully caring society
- h. Ensuring an economically just society
- i. Establishing a prosperous society

(Mohamad, 1991)

“By the year 2020, Malaysia is to be a united nation, with a confident Malaysian society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient”.

Tun Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad (1991). "Malaysia: The way forward, Speech at Majlis Perdagangan Malaysia, 28 February 1991.

Malaysia's 2020 Vision has influenced the government in many aspects of planning and implementation of policy. Education is an integral part of change and therefore it is very important that the programs offered in the public and private universities are in the line with market need. Equal opportunities of education are provided for all pupils and all races. The Malaysian Government is concerned to improve creativity and innovation in the education system, enhancing the quality of education at the primary level and secondary level especially in the rural areas

The Education Development Plan for Malaysia (2001-2010), also referred to as the Blueprint, was launched by the Ministry of Education Malaysia as a policy framework and direction for Malaysian education (Malakolunthu et al., 2010) with aims to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity of twelve years of education in terms of access, equity, and quality in line with Vision 2020 to become a developed country. The Blueprint also aims to further develop the potentials of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced, following the National Education Philosophy. The major thrusts of the Blueprint are to increase access to education, increase equity in education, increase the quality of education, and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education management. The Ministry of Education (MOE) aims to continue with the equitable distribution of educational inputs to ensure students obtain appropriate learning experiences from all educational programmes.

## **Teaching Profession in Malaysia**

### **a. Teacher education**

Malaysia is committed to producing high quality teachers in pursuit of the development goals of the nation. There are two types of teacher training programme in Malaysia. The first programme is the training offered by Institutes of Teachers Education (IPG) and the second one is teacher training offered by public universities. IPG is responsible for producing non-graduate teachers for primary schools. Every year, the Malaysian Government receives approximately 40, 000 applications for teacher training programmes but only around 10,000 applicants are selected to undergo training at IPG and universities. However, in the year 2007, IPG began its 4 year Teaching Bachelor Degree programme (PISMP) to produce graduate teachers for primary and secondary school (Asariah, 2009) and in 2008, there were 31 teacher training institutes all over the country which conducted the courses. Being a Muslim-dominated country, the teaching profession has always been one of the most popular professions among students in Malaysia because it is viewed as a noble profession. Muslims consider being teachers as noble because, in Islam, the act of teaching useful knowledge to children can help them in the afterlife. Thus, in Malaysia there is no problem of a shortage of new teachers and most education reforms in the country are more concerned toward improving the quality of teachers and retaining quality teachers in classrooms.

The public universities also produce graduate teachers to teach at secondary schools. There are two types of teacher education program offered by local universities: consecutive programme and concurrent programme. The consecutive programme is a one-year post degree and accelerated course that is offered to those who have already obtained their first academic degree. This programme is introduced due to the high demand in the workforce and offers a fast track education course for trainees who have mixed fields of bachelor's degrees (Lee, 2002). The concurrent programme is a

four-year degree that offers teacher education courses for undergraduates who would undergo three years of study and an additional one year to complete their practicum and related education courses (Lee, 2002). Teacher certificates or diplomas are certified and validated only by the Ministry of Education Malaysia, not by any professional bodies (Lee, 2002) thus paving the ways to the creation of special professional bodies for teaching that would be given the power to validate teaching certificate or degree in teaching, as done by other professions such as law and medicine.

The Malaysian government promotes life-long learning among teachers and in a move to encourage all teachers to improve their academic qualifications, 14 IPGs and seven public universities offer a three-year Bachelor of Education Programme for non-graduate teachers all over the country starting from 1991 (Lee, 2002). This effort is in line with the government's aspiration to have 100% graduate teachers serving at secondary schools and at least 50% of them serving at primary schools after 2010. IPGs in the country which originally only offered teaching certificate to their trainees have gradually stopped the practice and have begun to offer degree programme since mid 1980s.

Most of the programmes and activities planned at all levels in the education system in Malaysia are based on National Philosophy of Education (NPE) and National Policy of Education (PTE) (Habsah et. al., 2009; Meng, 1989). This includes all teacher training institutions and higher level institutions which offer teaching courses to aspiring teachers. There are around 219,766 primary school teachers and 166,265 secondary school teachers in Malaysia and the government projected the number would continue to increase as there are now 20,000 teacher trainees undergoing training at teacher trainee institutions all over the country (Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2010). Every year, new batches of teachers are produced to fill the vacancy left by retired teachers or those who passed away or to teach at new schools.

Basically, teacher trainees are taught about:

- a. General education
- b. Pedagogy and teaching basics
- c. Field-based experiences (Meng, 1989)

The Ministry of Education Malaysia believe that one of the ways to produce a competitive generation is through high quality education that students receive. Thus, the development and improvement of teachers' quality become the main concern and an important agenda in educational reform in the country. For example, the Ministry of Education Malaysia encourage teachers to take up fourteen-week or one year in-service courses in computer education to improve teachers' basic computer literacy and many other courses to help them become better teachers. Until the year 2000, almost 60,000 teachers have attended and benefited from such courses, although not all of the teachers used the knowledge in their classroom teaching Malaysia's goal of teacher education is to produce quality teachers who are knowledgeable, competent and able to practise all the values required in the teaching profession ([Habsah et. al., 2009](#); [Meng, 1989](#)). The Teacher Education Conceptual Model is outlined based on the NPE and education goal. This model explains teachers' accountability as seen in three dimensions listed below:

- a. Divinity: producing teachers who have strong belief and devotion to religion.
- b. Socialization: producing teachers who can play the role of educators, leaders and change agents.
- c. Self: producing teachers who possess courtesy and noble values

Teacher Education Conceptual Model has three basic aspects:

- a. Knowledge which is related to the development and importance of education in life.
- b. Pedagogical skills which include skills of using teaching aids to improve teaching and learning quality.

- c. Caring, strong, patriotic, innovative, creative and always guided by the PTE (Meng, 1989).

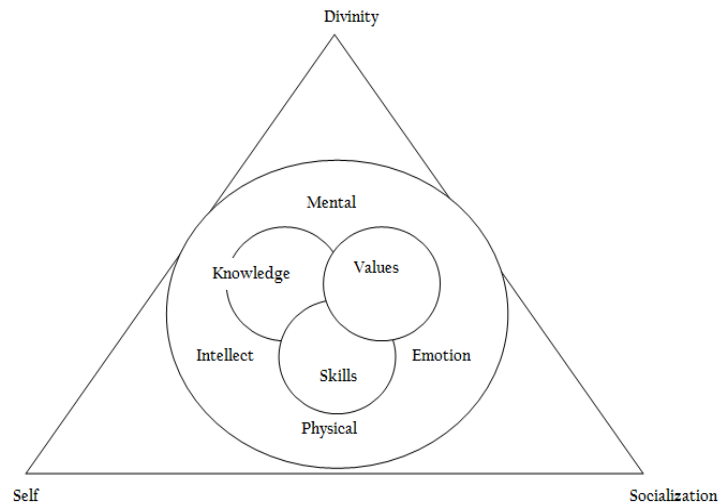


Figure 2-1: Malaysia Teachers' conceptual Model

As shown above, teacher education main objective is to produce teachers who are able to embrace all three dimensions of divinity, socialization and self. Teachers produced by Ministry of Education Malaysia should have strong belief and devotion to religion, play the role of educators with knowledge and high morale and could become leaders and change agents for national development. As educators, they should also possess noble values to enhance the image of professional teachers in the eyes of the community.

There are certain criteria a trainee should meet to become a teacher at primary or secondary schools in Malaysian public schools. The minimum requirements are as follows:

- Graduated from any public university in Malaysia or any Teacher Training College with Bachelor of Education or
- Possess Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching (for those who already have a first degree and are keen to become a teacher)

## **b. Teaching career in Malaysia**

Although the teaching profession is one of the respected professions in Malaysia (Bajunid, 2000), the profession still fails to attract more talented people to it due to low status, low salary and complex roles and responsible of teaching task (Lee, 2002). The Malaysian government has tried to make the profession attractive by improving teachers' pay structure, improving working conditions and providing more incentives for teachers, and until now, Malaysia has never faced problems of shortage in the number of teachers. Since 1980, the goals of the profession have been based on the suggestions outlined in the Cabinet Report of the Revision of National Policy of Education (NPE) which was produced in 1979. Starting from 1982, teacher criteria are set based on PTE (Habsah et al., 2009).

Professional development is one of the strategies of educational reform in improving teaching and learning as professional development could improve teachers' knowledge and collaboration, thus giving positive impact to students' activities (Borco, 2004). In-service teachers who wish to upgrade their professional knowledge and skills can apply for a 14-week or one-year courses in various fields which are offered two times per year by the Ministry of Education. Most of these courses are conducted at Teacher Training Colleges and The National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN). INTAN is the training arm of the Public Service Department, Malaysia. It began as a modest training centre at Port Dickson in September 1959 and was then known as the Staff Training Centre. This centre provides training to officers on land administration, financial administration, office management and local government administration.



## **Teachers' career development: promotion in the teaching profession in Malaysia**

Malaysian teachers are currently put under a scheme known as the Malaysia Remuneration System (SSM) which was introduced by the Government of Malaysia to:

- a. increase government servants' effectiveness in line with the country's public service goal to create learned and skilled workforce that is viable and competitive;
- b. ensure public service officers are always effective, relevant and able to face current need and challenge;
- c. help public service officers handle increasing customer's expectation;
- d. ensure public servants have integrity, transparency, consistent accountability and the ability to develop the capacity for good governance

Through SSM, teachers are required to serve on probation for a period of one to three years before being confirmed in service. For graduate teachers, they will start at the DG41 post. After a period of time, following time-based scheme or a promotion, they will move to the next grade which is DG44 and then followed by DG48, DG52, DG54 and Special C Grade (JUSA). They will continue their services until they reach their retirement age - 55, 56 or 58 years old - depending on the options they make. There are four opportunities for job promotion in the teaching profession in Malaysia.

- a. Naturally based on seniority (secara hakiki)
- b. Time-based promotion
- c. Form six posts. For promotion to DG44 grade, candidates are required to have at least five years service as teachers.
- d. Special to Holder (Khas Untuk Penyandang)
  - Timed based
  - Guru Cemerlang (The Malaysian Excellent Teacher award scheme)

- Guru Besar Cemerlang (The Malaysian Excellent Headmaster award scheme)
- Pengetua Cemerlang (The Malaysian Excellent Principal award scheme)

For the “secara hakiki” post, a teacher is promoted to the next level of pay scale after ten years of service. For example, graduate teachers who start at DG41 level will move to the next scale of DG44 after teaching for up to 10 years. However, in 2008 some changes had been made in the teachers’ career promotion and now it is based on job vacancies, suitability of the candidates and post quota. Below is the comparison of career promotion for teachers in Malaysia before and after 2008.

GRED / KUP	Before the year 2008	After the year 2008
Gred Hakiki	Year of service	Year of service
a. DG 41 to DG 44	10	5
b. DG 44 to DG 48	4	1-4
c. DG 48 to DG 52	3	1-3
d. DG 52 to DG 54	3	1-3
e. DG 54 to JUSA C	3	1-2
Guru Cemerlang Scheme		
a. DG 41 to DG 44	7	5
b. DG 44 to DG 48	3	<1
c. DG 48 to DG 52	3	<1
d. DG 52 to DG 54	3	<1
e. DG 54 to JUSA C	2	<1
Pengetua Cemerlang Scheme		
a. DG 48 to DG 52	1.5	<1
b. DG 52 to DG 54	1.5	<1
c. DG 54 to JUSA C	2	<1

Table 2-1: Teacher year of service before getting promotion before 2008 and after (2008). Sources: <http://www.iab.edu.my>

Gred	Quota	Filling (%)	Vacancies (%)
DG44	4000	1442 (36.1)	2558 (63.9)
DG48	1000	818 (81.8)	182 (18.2)
DG52	250	133 (53.2)	117 (46.8)
DG54	100	11 (12.4)	89 (87.6)
Khas C	24	12 (50)	12 (50)
Total	5374	2416 (48.3)	2958 (51.7)

Table 2-2: Quota, fillings and vacancies statistics of PPPS Excellent Teachers until October (2008). Sources: <http://www.iab.edu.my>

GRED	Quota	Filling (%)	Vacancies (%)
DGA32	3200	3104 (97%)	96 (3%)
DGA34	800	800 (100 %)	0
Total	400	3904 (97.6%)	96 (3%)

Table 2-3: Quota, fillings and vacancies statistics of PPPLD Excellent Teachers until October (2008). Sources: <http://www.iab.edu.my>

Year	Total number approved by Malaysia Ministry of Education	
	DG 54	DG48
2007	7316	730
2006	7185	258
2005	16485	751
Total	30986	1718

Table 2-4: teachers' promotion based on "Time-Based PPPS" (2005-2007).

Sources: <http://www.iab.edu.my>

Year	Total number approved by Malaysia Ministry of Education
2008	9137
2007	34795
2006	52406
Total	96338

Table 2-5: teachers' promotion based on "Time-Based DGA32" (2005-2007).

Sources: <http://www.iab.edu.my/bsm.pdf>

Below is the diagram showing teaching career path of Malaysian graduate teachers starting from DG41 grade until the highest grade JUSA.

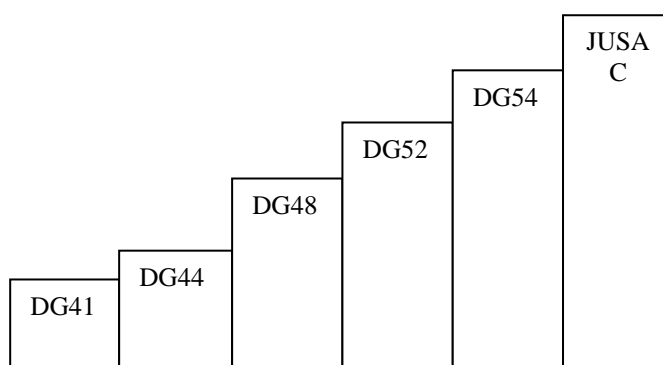


Table 2-6: Teaching career path of Malaysian graduate teachers

Normally, a teacher will start joining the service at the age of 24 at the basic DG41 scale. After 10 years of service, the teacher is automatically promoted to the next scale / level. The same rule also applies to those promoted from DG44 scale to DG48 scale. A teacher's performance is also taken into consideration for the promotion. For those who are promoted through Time-based Scheme, the highest post they can take is DG48 post. Should they want to move further up, they need to make applications through the promotion 'secara Hakiki'.

Through the SSM system, a teacher's salary is based on automatic annual pay increment. Every year, a teacher's salary will increase automatically by certain amount. However, for those who intend to double the increase, they need to take the examination called Ujian Penilaian Tahap Kecekapan (PTK) or Efficiency Level Assessment Test. Based on the results, teachers who score level 3 in the test will be entitled to receive the ordinary annual pay increment and for those who manage to score level 4, they are entitled to received double pay increment for the year. However, for career promotion, teachers will still have to be evaluated in terms of their job performance, years of service and the recommendation from their school heads. Once promoted, they may become school administrators such as head masters/principals or school senior assistants. Some are transferred to the District Education Office or State Education Office following their promotions.

Normally, a master's or doctorate degree is not taken into consideration in a promotion scheme of a teacher. Unlike the practice in tertiary institutions where academic qualification is given the priority in awarding a promotion to academic staff, promotion for a teacher in schools is normally awarded based on years of experience and contributions to educational development within or outside schools. Other than that, if a teacher is interested in administrative post, he could apply for any positions at District Education Office, State Education Office or at the ministry level. However, vacancies for these positions are very limited and only those who are always involved in giving talks outside schools and have experience dealing with high ranking officers from the ministry would be given the posts.

To attract more people into the profession, the government tries to make teaching a more desirable and respected profession. To do this, the promotion system is revamped to give more opportunities for teachers to move forward in their career. In addition to attracting more quality people to join the profession, it is also important to improve the quality of in-service teachers and motivate them to perform well by providing them with stable prospectus job which means would not be affected with

such economic problems, higher pay, special benefits and opportunities to promotion, professional development and career advancement.

### **Teachers' Incentives in Malaysia**

The quality and performance of teachers have been a focus of concern in education (Ballou & Podgursky, 1997; Darling-Hammond & Snowden, 2007; Day, 2007). The importance of academic qualifications, subject matter knowledge and pedagogical knowledge and skills could not be sidelined in determining teachers' performance, However, a knowledgeable teacher without motivation and dedication to teaching may not sustain quality education (Johnson, 1985; Zhao, 2008). In other words, the quality of teaching is not only governed by the knowledge and skill competence of teachers but also their motivation to teach, enthusiasm and commitment in teaching (Guskey, 1986; Zhao, 2008). Interest in teacher incentives as one of the keys to promote the improvement of teaching has grown substantially in the last few years. The use of incentives was believed to be able to enact change to teaching practices as it increases teachers' efforts in promoting new strategies in classroom activities that are different from traditional ways of teaching which are commonly seen in our classroom. This will lead to the improvement of quality of what students will get from schooling today (Day, 2007; Johnson, 1985; Lord & Miller, 2002).

Most Malaysian teachers receive certain incentives in the forms of financial and non financial benefits. Some of the incentives such as housing allowance are entitled to all teachers and some incentives are based on the grade of service and level of teacher education. Some teachers also receive financial incentive as follows:

- a. Critical allowance (BISP), for those who teach Science and Mathematics in English and also English subject.

- b. Provincial allowance. In encouraging teachers to teach at rural and remote areas, the government also provide teachers with a provincial allowance. This allowance is also awarded to those teachers from Peninsular Malaysia who teach in East Malaysia (Sabah and Sarawak)
- c. Chief Warden and Warden allowance. Teachers who are appointed Chief Warden or warden in some boarding schools or school with hostel facilities are entitled to receive some financial allowance (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).
- d. Language allowance (Tamil & Chinese language). Teachers who teach Tamil and Chinese are entitled to claim financial incentives based on per hour of teaching (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

Besides these financial incentives for teachers, other forms of non-financial incentives are also available to most teachers. The incentives are as follows:

- a. Free hospital and dental treatment benefit to all teachers including their children, spouse and parents.
- b. Teachers' apartment or hostel based on vacancies and suitability. Some teachers who are teaching at rural areas are provided with fully furnished apartment or hostel and for certain areas, teachers need to apply for the apartments.

GRED	ITKA/ITK (RM) Public service allowance	ITP/ Housing allowance (RM)
DGA32	170	180
DG41	300	300
DG44	400	400
DG48	550	700
DG52	600	700
DG54	800	900
Khas C	800	1300
JUSA C	1000	1300

Table 2-7: Housing allowance based service grade

### **Reward system for high performance teachers**

In Malaysia, financial incentives and welfare facilities are two important keys to excellent service. Apart from that, motivation and job satisfaction could also be integral as they were believed to be the pillars to human resource management. The Malaysian government recognises and appreciate those teachers who show high performance in their services. Every year teachers who are excellent are given excellent service award known as Anugerah Perkhidmatan Cemerlang (APC). Through this reward, teachers are entitled to receive:

- a. excellent service certificate
- b. cash money as much as MYR 1,000.00
- c. opportunity and priority to career development such as attending courses, seminars or conferences which can contribute to increased work performance
- d. the opportunity to be nominated for Federation or State honorary title
- e. the opportunity to have their names and pictures displayed at strategic locations at their office so the public can view them (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006)



Although this award is given to those teachers who show excellent performance, there are still not enough opportunities for teachers to get salary increment through this award of excellence. The award would not affect teachers' basic pay. Thus, APC could only be labelled as reward, but not a career path in the teaching profession that would mean career advancement for teachers. Moreover, APC is awarded based on the 8% quota of the number of officers including teaching and non-teaching staff in a school. Thus, many high performance teachers have to wait for another year before they can get the award (2010, Berita Harian-2010/05/19). This could de-motivate some teachers who feel that they deserve to be selected as the award recipients.

At the same time, following the traditional ways of promotion in public services, opportunity it is very limited and sometimes takes a long time. Malaysia has around 1.2 million people working in the public sector and as teachers make up the largest number of public servants in the country the promotion opportunity for them in the SSM scheme is even less. This is because besides merit, promotion is made based on vacancies and quota. The current Prime Minister of Malaysia was quoted as saying that it is a long way and he was afraid that the lack of opportunity to promotion and incentive to reward workers could bring negative effect to them and reduce workers' productivity:

“Some excellent civil servants would have to wait for promotion depending on vacancy of the posts. They also have to face stiff competition among their colleagues because of the limited posts of promotion. Some of them have to wait until 15 years to step up to higher grade of KUP post”

Najib Tun Razak (Speech at Perhimpunan Penjawat Awam  
2010, Berita Harian-2010/05/19)

## **Policy Change: Upgrading teaching career path and promotion**

Teacher quality is viewed as one of the most important inputs in an education system and there is a broad consensus that academic achievement of students can be raised if the quality of teachers improves (Adu & Boaduo, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Day, 2007; Jilan, 2010; Lavy, 2007). Although many factors contribute to the success of students' learning, the teachers' role is still integral in influencing the quality of education that pupils receive and they are the "prime movers in the improvement of quality in education" (Adu & Boaduo, 2005; p.20).

Holding onto the belief that the quality of education is important and teachers matter, planning and actions were undertaken in educational reform by the Malaysian Government that involved three categories; student learning and achievement, school leadership, and restructuring of the teaching profession. Improving student learning and achievement becomes a great concern to the country because Malaysia is preparing to become a high-income developed nation by 2020 and therefore the development of high knowledge and a capable generation is crucial (Abdullah, 1992). Different new policies were introduced in schools to provide high quality environment and a lot of money was put aside to ensure all schools have the basic needs and facilities to make learning conducive. In addition, the government made sure that all schools have enough teachers to facilitate learning and produce high quality of teaching and learning (Asariah, 2009).

The second area that is important in educational reform is improving school leadership among school principals and school administrators. The success of educational reform also depends on how school leaders play their roles in promoting quality to teachers and students. Research in effective schools and school improvement identified school leadership as among the main factors in ensuring academic success of a school. Policy makers all over the world have discovered that teachers and textbooks cannot produce results without highly effective school heads

to facilitate, model and lead. As a result, a variety of initiatives have focused on the redefinition of the role of the school heads and improving the effectiveness of school management remains one of the fundamental concerns (Lee, 2002).

The third area of the educational reform movement is restructuring of the teaching workforce. A lot of actions were taken to arrest related problems such as the shortage of young teachers in schools, shortage of teachers for critical subjects like Science and Mathematics, attracting and boosting the dwindling number of quality teachers in classroom. Another important concern to the teaching profession is the effectiveness of teachers in delivering teaching and learning to students. Although Malaysia had witnessed high quality teacher expansion produced by the Teacher Training College and universities and many more quality teachers are stationed in primary and secondary schools nationwide with the increased opportunities for teachers to improve their level of their education through various in-service professional development, the quality of teachers could still be improved and there are still rooms to enhance the teaching profession and the quality of teachers in the country (Asariah, 2009; Mohd, 2010).

The main thrust in improving the quality of education has come from a policy change on school improvement based on the long term Education Plan (MOE: Pembangunan Pendidikan (2001-2010)). Holding onto the belief that improving quality teachers is important in producing a high quality generation approaching the 2020 Vision, the government believe that reforms in the selection and recruitment, wage structure, promotion scheme and incentives for teachers are needed and important in order to attract more quality students to enter teaching, retain quality teachers in classrooms and the improve quality of teachers' performance. Therefore, the Ministry of Education outlined several strategies to enhance the teaching profession for example by tightening the selection process of future teachers, improving the learning atmosphere, and strengthening teachers' self-confidence and providing continuous service support.

The importance of teachers' quality was highlighted by the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, during his speech at "Seminar Kongres Antarabangsa Bagi Keberkesanan dan Penambahbaikan Sekolah 2010 (ICSEI 2010) Kali Ke-23":

"What is more important in achieving educational excellence is teachers' quality"

"All parties know that quality education cannot exist without quality teachers because they are the ones who will determine school performance and the student achievement,"

(Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, 2010)

The Ministry of Education Malaysia believes that the teaching profession could be improved by increasing teachers' quality not only through teacher training, but through improvement in teachers' career development and teachers' welfare. This is stated in the five thrusts of the National Education Development Blueprint or Pelan Pembangunan Induk Pendidikan (PIPP):

- a. Improving the selection system in recruiting candidates for teaching profession
- b. strengthening teacher education training
- c. boosting teaching profession
- d. improving teachers' working environment and teachers' welfare
- e. planning and managing human resources

(Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2007)

### **Malaysia Excellent Teachers award scheme (GCM)**

Like many other countries, Malaysia has also introduced teachers' incentives to award performing teachers. Guru Cemerlang (Excellent Teacher) promotion was introduced in 1993 by the Malaysian Ministry Of Education as an award given to

teachers who are regarded as experts in their field of teaching and subject matter. The rationale of giving this award is due to the progression of teacher promotion. In the past, teachers who fit the criteria were promoted to the post of principals, vice principals or education officers. In getting promoted, the teachers move away from teaching in the classroom to doing administrative work. This means teachers who are dedicated and expert in their subject matter are lost in the system; their skills and talent are inaccessible due to their promotion. The awarding of Guru Cemerlang ensures that even if the teacher is promoted, he/she will still be teaching and his/her knowledge and expertise can be used by the school and the schools in the district.

***a. Objectives of the Guru Cemerlang Promotion Scheme are:***

- To acknowledge and recognise teachers who are excellent in their field or subject.
- To improve the quality of teaching.
- To promote Guru Cemerlang as role model to other teachers.
- To enhance school excellence by utilising the experience and expertise of the Guru Cemerlang.
- To expand the horizon of promotion in educational services.
- To offer promotion opportunity to teachers without having to leave classroom teaching or changing to administrative duties.
- To give promoted teachers the opportunity to get to a higher grade quickly.

***b. Characteristics of Excellent Teachers***

– Personal Behaviour

An Excellent teacher is a teacher who has admirable personality and skills and adheres to school ethic and public service ethic and is sensitive and mindful to students' needs.

- Knowledge and skill

An Excellent teacher is a teacher who dominates and fully appreciates his subject content and his expertise. He is a very resourceful person who is wise in managing time, source materials and learning devices. He also has the ability to identify students' learning needs and problems and is capable of setting follow-up programs for students, besides being knowledgeable and skilled in the field of information technology and communications.

- Produce work

An Excellent teacher is a teacher with the ability to increase learning outcome and develop students' potential in accordance with Education National Philosophy.

- Potential

An Excellent teacher is a teacher with a clear vision, proactive, has the initiatives, responsive and innovative in the framework of an educator.

- Contribution to educational development

An Excellent teacher is a teacher who is capable of generating new ideas and implementing the ideas to improve the quality of education.

There are various requirements teachers should meet before they can apply for the Excellent Teacher post. There are five grades in the Teacher service in Malaysia:

- ***Excellent Teacher PPPLD DGA32 Grade***

- Teaching experience not less than 7 years on 01-01-2007 in DGA29 Grade
  - Subject that is requested is a major subject taught
  - Teach the subject stated in the final three successive years prior to application.

- ***Excellent Teacher PPPLD DGA34 Grade***
  - Teaching experience not less than 7 years on 01-01-2007 in DGA32 Grade
    - Subject that is requested is a major subject taught
    - Teach the subject stated in the final three successive years prior to application
  
- ***Graduate Excellent Teacher DG44 Grade***
  - Teaching experience not less than 7 years on 01-01-2007 in DGA41 Grade
    - Subject that is requested is a major subject taught
    - Teach the subject stated in the final three successive years prior to application
  
- ***Graduate Excellent Teacher DG48 Grade (KUP)***
  - Teaching experience not less than 7 years on 01-01-2007 in DGA44 Grade
    - Subject that is requested is a major subject taught
    - teach the subject stated in the final three successive years prior to application
    - Excellent Teacher holders must remain teaching the subject of his expertise after the appointment of Guru Cemerlang DG44 Grade
  
- ***Graduate Excellent Teacher DG52 Grade (KUP)***
  - Teaching experience not less than 7 years on 01-01-2007 in DGA48 Grade
    - Subject that is requested is a major subject taught
    - teach the subject stated in the final three successive years prior to application
    - Excellent Teacher holders must remain teaching the subject of his expertise after the appointment of Guru Cemerlang DG48 Grade
  
- ***Graduate Excellent Teacher DG54 Grade (KUP)***
  - Teaching experience not less than 7 years on 01-01-2007 in DGA52 Grade

- Subject that is requested is a major subject taught
  - teach the subject stated in the final three successive years prior to application
  - Excellent Teacher holders must remain teaching the subject of his expertise after the appointment of Guru Cemerlang DG52 Grade
- ***Graduate Excellent Teacher Special C Grade (KUP)***
    - Applicants must be a holder of Excellent Teacher in the DG54 Grade (KUP) post in not less than two years on 01-01-2007.
      - Subject that is requested is a major subject taught.
      - Excellent Teacher holders must remain teaching the subject of his expertise after the appointment of Guru Cemerlang DG54 Grade

***Aspects in the evaluation of the Excellent Teacher post are;***

- a. annual performance appraisal report
- b. evaluation form
- c. evaluation by panel of evaluation
- d. evaluation and monitoring by panel of evaluation and interview (for special grade only).

***Competency assessment***

- Professional Competency

Teachers have the capability to manage, exploit and disseminate their knowledge and experience in their fields of specialisation or subject expertise, and pedagogy knowledge (behaviourist, cognitive, social and humanities) to enhance student achievement, are informed in approach or education strategy and sensitive for policy and current educational issues.
- Teaching and Learning

Teachers' capacities and abilities to carry out teaching and learning



- Curriculum Management  
Teachers' involvement in the community and ability to contribute subject expertise in and outside the institution, can manage student achievement records and information for follow-up purposes
  
- Non-academic role  
Teachers have the knowledge of, and show skills to engage, in co-curricular and student affairs related activities besides teaching.
  
- Personality  
Appropriate dressing style, punctual, friendly, decent, responsible, confident, trustworthy and has good communication skills.
  
- Self development  
Always strive to enhance the level of professionalism through academic programmes, professional involvement like forum, seminar and other knowledge councils.

The introduction of the GCM scheme opens the door for teachers with short term and long term goals in their teaching career. Now, high performance teachers have more options in their career: whether to remain teaching in the classrooms or choose administration post if they get promotion to a higher grade. More Master's degree or PhD holders can apply for the post and they have more advantages compared to other applicants as among the criteria required for the post are good skills and knowledge. Although it is not a mandatory requirement, it is a bonus for them to be considered for the post. With more teachers who have Master's degree and PhD applying for the GC post, it helps to uplift the GC status in the country and furthermore, the addition of a quota with less stringent selection process for the GC post announced by the

Ministry of Education could enable more qualified and aspiring teachers to apply for the post.

The GCM award scheme could hopefully attract more quality teachers to remain teaching than opting for administrative posts due to grade promotion, and motivate other teachers to improve their performance in order to get the GC status. GC award offers two ways of career development for teachers through:

- a. The increase in teachers' basic salary
- b. The short cut promotion route which takes less time to achieve greater grade.

Through the normal scheme, if a teachers starts serving at the age of 24 at the DG41 grade, he has the opportunity to be promoted to the next grade which is DG44 only at the age of 34, which is after ten years of service. On the contrary, through the GC scheme, he can be promoted to a higher grade after only seven years of service and for those non-graduate teachers who obtain their degree while in the service; they only require five years to be promoted to the next grade. The scheme also makes it possible for a teacher to even reach higher grades of DG52, DG54 or even JUSA C (the highest rank in the country's public sector) before he reaches the age of 50, which were impossible and rare in the teaching profession previously as many teachers including school principals only reach the grade of DG48 or 52 when they retire.

In short, based on the ordinary scheme, DG44 can only be achieved after a teacher works for 10 years. If a teacher continues to teach at school until he retires from the service, the highest scale he can reach is DG48. This applies for even the posts of School Principals and Senior Assistant Teachers. One of the reasons is the limitations in the policy of the post itself. The policy states that school head posts should be a notch lower than the post of the State Director of Education which is a DG52 or DG54 post.

The GC scheme changes the whole scenario as the GC post does not have to comply with the same policy. According to the GC scheme, a teacher can be considered even for the JUSA C grade if he has the capability and meet all the criteria required. Those in the administrative scheme such as the School Principals do not enjoy the same privilege as they are subjected to the existing policy. Even with the introduction of a new scheme such as the Excellent School Principal Scheme, many still do not have the privilege to get the promotion as the quota for the post is very small if compared to the quota for the GC scheme.

If a teacher thinks that he possesses all the criteria for excellence which are required to be selected as a GC, and shows good job performance inside and outside classrooms and contributes a lot to the community, then the GC scheme is the right platform for him to improve his career development. The scheme is hoped to attract more teachers and with low number of applicants for the GC post (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006), the chances of those who are really qualified for the post are high. Even with a small quota for the GC post, it is very likely they will get the post if they apply because only those who are qualified and interested would apply for the post.

## **Summary**

Rewards through recognition, promotion and better remuneration should be considered as an investment towards education development and teaching quality in the country. Teachers who are considered the front-liners in education field should be rewarded accordingly. Those who show good job performance and contribute a lot for the development of their schools and students should be given the priority to be rewarded as teachers also as a human being have their rights to promotion or a rise in their salary in motivating them to hard work and improvement. As a parent or community that we send our children to school, we should be proud of them as they

are the ones who educate the young generation in the country. If we think that other profession can enjoy extra benefits in terms of promotion and remuneration, the teaching profession should also enjoy the same things as education determines the economical, political and social development of a country.

The Malaysian Government decision to introduce GCM award scheme opens more opportunities for teachers to receive financial incentive based on their excellent performance. When it was first introduced, the quota was only 2600 with 1000 posts for degree teachers (PPPS) and 1600 post quotas for non-graduate teachers (PPPLD). The latest approved overall quota for GC scheme totals up to 10,174, an increase of 6,762 over the present quota with 5,374 posts for Excellent Teachers PPPS and 4000 for Excellent Teachers PPPLD. This show the Malaysian Government are taking serious actions to give opportunities to more teachers to receive the award and it is hoped that this will increase teachers' motivation to improve the quality of teaching and learning and increase students' achievement.

The next chapter will review the literature of the relationship between teachers' changes and motivation with teachers' incentives. It will attempt to discuss the effectiveness of incentives in improving teachers' performance and quality. It will also offer a discussion on whether incentives would enhance teachers' professionalism. Chapter 3 will also discuss how teachers' incentives in the form of pay for performance system are carried out in several countries and the impact of such incentives to teacher quality.

## **CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **3.1. Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to identify how Malaysian Excellent Teachers (GC) perceived their motivation to change in order to improve their performance after receiving the Malaysian Excellent Teacher Award scheme (GCM). It tried to investigate how financial incentives, promotion, and the title of Malaysian Excellent Teacher could motivate teachers to change their attitudes, the teaching and learning process, and contributions to other teachers in order to improve the quality of teaching. This study aimed to explore Malaysian teachers' perception on the impact of the pay for performance system used in Malaysia as an incentive to reward high performance teachers and also as motivation for improvement. The findings would then give some lights and data on the impact of incentives and rewards in changing and modifying teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to other teachers to meet the expectation of GCM award scheme policy and to improve the quality of teaching and so promote students' learning.

This chapter will be divided into five sections. The first section will begin with a discussion on teachers' motivation. The second section will discuss teachers' incentives, types of incentives and factors of providing it to teacher in the teaching profession. This section also presents theories that aim to explain the rationale to link incentives to job performance. The third section will discuss previous studies on reward and incentives and how they have been used in the education system to increase the quality of teachers. The next section focuses on some of the issues surrounding teachers' incentives which are believed to be most effective in changing teachers' behaviour and increasing their effort to improvement. The last section discusses on the relationship between incentives and teachers' professionalism, including the raised debate that incentives could de - professionalise teachers. The discussions presented in this chapter are followed through the model below to

explain about incentives, motivation and performance. From that, it further explains the relationship between incentive and performance.

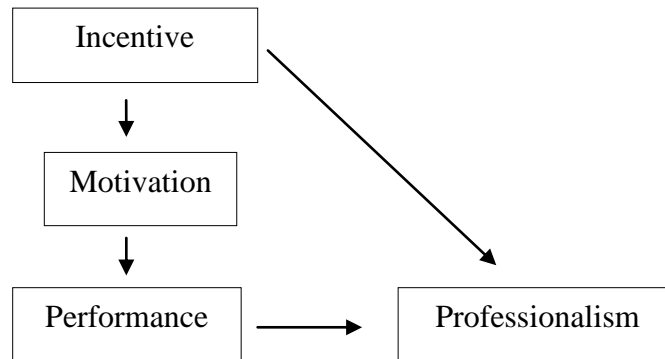


Figure 3-1: A model of relationship between incentive, motivation and job performance that is used in this study

This study is an exploration of the impact of teachers' incentives in motivating teachers to change their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions of teachers' knowledge and skills to other teachers in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The emphasised issues here are:

- a. Teachers' incentives which focuses on Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award
- b. Motivation work
- c. Teachers changes in three aspects namely attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions of teachers' knowledge and skills to other teachers

### **3.2. Teachers change**

The Plain English Dictionary (1996) indicates that "if there is a change in something or if it changes, it becomes different in some way" (Plain English Dictionary (1996, p.104). The term teachers' change in this study refers to changes in teachers' efforts for improvement in three areas: (1) teachers' attitudes, (2) teachers' teaching

strategies, and (3) teachers' contribution to other teachers promoting quality teaching and learning including teaching related activities such as giving instructions, preparing for lessons, marking and grading students' work and also non teaching activities such as extracurricular activities and professional activities (Rutter, 1986). Other teachers' contribution that will be discussed in this study includes coaching, mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching, and sharing of good practice (OECD, 2009, p.49). The discussion in this chapter tries to explain all teachers' change in the three aspects mentioned above in order to link the relationship between incentives, motivation and teachers' change for improvement.

In addition to the term "change" that would be focused in this study; the Collins English Language Dictionary cited in Wu (2004) indicates that change can be classified into four types namely;

- a. a continuum change or assumed as reformation
- b. gradual change or assumed as metamorphosis
- c. big change or a little change that could be referred to as modification or moderation
- d. partial change or assumed (Wu, 2004, p.10)

In this research, the study tried to explore teacher change for improvement in teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality in teaching and learning. The term 'improvement' in this study refers to the explanation given by Plain English Dictionary (1996) which indicates as "if something improves or there is an improvement in it, it gets better" (Plain English Dictionary, 1996, p.321). However, this study did not intend to measure the types of changes as suggested by (Wu, 2004). It only aimed to investigate whether the use of GCM award scheme by the Malaysian Government as incentives for teachers could influence teachers' to change their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to other teachers in promoting quality teaching and learning.

The study of change has attracted many researchers in various disciplines, but the ones concerning education and teachers were done by (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992) who defined change as the process of learning to be different. They categorised change into different types, and according to them not all changes could solve the problem. Some changes could be the cause of a new problem (Wu, 2004).

Since the concept of change is complicated, the issues of teachers' change are still debatable.

### **3.3. Incentives**

Incentives could be defined as a reward given to workers in order to satisfy their motives for work or maintain their participation at their organisation (Clark & Wilson, 1961). Clark and Wilson (1961) also have argued that there are three types of incentives namely:

- a. Material
- b. Solidarity
- c. Purposive

However, at the same time, Clark and Wilson (1961) also claimed that material and solidarity incentives fall into rewards category because material incentives are tangible rewards that could be seen whereas solidarity incentives are something hidden such as fun, sense of group acceptance or status of membership.

Another definition of incentives was provided by (Hoy & Miskal, 1978) who wrote that:

“Incentives are defined as the organizational counterpart to individual motivation, that is, a worker receives incentives from the employing organization in return for being a productive member. Incentives then are rewards or



punishment given in exchange for an individual's contribution to the organization (Hoy & Miskal, 1978, p.116).

From the quotation, it could be said that incentives encourage workers to behave in certain ways and in return, workers get the reward. Deci (1975) has listed into three types of reward namely extrinsic, intrinsic and affective. The definitions show that it is problematic to distinguish between what is called incentives and what is a reward. To clarify the issue, Mitchell (1987) has proposed two assumptions that first, incentives are a special class of rewards and secondly, incentives could be classified as one of the characteristics of reward which means that in certain ways, incentives possess a reward. As the distinction between rewards and incentives remains sensitive in discussions, if we want to separate rewards from incentives maybe absurd if the study of rewards normally links to incentives. Incentives derives from the Latin root of "incentus" meaning "to set the tune" which means human action to modify behaviour in order to get certain rewards or to avoid punishments, whereas rewards means pleasure or satisfaction that could be received from certain activities or experience (Webster's dictionary). Thus it give us the view that, in order to secure incentives, people tend to modify their behaviours and in return would felt certain feelings such as happy or satisfied from the incentives and rewards that they received.

### **3.4. Types of incentives in organisation**

There are three types of incentives systems that are normally applied in organisations which are individual incentives, group incentives and organisation incentives. Each system type is different as discussed below:

### ***a. Individual incentives***

An individual incentive is an incentive that involves intrinsic and extrinsic rewards which are offered to individual workers in an organisation in order to increase work performance. The intrinsic rewards may come in the forms of interesting and enjoyable work, whereas extrinsic rewards include fixed salary or hourly wages. Some workers are given incentives in terms of recognition and sense of accomplishment and some are offered merit pay or pay for performance system (Mitchell, 1987).

### ***b. Group incentives***

Group incentives, which come in the form of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, are given to increase workers' performance. The difference between group and individual incentive is that incentives are given to workers as group bonuses if they reach organisation objectives or standard (Mitchell, 1987).

### ***c. Organisation incentives***

Organisation incentives are different from group and individual incentives in that they are offered to workers to strengthen their sense of membership. In this type, workers are offered the rewards such as profit making success (extrinsic reward) from the improvement in workers' performance and for some workers the sense of symbolic success or intrinsic reward (Mitchell, 1987).

It could be said that the three types of incentives systems that are now applied in organisations are different in type and also have distinct advantages and disadvantages when operating in any organisations. In the context of the teaching profession, the introduction of reward and incentives for teachers could be said to be widespread throughout the world, for examples in many OECD countries (OECD,

2005) and within Asia, like Malaysia (MOE, 2006). In the form of individual incentives within the context of the teaching profession, it was found that the incentives can influence people to enter teaching and remain in the classroom and, moreover, it also could influence the quality of service of the teachers (Hanushek & Rivkindari, 2007; Wayne & Youngs, 2003)

These three types of incentives will be further discussed in this chapter together with the debate around the effectiveness of incentives to increase work motivation and performance.

### **3.5. Teachers' incentives**

Teachers are believed to be the key contributors to the quality of student learning and thus it is imperative that teachers show high quality of teaching (Fryer, 2011; Koeddeal & Betts, 2005; Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006; OECD, 2005; Rivkin & Hanushek, 2002). A number of factors are deemed to be significant in determining teachers' performance and motivation to perform. Some of the recognised factors are status and reputation of the profession in the eyes of the community, appropriate working conditions and space for work such as hours of working, classrooms conditions, the number of children in a class, social and professional activities with peers, students or parent and the opportunities for promotion, incentives and career advancement (UNESCO, 2006, p.2).

There has been a great deal of interest in the use of incentives to improve work performance (Glazerman et al., 2009; Lavy, 2004, 2007; Lazear, 2000; OECD, 2009). However, while the idea of using incentive pay schemes as a way of improving teachers' performance is increasingly making its way into policy, the empirical evidence on the effectiveness of such policies is quite limited, the impact of teacher incentives are mixed and several studies have highlighted the possibility of

positive effects if the system is applied in teaching profession (Lavy, 2002, 2004; OECD, 2009) and it is supported by the economic perspective that financial incentive are recognised as important in influencing human work motivation to perform and while from a psychological point of view, the influence of financial incentives to work motivation and job performance is mixed and open to discussion.

### **3.6. Justification of incentives for teachers**

#### ***a. signal of praise, recognition of teachers' achievement and contribution***

There are several assumptions about providing teachers with incentives. People may decide to take up the teaching profession based on various factors (Murnane et al., 1991) such as the desire and intention to teach and impart knowledge. Although money is not the motivation for some people to become teachers, there is still a need to provide teachers with such incentives as they could be a signal of praise, recognition of teachers' achievement and contributions that can motivate teachers to improve their work performance (Lavy, 2007; OECD, 2005, 2009; Podgursky & Springer, 2007).

#### ***b. Improving teachers' effectiveness***

Other related issue in the relevance of giving incentives to teachers is because it is believed that it is not only beneficial to individuals but it would go beyond that as it could increase teachers' effectiveness and effect changes in their attitudes and strategies in their teaching. Increasing teachers' salary or providing teachers with work facilities in staff room may help the Government or school leadership to motivate teachers to promote quality in their work.

### *c. Increase teachers' contributions*

Even though a teacher's work seems to be very individually based and limited to work they do inside classrooms, teachers' incentives could make big impacts on their contributions to others especially those teachers who are capable, have skills and have knowledge in certain teaching and learning areas to their own schools or other schools such as through talks, seminars, observations, collaborations with other teachers, peer coaching, and mentoring other teachers and students (OECD, 2009). Thus through these contributions, it may and could enhance the teaching profession through knowledge sharing among teacher in order to improve the quality of teaching and at the same time could link to improve student learning and achievement.

### **3.7. Problematic issues in implementing incentives policy**

Although from an economic point of view, performance incentives have some beneficial impacts such as the signal of praise, recognition of teachers' achievement and contribution, improving teachers' effectiveness and increase teachers' contribution (Lavy, 2007; OECD, 2005, 2009; Podgursky & Springer, 2007), there are also debates about the possible problematic issues which may arise when implementing such policies in education. There are several issues surrounding the implementation of performance incentives in the education sector for example in defining what constitutes a quality teacher or high performing teacher. There are various interpretations of the term "high performance". Darling-Hammond (2000) and Darling-Hammond & Youngs (2002) defined a quality teacher as a teacher who has strong knowledge in pedagogy and subject teaching, whereas Akiba et al., (2007) also associated quality teacher as the person who can help their pupils in gaining good scores in examination (Akiba et al., 2007). There is no consensus or confirmation on what exactly constitutes a quality teacher because some teachers

have different perceptions depending on their own situation and classroom environment.

The criteria used to evaluate teachers with high performance are quite abstract and hard to measure. Some of the indicators to measure teachers' performance are in the form of student outcomes and probably most of them are students' examination results. Using student outcomes to measure a teacher's performance is complicated as there are both short term and long term impacts from education such as being a good citizen (Chetty et al., 2011; Halachmi & Holzer, 1987). As the education product is human and their outcomes are measured in terms of values, they arguably should not be compared to factory products which are tangible (Chetty et al., 2011). The process of learning that students go through during their school days is not easy to evaluate, thus the measurement of student outcomes should also take into considerations the long term effects. Even if other elements were used to measure and evaluate teachers' performance, the focus would still be on student outcomes, and it could be argued that a student's performance is not only determined by one teacher's effort but it is also influenced by the student's social and economic background and by other teachers. Contributions by counselling teachers, for example, could bring impacts to students' examination results and behaviours. The home environment should also be acknowledged as an important factor in child development and performance. The influence of school, principal, students' family background variables also become important factor to student development and moreover, Guimaraes & Sampaio (2011) suggest that parents' education and study environment are important aspect in influencing students' achievements. Students' efforts in extra class is also important in helping improve their test score thus have shown that students' performance is also affected by student and family background. In order to determine students' development and achievement, such factors should be considered as each of it has abilities in influencing the output of students.

Another problematic issue that should be taken into consideration by policy makers in implementing the performance incentives is the problem of the possible decrease of teachers' collaboration within school (Odden, 2000) as team work and cooperation is salient in helping and finding ways in improving students' learning. Although it can be argued as a positive thing to reward teachers, these incentives should not adversely affect relationships, cooperation and team building among teachers because these would influence students learning. As only a small number of teachers would be given the incentives, it would naturally become a threat to teachers' cooperation as it might eventually cause a rift in their relationships because some would feel that they deserve the award more than their peers. These issues may demotivate some teachers and it could eventually affect students' performance in the long run. It is important that a standard list of criteria is used to determine teachers' performance, and steps must be taken to minimise the negative effects of the performance incentives to teachers (Rivkin et al., 2005). The introduction of the GCM award policy, for example, seems to reduce teachers' motivation to work together with other teachers as many see the incentives as a personal reward. Therefore, many teachers prefer to work individually rather than collaborate with other teachers.

### **3.8. Types of teachers' incentives**

There are many types of incentives designed for teachers with the objective to influence both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (more definition in the next section) such as salary differentials, pensions, job stability, recognition and prestige, professional growth, responsibility, adequate infrastructure and teaching materials (Milanowski, 2007; Puryear, 2009; Vegas, 2005).

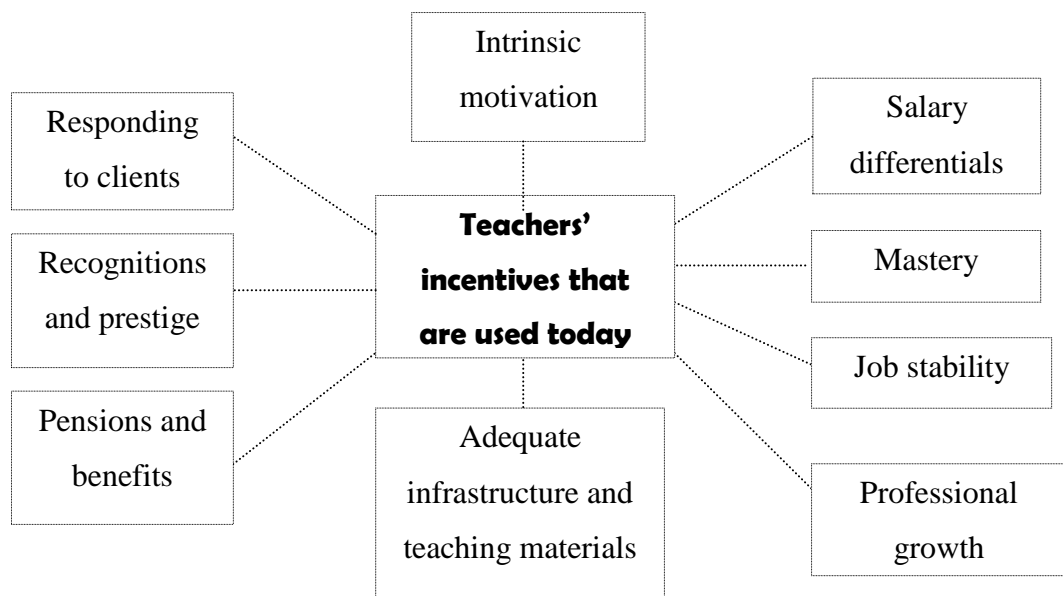


Figure 3-2: Types of teachers' incentives that exist today: Adapted from Vegas (2005)

However, teachers' incentives are normally categorised into two types which are financial and non-financial incentives (OECD, 2009) or sometimes referred to as monetary and non-monetary incentives. For this study, both terms will be used interchangeably as they carry the same meaning.

- ***Financial incentives***

These incentives could be in terms of a cash bonus or increase in teachers' pay for those who increase their knowledge and skills through training, certificates or 'accomplished' teaching. Another financial incentive is in the form of an allowance for those teaching critical subjects such as Mathematics and Science, or hardship allowance for teachers who teach in rural and remote areas (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006; OECD, 2009). Pay for performance rewards or performance related pay is one of the examples of financial incentives which are given to reward high performing teachers and used as a



motivational tool to increase teachers' work motivation while at the same time possibly attracting and retaining quality teachers in classrooms (Johnson, 1985; Podgursky et al., 2007). The system is very popular in policy legislation and many countries such as United Kingdom, United States and Australia have adopted it (Lavy, 2007; Lazear, 2000; Podgursky et al., 2007). Another financial incentive that falls into this group is a reward in the form of increment to teachers' salaries and changes in the structure of teachers' basic pay for teachers who perform well and reach certain standards and criteria (of excellence) at school or national level (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006; OECD,2009).

Financial incentives

- a. Cash bonus
- b. Changes in the structure of teachers' basic pay for teachers who perform well
- c. Increases in teachers' pay (increments)
- d. Allowances for those teaching critical subjects such as Mathematics and Science and hardship allowance for teachers who teach in rural and remote

Figure 3-3: Teachers' financial incentives

- ***Non financial incentives***

These incentives could be in terms of praise and appreciation, whether orally or in writing especially from school administrators and colleagues. Others ways that fall into this category including different title to reflect teachers' status such as master teacher or expert teacher, or comfortable work place and space given when teachers reach certain standards or objectives (Engelking, 1987). This will inform the teachers that their efforts or contributions are appreciated by others. Some incentives involve extra or special equipment provided for teachers in their working place and space that would help them work in a more conducive environment. Teachers may get

extra equipment at work such as photocopy and fax machines, telephone lines and computers that facilitate them to finish their work and enable them to carry out discussions with students and other colleagues (OECD, 2009). Another example of non-financial incentives is also recognition to teachers and this is done by giving them certain awards and opportunities to attend or present papers at seminars or conferences for continuing professional development. Some schools may provide special leave for some teachers, study leave for them to further study or gain certificate to improve and increase their knowledge and health benefits not only for them but also for their families (Engelking, 1987; OECD, 2009; Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

Non financial incentives

1. Praise and appreciation from school administrators or peers
2. Different title to reflect teachers' status
3. Conducive work environment
4. Extra equipment at work such as photocopy and fax machines, telephone lines and computers that facilitate teachers in doing their duties
5. Opportunities to attend or present papers at seminars or conferences for continuing professional development
6. Special leave for some teachers, study leave for them to further study or gain certificate to improve and increase teachers' knowledge
7. Health benefits not only for them but also for their families

Figure 3-4: Teachers' non financial incentives

### **3.9. Pay for performance (PFP)**

There is a growing interest in the study of giving incentives as a way to improve teachers' performance and this study will discuss the central issue of providing teachers with financial incentives known as pay-for-performance (PFP) that is

similar to the term ‘merit pay’. This could be grouped into financial incentives because PFP is a concept which is developed to tie pay to work performance (Heneman, 1992). It means that a worker who showed high performance would have the opportunity to receive the benefits from the scheme based on their performance rather than on seniority or work experience. The term ‘high performance’ normally in teaching profession could refer to such things as results of students’ outcomes and the ways teachers carry out their duties, that are perceived as excellent and also assumed to reach certain required standards. This study will focus more on this type of incentive since it is quite similar to the GCM award policy concept in rewarding teachers who have showed excellent performance in doing their duties.

Although there are arguments and debates that the concept of ‘high performance’ is too abstract and hard to define, the PFP scheme is still popular in policy legislation and is often favoured by policy makers as it thought to increase teachers’ work motivation to produce a high job performance (Engelking, 1987; OECD, 2009; Podgursky et al., 2007). Because it is widely accepted that these incentives serve to promote human effort and performance, (Lazear, 2000) PFP has emerged as a strategy for responding to demands for increased productivity and management accountability. In order to be clear, PFP in this study refers to incentives that were given to reward teachers who showed high performance and at the same time are intended to motivate teachers to increase their future performance as shown below. This figure 3-5 is adapted from Heneman (1992).

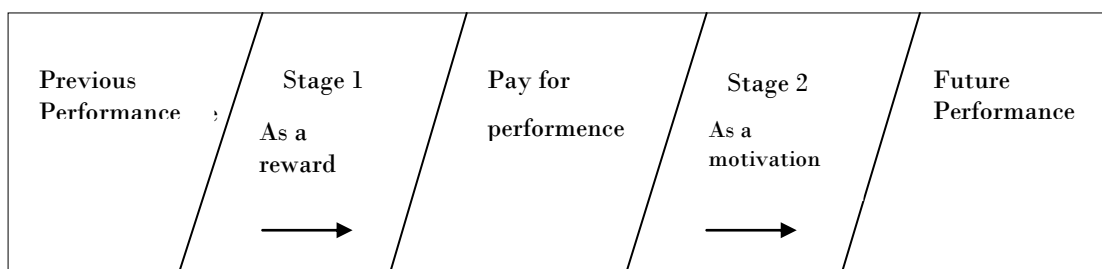


Figure 3.5 adapted from Heneman (1992)

### 3.10. Theories behind pay-for-performance

As there is growing interest in applying PFP in organisations whether in the private or the public sector, there are several theories behind the implementation of the system. For this study, two supporting theories are presented, one from the psychology field and the second from the economic field. Although the fields have different interpretations as to the reason for giving incentives, there is a similarity in the rationalising of paying to produce high performance. In general the difference is that, in the psychology field, it is as a motivation factor whereas in the economist theory it is more likely directed to the operation of the firm, emphasising the importance of the employer view, rather than employee (Heneman, 1992). This theory was developed to find factors to link motivation and productivity. The examples of psychological theories in explaining the PFP are expectancy theory and reinforcement theory by Skinner (1953), equity theory by Adams (1965) and goal-setting theory by Locke (1968). The first model of expectancy theory was developed by Vroom in 1964 showed positive support for the use of pay to increase performance. The model was used and from that redefined by other researchers such as Porter and Lawler (1968). There also exist a number of theories in the economic field that also address linking pay to performance for example, marginal productivity theory, implicit contract theory and efficiency wage theory. Although some of the theories are used, the uses of economic theories have not received as widespread attention as the psychological theories (Heneman, 1992).

Psychological theories	Economic theories
1. Expectancy theory (1957)	1. Marginal productivity theory
2. Reinforcement theory by B.F Skinner (1953)	2. Implicit contract theory
3. Equity theory by Adams (1965)	3. Efficiency wage theory
4. Goal-setting theory by Locke (1968).	

Figure 3-6: Psychological and economic theories of pay for performance

- *Vroom's expectancy theory (1964)*

Based on Vroom's expectancy theory (1964), there are three variables that explain why individuals choose one behavioural option over another. First is expectancy, second is instrumentality and third is valence. If the worker believes that his/her effort will result in desired performance goals and from that she/he believed that it will receive a reward, the performance expectation is met. However, the effort also depend on the valence, which means if workers regard rewards as important, it will compel them to increase performance whereas if workers regard rewards as insignificant, the effect on performance intended would not be fruitful. In this situation, if the worker believes that working harder will bring them more money, they will work harder to gain the money. As such, any reward that is offered to workers should be able to intrigue them and motivate them to increase job motivation for improvement. The model is shown below in the relationship between three variables of expectancy, instrumentality and valence.

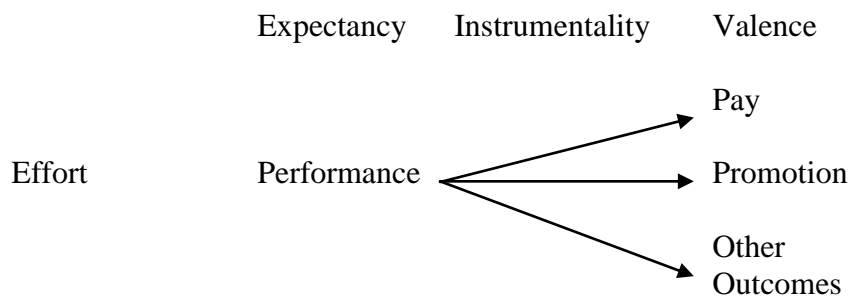


Figure 3-7: Expectancy theory adapted from Heneman (1992)

It could be said that incentive is one of the ways to influence human work motivation to perform and to recognise excellent performance. It could be said that reward and incentives among workers should not be denied as it could lead to dissatisfaction and would lead to low motivation and possible non-compliance when it comes to achieving objectives of their organisation. Reward and incentives as said before

could become an important source for motivation for job improvement. This section will further discuss the central issue of this research that is using financial incentives as a way of increasing teachers' performances and the research will only focus on the pay for performance scheme (PFP) and its relationship with human motivation and job performance. This section will further discuss the central issue of this research that is using financial incentives as a way of increasing teachers' performances and the research will only focus on the pay for performance scheme (PFP) and its relationship with human motivation and job performance.

### **3.11. Motivation**

Motivated and unmotivated individuals are two different groups as mentioned by Ryan and Deci (2000) who described a motivated person as 'someone who is energized or activated toward an end' and an unmotivated person as 'a person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act' (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.54). Work motivation has always been a popular organizational behavior topic and a subject of debate among policy makers, governments and researchers as it is believed to play a major impact in influencing human action and behavior. It was recognised that teachers' motivation is one of the key factors in improving teachers' performance and commitment (Carver & Scheier, 2005; Day et al., 2005; Zhao, 2008). Yet the increase in teachers' roles and workload have increased stress, pressure and dissatisfaction in teaching profession and these in turn, have also affected teachers' job motivation and their commitment to work (Day et al., 2005; ; Louis, 1998; Riehl & Sipple, 1996; Tsui & Cheng, 1999).

Research throughout European countries has shown the increasing levels of teacher stress, fatigue and burnout (Klette, 2000; Kyriacou, 2001; OECD, 2005, 2009). These are found to affect teachers' motivation and in fact, teachers are now reported to have an increasing diversification and intensification in their work in terms of increasing hours spent at the workplace, broader roles and responsibilities (Day, et

al., 2005; Tsui & Cheng, 1999). There has also been increasing pressure on teachers to extend responsibilities beyond their own classroom as in curriculum decision-making, school management committees, interaction with other teachers within or outside of their school and building close relationships with parents and community (Day, et al., 2005; Tsui & Cheng, 1999). Researchers generally agree that if schools are to improve teachers, those aspects of the job that influence teacher satisfaction and motivation must be considered and put as a necessary element to increase the quality of their teaching job (Frase & Sorenson, 1992) as it have significant impact in individual performance and also the success of achieving organisational objectives (Muller & Alliata 2009).

Researchers in the education field that studied teachers' motivation found many factors which contributed to the sources of teachers' motivation, namely collegiality, intrinsic rewards, mastery of subject matter (Rosenholtz & Smylie, 1984), opportunities for career achievement, professional growth and advancement, recognition and appreciation (Frase & Soreson, 1982). There are commonly several models that try to describe how motivation influences individuals' behaviour. Those are Maslow (1954), Vroom (1964) and Alderfer (1969) that provide us with useful information. From the motivation theoretical perspective, as mentioned by Adam Smith in the 1770s, human beings are motivated to work for financial reason and to fulfil their economic needs. So, providing financial incentives could help motivate a person to work. The example of theory which discusses the importance of financial incentives is ssatisfaction theory (Herzberg, 1959) and incentive theory (Vroom, 1964) that state that humans are driven to improve and increase their performance if provided with some financial incentives as a reward.

### **3.12. Motivation to work**

Further studies in human motivation found that money is not the sole reason for people to come to work or change behaviour. Several factors are found to be

associated to other needs such as self actualization to fulfill their sense of achievement and accomplishment (Maslow, 1954).

### **Maslow's hierarchy of needs**

In his theory, Abraham Maslow (1954) listed eight innate needs for most humans in hierarchal order starting from basic need at the bottom of the hierarchy. He distinguished the need as physiological needs (food, water and sex), safety needs (security, family, employment), love / belonging needs (friendship, family, sexual intimacy), esteem needs (confidence, achievement, and respect) and self actualisation (morality, creativity as development of human potential). The understanding of Maslow hierarchy of needs might be useful for us in understanding the way it describe the differences of human needs and that economic needs may not be the ultimate for human beings; instead, people may strive to achieve the highest need that is self-actualization. Maslow did not develop his theory to explain human work motivation; however the use of the theory could be said as relevant in explaining about human motivation in fulfilling their needs. In certain ways, the authority should try to create such incentives that could gear workers to fulfil their need and for that motivate to achieve that.

Another theory which also stresses other important factors that influence human motivation is Fredrick Herzberg's two factor theory. In this theory, Fredrick Herzberg distinguishes two factors that influence workers; satisfaction factors and dissatisfaction factors, as shown below:



Satisfaction factors (motivator)	Dissatisfaction factors (hygiene)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• achievement</li> <li>• advancement</li> <li>• recognition</li> <li>• growth</li> <li>• responsibility</li> <li>• the work itself</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• salary</li> <li>• status</li> <li>• company policy</li> <li>• supervision</li> <li>• working conditions</li> <li>• security</li> </ul>

Figure 3-8: Fredrick Herzberg's two factor Motivation Hygiene Theory

This theory was developed by Frederick Taylor which states that employee motivation to work was based on two factors namely satisfaction factors (motivator) and dissatisfaction factors (hygiene). The factors which led to worker's satisfaction (motivator) were different from what dissatisfied to work (hygiene). Herzberg stated that to remove dissatisfaction, the employer need to improve in such as salary and working conditions in the hygiene factors, however, it would not promised that the action could increase work's satisfaction and motivation.

### 3.13. Types of motivation

There are two types of motivation which normally appear in most literature of motivation, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation (Ysseldyke & Elliott, 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Woolfolk, 2001; Muller & Alliata, 2009). However, although it is quite familiar in most literature to distinguish between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation, there is still a problem about how clear the difference is. In some cases, they may be mixed together (Johnson, 1986).

## **Intrinsic motivation**

Intrinsic motivation refers to human action of doing something without the pressure or any intention of getting something after doing it (Klausmeier & Ripple, 1971; Omar & Sapuan, 2010). Intrinsic motivation comes from the sense of the satisfaction from the work itself (Maslow, 1954; OECD, 2009). It involves enjoyment, fun and satisfying psychological needs (Reeve, 2001). In the context of teachers, intrinsic motivation may come from students' development and achievement in their learning and results. Another source for the intrinsic motivation may be the achievement by the teacher in attaining their objectives such as in school programme or class activities.

## **Extrinsic motivation**

Extrinsic motivation refers to human action of doing something with the intention of getting reward or avoiding punishment (Klausmeier & Herbert, 1971). Sources of extrinsic motivation are found to be such things as pay, bonuses and financial incentives (OECD, 2009). As with intrinsic motivation, it also involves enjoyment and fun and is associated with humans' belief about their abilities and is also said to help increase work satisfaction and work motivation (Jones & George, 2003). A study of teachers' motivation also linked the function of incentive and reward to increased work motivation through reward for those who show excellent performance as a recognition of their effort (Day, 2005 & 2007). Although human need and behaviour is a complicated subject, generally most psychologists agree that extrinsic reward such as pay and promotion could motivate people the same way intrinsic reward such as pride in their work could (Johnson, 1986) and this is supported by other researchers who concluded that one of the ways of motivating workers is through reward and incentive that improve performance and commitment to the job (Kelly et al., 2002; Leach & Westbrook, 2000; Muller & Alliata, 2009).

### **3.14. Work performance**

Work performances are very crucial factors in achieving organisational objectives. Job performance could be regarded as a function of ability and motivation (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976). They also show people's ability in achieving and completing certain given tasks due to skills, knowledge, experience, time, ability and efficiency. Individual performances are believed to be derived from several factors such as ability to do the work, level of expended effort and organizational support (Mathis & Jackson, 2003). It means that the ability of human such as talents, interest and personality would influence the work performance. Work performances determine organisational survival and success. There are many factors that contribute to high quality performance: first is work motivation and second is work ability (Mathis & Jackson, 2003) whereas (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976) opined that good performances come from motivation, ability, knowledge, experience, organisation climate and good relationship among workers in the workplace, standards, and targets.

It could be said that human performance is the combination of many factors such as knowledge, experience and organisation factors. It means that if the organisation wants to achieve their objectives, such factor that mentioned above should be considered and there also need to concerns on how human could be motivated to work in order to increase workers to perform at the higher level.

### **3.15. Teachers' change**

As mentioned before, one of the aspects investigated in this research was the issue of teachers' change. This study tried to explore whether the GCM award scheme policy which was given to teachers as an incentive could change teachers' attitudes,

teaching strategies and contributions to others, and this section will further discuss the changes.

### **3.16. Attitude formation and change**

In psychology, the word attitude has many definitions. However it was generally agreed that the word refers to human response of certain objects in favourable or unfavourable manner (Amstrong & Dawson, 1987). There are three components in attitudes:

- a. A cognitive component. In this component, an attitude is based on real or assumed knowledge about the object;
- b. An affective component. In this component, an attitude includes a feeling or emotional response to the object;
- c. A behavioural component. In this component, an attitude implies a predisposition to act in a particular (Amstrong & Dawson, 1987, p.61)

- *Attitude formation*

It was believed that human attitudes are formed through early socialisation, group affiliation and also from personal experience. Early socialisation of a person's attitude is believed to start to form at the beginning of life, and is always influenced by parents, family and the place he / she lives in. Some attitudes are permanent and some change depending on several factors (Amstrong & Dawson, 1987).

As a person moves from childhood to adulthood, attitude will change based on the influence of the people around him that influenced by group affiliation. Some attitudes learned during childhood might be changed through group affiliation later in life. The more people and groups a person mixes with, the easier for him to develop new attitudes. Besides group affiliation, attitudes can also change based on age, job

type and hobbies (Amstrong & Dawson, 1987). Normally, humans tend to follow the attitudes of the group to which they belong.

Other source of attitude formation is through human personal experience for example experiencing certain events such as attending training, getting married or losing family members, parents or valuable things in life. These events may cause people to form new attitudes (Amstrong & Dawson, 1987). It could be said that attitudes keep on changing throughout our lives and new attitudes are formed to replace the old ones depending on many factors. Other factors include additional information, changes in group affiliation and also from experience (Amstrong & Dawson, 1987).

Throughout our lives, we are exposed to a lot of additional information from electronic or print media such as newspapers, television, internet and magazines. The information, whether it is true or false, could possibly change some of our attitudes or may also form new attitudes in our lives.

- *Changes in human attitudes*

There are several factors that may change human attitudes such as change in group affiliation and our daily and life experience. Human attitudes are believed could be changed due to changes that happen in the group affiliation. Normally, humans tend to adjust their behaviours, hobbies or interests following the group that they belong to. Thus, the change of group would possibly change our attitude. Although the change might be minimal, for some people it is necessary so that they can be recognised as a member of certain groups.

Other important source and influence in changes in human attitude come from the experience. As human, we always face many events in our lives such as going to new places, meeting many people from different age or area, or using different types of

cosmetic products device, which can influence our perceptions, behaviours and belief about some things.

One of the research questions in this research is: “Do teachers perceive change in their attitude from the impact of GCM award policy in motivating teachers for improvement toward improving quality teacher?” From the perspective of attitude formation and change discussed above, GCM award policy can be considered as a source of teachers’ additional information about promotion in their career development, also as it provides teachers with the status of “Excellent Teacher”. Despite that, the participants in this study also have experience of becoming GC in certain term and for that, this study is the exploration of asking whether through the GCM award, possibility or not it could change toward positive of teachers’ attitudes in improving the quality of teacher.

### **3.17. Teaching strategies**

Teaching is an activity that requires someone to be creative and imaginative in using their knowledge, skill and experience in promoting interest in teaching activities and also to help students in understanding what they have to teach (Hough & Duncan, 1970). During the teaching process, there are a lot of strategies that teacher can use to facilitate students’ learning such as answering and questioning, giving quiz, grouping, mentoring, motivating and drilling. Teaching also involves varieties of sources such as text books, additional books, laboratory equipment, and media such as television or the Internet.

This study intended to investigate whether the use of GCM award scheme as teachers’ incentives could impact teachers’ teaching strategies toward improving the quality of teaching and learning. This section will discuss some of the instructional

behaviours or teaching activities that are associated to effective teaching and learning.

Some of the elements in effective teaching strategies that are found to be effective are the use of direct observation, interactive teaching and teachers' ability in classroom management. Clearly structured lessons, pacing, modelling and mapping strategies are several characteristics of effective teaching (Muijs & Reynolds, 2001). The use of text books, organising students' seatwork, feedback, grouping, giving homework and assignments are also some of the important elements of effective teaching strategies (Muijs & Reynolds, 2001).

Besides teaching, teachers also have other duties to make sure that they could effectively transmit the knowledge and achieve the teaching objectives by managing students' behaviours. Dealing with inappropriate behaviour is important in order to make the teaching activities go smoothly and not interrupt other students' concentration. As teaching is about dealing with human beings, it is also important to use rewards and punishment to reinforce or deter certain behaviours (Muijs & Reynolds, 2001). The examples of rewards are bonus points or praises given to students when they show good behaviour or reach certain standard set by the teachers. . The use of extrinsic rewards, however, should be done carefully so that it would not undermine students' intrinsic motivation in their actions. Teachers are also suggested to manage classroom effectively through punishment tools if necessarily. However, any punishments should not be too harsh, as they could influence students' motivation. It should be noted that the punishment should give a lesson to make sure the students will not repeat their misbehaviour, and it should not bring embarrassments to the students as they might want to retaliate by taking revenge and creating more problematic behaviours (Borich, 1996; Arends, 1998; Muijs & Reynolds, 2001).

One of the research questions in this research is: “Do teachers perceive change in their teaching strategies from the impact of GCM award policy in motivating teachers for improvement toward improving quality of teaching and learning?” From the perspective of change, the study intends to explore whether teachers perceived change in their teaching strategies in improving the quality of teachers’ teaching instruction. It is important in providing evidence for the authority such as The Ministry of Education Malaysia on to what extent teachers are motivated by the incentives given to them in the form of GCM award.

### **3.18. Teachers’ contribution**

The importance of teachers collaborating and working together could not be denied as it could enhance teachers’ effectiveness in certain areas of problem solving, helping in managing and reduce teachers’ stress, tension and promote learning culture among them (Bunker & Wijnberg, 1988). The importance of teachers’ education training in producing high quality teacher with knowledge especially in subject matter and pedagogical skills cannot be denied. However, teachers also can always improve their knowledge through other means such as learning from experts, attending continual development training and also from their own experiences and students’ feedback (Lally & Jon, 1995). This was supported by Hargreaves (1992) who suggested that teachers can also learn more from their colleagues at the same school. Although teachers also have their own duties in teaching and are required to do other tasks such as extra activities of non teaching activities, it could may hinder teachers not able to help their peers as much as they want to, but still at least could contribute as much as they could if they able to manage their times well and motivated to do it through certain incentives (Lally & Jon, 1995).

Teachers’ contributions include teaching activities such as instructions, preparing lesson plans, marking and grading students’ work, extracurricular activities and



professional activities (Rutter, 1986). The Malaysia Ministry of Education has raised the issue of teachers' contributions especially about the collaborative work of Malaysian Excellent Teachers (GCs) to utilise their knowledge and skills to help other teachers and to promote the quality of teaching and learning. As stated in the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, "The GCs should not only play their roles at school level, but they must also always be at the forefront of knowledge and skills especially in the subjects they are teaching at the national level" (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006, p.2).

In addition, GCs are also expected "to give advisory service and guidance to other teachers in the surrounding schools or institutions which require their expertise" (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006), p.19).

Collaboration activity is not new in our lives and also common among teachers with others in gaining knowledge such as in house training, workshop and involvements in some school projects (Barron, 2000). Also the important of experience teachers in mentoring new teachers in their new career as addressed in many of policy in helping new teachers as stressed in the K12 in US (Howey & Zimpher, 1989) in assisting new teachers as research has found that some teachers leave within 6 years after graduation due to struggle in practicing what they teach at education training with reality in classroom activities (Schlechty & Vance, 1981).

### **3.19. The relationship between financial incentives and teachers' change**

Surveys (Tharp, 1986) in USA found that PFP has been practising in the private sector for quite some time and found to be most important in human motivation and work performance. It is suggested that private sector managers assume that pay for

performance is a productive strategy in increasing work performance. Likewise, in public sector education, rewarding teachers through the PFP scheme could improve performance and increase teachers' productivity (Lavvy, 2004, 2007; Murlis & Wright, 1985). Underlying the premise that merit pay is a motivational technique is an assumption that motivation, and therefore productivity, can be improved by the use of monetary incentives as Belcher concludes:

“Paying employees on the basis of their performance, according to the tenets of compensation administration is the way to get performance motivation in organizations. Not only does this approach make sense intuitively, it has a solid theoretical base. Expectancy theory (in simple terms) postulates that if people want more pay and believe that working harder will result in their getting more pay, they will work harder and perform better in order to get more pay” (Belcher, 1980)

It could be said that from the economic point of view, it is logical to associate pay with job performance because human beings tend to see the value of money as a motivation factor to increase their performance and it would be a challenge to motivate people if they are not rewarded after successfully completing a task. The pay is seen as a form of recognition and appreciation to human effort although the sum of pay could bring another indication in how people would react to the offer of performance pay.

### **3.20. Objectives of PFP**

Why should we believe that reward and incentives in education can improve teachers' performance, and thus will increase students' performance? Researches on educational policy of teachers suggested and found that work performances were

associated with motivation and improvement (Porter et. al., 1975; Kanungo & Mendonca, 2001). It was recognised that teachers are just like other ordinary people who care about their work. Although some previous research on teachers' motivation found that teachers are more attracted to intrinsic reward (Murnane & Cohen, 1986), it did not rule out the importance of extrinsic reward such as financial reward to boost teachers' work motivation in improvement and there are studies that provide evidence that financial incentives are significant in improving teachers' performance and increase students' outcomes (Lavy, 2002 & 2007; Podgursky & Springer, 2007).

Today, many if not most organizations recognize both the importance of pay and the need to link individuals' performance to their pay to improve performance (Hein, 1996; Stiffler, 2006). In the economists' perspective, giving higher pay and a promotion naturally lead to increased job performance (Lazear, 2003) whereas the consequences and impacts vary in the psychologists' perspectives. Teachers' incentives that are designed for teachers have three main purposes and could be used as a potential strategy to affect teachers' work motivation for improvement and at the same time could attract quality students to apply for teaching services and retain those who are good to still remain in teaching (Hanushek & Pace, 1995; OECD, 2005; Stinebricker and Stinebricker, 2001), rather than losing due to job promotion or getting another job which offers higher pay (OECD, 2009; Woessmann, 2010).

The call to pay teachers based on their performance is increasing in many countries as it is believed that it could improve teachers' performance (Lavy, 2007) even though the idea could also possibly bring negative effects if teachers focus too much on personal reward and for that will influence teachers' collegiality and teamwork (Kreps, 1997; Lavy, 2007; Murnane & Cohen, 1986). Although there are issues surrounding the incentive such as whether or not it is an appropriate alternative to the present system of teachers' pay (Lavy, 2003, 2007), some researchers (Lavy, 2003, 2007; Day, 2005; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007) suggest that changing the present teacher pay system will increase teachers' motivation and this

will lead to job satisfaction and will improve teachers' quality and students' performance. There are two prime objectives of PFP in the teaching profession which are to influence human motivation in improving teachers' performance and to attract quality teachers to enter and remain in the teaching profession. Giving more financial incentives as a motivational tool for improvement is found to be popular (Kelley et al., 2002; Lavy, 2007; MOE, 2007; Reineke & Plake, 1990).

***a. Attracting quality teacher to enter teaching profession***

The traditional way of teachers' promotion and influence the pay that they received in many countries is based on two factors first is based on years of teaching and secondly through level of teachers' education. Coming into the 21st century, teachers' pay has been seen to have failed to reward teachers who show high performance, is not attractive enough for quality student teachers to make them want to enter the teaching profession and is not successful in retaining quality teachers in the profession (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2010) because it was believed that one of the reasons to motivate people to choose and remain in the teaching line is if they are offered high pay and opportunity for promotion (Johnson, 1986; Lazear, 2000).

***b. Retaining quality teacher to remain in teaching profession***

Besides attracting more people to choose the teaching profession, it could also attract in-service teachers, especially the good ones, to remain in the profession and not switch to other alternative jobs that offer higher salary and attractive incentives. At the same time, a lot of discussion centres on the impact of teachers' pay on students' learning and outcomes, and this has drawn attention to the use of performance-based pay for teachers where teacher salary is paid based on their performance.

The notion behind PFP is that, like other professions, those who are successful in carrying out their jobs should be rewarded. It would not only be seen as a reward and recognition, but as a source of motivation for them to improve and in helping students' outcomes (Farrell & Morris, 2009). Relatively, pay for work performance could be seen as motivational factor in meeting human needs such as material reward, recognition, pride, self esteem, stability and self actualization (Johnson, 1985) and PFP is found to considered as recognition for teachers' effort from higher management such as school and the government and it is hoped to influence teachers' motivation to improve and work hard.

*c. Motivational tool for improvement in teaching profession*

There is also growing empirical evidence of the positive impact of reward such as financial incentives (Lawler, 1971; Lazear, 2000) to show that these incentives increase work motivation. Conversely, it was found that the level of teachers' education or the amount of teaching experience have a weak relationship with teachers' performance (Hanushek, 1986; 1989). It is important to provide rewards and incentives to workers because it is believed that they can increase workers' motivation and accountability as they know that after receiving rewards and incentives, they need to perform better than before. Besides, there is also a probability that workers would feel obliged to carry out their job in accordance with the incentives and Lavy (2007) believes that it could increase teachers' efforts to do the "right things" (Lavy, 2007, p.90) for students' improvement. PFP is assumed as an incentive for teachers to make extra efforts for their students such as providing them with more materials, homework or modifying teaching strategies to become more effective in increasing students' understanding in certain topics. Teachers' incentives such as performance-based pay are believed could be the best way for us to reach our goals (Jones et al., 2006; OECD, 2005).

Other studies in support of providing teachers with reward and incentives were carried out based on the findings of previous research which explored the reasons why teaching career was less attractive and failed to retain quality teachers (Engelking, 1987; Johnson, 1986; Lee, 2002; OECD, 2009). The research found that a teaching career was seen to be offering low salary, having little prestige compared to other professions and offering less opportunity in career advancement (reported by Ernest Boyer in *High School*, 1983; Engelking, 1987). A call was then made to increase teachers' motivation by providing both intrinsic and extrinsic incentives such as increased pay, more opportunities for professional growth and career advancement (Fraser & Soreson, 1992; Engelking, 1987; Muller & Allinata, 2009). Performance-based salary not only could encourage teachers to increase their efforts in improving student results but at the same time could attract more talented student teachers to join the teaching profession. Preventing teacher turnover is very important in maintaining student outcomes (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2008; OECD, 2009) and offering incentives is one of the ways to keep teachers in the teaching profession.

The use of PFP in the private sector is popular and common in improving output and is also found to be a productive strategy in increasing work performance (Tharp, 1986). This could be applied in the education sector as teachers, like other individuals, are striving to receive higher pay and recognition for what they do in their work. Similarly, (Gabris & Mitchell, 1986) supported the link between performance-based pay and the question 'Why should highly productive employees maintain high productivity if there's no reward?' It is logical to associate pay with job performance because human beings tend to see the value of money as a factor which could increase job motivation and it would be a challenge to motivate people if they are not rewarded after successfully completing a task. The pay is seen as a form of recognition and appreciation to human effort although the sum of pay could bring another indication in how people would react to the offer of performance pay.

### **3.21. Arguments on the effectiveness of PFP in education system**

Tying teachers' pay to their performance has become a popular topic for debate among educational researchers, economists and political leaders (Ballou, 2001) as defining 'performance' in the context of teaching is difficult. For many number of reasons, individual teachers' incentives cause controversies. Some say that such incentives are not appropriate to the teaching sector. There are several issues in arguing the effectiveness such as discussed below.

#### ***a. Teaching dealt with long term effect***

The teachers' 'product' is not easy to evaluate as it deals with values and norms, for example loving, caring, and skills that may not see results in a short time (Halachmi & Holzer, 1987). Some of the results from schooling could only be seen long after the students finish their study, for example, becoming a good citizen or responsible parents. On the other hand, the products of the private sector are tangible, can be seen and counted clearly. Measurements such as how many items are sold, how many items are returned and the amount of sales can be used to gauge performance level. The processes of evaluation and observation can be quite clear, fair and easy (Halachmi & Holzer, 1987).

#### ***b. Measured of teachers' work performance***

In the teaching profession, some presume that some teachers are better than others by looking at the examination results. However, students' result or performance could be said as relatively hard to measure because it was not influenced by one specific factor but mixed factors such as students' background, school environment and teachers' instruction. Teaching involves human behaviour in educating and influencing rather than examination outcomes (Mihal, 1983; Murnane & Cohen, 1986). The perception of performance criteria is subjective and it is quite unfair in

any single respect to make performance pay among workers such as teachers as it may threaten the success of any performance pay plan that is intended to improve performance.

*c. Not all attracted by money in becoming a teachers or improvement*

Moreover, it has been found that extrinsic incentives such as financial reward are not really effective in achieving improvement in teachers' work performances (Lawler, 1971; Herzburg et al., 1957; Murnane & Cohen, 1986; Rosenholtz & Smylie, 1984) as money is found to be not the main attraction in entering the teaching profession. From the beginning, it is not surprising that teachers knew that the pay that they receive is far below compared with other professional salary. Dohmen and Falk (2006) stated that monetary incentives may not be relevant and preferable in the public sector especially in the teaching line with the argument that people who choose to be teachers usually opt to teach due to job security and minimum payment risk. Therefore, the introduction of new payment scheme, including financial incentives may be irrelevant due to the traditional views of teaching as a career with fixed wages. Although people work for money, many of those who join the teaching profession are initially not concerned about higher pay as they are more interested in the job security, time to spend with family and working hour, thus this is an argument against the effectiveness of financial incentives to influence people on work motivation and job performance (Dohmen & Falk, 2006; Jones & Jenkins, 2006; OECD, 2005)

The teaching profession is considered to be the biggest population in the public service, and some writers (Frederickson & George, 1997; Houston, 2009) have argued that frequently people view and choose to work in public service because of a desire to service the community, enjoyment and some perceived it as a calling to serve to their country. In relation to the teaching profession, it could be said that it is quite a stable job in the term of pay and low risk of termination. Teaching also is one



of the job is that could offer enjoyment for those who care for time with family and more over have the opportunity to have long holiday for example during summer. In line with other literature, some people also emphasise the enjoyment of working with children and satisfaction when they see students' progress and enjoyment. In other words, it raised issues the way people perceive the important of intrinsic motivation in moving people to work and increase their effort rather than emphasis and derived solely by the financial incentive.

***d. Teachers are more attracted to intrinsic motivation in doing their duties***

Another argument on the effect of monetary incentives (Locke & Latham, 2004) predicted that financial incentives have small effects on job performance. (Finnigan & Gross, 2007; Lortie, 1975) found that ` an intrinsic reward such as satisfaction in helping pupils to learn and getting better results, accountability, job challenges, gained skills and experiences are the main sources of work motivation as opposed to money. As teachers' salary is low compared to other profession, the increase in the number of applicants to be teachers could suggest that those who apply for the job are not attracted by the financial benefits of the profession but more on the desire to make a difference and to help students to learn by caring for and loving them. As pointed out by (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996), teaching seems to be a caring profession from the society point of view as opposed to a high status profession.

***e. Reduce teachers team work***

Despite the evidence that pay and bonuses are important reward in motivating workers to produce high performance (Lazear, 2000; Porter et al., 1975; Kanungo & Mendonca, 2001), there was also evidence of the negative impact of reward where it was found to reduce teachers' effectiveness due to increased roles and responsibilities (Johnson, 1986; Lortie, 1975) and it also interfered with interaction

among teachers that could reduce knowledge and skills sharing among them (Rosenholtz, 1987). At the same time, some previous findings also reported that PFP brought negative effects when there was an increased competition among teachers to receive the incentives which reduced teachers' collegiality and teamwork (Farrel & Morris 2004; Murnane & Cohen, 1986). PFP or similar financial incentives are found to be causing increased competitiveness among teachers, thus breaking teachers' cooperation in teamwork and cooperation in school (Firestone and Pennell, 1993; Murnane & Cohen, 1986). As students' outcomes do not depend solely on one teacher, cooperation and teamwork are important to the students' development and PFP could destroy the spirit of collaboration among teachers in the same school as teachers would have the tendency to work individually to receive the award.

Although incentives and reward are widely accepted as means of increasing teachers' motivation, some questions arise as to what extent the implementation and the system may influence individual teachers (Murnane & Cohen, 1985) as it is believed that it would deny teachers' right to collectivise to achieve school objectives. It could be said that the incentives to individual teachers may give less impact to common school objectives compared to incentives given to the entire school that would encourage teachers, together with all school staff in the school, to achieve certain standards as a team (Belfield & Heywood, 2008; Murnane & Cohen, 1985). In this issue, rather than giving out individual incentives, the study suggested that providing group incentives or school incentives would be better as teachers will work together in achieving the educational target or standards that are required thus it promotes team work and collaboration among teachers. It also could reduce competitions among them, as the incentives could be shared.

To summarise, a number of studies were done in order to examine whether or not financial incentives to people would increase teachers' work performance and help in improving pupils' academic achievement. The results showed two different findings as some found it to be positive and some found that monetary incentive gave no

impacts to the improvement of teachers' motivation, thus giving more weight to the idea of increasing more intrinsic reward to teachers as a motivation to increase their job performance.

### **3.22. Applications of performance-based pay in teaching profession**

This section will provide some evidence of short term effects on the implementation of experimental studies for the PFP in Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States. One of the examples of reward and incentives programme around the world is the Teacher Advancement Programme (TAP) used in some states in the US such as Texas and Florida which introduced two types of incentives to reward teachers that involve individuals and groups. A similar performance-based pay system was also introduced across the UK and is known as The Chartered Teacher in Scotland and the Advanced Skills Teacher in England (AST). Some other countries like Australia, Singapore and Malaysia introduced Excellent Teacher Policy as an incentive for teachers (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006, OECD, 2009). The policies mentioned share some similarities that are they were developed to improve students' achievement through teachers' roles. Among the incentives given to teachers are financial incentive plans, which include merit pay, bonuses, and various modifications in salary schedules, career options, such as career ladder plans and career paths (Fuller, Goodwyn, Brophy, & Harding, 2010; Reeves et al., 2010).

#### **United Kingdom**

A research was carried out to investigate the impact of accomplished teaching on pupils that explored how the policy of Chartered Teacher Initiative in Scotland could improve teachers to be more effective (Reeves et al., 2010). The research was undertaken for nearly one year starting from June 2009 and was completed in March

2010. SCT was introduced in 2003 and until 2010 there are around 1010 teachers on this scheme that rewards high performance teachers and gives them opportunities for professional development and recognition. The research found that these teachers apply a variety of strategies that help in enhancing students' learning and increase contributions in schools by showing high commitment to encourage peers inside and outside the classroom in improving the quality of teaching and learning and moreover, success in building the good relationships with parents and wider educational community (Reeves et al., 2010).

Another study was also done to see the impact on the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) of a performance-related pay system which was introduced in England in 1999 to teachers (Atkinson et al., 2009). The research was done within two-year teaching cycles to see the impact of the program before and after the implementation of the incentive system. The findings showed some evidence of positive results from the policy as teachers are found to be increasing their effort to improve their performance and the scheme did increase students' achievement by about 40% of a grade per pupil (Atkinson, et al., 2009) and thus, giving positive weight to the implementation of pay for performance incentive in the education system.

The AST programme was introduced in England in 1998 with the belief that teachers are an integral part of learning and could bring impacts to students' outcomes. Thus the objective of AST is to attract and retain excellent teachers in classroom. The AST teachers opted to remain in classrooms rather than taking up management posts offered to them as a job promotion. The AST teachers' roles are not limited to expanding their knowledge and skills to teaching matters, but to contributing to the development of other teachers' practices and they will receive a pay that is comparable to their expertise and challenges of their roles. After it was introduced in 1998, an evaluation of AST system was done by the Central Archive (Fuller et al., 2010) involving 1,400 ASTs through online survey and in-depth telephone

interviews which covered questions that address supports, training, impact and changes to their status. The findings were found that 85% of the respondents enjoyed being an AST 'most of the time' and more than two fifths of the teachers stated that the role was what they expected it to be. The positive finding also indicates that teachers felt that they were having an impact of supporting other teachers (38%) and the training provision (31%). Almost all teachers agreed that their role was achieving what the government intended it to in terms of raising standards and retaining teachers as stipulated in the AST Policy.

AST could be seen as a government's effort to increase teachers' motivation in improving students' achievement and to retain quality teachers in classrooms (Fuller, et al., 2010). This supports the previous findings of Atkinson et. al. (2009) that the scheme of performance pays that was introduced among teachers in schools showed positive impact in improving pupils' test scores and schools' value-added scores. Although most ASTs teachers perceived their tasks as challenging, they really enjoyed their roles and professional status. They also received recognition of their performance in raising the standards of quality teaching and learning (Fuller, et al., 2010). Due to the status of 'Advanced Skills Teacher' over half the teachers agreed that the AST title summed up well their level of expertise that provided teachers a sense of professional recognition that is important to a teacher's sense of professionalism

The AST programme is seen as a programme that helps assist the government to increase teachers' motivation in improving students' achievement and to retain quality teachers in the teaching profession. Although most AST teachers perceived their tasks as challenging, they really enjoyed their roles and professional status and recognition of their performance and indeed raising standards quality of teaching and learning. However, despite what were prescribed in the policy of AST that teachers should increase job performance. Berry (2008) and Day (2007) suggested that the policy should also offer teachers facilitating environment, supportive colleagues,

leadership and continuous professional development which were in line with OECD (2005) rather than focussing on monetary reward. The lack of a system to support teachers with available infrastructure could fail many educational policies which were aimed at improving teachers' quality.

## **United States**

Interest in the application of reward and incentives in the teaching profession developed in the United States in the name of teachers' quality improvement and students' achievement. A survey of public opinion about teachers' quality in the US found that all groups recognised the importance of teachers' quality and strongly supported reforms that lead to significant increase in teachers' salaries, if those reforms also provide better guarantees that these increases in reward is evidence of professional development and quality teaching (OECD, 2005). Some studies (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Hanushek & Rivkin, 2007; Lazear, 2003) supported the use of performance pay system to attract and retain individuals who are particularly good and repel those who are not (Podgursky & Springer, 2007) and Lazear (2000) maintained that the performance pay system will affect and increase teachers' productivity and improve students' performance.

Research in the STAR (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio) in Tennessee was implemented by the Tennessee Department of Education in 1985 until 1989 as the examination to find the relationship between students' achievement and class size. The research by Dee and Keys (2004) to examine the relationship between pay related performance and test scores found that students who were taught by teachers who received merit pay had scored 3% points higher than students taught by other teachers in Mathematics subject provided the evidence of the positive effects of a merit pay program that improves teachers' performance and brings meaning to teachers to increase their efforts to receive it (Greene & Forster, 2008). The study's results provided the evidence that teachers in the pay program were more effective

than those who did not receive it and the reward was positive in attracting more performing teacher to apply for the reward programme.

The Teacher Advancement System (TAP) with objectives to reward excellent teachers and improve the quality of teachers was used in 14 states. Research by Schacter and Thum (2005) examines the TAP that divided schools into two categories: participating schools and non-participating schools. These two types of schools were matched in their similarities in size, locale, initial student achievement, percentage of minority students, percentage of students eligible for free lunch, and percentage of limited English proficient students. The study in summary found the positive effect of TAP in raising students' test scores from 10% to 21% compared to non-participating schools. The research found that students' math scores rose by 14% more in TAP schools, while reading scores rose by 4% to 6% more. Thus, it is another positive evidence of merit pay to be implemented in school system as it is proven to help increase students' outcomes.

## **Israel**

A study that was carried out in Israel (Lavy, 2002 & 2007) found a significant positive effect of monetary incentives for individual teachers who were rewarded cash bonuses on improving students' performance in Mathematics and English subjects. The research done by Lavy (2002) involved fifty high schools in Israel to see whether financial incentive could influence and improve teachers' work performance by giving teachers a bonus for their effort to improve students' outcomes. The research findings found that teachers showed changes of improvement in their teaching strategies and behaviour and they showed willingness to do extra work such as teaching even after school hours (Lavy, 2007). The research found that students' achievement was also improved due to changes in teachers' way of teaching and behaviour thus supported the ideas of the government using money

as a way to change teacher's teaching and behaviour. The empirical results suggested that schools and teachers group monetary incentives caused significant gains in many dimensions of students' outcomes. The teachers' incentive was shown as more cost effective compared to other teachers' incentives because teachers would improve their efforts to improve students' performance to get cash reward (Lavy, 2007).

## **Mexico**

Pay for performance in Mexico is called The Framework for Good Teaching and it offers opportunities for teachers to receive an incentive after completing an examination on their subject area and after evaluation of four components: self-evaluation, supervisor (either principal or head of instruction), peer evaluation and portfolio to show teachers' responses to learning goals in the curriculum in videotaped lesson (OECD, 2009). The amount of money the teachers receive would depend on examination scores and range from 5-25% of basic salary and these teachers need to retain the scores and undergo evaluation every four years (OECD, 2009). There are four categories in the scheme which were rated as outstanding, competent, basic and unsatisfactory. Since it was introduced in 2002, the evaluation consistently found that 60% of the teachers are outstanding and competent. Although there are arguments on the subjectivity of the different evaluation systems and the absence of students' results in the evaluation, the impact of effective professional development that teachers received through the system found to be positive to students' performance and this was supported by a report on evaluation of the system (OECD, 2009) stated that students who were taught by teachers from the two top categories outperformed their peers who were taught by teachers from the two below categories. Thus the system could be seen as helping and contributing to the students' learning and helping teachers in improving their teaching practices.



### **3.23. Teacher professionalism**

Teacher professionalism is a multidimensional concept and definition but on the most basic level, the definition of “professional teacher” refers to the status of a person who is paid to teach and it may also refer to a teacher who represents the best in the profession and set the highest standard for best practice (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). It means that professional teacher is the people who have the knowledge and skills that make them able to practice their work at the highest standard. Teachers’ professionalism is shown on teachers’ personal characteristics and the knowledge in the subject teaching and pedagogical knowledge that they possess Tichenor and Tichenor (2009). The concept of professionalisation in teaching profession refers more to teachers’ accountability rather than status and prestige because teachers’ pay is found to be less than other profession (Helsby & McCulloch, 1996). However, traditionally and even in current community, teachers have been found to be one of the most accountable members of society (Lello, 1993).

Although there are certain concepts and dimensions used to generally define what a professional is, the change to the nature of work due to current world events, demands and responsibilities will influence the professionalism of an occupation. However, using the characteristics of what is constituted as a profession; teachers enjoy the professional status of the occupation. Becoming a teacher needs someone to attend training for a period of time to gain knowledge in subject matter and pedagogy. Teachers’ involvement in teachers’ union and the introduction of teaching standard, for example National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) in the US and SGM in Malaysia put the teaching profession in the professional category. The use of teaching standard to produce and evaluate teachers’ level of competencies shows that teaching profession has its own aims and objectives to achieve, thus providing the level of standard each teacher needs to produce in order to be recognised as a quality teacher.

Phelps (2006) categorizes teachers' professionalism into three dimensions namely responsibility, respect and risk-taking and perceives that developing professionalism in new teachers is a great challenge to most teachers' education. As teachers spend most of their time at school with students, the demand of responsibility and accountability is increasing. They are required to develop citizens with knowledge and skill for the future. As teachers are accountable in educating humans, Kramer (2003) classified teacher professionalism into three categories namely teachers' attitude, behaviour and communication. Teachers' attitudes and behaviours could be seen in teachers' professional lives and communication through teachers' interaction with colleagues, parents and students (Kramer 2003). The ways teachers behave and the attitudes that they possess such as caring, loving, respect could show others the characteristics of professionalism that they have. In supporting the argument, both Hoyle (1980) and Hurst and Reading (2000) believed that professionalism is also associated with the quality that teachers show in their practice such as in communication and social interaction.

Besides knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours and communication, other additional dimensions that are closely related to teaching profession are teachers' personal characteristics, commitment to change, continuous improvement and teachers' participation and contributions outside classroom (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). Some personal characteristics such as caring and loving are closely linked to the decision to enter the teaching profession as it is also perceived to be important if one wants to become a professional teacher. As the world is going through a rapid change, it is important for teachers to be able to change for improvement, increase and renew their knowledge and to deliver up-to-date knowledge and use new methods of teaching. Another important dimension in teachers' professionalism is the contribution of teachers in helping others to become effective teachers through teachers' collaboration in or outside their schools. Collaboration among teachers is now found to be important in the development of producing quality teachers through in-service teaching, collaborative discussion with peers and mentoring others.

Professional teachers also apply the concept of continuous learning and improvement and contribute their knowledge, skills and experience beyond classroom activities (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005). However, being a professional does not only mean the teacher is knowledgeable in the subject he is teaching and has pedagogical skills, but it requires teachers to also exhibit their professionalism by showing personal and professional characteristics, showing high commitment in teaching and by being open to changes.

This study explores the relationship between teachers' incentives as motivation factor in changing teachers' attitudes teaching strategies and contribution. As the literature reviews state that professional teachers showed good attitudes (Kramer, 2003), employs multiple instructional strategies (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2009) and contribute their knowledge and skills beyond the classroom (Tichenor & Tichenor, 2005) it also could linked to study the relationship between how could incentives promote teachers' professionalism in teaching profession in the Malaysian context by using the GCM award policy in influencing teachers' effort to change in improving teacher quality in their teaching performance for improvement. The next section will discuss changes that affect and influence in promoting teachers' professionalism.

### **3.24. Changes affecting professionals**

Despite efforts from most professions to reach the highest status through more autonomy and security, they are found to have less autonomy due to changes in the new era and changes in organisation and structure (Graham & Chivers, 2005; Watkins & Drury, 1995). The world now is rapidly changing through modernisation and professionals are believed to be impacted by these changes. The development of sciences and technologies with the introduction of the Internet, email and changes in the way people communicate increase the demand for professionals to renew and adapt new knowledge and skills (Graham & Chivers, 2005). Furthermore, many

professionals are also involved in and influenced by changes in their organisation through the process of merging and some through bureaucratic issues such as changes in government policy that affect and limit professional autonomy for decision-making (Mckinlay, 1982). Some parties believe that through educational reform, teachers are becoming more passive and their autonomy is becoming less despite the aim to improve teachers' quality and students learning (see for example; Helsby, 1999; Hargreaves, 2000). Teachers are believed to receive prestigious status through salary increase, reward and incentives, opportunity to receive amount of money and time to be involved in research and for that reasons, they are required to fulfil government and educational policy (Hargreaves, 2000). Moreover due to the movement in some policy changes, professionals are confronted to choose between their commitments as a professional to finish the task or to commit and follow the procedure of what they need to do that is prescribed by the organisation that they belong to (Styskal, 1979; Watkins & Drury, 1992).

Some professionals such as scientists are found to be losing control of their independence in choosing research projects, as research is decided by the market force and the fund available for it (Varma, 1997). It is close to what (Oppenheimer, 1973) suggested that new society is faced with increasingly high competition and more companies are trying to maximise the outcomes with minimum cost and due to that, many professionals are dealing with loss of autonomy and de-skilling of their professions.

In the context of teachers' reform, some scholars (Taylor, 2007) believe that teachers' professionalism is being threatened from the objectives teachers need to fulfil thus the focus falls on what teachers do and need to do, rather than enhancing the professionalism by giving more opportunities for them to exercise their practice with more autonomy in classroom activities and reach specific goals depending on their knowledge and skills from the curriculum that they teach (Helsby, 1999). The argument is also supported by Bottery and Wright (2000) who said that nowadays

teachers have less autonomy and need to closely follow the policy makers' and government's agenda, which actually contradicts the concept of professional autonomy (Crues, 2004). Moreover, teachers are not only found to be controlled by educational reform or national curriculum target but also need to follow school principal's direction in teaching activities, participating in school activities and achieving school objectives (Taylor, 2007).

### **3.25. The Role of incentives in enhancing teacher professionalism**

What do teachers' incentives signify to teacher development and indicate to teacher professionalism? The issue of improving teacher professionalism through the method of incentives and reward has always been discussed among the public and policy makers. The main objectives of giving and creating incentives are:

- a. To improve the quality of teachers
- b. To attract more quality students and retain and teachers to remain in the teaching profession.

Some believe that using incentives and reward did not help the development of teacher professionalism. Instead, it seems to de-professionalise teachers through the enforcement by the government to control teachers to follow and do what the government tends to accomplish (Taylor, 2007). Teachers have previously enjoyed the relative autonomy or isolation in their job in classroom context. Although teachers have the opportunity in meeting peers and having discussion on their practice in the staff room, during staff meeting or professional development programmes, the concept of "isolation" still exists during their teaching activity. However, providing teachers with the opportunity to receive monetary reward leads to increased work quality. The concept of professionalism requires a professional to show high standards of behaviours and quality of work and this concept is seen through the introduction of reward to increase teachers' motivation and

accountability (Cruess & Cruess, 2004). Besides motivating teachers to increase their performance and quality of work, incentives and reward are more importantly used to attract more competent and high quality students to choose teaching as a profession. It is important to enhance teachers' professionalism and build trust and respect from the community to the profession (Charlton, 1965; Lello, 1993).

In order to increase teachers' work motivation, the use reward might be useful as incentive for teacher to improve their performance. Hanushek and Rivkindari (2007) have suggested that educational reform with the objective to improve teachers should directly go to teachers. Policymakers can learn about teachers' motivations by encouraging teachers to show excellent performances in teaching and for that they are entitled to receive the credit through incentives and rewards.

### **3.26. Summary**

Rewards and incentives in the teaching profession should not only be seen as a system that rewards and recognises high performing teachers, but they are also aimed at improving the quality of teaching by increasing teachers' motivation in improving and extending their contributions among colleagues as suggested by Johnson (1986) and Day (2007) that peer interaction and team work could bring positive impact to the effectiveness of teachers and schools' improvement. The school environment that promotes and encourages teachers toward working together and sharing knowledge, ideas and experience will bring positive impact to the school culture. Thus, it will lead to progressive students' learning and achievement. Although this chapter highlighted more on the use of financial reward and incentives as one of the ways to promote teachers' performance, the potential of non-financial reward and incentives should not be denied in improving quality in teachers. Even though there are some arguments about the effectiveness of money as motivational tool in improving teachers' quality, the combination of both financial and non-financial incentives and

reward could support in achieving the educational reform objectives. Besides the discussion on the influence of incentives and reward to teachers' quality, there are also some issues of whether these incentives and rewards would enhance teachers' professionalism or would de-professionalise the profession and cause teacher to lose some autonomy in the ways they work. Eventually, it is the teachers who decide whether they are in full control of what they are doing or not.

The following chapter will discuss the findings of the research questions about teachers' changes in attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award scheme and the challenges of the implementation of the policy in Malaysian context.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research method used in this study. It will be divided into several sections that will explain about the qualitative research, justification of employing qualitative studies, strategies in data collecting, research design, and data analysis. This study used qualitative research methods to explore the use of teachers' incentives in the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme that consists of status and financial incentives to influence teachers to improve their work performance by changing their attitudes, teaching strategies and their professional contributions. Data was gathered through interviews and supporting documents in order to explore the core issues of teachers change in this study.

### **4.2. Research Methodology: Qualitative Research**

Choosing a research method is about choosing the techniques and procedures by which a researcher will gather and analyse the data or evidence in an investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Corbin and Strauss emphasise the complexities of understanding social phenomena, people's behaviours, events and people's experiences and these need to be taken into consideration when deciding the best methods to gather the data and to convey the research findings. Choosing between quantitative or qualitative methods, the two main traditions of research method (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), depends on the research questions set by the researcher. It is also important to consider who will be the audience for the research findings (Miller & Dingwall, 1997). This chapter will discuss qualitative research and the justification for using qualitative research, and that of interviews as strategies for data gathering and data analysis.



Qualitative research has long been established in studies of human life in multiple disciplines such as social sciences, education, communications and psychology (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). This method involves multi methods of an interpretive or naturalistic approach to its subject matter with various strategies of data collecting such as case study, personal experiences, life story, interviews, observation, historical in order to bring meaning to the phenomena or events that have been studied (Denzin, 1998 & 1999; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Qualitative methods can produce a lot of detailed data about a number of cases, and provide in-depth details through direct quotation, precise description of situations and close observation. The great strength of qualitative research is that it attempts to depict the fullness of experience in a meaningful and comprehensive way (Winget, 2005). This can be explained through multiple strategies for doing data collection such as participant observation, open-ended or semi-structured interviews, and qualitative content analysis of documents (Winget, 2005).

Qualitative research is also designed to provide an in-depth description of a specific programme, practice or setting through the multiple strategies such as interviews and observation. In qualitative research, the world is transformed into a series of representations: field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. The researcher is attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them (Mertens, 2005, p.229). Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.3) state that qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experiences; introspections; life story; interviews; artefacts; cultural texts and production; observational, historical, interactional and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives.

Qualitative research is also believed to be able to help researchers to observe and make sense of some of the aspects of social life. With the varieties of methodological

resources and approaches, it makes it possible for them to answer research questions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Miller and Dingwall, 1997). Qualitative research also becomes an “empirical enterprise” as it is believed to be useful in studying people’s daily lives to get more understanding on human life, the way people interact and behave in their social contexts (Miller & Dingwall, 1997).

### **4.3. Objectives of qualitative research**

The decision to choose qualitative methods also depends on the reasons behind the research. According to Patton (2002), because many educational and psychological programs are based on humanist values, the intended user of the research may prefer the type of personal contact that will emerge from the study. So by adopting qualitative methods, the result will be credible and the findings would become useful information for us to have a better understanding of human perception.

Researchers might also choose the qualitative method when no acceptable, valid, reliable, appropriate quantitative measure is available for the desired outcomes of a programme such as the impact of the GCM award scheme policy in influencing teachers’ work motivation for improvement. Qualitative data from observations or interviews could be used to explore the change of teachers’ attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions of their knowledge and experience. The data in teachers’ interviews could be transcribed to trace the change.

Miller and Dingwall (1997, p.3) states that there are two major objectives of qualitative research which are employed by researchers. The first is to describe and the second is to analyse social behaviours as in line with the nature of qualitative research as stated by Silverman (1997) that it concerns exploring people’s wider perceptions or everyday behaviour. This is also an approach to research on policy debates among people especially public policy constructed by the government

(Goffman, 1961). There are many methods that can be chosen by researchers to collect and analyse data which are appropriate and relevant to the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Silverman, 1997). The richness of qualitative research sources can provide a researcher with a wider perspective to interpret and understand the essence of the issue of their study. Data collection strategies such as interviewing, observation, document analysis, conversations and life story can give us a secure grip to fully understanding the phenomena and events of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Silverman, 1997).

This research was carried out to explore and explain teachers' motivation under the GC award policy and how the policy affects teachers' attitudes towards their quality of teaching and learning and contributions to other teachers. Qualitative research would enable the researcher to identify teachers' reported changes of attitude, teaching practices and contributions and find out whether the changes are in line with the ones outlined in the GCM award scheme policy. The interpretation of qualitative data through interviews provided a deep understanding of the central issue of the research. The same understanding would not be possible through a structured questionnaire and laboratory process because it involved teachers' beliefs, experiences and feelings that were conveyed through narration of the events. The interview approach is found to be flexible because it involves interaction between the researcher and participants and it encourages the participants to tell their experience and their perception of the situation.

#### **4.4. Justification for using Qualitative research methods**

This study used qualitative research methods to explore how teachers' incentives influence human work motivation in improving teacher quality through changes in attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions in the field of teaching and learning. The justification for using qualitative research methods for this study can be

explained by looking at several issues: Patton (2002) and Corbin and Strauss (1990, 2008) claimed that qualitative methods can be used to gain new perspectives on things about which little is yet known. It is also suitable to be employed for events, situations where phenomena remain unexplained, where the nature of the research is uncommon or broad, where previous theories do not exist or are incomplete (Patton, 2002); and when the goal or objectives of the situation are easy to understand in long narrative (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). This study explores the impact of the GCM award given to teachers; whether it could bring positive impact to teachers' motivation for improvement. Although the policy of GCM was implemented 16 years ago, there is still a lack of evidence in the Malaysian context to support the use of incentives in promoting teacher quality and there are almost no available sources in the literature about the effect of incentives, especially financial incentives, in teachers' attitudes, their teaching strategies and contributions after the Malaysian Government introduced the GCM scheme. Thus, qualitative research methods could be the best way in exploring the changes teachers perceived they made in promoting quality after receiving the GCM award scheme.

As the aim of the study was to explore teachers' perception on whether or not changes occur in teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies, and contributions after receiving the GCM award, thus data could only be provided by teachers. This study does not intend to compare what GC teachers perceived about change with other perceptions such as those of school principals or peers. The study also does not have any intention to justify whether the changes that teachers would report have impact on student achievement. Thus it is not required that it involve other sources of data of interviews rather than teachers only. As the research questions of this study only related to the GCs' perceptions, the researcher decided to interview teachers to get the data, without supporting data from principals' or peers' interviews.

The research questions were designed to explore the Guru Cemerlang's perceptions of the impact of financial and other incentives given to them and how this could

influence their motivation to improve their work performance through changes in attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to promote the quality of education. The questions are closely related to the nature of the qualitative method that is to know the meaning of one phenomenon which gives meaning to people (Mertens, 2005; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As this study explores the impact of money and other incentives such as teacher status and promotion on human work motivation, it is only appropriate that qualitative research methods are used. The study of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia in terms of their contributions is still new despite the scheme being introduced back in 1994. This study tried to explore and understand Guru Cemerlang's perceptions about their contribution in helping the government to promote the quality of education. It looks at how the teachers perceive changes in their attitudes and their contributions to other teachers in their own schools and the neighbouring schools and how they create the environment of excellence after becoming GCs. Although what teachers should contribute after they became a Guru Cemerlang was clearly stated through the Ministry's circular letter, no study has been carried out on the contributions of Guru Cemerlang through their own perspectives.

Moreover, the justification of using the qualitative research method is because this study looked into intangible things that are not in line with quantitative research that are concerned with number and facts (Labuschagne, 2003). The events studied were teachers' perceptions when they received the GCM award, how they perceive the changes in their attitudes, changes in their teaching strategies and their contributions in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award. The focus of my research is the Guru Cemerlang's experiences and emotional states; about what they feel or how they perceive their roles and attitudes. The experiences of the teachers cannot be expressed easily or fully through numbers. Since this study explored teachers' experiences and perceptions which are not easily quantified, qualitative research methods were the most suitable approach to be used as the study concerned about feelings and not numbers and facts (Labuschagne, 2003). These things cannot be studied in the laboratories or decided by scientific tests. Memories

of daily lives may be forgotten and can only be captured or recalled through qualitative methods with various strategies. The researcher feels that the qualitative research strategies such as interview can produce a lot of information to explain and answer the research questions.

The reason why the qualitative method was used was also related to the research questions designed earlier and the adoption of qualitative research methods would help me to have a better and deeper understanding of the issues in the research. The research question “how did the teachers perceive changes in their attitudes, changes in their teaching strategies and contributions in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award” is general, non specific and appropriate for open answers suitable for a qualitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The answers from the teachers varied and they provided opportunities to further explore and investigate how the teachers who received the GCM award changed their attitudes and teaching strategies and utilize their expertise, skills and experiences to help students achieve high scores, how they connected with their colleagues in their own schools and neighbouring schools, and how they promoted the culture of excellence, as well as quality in the education field. It was stated by Corbin and Strauss (2008) that qualitative methods can be used to gain new perspectives on things about which little is yet known. This study explored Malaysian teachers’ perception on the impact of awarding teachers with financial incentives and other such as title and status using the interview method. The information is in the form of narrative which means that their perception and experience can be best explained by the researcher also in the form of narrative. Thus, qualitative methods could be one of the best ways in order to understand and share the teachers’ world in experiencing certain phenomena.

Another reason why qualitative research methods were used was because I need to gain in-depth information that involved teachers’ perceptions on their feelings and experiences after becoming Guru Cemerlang and these were not possible to be

conveyed through a quantitative approach. Stake (1995) stated that qualitative research reports are rich with details and insights into informants' experiences of their daily lives that are easy to understand through the form of narrative word. This study seeks the answer from teachers to the meaning of becoming Guru Cemerlang and how they can further improve themselves. This meaning could be considered as a personal search and a personal meaning and qualitative research methods may help me to get an accurate picture of "the inner experience" of the teachers (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.12) in their daily lives as Guru Cemerlang and how they play their roles in the classroom and how they interact with other teachers.

#### **4.5. Research procedure and data analysis**

##### ***a. Data Collection***

This section will discuss the strategies used for the study. Data collected for this research came from two sources, namely interviews with Guru Cemerlang and from the Book of Excellent Teacher: Terms and Reference Booklet (2006) to provide the details about the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme policy.

Before the researcher started to collect the data, permission was requested from the Ministry of Education Malaysia through the Malaysian Education Planning of Research Development (EPRD). The researcher informed the Ministry of Education Malaysia when the data collection would start and who would be involved in the study at least three months before the research begin.

##### ***b. University ethical approval***

Before the researcher started to collect the data, related documents such as a supervisor's letter from the university and the proposal were provided for University

of Strathclyde ethical approval. Once the researcher received ethical approval from University, data collection could be started thereafter.

After getting permission from the Ministry of Education Malaysia through the Malaysian Education Planning of Research Development (EPRD and University of Strathclyde ethical approval, the researcher went through the list of Guru Cemerlang in the Kedah state, which was chosen as the location for the research from the website of Guru Cemerlang. The researcher also contacted the Malaysia Ministry of Education to get information about the GCM Award Scheme policy. The researcher then was advised by the officer at the Ministry of Education Malaysia to seek advice from the State Education Department of Kedah. The researcher contacted the State Education Department of Kedah and was advised to meet and seek information at the State School Inspectorate Department of Kedah. It could be said that, the State School Inspectorate have all the details information about the number of GCs. An officer there suggested a list of numbers of GC to involve, however from the list only five names were available for the interview sessions due to time and their circumstances. The researcher selected another five Guru Cemerlang to be interviewed from the lists given by the officers at the State School Inspectorate Department of Kedah. Selecting suitable individuals for the study would enable the researcher to get full cooperation from the participants and to achieve the objectives of the research.

### *c. How Participants were selected*

As informed before, the researcher acquired the information and confirmation on the numbers of Guru Cemerlang teachers and their status through the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia website, Ministry of Education Malaysia office, State Education Department of Kedah and Jemaah Nazir Sekolah (School Inspectorate Department of Kedah). After being advised by The State School Inspectorate Department of Kedah, the researcher identified the participants, contacted the teachers and visited the



schools where the prospective participants were teaching to inform the school principals about the interviews and request permission. It was vital to ask permission from the school head / principals to conduct with their teachers. Some school administrators were contacted by telephone.

Before and during the interviews with the participants, the researcher informed them that they were required to share their positive perspective of their teaching experience. The focus of the study and the selection process were also explained to them so that they would be clear about what was expected of them to say during the interview. The researcher avoided leading the teachers to certain answers as the researcher used an open approach for the interviews. Throughout the interviews, the participants were made to feel comfortable and were encouraged to express their view freely. It was hoped that the approach would help the researcher to gain enough information from the teachers to get the answers to the research questions.

#### **4.6. Interview technique**

An interaction person to person that involves two or more people with specific purpose and objective is called interview (Kumar, 2005). The interview is one of the strategies that is widely used in qualitative research (Bryman, 2008). It is believed that the interview could become a powerful strategy if the researcher intends to have face to face interaction with the participants to find information on the topic of the study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) and is most commonly used by researchers to understand human beings (Fontana & Frey, 1998). Interviewing people is one of the qualitative research methods used by researchers to get in-depth understanding of the main issues of the research especially when it concerns their personal experiences and feelings. This is explained by Stake who said that interview can be seen as “*the main road to multiple realities*” (Stake, 1995, p.64). Fontana and Frey (2000, p.652) suggest that interviewing “can provide a greater breadth of data than other types, given qualitative nature”. They also suggest that researchers should think of and treat

the participants not as total strangers or mere objects to fulfil what they want to accomplish in their research but as close friends. Once a researcher manages to do that, the interview sessions will become alive and natural and it will enable the researcher to get a close perspective on the topic of study (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

In this study, there are four reasons why the interview technique was employed as suggested by Kumar (2005). The reasons are related to the objective of this study and that it was more appropriate to use the interview technique in obtaining the data, the importance of data from the teachers' interviews to explore teachers' perceptions in-depth, the flexibility between researcher and participants during the interview sessions, and finally the appropriateness of its use, given the different backgrounds of teachers, their age and experience, and the ways questions were asked by the researcher.

The interview is more appropriate to use in certain situations such as with sensitive questions in that it gives an opportunity for the researcher to prepare different questions to probe the issue with the respondent, depending on their reaction to the issue. In this study, teachers were asked about their perception of whether change happened after teachers received the GCM award scheme. It would be appropriate for the researcher to find the information about the change through interviewing, rather than questionnaire because the researcher could probe or ask teachers more about the types of change in a friendly conversation if teachers give unclear answer about change in this study. There are two types of interview technique in qualitative research, namely structured interview and unstructured interview.

#### *a. Structured interviews*

Structured interviews refer to the situation where the participant is asked to answer certain questions with limited response, flexibility, or answers (Fontana & Frey,

1998). During the interview session, the interviewer controls the participants to reaction and response by having a script of questions, as it were. In these types of interview, normally the interviewer would like to avoid long explanations and interruptions during the session. Moreover, the interviewer also would never suggest any answer and ideas to the participant or agree or disagree with any participant answer. With limited opportunity for participants involved in these types of interview, normally research surveys such as asking people at shopping complexes, by telephone, or in public places are common examples of this type (Fontana & Frey, 1998). The structured interview could be said to be rigid in terms of content, wording and questioning (Kumar, 2005).

#### ***b. Unstructured interview***

This type of interview could be regarded as nearer to the nature of qualitative research in that it brings greater freedom and flexibility to the researcher and participant during the interview session (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The types of interviews that fall into this category are in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, group interviews, narrative interviews and oral history interviews (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Kumar, 2000). During the interview, the use of the unstructured interview give the opportunity to researchers and participants to ask questions and give answers to the interview questions in nearly an informal situation. The researcher in this type can become friendlier and can maintain closeness with the respondent during the interview. The researcher also could probe, suggest answers or repeat some of the questions in order to get some of information for the study.

The particular choice of the type of interviews depends on researchers and the topics of the study. Some researchers adopt both structured interview and unstructured interview in doing their research. Hitchcock and Hughes (1989) prefer the semi-structured interview format to be used and employed by the researcher because it

could allow the researcher to further develop and expand upon particularly interesting responses. As a researcher is often a stranger to many of the research participants, it is useful to use semi-structured interviewing to develop a relationship through discussion and conversation from the participants (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989). The use of semi-structured interviews could also bring the sense that the participants are important people, where their information could give more understanding into certain events or experience by sharing their feelings. Furthermore, if the researcher manages to organize the interviews well, it will provide a conducive environment for the interviewees to provide answers and information to the specific questions intended to explore the issues of the study. Moreover, this format also allows the participants to ask and answer questions whenever they feel the need to and at the same time allows the researcher to have some control throughout the entire session (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989; Winget, 2005).

The primary sources of data for this research were from the interviews with ten Guru Cemerlang from the state of Kedah. The data from the interviews provided in-depth discussions of Guru Cemerlang's perceptions on changes after receiving the GCM award in terms of improvement in attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to the pupil, colleagues and schools. To ensure a conducive environment for the interviews, the researcher sought the participants' advice on the appropriate time and venue for the interview to take place. By having the choice to determine the time and place convenient to them, they could feel at ease during the interview. In order to obtain some rich and original data, the interview was conducted using semi-structured questions which gave the teachers the opportunity to freely express their opinions, comments or perceptions (Travers, 2001). Each interview which took between one and one and half hours was taped, and then transcribed by the researcher. A short questionnaire about their age and teaching experience was also used to complement the interviews.

The interviews helped the researcher to discover and explore teachers' perceptions on the success of the implementation of the government's policies, especially the GCM award policy that was introduced in 1994 and revised by the Malaysian Government in 2006. As the scheme has been implemented for more than 10 years, it is important for the government and the public to be informed about the impact of the policy to the development and improvement of teaching and learning in Malaysian schools. The findings would give indications of whether it needs to be retained or terminated for the purpose of teachers' development. The use of interview technique could also increase the understanding of teachers' perceptions on the impact of extrinsic rewards such as financial incentives in teachers' work motivation to improve quality and on the aspect of changes that they went through.

#### **4.7. Supporting documents**

Besides using the interviews as a major source of the data, this study also used supporting documents such as Guru Cemerlang book of reference, government circulars, newspaper reports and biography in order to provide more specific information about the main subject of this research about the GCM award scheme policy. Ozga (2000) described research on education policy as a *contested terrain* and she opined that it has become important and dominant form in the area of social science and education (Ozga, 2000, p.102). The data in the teachers' interviews and information in the supporting documents were useful in understanding whether the teachers were well versed about the policy and whether the teachers were heading towards the same direction in achieving the government's objectives of the GCM scheme. The use of a combination of more than one source of data in research was explained by Corbin and Strauss (2008) as a triangulation for the purpose of verifying and adding another source and at the same time could obtain various types of data to bring clear picture of the issue and increase our understanding of the phenomena in the study.

The type of documentary analysis in qualitative research can be listed from all documents that the researcher thinks and considers as related to the research. These documents include article journals, transcripts of interviews, written open-ended items on questionnaires, personal diaries, video tapes observation, and various forms of documentation (Winget, 2005). In qualitative research, document and documentary sources have been recognised to provide rich information and evidence to study. The text in the documents can be treated as a given object, to be read by the researcher to understand and explore the phenomena of the study. Putting and bringing documents into a research can be important for evidence and back up data in qualitative research. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommended for all researchers to think and see documents as equally important as informants and the information that gained from the documents is important in providing the answers to some research questions.

This study refers to the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, (2006) as the main source of document in order to provide information about the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme policy. An explanation of this scheme was provided in Chapter Two. The justification of using this Book of Reference is to gain information in detail such as the background, objectives of the award scheme, procedure of selection, requirements and other important information that related to what is the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme policy. The decision only to use this Book of Reference as the main document source for this study is because it provides the detailed information about the scheme that could be considered sufficient for providing information to the reader and because it is the policy guideline which deals with the working lives of the GCs interviewed in this study.

#### **4.8. Documentary analysis**

This study is based primarily on interview data, but in order to gain a more complete picture of the context, documentary analysis was also undertaken. As mentioned earlier, this study used the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia produced by the Malaysia Ministry of Education (2006) as the main documentary source consulted in order to provide information about the context of the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme policy. Other documentary sources analysed were teachers' certificates and their biography books that provide information about the participants in this study.

The analysis of the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia occurred in three phases. At first, the researcher read the information in the document about the policy starting from the background, the objectives of why the government introduced the policy and other information such as requirements and the criteria for application. At this stage, all the background information was presented in chapters one and two of the study. Through this phase, the researcher got a full understanding of the Government's view of the scheme through the detailed information given in the book. Strauss and Corbin (2008) suggest that the first step in any analysis of data is to go through reading materials from the beginning to the end by taking notes, underlining and doing some writing. The same process was used in this study where the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia was used and referred to from the beginning until the end of the study.

During the second phase of documentary analysis, the researcher started to look closely at the objectives of the policy which was introduced by the government but was subsequently seen as causing more stress as opposed to rewarding those high performing and excellent teachers, even though the award was actually aimed at motivating teachers to perform at a high level and encourage them to contribute their knowledge, skills and experience to other teachers. During this phase, the researcher

analysed the way(s) in which the term ‘high performing’ and ‘excellent teacher’ were used in the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia and considered what type of contributions were being expected by the government from those teachers who were appointed as GCs.

The researcher then put the analysed information in chapter two of the study. The result of the phase is much more on the information and some analysis of the Malaysian Excellent Teacher scheme such as definition, characteristics of Excellent Teacher and competency assessment. In addition, the researcher also do some comparisons study of document between GCM award with other country like Scotland Chartered Teacher and Teacher Advancement System (TAP).

#### **4.9. The terms ‘high performing’ and ‘excellent teacher’ in Malaysia Excellent Teachers award scheme (GCM)**

Like many other countries, Malaysia has also introduced teachers’ incentives to award teachers with good performance. The Guru Cemerlang (Excellent Teacher) promotion was introduced in 1993 by the Malaysian Ministry of Education as an award for teachers who are deemed to be excellent in their performance. The rationale for giving this award is due to the progression of teacher promotion. In the past, teachers who fitted the criteria were promoted to the post of principal, vice principal or education officer. In getting promoted, the teachers moved away from teaching in the classroom to doing administrative work. This meant teachers who were dedicated and expert in their subject matter were lost in the system; their skills and talents in the classroom were inaccessible due to their promotion. The awarding of Guru Cemerlang title was designed to ensure that even if the teacher is promoted, he/she will still be teaching and his/her knowledge and expertise can be used by the school and the schools in the district.



The Malaysian Ministry of Education has defined the ‘excellent teacher’ as a teacher who is regarded as expert in their field of teaching and subject matter. The teacher is also a person who has given contributions of their knowledge and skills to other teachers in order to help improve the quality of teaching and learning. An excellent teacher is a teacher who dominates and fully appreciates his/her subject content and his expertise. He/she is a very resourceful person who is wise in managing time, source materials and learning devices and has the ability to identify students’ learning needs and problems and is capable of setting follow-up programs for students, besides being knowledgeable and skilful in the field of information technology and communications. Besides such knowledge and skills, the teacher also possesses certain characteristics to be excellent by having admirable personality and skills and he / she adheres to school ethic and public service ethic and is sensitive and mindful to students’ needs. (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006 pg 6).

The teacher has the ability to increase learning outcome and develop students’ potential in accordance with Malaysian Education National Philosophy. The teacher is also a teacher with a clear vision, proactive, has initiative, and is responsive and innovative in the framework of an educator. With such characteristics, it would be helpful for the teacher to generate new ideas and implement them to improve the quality of education.

The analysis of the document was further done in relation to the competency assessment for those who are interested in applying for this award. Compared to other similar awards like Scottish Chartered Teacher and The Teacher Advancement System (TAP) in United States, the Malaysian Excellent Teachers are evaluated in different ways before they are given the award. Some aspects which are included in the assessment are annual performance appraisal report, evaluation report by a panel of evaluation and monitoring and an interview report (for special grades only). It means that the teacher is not required to finish or accomplish certain module or

certificates like the policy used in Scotland Chartered Teacher and the Teacher Advancement System (TAP). Another difference is that Malaysian school teachers are only required to have bachelor degree in education (most of these teachers teach at secondary schools) and certificate of teaching for diploma holder (most of these teachers teach at primary schools).

One of the aspects evaluated in the teacher competency assessment is teacher professional competency that determines if the teachers have the capability to manage, exploit and disseminate their knowledge and experience in their fields of specialisation and their pedagogy to enhance student achievement, and if they are well versed in their approaches or education strategies and are sensitive on policy and current educational issues. The teachers are also able to be involved in the community and able to contribute their expertise in and outside of their institutions, can manage student achievement records and information for follow-up purposes. They are encouraged to make contributions in non academic field, in extra-curricular activities and student affairs related activities besides teaching. They are also evaluated in their personality in which they are supposed to have appropriate dress style, be punctual, friendly, decent, responsible, confident, trustworthy and have good communication skills including self development, like always striving to enhance the level of professionalism through academic programmes, professional involvement like forum, seminar and other knowledge councils.

Other aspects mentioned in the document are about teachers' characteristics for the excellent teachers such as having knowledge and skill in their teaching subject, admirable personality and the ability to increase learning outcome and develop students' potential and also capable of generating new ideas and implementing the ideas to improve the quality of education. From the list of characteristics that were mentioned in the GCM award policy, it could be said that all the characteristics can be achieved by the teachers with knowledge, skills and support that they have received from peers, school and government and through the process of continuous

learning applied by the teachers. Although some of the characteristics mentioned are quite hard to measure whether the teacher possesses and apply it in their work, observation by school and school inspectorate would be welcome for teachers' improvement.

From the analysis of the document, it was found that the reward is given to those who possess knowledge in their subject matter or the subject that they teach, skills in teaching, and they have certain characteristics such as appropriate dressing style, punctual, friendly, decent, responsible, confident, trustworthy and have good communication skills. Besides the characteristics above, the teacher should also be able to contribute to other related activities such as involvement in the community and ability to contribute in and outside the institution they are representing and at the same time improve their abilities by attending forums and seminars. From the document, it could be said that rewarding those teachers who have shown excellent performance is an incentive for teachers to increase their performance as they are not only evaluated on their knowledge and skills but also on their attitudes.

#### **4.10. Analysis of data**

At the third phase, the researcher started looking at the interview data of what the teachers reported and then compared them with the information written in the book about the objectives of the GCM policy and the roles and responsibilities of GC teachers after they received the GC award. At this phase, the researcher did check what teachers reported and what is written in the policy document. In order to analyse the document, the researcher used data collection of what teachers reported based on the three research questions in this study. The research questions are

1. How did the teachers perceive changes in their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?

2. How did the teachers perceive changes in their teaching strategies in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?
3. How did the teachers perceive improvement in their contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?

For research question number 1, teachers were asked whether changes happen in their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme. What teachers reported then would be compared to characteristics in the document, characteristics that the Government intend the GC teachers to have.

For research question number 2, teachers were asked whether changes happened in their teaching strategies after receiving the GCM award scheme. What teachers reported then would be referred to the document on several teaching strategies that the Government wanted the GC teachers to apply in their classroom.

For research question number 3, teachers were asked whether changes happened in their contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme.

In sum, by looking at and analysing the document of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia Scheme Award, some of the issues which were mentioned by the Malaysian Government in the document for examples CPD and teachers' capability in becoming a role model and a resourceful person and the importance of continuing professional development are important aspects for maintaining teacher quality in

Malaysia. The document which acts as a blue print by the government is an important point of reference.

#### **4.11. Other documentary sources**

As mentioned above, the researcher also analysed other documentary sources like teachers' certificate and biography books. During the interviews, teachers were encouraged to show their work and contributions and some teachers showed their biography books and certificates that they had received. The researcher used these sources as the supporting data with what teachers reported. For example, when the teacher reported that she / he had won certain competition, a document was shown as a proof.

#### **4.12. Participants**

The principal data of the study were from the interviews conducted with ten Guru Cemerlang Malaysia that were selected as participants of this study based on recommendations from the State School Inspectorate officer. The researcher then got these teachers' agreement to be involved in the study. All of them were Guru Cemerlang Malaysia teaching at Malaysian primary and secondary schools. The selection process started by the researcher going through the name list of Guru Cemerlang obtained from Guru Cemerlang Malaysia website, State Education Department and State School Inspectorate officers. After getting several names of the GC teachers, the researcher contacted the schools where the selected teachers were teaching to invite them to become involved with the study and also to get permission from the schools' administrators. Some of the teachers who were contacted were moved or transferred to other schools and some were involved with meetings or took leave, thus requiring time for the researcher to get the teachers involved.

This study had three research questions which aimed to explore teachers' perception of changes they made on three variables namely teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and teachers' contributions to others after receiving the GCM award. Since the focus was only on teachers' perception, this study would only provide data collected from the teachers, not their school heads or peers. The study also did not intend to investigate the impact of the changes on students' academic performance. Thus, besides data provided from the interviews with the teachers, there was no need to collect data from other sources. However, if there is a need for future research to compare perceptions between teachers and their superiors and peers, the data may involve interviews from other sources.

As all schools in the fourteen states in Malaysia are under the Ministry of Education, they observe the same rules and regulations and the teachers follow the same process and procedures of teacher training before becoming teachers at Malaysian public schools. These teachers also have to go through the same procedures before they can become Guru Cemerlang. Hence, after a series of discussions with the supervisor, the researcher decided to choose participants from the state of Kedah, a small state located in the North of Peninsular Malaysia. The decision was also made because the researcher only had three months for data collection and school semester break was near at that time.

In Malaysia, the administration of education is a centralized system. There are four levels of administrative structures which are:

- a. Federal level which is administered by the Ministry of Education Malaysia
- b. State level which is administered by the State Education Department
- c. District level which is administered by the district Education Offices, and
- d. School level which is administered by school heads.

The Ministry of Education is the main body which is responsible to train and provide new teachers to all the states through the State Education Department. The State

Education department will then submit the names to the District Education Offices which will finally decide the schools for these new teachers to be posted. Since the education system in Malaysia is governed by a centralized agency that is the Ministry of Education, equality of teachers all over the country is assured

In the context of this research, since all the teachers throughout the country are subject to the same procedures before they can get the GCM award, the researcher is of the opinion that the selection of the participants from only one state, which is Kedah, should not affect the findings of the study.

The teachers who participated in this study were from two different cohorts/batches of the Guru Cemerlang policy. The first batch came from the group of teachers who were appointed from 1994 to 2006, whereas the second batch comprised teachers who were appointed from 2007 to 2009, after the government increased the quota of Guru Cemerlang by 300%. The difference between the two cohorts is that the first batch of teachers was selected and appointed by the school principals / head teachers and went through classroom observation by both their school administrators and School Inspectorate officers, whereas the second group had to fill in specific application forms before going through classroom observation done by the school Principals / Head Teachers who would then propose the names of qualified teachers to the School Inspectorate to be considered. The difference mainly lies in the process that these teachers needed to go through and looking at the process, it can be said that the second cohort went through an easier process before being appointed Guru Cemerlang as compared to the first cohort. However, this study does not intend to explore the different selection process the two cohorts went through. For this reason, all the data which were collected for the research were analysed only based on the research questions and the answers from the interviews.

#### **4.13. Research questions**

The objectives of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia (GCM) policy according to the Book of term of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia (2006) are to acknowledge teachers who are excellent in their field or subject, improve the quality of teaching, promote Guru Cemerlang as role model to other teachers and at the same time to enhance schools' excellence by utilising the experience and expertise of the Guru Cemerlang. These objectives led to the development of the research questions for this study on the exploratory research about how financial incentive given to teachers in the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia policy could influence teachers to improve the quality of their performance by changing their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award. The research questions for this research are;

1. How did the teachers perceive changes in their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award?
2. How did the teachers perceive changes in their teaching strategies in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award?
3. How did the teachers perceive improvement in their contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award?

#### **4.14. Instruments**

This study investigated Malaysian Excellent Teachers' perception of their motivation to change and their efforts to improve the quality of teaching after receiving Malaysian Excellent Teacher Award. Thus, the instruments of the study were developed based on the aim of the study. During the development of the research



questions, the researcher consulted with the supervisors of this research to seek their opinion and enrichment for the development of the instruments.

The researcher developed an interview protocol that contains five portions. The questions relate to the teachers' experience, starting from their entry to the teaching profession until they have become Excellent Teachers. The questions included teachers' experience, subject teaching, why the teachers applied for the Guru Cemerlang Award Scheme, where teachers received the information about the scheme. Questions then move to the next section that asks about changes in three areas of study: about change in teachers' attitudes, teachers' teaching and teachers' contribution after receiving the Guru Cemerlang Award Scheme policy and the transformation from non GC to become GC. In summary, the questions are as shown below;

- a. Teacher training (to explore how the teacher perceives their experience at the teacher training college)
- b. Family background
- c. Teachers' experience at teacher training college
- d. Teachers' experience at the beginning of service and before getting the GC award
- e. Teachers' experience at the beginning of their appointment as GCs. The questions explored why teachers applied for the GCM Award and where they received the information from.
- f. Teachers' perceptions of change in three area of study: changes in teachers' attitudes, changes in their teaching strategies and teachers' contributions after receiving the Guru Cemerlang Award

The qualitative research study instruments were developed based on the research questions through semi-structured interviews (the interview schedule is provided in an Appendix). The selection of interview questions was done based on the three research questions. For example, the first research question is "How did the teachers

perceive the changes in their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award?” So, during the interview, the participants were asked how they perceive the changes in their attitudes after receiving the GCM award. All the interviews were recorded and the participants were not required to give specific answers as they were given the chance to answer the questions based on their understanding of the concept of “attitudes”.

The second interview question was based on the second research question: “How did the teachers perceive changes in their teaching strategies in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award?” For this question, the researcher asked the participants to inform her about the changes they made in their teaching strategies after receiving the GCM award.

Finally, for the third research question of “How did the teachers perceive the improvement in their contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award?”, the researcher asked the participants to share about the changes that they saw in their contributions to other teachers in their own schools and in other schools after receiving the GCM award. They were also asked about whether they contributed their efforts at the school, state or national level.

The interview questions which were developed to answer the research questions began with questions on demographic information, teachers’ backgrounds and teaching experience. Each interview took between one hour and one and a half hours. Even though all the questions were standardised to all participants, the length of the interview depended on the answers given by the teachers. The findings for this study were based on the perception of all the participants, based on their understandings and interpretations of the questions asked during the interviews.

#### **4.15. Pilot study**

Carrying out a pilot study has its advantages even though it may require more time and possibly money. If the research uses standard interview questions that have already been used in other previous studies, it means that the researcher has an option of not carrying out a pilot study. However in this research, the researcher considered it necessary to do a pilot study because the researcher used interview as a data collection strategy and the researcher collected the data from outside the country that is from Malaysia. This technique requires time, money and energy. At the same time, the instrument was designed by the researcher and it was never used in any other research, so it is very important to run a pilot study especially because the pilot study might contribute new ideas to improve the research in unexpected ways. The pilot study would also help the researcher to identify relevant and important questions for the interview. There should be no room for unimportant questions that are not related to the main objective of the study. Thus it is very beneficial to run the pilot study before starting the real field work as suggested by Wengraf (2001).

Some of the benefits of conducting the pilot study are it could improve the concept, design, instruments and procedure of the primary study (Anderson & Burns, 1989). It will also help the researcher to develop and standardise the interview questions for the real study. Sproull (1988) stated that a pilot study is also one of the actions which would be taken by many researchers before doing the actual research. It is a preliminary trial of research with several reasons such as consideration of time, money and to test the construction of interview questions. Normally, the pilot study is conducted in a short time and by using fewer participants. The pilot study is conducted before the actual interview to assess the various research procedures prior to the major study in order to modify or estimate the elements that are relevant to the study such as:

1. It helps researcher in determining if the research questions are appropriate for the actual study
2. It provides information which may help the researcher with interpretation of the review of literature and related information
3. It helps researcher to improve or modify interview questions

### **Findings of Pilot study**

The pilot study was conducted with two teachers who received the Guru Cemerlang Award. The teachers who participated in the pilot study were friends of the researcher who volunteered to take part in the research. The researcher treated the interview session like the actual interview by first informing the teachers the objective of the interview and providing them with consent letters. Below are the findings of the interview.

First, the teachers were asked the demographic-related questions such as questions about their age, area of expertise, their roles and responsibilities at the present school and year of teaching experience. In answering the questions, the teachers provided the information about their teaching experience as asked by the researcher.

The researcher then asked the teachers about the people who encouraged them to apply for the Guru Cemerlang award scheme and where they received the information about the scheme from. Their answers showed that their decision to apply for the Guru Cemerlang award came after they were approached by their school administrators, encouraged by family members and after they learnt that the award was an opportunity for career advancement.

The findings from the pilot study showed that teachers reported that changes did happen in the three areas of study;

- a. changes in teachers' attitudes after receiving the Guru Cemerlang award

- b. changes in teachers' teaching strategies after receiving the Guru Cemerlang award
- c. changes in teachers' contribution after receiving the Guru Cemerlang award

### **Amendments from the pilot study**

After the interview sessions, the researcher analysed the findings to check the interview questions. The researcher decided that the teachers had reported what was intended to be explored in this study that is about whether teachers who received the Guru Cemerlang award scheme have increased their motivation to change in three areas.

After analysing the findings, the researcher consulted with the supervisor for the study. The researcher then decided to continue and followed all the items in the interview questions that had been initially developed.

### **4.16. Data Analysis**

Participants were selected then approached via phone where they were invited to participate in the study. All the interviews were done in the Malay language and lasted from 1 to 1 hour 30 minutes each. All the recorded interviews were then transcribed manually through Microsoft Word Office and then analysed using NviVo version 8 software. The framework for analysis initially consisted of the themes and sub-themes of comes from the interviews. For themes arising in this analysis that were not identified, new categories were constructed. To ensure reliability and avoid interpreter bias, a proportion of data was analysed by others such as the teachers themselves through email and peers check. Some teachers in this study have reply back the researcher, whereas some are not reply the email from the researcher.

#### **4.17. Reliability and validity in transcribing texts of conversation analysis**

One of the concerns in social research is not only about descriptions of human life but also the social world that has been described by researchers. It means that the researchers do not only represent the data that have been collected, they should also represent the reality of the events as near as they can be based on the findings (Hammersley, 1992). Researchers need to reach the possibility of the validity of all findings in the qualitative research and to recognise that it could be represented in many ways, because there is no single ways of analysing texts or transcribing interviews (Perakyla, 1998) and moreover, issues of reliability may not be too serious and in some cases may not apply in conversation analysis context (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Although there is no such fixed way in transcribing and presenting text, there is a concern for all researchers to adhere to objectivity in providing such information of their studies.

#### **4.18. Analysing the data**

All the interviews were audio-taped and the researcher also took down some notes during the interviews to ensure all the non-verbal interaction and details which were not picked up by the audiotape would be documented. Some of the teachers showed some supporting documents to the researcher that helped the researcher in the process of transcribing the interviews. As most of the interviews lasted for one and a half hours, the researcher had to take around five to six hours to transcribe each interview.

## **Coding**

The process of data coding in this study was done in two ways: manually and electronically. Everything was done manually at first. After finishing with all the interviews, the researcher started the process of coding all the interview data into general themes based on the three research questions i.e changes in attitude, changes in teaching strategies and changes in teachers' contributions. The researcher then highlighted information that was reported by the participants.

Some of the information could not be grouped into any categories, thus were put into sub-categories until the researcher transferred them into a word document

The next stage of the coding process involved the transfer of all the coding into a word document. At this stage, the coding was still done according to individual interviews. The cross analysis of what had been coded for individual participants only began when the researcher used Nvivo software.

The researcher found some advantages of using Nvivo software because the programme helped the researcher in building a database for all the participants before all the data could be grouped. This made it easier for the researcher to put all the coding into different family / group of categorisation. The process of coding using the Nvivo software still requires the researcher to do it manually first, but it saved time and made things easier for the researcher to move to the next stage.

Analysis of the interview data occurred in three phases.

- In the first phase, all the ten interviews were transcribed verbatim in Malay language. Then the researcher read all the interview transcripts for the first round. As the interviews were conducted in Malay, they were then translated into English by a translator. The translator in this study is a secondary school teacher who has 16 years of experience in teaching English as a second

language in Malaysian secondary schools and has experience in translating interviews or documents from Malay language to English.

- At the second phase, the researcher read all the English transcripts of the interviews to make sure that the nature of the content was retained in the translated version. The researcher then identified the parts where changes needed to be made and referred to the translator for corrections because after all, for the research, all analysis and coding would only refer to the English version before the teachers were categorized into different groups. During this process, the researcher manually highlighted all the keywords with different colours and then traced the data using a word processor before copying them to the Nvivo software which means that work is done through manual coding before it is transferred to electronic coding. The next process of tracing the themes and categories was done using Nvivo. The researcher put the data into three big categories of changes based on the research questions one: teachers' perceptions on the changes in their attitudes, research question two: teachers' perceptions on the changes in their teaching practices, and research question three: teachers' perceptions on the changes in their contributions. All of the themes and categories were analysed using NVivo 8 software and after that were tabulated using Microsoft Word.
- In the third phase, the researcher started to do the cross analysis involving all ten teachers and categorized the events into three categories which are teachers perceived changes in their attitudes, teaching practices and contributions. At the same time, the researcher kept on reading all the interview transcripts and continued with the coding process. Based on the interviews with the teachers, it became apparent that they belonged to two different groups: teachers who had the perception that they had made some changes to their attitudes, teaching practice and contributions after receiving the GCM award and teachers who thought that they maintained their existing position after receiving the award. After some consideration, the researcher



decided to only highlight the changes that occur after the teachers received the GCM award scheme.

During the analysis, the researcher used some supporting documents such as the Excellent Teacher terms of reference Booklet, government circulars, newspaper reports, journals and biography books. The Excellent Teacher: Terms of Reference Booklet was used as the main source to provide the information about the GCM policy starting from the background, objectives and characteristics of GC teachers. Translation was done on the contents of the booklet as it was written in the Malay language. Besides the booklet, the researcher also referred to other sources such as government circulars, newspaper articles, journals and biography books to find more information about the GC policy in Malaysian context. Most of the information from these sources was included in the first and second chapter of this study.

- *Categorisation*

The categorisation stage is important in bringing meaning to the overall data as this is when the themes were identified and then grouped into different categories. The process required the researcher to re-read the data again and again in order to trace common patterns, behaviours and phrases used by the participants during the interviews. Some data could easily be categorised into certain categories but some data which could not be categorised were first labelled under subcategories. The process continued until all the themes were categorised under main or sub-categories.

Below are some examples of the process

Categories	Main categories	Sub categories
Teachers' attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time management</li> <li>• Positive thinking</li> <li>• Continuous learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Striving for excellence and</li> <li>• Never giving up if failing in achieving objectives or targets.</li> <li>• Arriving early at school and leaving late</li> <li>• Completing tasks in good time</li> </ul>
Teaching activities	More creative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing modules Innovation</li> <li>• Activities outside classroom</li> <li>• Using multiple techniques</li> </ul>
Teachers' contribution	becoming a consultant knowledge sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing paper work, work sheets</li> <li>• Overcoming student problem</li> </ul>

Table 4 – 1: Categorisation of data analysis

The researcher managed to do this by using the Nvivo software which has the ability to record these main and sub categories. The software had also helped the researcher to combine all the data and then interpret them by cross analysing them based on all the categories and sub-categories identified using the software earlier.

Data analysis is very important for researchers to think, decide and organize data in order to come to a concrete conclusion regarding the phenomena of this research. The researcher used reduction process by transferring the information from linear to non-linear format and vice versa. This reduction process helped the researcher to summarize long paragraphs of writing into short and precise information. The process was referred to as the *“process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming the raw data that appear in written-up field notes”* (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.23). This process occurred throughout the whole process of qualitative research, starting from the point when the researcher decided

what to do, what to put in the conceptual frame work, how to collect the data, and what research questions to use and who the participants would be. This reduction process was done continuously throughout the process of *writing summaries, coding, teasing out themes, making clusters, making partitions and writing memos* (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p.23).

***a. Reliability of conversation analysis***

Reliability is defined as “the degree to which the finding is independent of accidental circumstances of the research” (Kirk & Miller, 1986, p.20). It means that during transcribing the data findings, researchers should be able to make sure that they are able to show or provide other people the ways they collect and analyse the data and also in certain ways adopt the methods used by other researchers who did studies on similar topic. In this study, the researcher has provided information about the beginning of the study starting from the application to conduct the research that obtained from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow and the Malaysia Ministry of Education. The researcher also described about the development of instruments of the study and the results of the pilot study until the actual of the research. The researcher also described how the themes and categories coming out from the findings in order to answer the research questions thus could be used by other researcher who intends to conduct the same study.

***b. Validity of conversation analysis***

Validity in social sciences research is about how could the researcher brings the descriptions of the phenomena or events of the study in the right ways (Perakyla, 1998) which means that if the researcher transcribes the conversation, it comes in their mind that it what is actually the respondent talked about (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

- Relevancy of categorisation- Age, gender, age, social class (Schegloff, 1991)
- Generalisation, based on the findings context only (Schegloff, 1991)

In this study, teachers' interviews were taped and recorded. All the interviews were transcribed manually in order to trace themes and categories to answer the research questions. After the transcribing was finished, the researcher showed and discussed with peers and emailed it to some of the participants who had provided email addresses to receive the copy of the transcription.

The participants' demographics was not a concern in this study as the research objectives was to investigate and explore teachers' perception of change in teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and contribution after received the GCM award scheme. The study is not intended to investigate any differences in relation to age or gender.

#### **4.19. Ethical issues**

This study involved teachers who taught in Malaysian public schools and it was compulsory for all researchers to obtain permission first from the University where the researcher studies. After permission was granted from the university, the researcher then obtained permission to conduct the study from the Malaysian Government through the Malaysian Education Planning of Research Development (EPRD). It is important and compulsory to receive permission before conducting any interviews with the teachers. In this study, permission was granted by the authority, and after that the researcher forwarded the permission to the State Department of Education, District Office and school principal / head teachers before meeting the teachers and conducting the interviews.

Before the interview started, all the participants were given the consent letter that informed them about the study and at the same time the researcher provided further explanation about it. The researcher also offered to send the transcript of the interviews to all participants.

#### **4.20. The concept of insider researcher**

There are two trends of study in the first half and second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which saw two differences which Mercer (2007) described first as a trend which involved a researcher doing research or study outside of their topic, interest or background such as the study about other races or culture, whereas the second trend of research involved a researcher doing research about a topic which he or she was familiar with and was already exposed to such as a research about his or her culture or ethnic background (Hockey, 1993). The type of research thus creates the distinction between insider and outsider (Merton, 1972) where an insider researcher could be defined as someone who shares a particular characteristic such as gender, ethnicity or culture with the research participants, whereas an outsider researcher could be defined as someone who does not share the same knowledge and any of the characteristics that were mentioned above (Mercer, 2007).

In this study, I am considered to be an insider researcher because I bring my experiences as a teacher to explore the issue of the impact of incentives on teachers' performance. Before I started this study, I had a previous teaching experience at a secondary school for nine years and was exposed to the GCM award scheme. Having such background as a teacher, I felt that I had some advantages in understanding the documentation and had more confidence during the interview sessions.

There are debates about the issue of insider and outsider researchers, especially about the common dilemmas faced by researchers when doing research such as barriers to getting information about the issue under investigation not only from the participants, but also the “red tape” they have to overcome such as government policy and procedures that they need to go through (DeVerteuil, 2004). From that, many believe that an insider could gain more advantages if he or she is well informed about the topic and he or she would get more information from the participants in the research (DeVerteuil, 2004). With many barriers that can possibly hinder the success of research, particularly limited interactions from participants from different gender, race or religion (Shaffir, 1999), the insider researcher would have more advantages to understand the topic if he or she has the same background or shares common values or experiences with the participants.

In contrast, there are also some debates on the objectivity of the study carried out by an insider researcher such as the question of “prejudice” and “truth” in their research (Simmel, 1950). It could be argued that the insider researcher may be influenced by his similar background to the participants and as a result, it would influence the interpretations of data in his study. Besides that, some argue that the researcher might be biased in his report (Schulz, 1971) as he might be heavily influenced by his past experiences regarding the topic as compared to an outsider researcher who has no prior background information about the topic making him more objective when reporting about the things the participants said during the research. However, many researchers including (Conant, 1968; DeVerteuil, 2004; Oakley, 1981) believe that an insider researcher would have an advantage if the study is about culture and way of life of certain community because he will understand the participants more and the interview process would be smoother when the participants and the researcher are of the same gender or share common values or experiences (Oakley, 1981).

The view was supported by (Drever, 1995) who said that in order for a research to be successful, the researcher must be aware of the fact that any information the participants would give him depends on what the participants think about the researcher and what they think the research is (Drever, 1995). This means that the researcher himself is an important factor in deciding about how much information he would get from the participants. In this study, I bring my previous experience of working as a secondary school teacher for 9 years and her background knowledge of the GCM award. With the background knowledge about the award and the problems faced by teachers in school, the researcher found that she could understand the issues regarding the GCM policy voiced by the participants during the interviews. The experience of working with several GCs previously helped the researcher to understand the changes all the participants went through after they received the award.

In most of the interviews conducted during this study, the participants 'appeared to be at ease' with the researcher after she introduced herself to them. This was because many of the participants had heard about the researcher's previous school or knew someone from the school. It helped to create a good rapport between the researcher and the participants as they might have felt that they were talking to a friend's friend. Knowing that the researcher used to work as a teacher, the participants were very open with her about many issues. They were not hesitant to talk about issues which were not asked by the researcher as many of them appeared to feel that the researcher could help to make their voice heard by other teachers, school heads and also the government.

The researcher is of the opinion that her 9 years experience in the teaching field has influenced some of the teachers to be more open when answering her questions during the interview, thus helping her in understanding more about the changes they went through after being GCs. According to McClintock, et. al (2003) research should be able to affect the researcher in a positive way. This study helped the

researcher to be aware of the importance of self and professional development. All the data and report from the participants have helped the researcher to motivate herself to be an excellent individual.

Hammersley (1993), however stressed that the element of an insider and outsider researcher should not shadow other factors as the concept and the definition are still very vague. For them, both insider and outsider research have their own advantages and disadvantages. In addition, besides ethnic groups and culture, there are many other important factors that would guarantee the success of research. Most of the time, it is not the researcher, insider or outsider, who determines the outcomes of a research but the focus and the approach are equally important (Mercer, 2007).

In summary, whether being an insider or outsider researcher, one must be able to be objective in reporting the information in the study. A researcher should always use the advantage she / he has as an insider or outsider researcher to gain as deep an understanding as possible of the topic of his study.

#### **4.21. Summary**

This chapter provided information about qualitative research, the justification to apply it in the study and the methodological process of conducting the study. This study explored whether (financial) incentives influence teachers' motivation to improve their performance in promoting the quality of teaching and learning through changes in their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to other teachers. A qualitative approach was adopted for the research because the focus of the study concerned the personal experience of teachers after becoming Guru Cemerlang where they needed to share their deepest feelings, the values they lived by and their personal understanding of the meaning of being teachers.



The following chapter will present the findings of the research questions about teachers' changes in attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award and the challenges of the implementation of the policy in Malaysian context. It will provide the findings from the interview data of this research.

## CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH FINDINGS

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings from teachers' interviews. The aim of this study was to investigate whether or not the implementation of GC award could be said to have motivated teachers to improve the quality of their teaching and to increase teachers' contribution to the professional community within or outside of their school. This study tries to explore the reported changes of improvement in teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and the types of teachers' contribution to help other teachers from their expertise, knowledge and skills in improving the quality of teaching and learning after they received the GCM award. This chapter is divided into seven sections, started with introduction and following with the synopsis of the ten participants in this study.

### 5.2 Participants of the study

Figure X below gives an overview of the teacher interviewees. For a fuller description refer to Appendix.

Teacher	Gender	Level of education	Years taught	Years appointed GC
Roby	M	Degree & Master	24 years	2008
Syed	M	Degree	11 years	2008
Munir	M	Degree	29 years	1997
Ahmad	M	Degree	32 years	2009
Noor	F	Degree & Master	16 years	2008
Siti	F	Degree & Master	27 years	2003
Yati	F	Degree	28 years	1997
Rosie	F	Degree & Master	20 years	2008
Melur	F	Certificate	30 years	2003
Lina	F	Degree & Master	28 years	1998

Figure 5-1: Participants of the study synopsis

The next sections will continue with discussion of all of the research questions for this study. This study is built around three research questions that asked how the teachers perceived changes in their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award. The study found seven categories of changes that teachers perceived to have occurred after receiving the award. The categories are changes in teachers' time management, positive thinking, continuous learning, role model, commitment and accountability, physical appearance and their personal values.

The third section discusses the results of the second of the research questions on how did the teachers perceive the changes in their teaching strategies in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award. For this section, it presented the findings of teachers' perceived changes that occur in their teaching strategies after receiving the GCM award. It was categorised into three areas of changes; changes in using multiple strategies of teaching instruction, changes in applying reward and punishment and lastly changes in teachers' targets and planning.

The fourth section discusses the results of the research question on how the teachers perceived the improvement in their contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award. The last section provides a summary to the chapter.

### **5.3 Research question one**

This section discusses the results of the first research question on how the teachers perceived the changes to their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award?

### *Time management*

- Arriving early at school and leaving late
- Completing tasks in good time

Five out of ten teachers reported changes in their time management after receiving the GC award and becoming a GC. Lina, Rosie, Siti, Noor, Munir, Syed reported becoming more effective in the way they managed their time to complete tasks before the due date. Teachers also reported spending extra time finishing their work by staying on late at school and also reported on always staying late not only to finish their job, but to make it more perfect. Lina for example, reported that she makes sure she comes early to school and stays on late to finish tasks given to her to ensure that she is a good role model as a GC. She also reported that she always manages her time well because she needs to commute a distance from her house and at the same time has also been appointed as a school warden. Lina said:

“I needed to travel a lot and I was also involved in the school management. I had less time for myself. In fact, school has been my priority nowadays. My interest comes second. I feel that the title brings along with it a very high expectation from people around you. When I was first promoted to this post, I came very early to school and was one of the last to go back home. Every task given, I made sure I finished it early. I made sure my Teaching Record Book is always updated. I felt like people were scrutinising every single thing I did and they expected perfection from me” - Lina-

Another teacher, Rosie, reported changes to her time management by making a habit of coming to work early. She reported that before received the GC title, she was not really concerned with that because she was sometimes caught in traffic and thought of it as not really important as long as she reached school and was not late entering the classroom.

“I make it a habit to come to school before 7.15 every morning. I know I must manage my time well” -Rosie-

Another teacher, Munir, reported on managing his time well because of demands to teach, go to meetings, seminars or talks. He also needs to be prepared with speech and related documents during his presentation, like power point presentation and teachers’ hand-outs. Becoming a GC needed more effective time management. As Munir stated:

“It really depends on my time management. Whenever time permits, almost every afternoon I give talks to students about answering exam question techniques and I also give in-house courses to teachers in a few districts in the Kedah state. That is what I meant by committing yourself to the post of GC and this is what makes us different from non GC teachers. Just imagine, before you give all these talks and courses, you must do the necessary preparation such as notes for the participants” -Munir-

### ***Positive thinking***

- Striving for excellence and
- Never giving up if failing in achieving objectives or targets.

Four out of ten teachers, Rosie, Syed, Roby and Siti perceived that changes had happened after receiving the GC award in the way that they think about school activities and all the jobs that they need to finish. For example, after becoming a GC, Rosie felt that she became more confident, especially in teaching. Now, especially after receiving the GC award, Rosie has become more positive and always tries to see everything in a positive way:

“I have become confident in my teaching and adopt positive thinking about whatever school programmes are planned by the administration. I used to find fault with everything the school did. Eventually I would carry out whatever I was asked to do but not without arguing first. Now I have changed my attitude. I see things from the positive side and I work very hard to achieve my school’s aspirations” -Rosie-

“As a GC, my motto has always been “positive mind leads to success. We must always think positive. Nothing is impossible even if the task is difficult” -Syed-

“When we hold the GC post, automatically we’ll strive for excellence in everything we do” -Syed-

### *Continuous learning*

- Self learning & exploration. Like to read more books or engage in professional development to increase knowledge and get exposed to up-to-date information
- Planning to study further (doctorate level)

Five out of ten teachers perceived changes in the way they adopted the concept of continuous learning after receiving the GC award and becoming GC. Munir, Noor, Melur, Siti and Rosie reported on perceiving the need to improve the quality of their teaching by increasing their knowledge, especially in subject teaching and becoming familiar with the latest knowledge and information by reading or attending professional development sessions. Some teachers perceived that being a GC requires teachers to promote excellence and to be more creative and innovative thus demanding that teachers master knowledge in subject teaching to become an effective teacher.

“As a GC, I have a clear vision and mission. I want to be a creative and innovative GC and always promote excellence to my students. How can I achieve my goal? The answer is continuous learning. For things I do not know, I always learn about them through reading or self exploration”  
- Munir-

“After becoming a GC, I am thinking of pursuing Doctorate study. I told myself that I was not going to stop there” - Rosie-

“When I pursued my Master’s study, I know it’s not going to be easy because I was also working at that time. I did it because I wanted to do it” -Noor-

### ***Commitment & accountability increased***

- hard working
- willingness to do extra or replacement classes
- don’t like to turn down task asked by school accepting invitations to contribution like giving talk, seminar

Nine out of ten teachers reported that changes had happened in their commitment after receiving GC award and becoming a GC. Munir, Rosie, Noor, Siti, Lina, Melur, Roby, Syed and Yati reported becoming more hard working, becoming willing to do extra or replacement classes, not liking to turn down tasks asked by the school and trying their best to manage time to make sure that they could accept invitations to make contributions, such as giving a talk, seminar or coaching other teachers or schools.

Teachers reported becoming more committed in their jobs. For example, Rosie makes sure that her students have something to do when she is not around for example if she asked by her school to attend a meeting inside or outside of school.

She aims to show that she is responsible towards her job and students and enjoys doing her job.

Nine out of ten teachers perceived fulfilling government and public expectations to be a struggle because

- People are expect GC to do a distinguished & excellent job
- A GC performance is always monitored/observed by people and school inspectorate

“If I need to attend outside events, I make sure I replace all those classes with my students. Sometimes I leave some worksheets with them so they can do something while I am not around. I also arrange some extra classes with them to cover topics that I think they need to work on. I enjoy doing it because unlike before, now I am doing it willingly. No one forces me to do it. I do it because I want to” - Rosie-

“I see some improvement in me but not too much. Whatever it is, I am well aware that I must make the effort to live up to the expectations of a GC” - Roby-

“When I became a GC, the way I do my job is much better than before. I give my every thing in whatever I do” -Syed-

“I do encounter some small problems especially when I have to carry out school programmes and need to sacrifice some of my precious time with my students. When that happens, I replace the classes or hold extra classes with them” -Syed-



### ***Role Model***

Nine out of ten teachers in this study, all except Ahmad, talked about being a role model of the good teacher with patience, and humility. As a GC, they perceived they should not be arrogant but should listen to other people's opinions regardless of their positions or ranks. GCs should also be role models of excellence in all aspects of teaching and behaviour. They also perceived that people around them would be watching them, thus they increased their efforts in improving quality in every task that they did. Teachers said that it will bring good impression of the GC title and so people would not assume that a GC is just the same as any other ordinary teachers.

Nine out of ten teachers perceived being role models for others as very important.

- Good communication with peers to build good relationship
- Good job performance especially classroom teaching.

“I am still working towards that. I need to be a role model to other teachers so that people will not have a wrong perception about GC. I make it a habit to come to school before 7.15 every morning. I know I must manage my time well. If I need to attend outside events, I make sure I replace all those classes with my students” -Rosie-

“People have a very high opinion on us. I see the title as a factor that controls my behaviour. I need to always show good examples to other people” - Melur-

“The GC post is a way of career advancement. I want to go further up and become a role model to my all non-GC. I want to be recognized for my excellent contributions” -Syed-

### *Changes in physical appearance*

One out of ten teachers perceived a change in physical appearance after receiving the GC award and becoming a GC. Roby perceived change in his physical appearance as he felt the responsibility to safeguard the GC title on behalf of other GC to look smart and become a role model to other teachers.

“I see a little bit of change. For example I want to always look good and smart in dressing. Whether I am wearing a cheap or expensive shirt, it doesn't matter. For me, what's important is that it brings a good impression of the GC title” -Roby-

### *Changes in inner / personal values*

Nine out of ten teachers perceived changes in their personal values after received GC award and becoming a GC, all except Ahmad. Some teachers perceived the GC award as career development and career advancement in their teaching career as Siti said:

“I was less apprehensive about things and much more confident. I don't feel like a passenger. I feel that even if people do not have a very high opinion about me, they still respect my opinion because I am a GC. As a GC I can do many things that I want to do.” -Siti-

Other teachers, Yati for example, reported applying to become lecturer at one of The Colleges of education in Malaysia, regarding it as advancement and a higher post than GC. Another teacher, Munir, explained that now he is holding the highest and maximum post for a teacher with “Jusa C” which makes him above the GC post and with higher pay than his school principal. He told that only with the GC award could he then receive the post.

Roby perceives that even as a teacher, there is still a way to move to a higher grade and position in the teaching career. He does not want to work as an administrator. The introduction of the GC scheme was a good thing for him as he can still teach in classroom but at the same time - his target was promotion without having to stop teaching. He is very happy and satisfied with what he has. After 24 years of hard work, he finally got promoted to a higher grade. The findings also found that teachers are reported to intend to further at doctorate level (Ph.D) and want to apply next scale of GC post, want to be a lecturer at the Government Teachers Training College, intention in applying for Form Six post that offer better post than GC and other teacher reported in applying for the “Jusa C” (maximum post for civil services (teacher career). Teachers also reported in planning to write a book about effective teaching and learning after retired as a GC and already received publisher

“I feel there is always room for improvement when it comes to my teaching and learning. I need to work on many aspects. If possible I want to compile everything and turn it into a book. I see lots of things that can be improved including how to have a more effective induction set in teaching. I have a lot to give and share” - Melur-

“I am satisfied with the promotion through this scheme. I felt appreciated and really want to double my efforts to become a good teacher, then I want to go to the next level of my service, to DG52.” - Roby-

For other teachers, Syed felt that becoming a GC made him better than before he held the title, as he said:

“When I became a GC, the way I do my job is much better than before. I give everything in whatever I do” -Syed-

In summary, this study found that teachers reported some changes had happened in their attitudes after they received the GC award. Teachers reported changes in their attitudes took place after becoming GC because GC award was regarded as motivation for teachers to change and at the same time to increase teachers' accountability with the title that they hold. GC, also known as Excellent Teacher, is not only a teacher who is recognised as possessing knowledge, expertise and skills in their subject teaching but also possesses positive attitudes such as being committed, dedicated, creative and highly motivated in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, striving for continuous excellence and promoting quality in teaching and learning.

#### **5.4 Research question two**

This section discusses the results of the second of the research questions on how the teachers perceived changes in their teaching strategies to promote the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award?

The findings show that seven new strategies were employed by the GCs in their teaching practices that they believed had a positive influence on students' learning. These new strategies are: creativity and using multiple techniques; application of reward and punishment; targets and planning; motivating students; good relationship with students; and, evaluation or reflection on the effectiveness of the techniques and methods of their teaching.

List of teachers' teaching practices changes after receiving the GCM award scheme:

##### ***More creative and willing to change to new techniques to improve teaching***

- Develop modules for difficult topics
- Innovation
- Doing activities outside classroom

- Using multiple techniques and developing teaching aids that can help students' understanding like singing, music, rewards and incentives

Seven out of the ten teachers perceived changes had happened in their attitudes towards improvement through applying different teaching strategies, after receiving the GC award and becoming a GC. Melur, Siti, Munir, Rosie, Roby, Syed and Lina reported becoming more innovative, hard working and creative to help students' learning. One of teachers, Roby, reported on doubling the usage of the internet in looking for support with teaching material and samples of examination. Although he already used the internet as one way of finding teaching material, the usage increased after becoming a GC. Other teachers, Melur for example, stressed the importance of changing to be more innovative after becoming a GC. Other teachers reported changes in attitudes towards the belief that they need to be more creative in teaching to improve students' learning and achievement, leading to the development of teaching modules, using the educational television channel, and newspaper cuttings.

“Every GC must do some innovations. Don't keep on using the same teaching aids, for example. We must always change" - Melur-

“I try to double the ICT usage, whether in classroom teaching or when I want to look for any related materials for my teaching aids. I try to improve my quality of teaching as far as I can. Of course, previously, I did spend some time surfing the Internet to find such information, but it was not as much as I do it now” - Roby-

### ***Changes in using multiple strategies in teaching***

- Create module for difficult topic, story, grouping, OHP, educational television channel, internet, exploring, drilling, more exercises, practice, newspaper and article cuttings.

The findings show that after receiving the GC award, teachers reported changes in their efforts in improving their teaching performances in their classroom teaching. Six out of ten teachers in this research, Syed, Yati, Munir, Lina, Roby and Rosie reported a perceived improvement in the quality of their teaching after receiving the GC award. Teachers perceived changes happened in their efforts to improve after receiving GC award. Teachers perceived changes occurred after becoming a GC in their teaching practices in that they become more professional in teaching, responsible towards job, and with a high commitment to teaching.

The new strategies that teachers applied included singing, creating a module for a difficult topic, use related stories in motivating students, grouping students depending on student abilities and achievement, using technology in teaching aids such as OHP and educational television channel, the use of the internet to find information on subject teaching, sample of test and examination question and used other alternative sources of knowledge through cuttings from papers, magazine and articles.

Lina reported that she changed a lot after receiving the GC award by applying a lot of approaches like using the OHP to explaining some concept or picture and to make sure that students could grasp what she taught. Other teachers is Munir who also increased in his creativity by using cuttings from papers, magazines and articles not only for his teaching subject but also to be used with other subjects that he displays behind the classroom and put in his mini library.

Another teacher, Roby, perceived an increase in the use of internet after receiving the GC award to find information and to search for samples examination question or exercise in his subject teaching

Yati is one of the teachers who perceived changes in using the concept of drilling, more exercises, grouping, exploring and practice so that it would help students to understand better, as she said:

“For those who can’t answer the questions, I would know his level of understanding. I used the exploring method in my teaching. They need to look for ways to find the answers by referring to textbooks, or modules. They must also do a lot of practices. I stress on the concept of drilling. If students don’t know how to answer a question; he should ask his friends about it. If his friends still can’t help him, then only he can come and see me. Some come straight away to me when they are stuck with any questions. I try to put them in groups. If no one in the group knows the answer, they can approach other groups to help them get the answer. I let them move around in my class. I would encourage them to look for the answer together” -Yati-

Syed, as one of the teachers that perceived changes in improving teaching, reported applying Take of Value (TOV), as one of the important things to monitor students’ achievement that could inform him which students need help and which students could be encouraged to get better result in their examination:

“After I became a GC, I realised that knowing students’ TOV is very important. Before this, I always saw it as something trivial. Knowing students’ TOV would help a teacher to know more about his students’ ability and performance. We can’t use the same approach to all students. I have 3 different modules for 3 different levels of students. I put a target for my students. I projected 40 students would score “A” and I reached the target. I always refer to my students’ TOV and it has proven to be an effective way to help my students perform well” -Syed-

### *Changes in applying reward and punishment in teaching*

- Intrinsic and Extrinsic

The research found that after receiving the GC award, teachers perceived changes in improving their teaching performances in their classroom teaching through using rewards. Three out ten teachers in this research, Yati, Lina and Melur perceived changes happened in the used of reward as one of techniques to change students' attitudes and increase students' motivation to do better in their learning. Teachers reported that the rewards that they used could fall under two categories, known as intrinsic and extrinsic. Non material rewards involve rewards such as encouragement or praise in motivating students. It also includes verbal and nonverbal rewards such as smiling, giving good marks, allowing student breaks or becoming involved with student activities. The material reward includes various gifts such as money, foods, stationery or hampers. Normally, these rewards would be given to encourage students to persist at learning activities and achieve their target.

The teachers in this research gave some reasons for the use of rewards such as to encourage students' participating in answering questions before the class finished to know whether students understood the topic that they learned that day. One of the teachers, Lina, reported that she had started using non material reward by praising and using encouraging words. She believed that through the techniques, it could lead to the positive student attitudes and motivation.

Melur reported using material rewards to motivate students, especially because she taught a remedial class and that she always needed to motivate students as most of them could not read and write. Melur created a token system that allowed students to exchange a certain amount of their tokens for small hampers. However, Melur also used punishment as one the teaching strategies that could improve students' attitudes. She believed that after becoming a GC, she always thinks about how to help students to change their negative attitudes regarding bringing books and stationery by



introducing a reward system and that she tried to improve student achievement in their reading and writing by providing them with small hampers to encourage students' learning.

Another teacher, Yati, also perceived changes in her way of using rewards with praise on how good her students look or how clever they are when they answer right questions or to receive students' attention. From her experience, some students do not like to ask the teacher if they do not understand because of the barrier between teacher and students. Teachers should know how to overcome that by praising or a little informal conversation before they start their teaching. Teachers should try to reward students if they do the right thing or finished their work and it would bring positive impact to the students' learning. Once students are comfortable with teacher, they will not hesitate to approach whenever they have problems in their studies.

“I do reward them but not by showering them with presents. I praise them when they do good things. I want them to know that I care about them. If students make noise, a non GC might just ask them to keep quiet” - Lina-

“I also prepare small hampers for my students. Whenever I notice they are a little bit down in motivation, I let them exchange the token for hampers”  
- Melur-

### ***Changes in having targets & planning***

- Targets and planning

Five out of ten teachers in this research Munir, Lina, Mrs. Melur, Rosie and Syed perceived that changes happened after they had received the GC award in terms of using targets and planning more seriously in their teaching. Teachers perceived that although they already did it before becoming GCs, they had not seriously realised its importance and effectiveness in improving students' learning. Some teachers

reported starting to plan all their teaching and learning activities or programme that they will do whether at the beginning of every year, weekly, monthly and yearly. Teachers stressed the importance of planning linked to their targets. Lina, for example, perceived that changes took place after she had received the GC award in that she began planning a lot of activities for her students in her classroom teaching. She started to plan as it would be proof that she did her job well as a GC and she perceived that planning is one of the ways that could help her to increase student understanding and that she could share what she was planning and implementing in the classroom with other teachers if it was successful and beneficial to other teachers to use it in their teaching.

Syed, one of the teachers, reported that planning positively affected his targets. As he had a list of target for his students, he needed to plan to achieve it. The target was not only for observation purposes or on paper only, but he tried his best to achieve it, as he stated:

“I set a target at the beginning of every year. Then I monitor my students’ performance. After their trial exam I check their results and decide on my next course of action. I work on improving their results. I take this thing seriously” -Syed-

Another teacher, Munir, stated that he had a target of what he wanted to achieve with his students, planning his teaching activities separately for each of classes that he taught differently. For example he listed the activities such as quizzes, motivational talks during the whole year, tests, and felt happy that he managed to run it with his students.

“Every year, I set my own target for all activities that I carry out from January to November in each class I taught” -Munir-

Rosie, stressed the change in her teaching after becoming a GC by realising the importance of setting a target of what she want to achieve in her teaching and how

many students that she targeted to achieve the standards that she wanted. Rosie reported in the interviews that she tried many ways to achieve her target by doing extra classes or providing a replacement if she missed her class when involved with outside activities or a meeting. She also conducted some extra classes for some difficult topics to increase students' understandings as she said:

“Now I set a target in my teaching and I do everything to achieve it”

-Rosie-

### ***Changes in increasing students' motivation***

- Using moral stories
- Inviting counsellor to give talk

Four out of ten teachers in this research, Lina, Yati, Melur and Syed reported that changes had happened in their teaching strategies after receiving the GC award and becoming a GC. Teachers reported realising the importance of motivation in increasing students' performance. After becoming a GC, the teachers perceived that they became more responsible in encouraging students to hard work in their learning and encouraging them to become involved with class activities.

One of the teachers, Lina, reported that she always motivates her students with related stories and examples of people who achieve victory with courage and hard working. She believes that sometimes pupils do not finish their home work not because they do not know but more because of low motivation and lack of encouragement from people near to them such as parents and teachers. She also motivates her students to behave in classroom with prophet stories that teach people to have good manners and respect each other. In the Islam religion, there are a lot of prophets' stories written in The Quran. Through the stories, Muslims are encouraged to become a good people and to follow what was taught by all the prophets. She also

asked her school to invite a counsellor or outsider to give talks for student motivation. As she said:

“We have to motivate them first. We can invite outsiders to give talks to them, or we can take them somewhere for a visit. We must always advise them to be better” -Lina-

“I motivate them a lot. Every time I catch students not paying attention or making noise in class, I give them some pep talk and explain to them how their actions can bring adverse effects to them and other people” -Lina-

Another teacher, Syed, also does the same things by inviting an outsider or counsellor to give talks on motivation to his school. He also adds different activities by taking students outside of the classroom to visit museums or local universities to encourage them to work hard to enter university in the future. He likes to advise his students that they can become successful and have same opportunities as other pupils outside if they try their best.

Melur, as one of teachers who perceived a change in improving student motivation after receiving GC award in that she perceived that the challenge that she faced teaching in remedial class was mostly being faced with the low motivation of students to learn. Melur reported that most of students in the remedial class came from poor families and rural areas and need more effective strategies to increase their interest to learn. She always motivates her students to hard work and improves. She not only used material such as hampers, gifts but also some advice.

“For students from remedial class, I first work on changing their attitude. They are generally lazy, not motivated to learn and the majority come from poor families. For them I use what I call the Economics Token. Students need to work out of their own will. I will not force them to do things because it

will not last long. I want them to adopt good attitude and keep it with them in their whole lives” -Melur-

In summary, the data relating to the second of the research questions found that teachers reported that positive changes happened in improving their teaching strategies after receiving GC award and becoming a GC. It suggests that teachers react to the GC award as an incentive to improve the quality of teaching by implementing effective teaching strategies. Teachers reported that the influence of the GC reward acted as a motivating factor in their efforts to improve students’ learning and achievement.

### **5.5 Research question three**

This section discusses the results of the research question on how the teachers perceived the improvement in their contributions to colleagues in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award?

Teachers reported that their contributions were increased after becoming a GC. They reported some of changes in teachers’ contributions such as motivational talks, not only to teachers about effective teaching and learning, but also for students such as guiding them in techniques in answering examination papers and motivational talk about being successful students. Teachers also reported giving advice on school activities and school development and also acting as a consultant in knowledge, skills and experience sharing, paper work, work sheets, overcoming student problems, pedagogical techniques in teaching and class management. The contributions reported by teachers in this study are listed as below:

#### ***Changes in giving talk to student and teachers***

- Motivational talk to student and teachers
- Effective teaching to student and teachers

- Examination question techniques to student and teachers

Of the ten teachers in this research, a total of seven teachers perceived an increase in contributions after receiving the GC award in terms of motivational talks to students and teachers, effective teaching to student and teachers and examination question techniques to student and teachers.

Lina, Melur, Siti, Noor, Munir, Ahmad and Yati perceived that after becoming a GC, their contributions increased in giving talks inside and outside of their school, mostly motivational talks for both students and teachers, examination question techniques also both for students and teachers and about effective teaching to other teachers.

Yati reported that she perceived an increase in her contributions after receiving the GC award, being invited to give talks regarding teaching and learning, especially about effective teaching. She gave talks at school, district, state and national levels besides having to give talks for in-house courses at her school. She reported receiving too many invitations and needing to prioritise to requests from school principals or official letters from government to avoid leaving the classroom for too much time. However, she felt that some talks could be arranged on weekends; most of these talks were accepted and successfully done.

Ahmad reported an increase in his contributions, after receiving GC award, to his peers with more on professional help like a lot of talks to teachers and students on examination technique. He also managed to convince at least seven teachers in his school to apply for the GC post recently by playing a role in encouraging them to submit their applications.

Another teacher who perceived an increase in her contributions after receiving the GC award is Lina. Most of her contributions were talks on effective teaching to other teachers in her school or outside of her school, whether in the district, state or

national level. Other things she mentioned about her contributions were giving in-house training to all teachers and helping school management in planning and running school activities to help improve school performance and students' achievement. Lina believed that she maximized her potential and excellence in contributing to other teachers, school and students.

“I am always invited to give talks regarding Teaching and Learning especially effective teaching. I am involved at the district and state and national level” - Lina-

In the following, Munir also perceived the feeling of increasing his contribution after receiving the GC award in that he is always involved in giving talks whether in his school or at the national level. He also stressed the role that he played in teamwork with other GCs to give motivational talks to teachers and students.

“In my school, there is another GC besides me that we were work together to give motivational talks to other teachers to help them improve their job performance.” - Munir-

Noor also reported that she perceives increasing her contributions through giving talks about her subject expertise and teaching under the direction of The District Education Office.

“I felt better after becoming a GC; I can contribute more outside my school. I am always invited to give talks outside”. - Noor-

Melur also perceived an increase in contribution whether in school or at the national level in that she is always invited go out to other schools to give talks to teachers about helping students in 3M (students' skills in reading, writing and arithmetic). She

also received an instruction from the State Education Department to give talks to schools all over the state.

“I even have to give talks in other states such as Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan. I am also involved in programmes at national level” - Melur-

Syed perceived an increase in his contribution with talks about examination answering techniques to his colleagues which require him to prepare all the materials. During the talks, he shared all the techniques and approaches that he used in class that found to be effective, Syed believed that many of them were not aware of some of the techniques that prove effective and for him becoming a GC increased his confidence in giving talks as the GC title become the authority and space for him to get other teachers’ attention. At the same time, all GCs are required by school to conduct talks and training about effective teaching.

Siti perceived an increase in her contributions both inside and outside of school and that her colleagues always consult her about techniques and approaches in teaching. She is also involved in the construction and development of KBKK module (Creative Thinking Skill module) of her subject teaching for many other schools.

### ***Changes in giving advice and opinion***

- To school activities and school development

Five out of the ten teachers in this sample Munir, Syed, Yati, Siti and Lina perceived an increase in contributions in terms of giving advice and opinions after receiving the GC award.

Munir has reported becoming more active in his committee in his subject teaching and also working together with others in conducting and managing their students’ society. As a GC, his advice and opinion are most welcome in school formal



meetings. Munir has become a source of support not only in his own school, but in other schools as he is well known for excellent teaching and job performance.

Syed perceived changes in contributing to school development at formal school meetings or small communities that he is involved in his capacity as teacher and GC. He said in the interview that:

“Sometimes I give my opinion and suggestions regarding the things that I know and I share everything with everyone in the school” - Syed-

Another teacher, Yati reported on increasing contributing after receiving GC award and after that being appointed as one of the school administration. She reported on contributing ideas whenever there is a need to do so even though she is at a higher grade than her school principal, she thought that she is still subordinate and must be compliant. Especially with holding the GC title, her school always consults her regarding any programmes that the school is planning and wants to carry out. Some of the programmes which she advised were proceeded with by her principal without asking too many questions and she very proud and felt this reflected the high reputation of GC title that she holds.

Siti perceived an increase contributing in advice and opinion to her school activities because she was also appointed as school administrator. She is often asked about other things relevant to teaching and learning.

Lina also reported contributing more in advice and opinion for her school development after receiving the GC award and becoming a GC. She reported that one of the reasons for the promotion of GC is to increase teachers' contributions and she is involved with most of the schools' activities as she has become administer of one of the school committees.

### *Changes in becoming a consultant*

- Doing paper work, work sheets
- Overcoming student problem

Five of the ten teachers in this sample Melur, Munir, Yati, Lina and Siti perceived an increase in their contributions after receiving the GC award as a consultant in helping other teachers, for example related to teaching and learning to the preparation of paperwork for funding, school programmes or research papers. Some reported increasing contributions in helping teachers as a consultant in conducting effective teaching with pedagogical techniques in teaching, on class management and in overcoming student problems.

Melur perceived her contributions in sharing her knowledge and experiences in preparing students' worksheets and teaching aids. She put all her samples in her room and welcomes other to see or borrow it. Melur reported that although she was contributing before, her contribution has increased as people are more confident in her capability and excellent performance. She expands her view as:

“Even before I got this GC post, people always consult me when they have problems or need help. When I am appointed as a GC, people become more confident in me. People have a very high opinion of us” -Melur-

Lina reported that most of her contributions are talks on effective teaching to other teachers in her school or outside of her school, whether in the district, state or national level. Other things that she mentioned about her contributions are giving in-house training to all teachers and helping school management in planning and running school activities, and in helping to improve school performance and students' achievement. Lina believed that she maximized her potential and excellence in contributing to other teachers, schools, and students.

“I think I have served other people and I contribute a lot to the betterment of many schools. I feel that I make full use of my experience as a GC to help others. I helped a lot in making my previous school excellent. I have helped schools and students to reach excellence” - Lina-

Munir perceived an increase in his contribution to his colleagues especially on how to use PowerPoint in presentation. He perceived helping a lot of his colleagues to use computers in presentation, preparing for paper work using computer and also the most important things is on sharing his expertise with other teachers on pedagogical approaches.

Another teacher, Yati, also reported increase in helping other teachers in preparing paper work for project or research. As Yati already involved with a lot of activities and have many sample of hers' paper project, many her colleagues come to ask her to assist them. Some teachers are still new to paperwork, whereas some asked her to borrow it and asked her to teach them to write following the right format.

“As a GC, we are supposed to be the one other teachers turn to when they have problems in teaching and learning” -Yati-

### *Changes in knowledge sharing with other teachers*

- Knowledge, skills and experiences sharing in pedagogical techniques in teaching and class management

Six of the ten teachers in this sample Melur, Syed, Yati, Siti, Rosie and Munir perceived an increase in sharing their knowledge, skill and expertise with other teachers after receiving the GC award.

Melur perceived that she had many experiences in effective teaching techniques that she used and received from attending courses and is always sharing what she has with others teachers.

Syed perceived that after receiving the GC award, he was aware of the importance of sharing with other teachers the knowledge and skill that he had, that he used, and that he got from other sources like the internet and reading. He maximised the knowledge-sharing especially in his subject teaching panel and realised that many teachers still do not know a lot of teaching techniques because some of them are still new to the subject, new in their teaching career and some teachers are directed by the school to teach a subject that is not their subject expertise due to a shortage of teachers or to replace others who take maternity leave. He had many experiences in effective teaching techniques that he used

Another teacher who perceived increased in contributing to the knowledge sharing is Yati. She perceived that she had a lot of knowledge, skill and experiences that she want to share. After receiving GC award and becoming a GC, she became involved with a lot of activities up to the national level, giving talks, attending seminars and conferences and being involved with developing modules. She really contributes to the sharing of knowledge, and other teachers also always consult her if they have problem and need advice.

“As a GC I need to share my knowledge with others” - Siti-

“I am committee member of subject teaching. I share all knowledge that I learn from courses that I attend. With better teaching techniques, I help my school to achieve a better performance academically and at the same it helps to uplift the school’s name” -Rosie-

As GC, I share everything with other teachers about how I go about teaching my students in classrooms - Munir-

“I share my expertise and experience in teaching techniques at national level. As a GC, I feel that I am a notch higher compared to other teachers” - Melur-

“I make sure I help all my colleagues whenever they need my help. I also share my knowledge with them” -Melur-

### ***Changes in helping teachers' interpersonal problems***

One of the ten teachers in this sample perceived an increase in contributing help to other teachers with interpersonal problem after received GC award.

“As a GC, we are supposed to be the one other teachers turn to when they have problems in teaching and learning. However, sometimes I have to listen to my colleagues telling me about problems they face with other teachers, their students and sometimes they even ask me to help them with paper work. Sometimes I am also seen as a bridge between my colleagues and the school principal. They always rely on me to relay any message to the Principal” - Yati-

### ***Changes in becoming a trainer, doing mentoring and training to:***

- student teachers
- New in service teachers
- New teachers who taught new subject due to shorten leave or waiting new posting teacher for the subject

Three of the ten teachers in this sample, Melur, Siti, Munir perceived an increase in contributing after receiving GC award in becoming trainer and mentor to other teachers.

Melur reported increasing her outside contributions after receiving the GC award. As she already contributed before becoming a GC, she reported an increase in her contributions especially in training students' teachers. The number of student teachers was growing after she got the GC award and she received a report that almost all of them under her training have become good teachers when they were posted.

“My student teachers that I supervised are from Teacher Training College; they come here for their practicum and learn from me. I need to observe, teach and supervise these trainees. I need to see that these trainees learn whatever they need to learn. It is a very big responsibility and the demand to train students teachers increased after I received the GC award” -Melur-

She also reported an increase in her contribution at national level by giving talks on 3R (Reading, writing and arithmetic) at district, state and national level. She reported an increase in invitations personally from other school principals to give talks on 3R and effective teaching after receiving the GC award. Melur realised that becoming a GC increased her contributions whether inside or outside of her school.

Siti perceived an increase in giving training to her colleagues after receiving GC award, for example, on how to carry out research for action research. So far, one of her colleagues represented at the state, another teacher competed at national level. Siti used to work in a team with two other teachers to provide courses in her school to encourage other teachers to carry out action research. She is already involved and managed to get the grant. She said in interviews that although she still gets offer to do that, she would like to offer the place to her colleagues so that they would get the experience with research and at the same time will improve student learning with their research.

Munir perceived increasing his contributions after becoming a GC and, as an experienced teacher; he has become a mentor for a few teachers, whether student teachers doing their practicum or others new to teaching.

Lina also perceived an increase in contributions after receiving the GC award. Most of her contributions are talks on effective teaching to other teachers in her school or outside of her school, whether at the district, state or national level. Other things that she mentioned about her contributions are giving in-house training to all teachers and helping school management.

“I give in-house courses in my expertise and also things which are not related to my subject matter. Whenever there is a staff meeting, I will share my teaching techniques with everyone in the school” - Lina-

“I try to share all the good things I know with other people. We GCs work as a team and help low-performance schools by giving talks to the students and teachers. We prepare questions and notes for them. They really need our help. It somehow motivates these teachers and students. We do this in a team”  
-Lina-

### *Changes in becoming a panellist*

- Job Competency Assessment (PTK)

One of the ten teachers in this sample, Munir, perceived an increase in contribution by becoming a panellist for Job Competency Assessment (PTK) after receiving GC award. PTK is a yearly examination for civil service (teachers) that require teachers to pass and achieve certain standard to get their promotion.

“Now I am one of the panellists for the Job Competency Assessment (PTK). In fact, most of the panel members are GC’s” -Munir-

***Changes in involving in the academic writing***

- text book, internal distribution for school teacher

Four of the ten teachers in this sample, Munir, Yati, Lina and Noor perceived an increase after receiving the GC award in terms of academic writing. For example, Yati reported that she wrote book articles at the district level about Malaysian Education Development Blueprint and these are already published by the District Educational department.

Lina also said that she increased her involvement with academic writing in journals of education, for example about the problem of reading among students, and discipline at school. Mostly, she was involved in group writing with other GC teachers who shared the same teaching subject.

Another teacher, Munir, reported that after becoming a GC, he contributed more to academic writing by writing a textbook that is used by Ministry of Education Malaysia in his subject teaching. Munir also become a writer with a private publisher. Moreover, he also produced internal teaching material like modules in his school to be used by other teachers in the same subject he taught.

“Yes of course my contribution increased after becoming a GC, I wrote text book for Form 3 and Form 5 that used by the Ministry of Education Malaysia” - Munir-

“On top of that, I wrote a book which is for internal distribution in my school and to be used by the Geography teachers” - Munir-



Noor also reported that she perceives an increase in her contribution in academic writing that relates to her subject area and teaching under direction of The District Education Office. Moreover she also contributes by giving outside talks in addition to her writing.

“I felt better after becoming a GC; I can contribute more outside my school. I am always invited to give talks outside. The District Education Office also relies on me to write papers regarding my teaching subject” - Noor-

### ***Changes in becoming an editor***

- Reference additional book (private)

One of the ten teachers in this sample increased his contribution by becoming a reference book editor after receiving the GC award scheme. Munir reported that after becoming a GC, he was involved with text book writing used by Ministry of Education Malaysia. With his experience, knowledge and the title of Malaysian GC, he was trusted to become editor for some Malaysian reference books.

“I am also the Editor for reference books published by private publisher, for example Fajar Bakti and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka” - Munir-

### ***Changes in doing action research***

Four of the ten teachers in this sample, Yati, Munir, Lina and Siti reported increased involvement with effective teaching after receiving the GC award scheme through engaging in action research. Yati reported that an increased contribution by carrying out action research on how to be effective in her teaching subject, thus sharing the findings with other teachers. Siti was contributing more after receiving the GC award scheme by producing action research for five years in a row. Now she continues by

training more new teachers to become involved in action research and by encouraging teachers to do it as it bring a positive impact in improving students' learning.

Munir reported increased contributions by being involved with research and development (R&D) in teaching and learning after receiving the GC award, as he believed through the research he could share his expertise with other teachers on pedagogical approaches that helped in solving student problems in teaching.

Lina also perceived contributing more through action research after receiving the GC award scheme. She believed that her research could help in students' learning because she believes, as a teacher, she needs to fix problems in students' learning and will find answers through research.

Three out of ten teachers in this study Rosie, Syed and Roby are planning to do research and already have a topic to research. They perceived that the intention increased not only because GCs are encouraged to do it, but because they have realised that they have something from their teaching that would help their students' learning and achievement.

“Actually, I really want to be involved in an action research. I have do it, but failed to finished it due to time, however I plan will redo and finish it” -  
Roby-

### ***Changes in becoming a Setter Panel***

- National Malaysia Examination

One of the ten teachers in this sample perceived an increase in contribution by joining an examination setter panel for the National Malaysia Examination after

receiving the GC award. Munir perceived an increased his contribution in the national level by joining the setter panel in National Malaysia Examination. He believed that as a GC, people respect and trusts such teachers' abilities so that they can be appointed to an important post like the setter panel at national level.

“As a GC, I can be involved in academic writing. People think very highly of us. I am included in the Question Setter Panel for examinations” - Munir-

### ***Changes in involving in developing modules and produce syllabuses***

Two of the ten teachers in this sample reported an increase in contribution by developing modules and producing syllabuses after receiving the GC award.

Lina was developing modules in her subject teaching to help other low-performing schools by working in a team with other excellent teachers. Lina explained that her team had worked with many schools in helping teachers to become more effective in their teaching by using the module on how to become more effective in their teaching whether at district or state level.

Noor reported an increase in outside contributions after receiving the GC award and becoming a GC. She already contributed before becoming a GC, however the role that she played increased, especially related to her subject expertise. Most of her contributions are related more to her subject expertise by planning syllabuses for district and state level. Other teachers, for example Rosie and Ahmad, were already involved in developing modules and producing syllabuses even before they received GC award and they continued and maintained their contributions.

In summary, data relating to the third of the research question found that teachers reported increased contributions after receiving the GCM award. Teachers reported

making contributions both inside and outside of their school at school, district, state and national level such as developing modules and produce syllabuses for teachers and their students, becoming a panellist for a book publisher, becoming an Examination Setter Panel for National Malaysia Examination for teachers and doing action research. The findings are also found that the Malaysian Government could be said as achieved their objective of giving the GCM award for teachers to increase their contributions by utilised their expertise, skills and knowledge to other teachers and students.

## **5.6 Issues and challenges in the implementation of the GCM policy**

Despite the largely positive findings in the study, some issues which were raised by the participants during the interviews could be seen to be potential challenges to the success of the implementation of GCM in schools. This section presents some of the issues arising in the GCM implementation which may need some consideration by the policy makers, Government, school principals or even teachers themselves.

- *Inadequate information about the GCM policy*

Seven out of ten teachers reported that they had not received enough information about the GCM policy and, moreover, there was no clear information provided by their schools about the policy. Siti, Rosie, Noor, Melur, Roby and Syed reported that they had been approached directly by the school administrators based on their perceived excellent performance. This means that those who are not identified and approached by the school administrator will not have the same chance to be appointed to the GC post. A new circular pertaining to GCM policy stated that starting from year 2006, application for GC posts is open to all teachers who possess certain criteria for the award. Below are some of the data about the GCM policy:

“The senior Assistant of my school asked me to submit my application for GC. As it was a request by my superior, I saw it as a directive. So, I filled in the form and applied for the post. Besides, I was not that apprehensive because I was used to being observed for my teaching. I was not nervous”  
-Siti-

“At first, it was known as Guru Pakar (Expert Teacher). “I did not know much about the scheme. In fact I think, I knew very little about it. Then I got the information that a GC gets a better pay than other teachers. Not long after that, the Principal gave out the application forms to me and 6 other teachers”  
-Siti-

Rosie also reported that she did not have enough information about the GCM policy. However she was approached by her principal to apply for the award. In the beginning, she was not really interested in applying for the post. However, her school still asked her to apply after being told that she had met the criteria for receiving the GCM award. Finally, she filled in the form after finding more information about what the GCM award is through reading a book and finding the information on the internet, as she said:

“Even though this GC scheme was introduced more than 10 years ago, many teachers still do not understand it. As you can see, I am now teaching in a good school but still there is not a single GC in this school. Thus, I have no one to turn to for advice and it’s very difficult for me as there is no benchmark of what a GC is supposed to be. I wish the ministry had done more to promote the scheme among teachers and provide them with clear explanation of what GC is all about. Because teachers have no common understanding of the concept of GC, they are reluctant to apply for the post”  
-Rosie-

“I was approached by the school’s senior assistant and was asked to apply for the post. I got the form from the senior assistant of my school” -Rosie-

“I got the information mostly from the National Union of Teaching Profession (NUTP) newsletters. However, I was not interested. I also heard about it from friends. I feel that I only know in details about GC after I got the post. I also read about it in GC websites” -Rosie-

Noor also reported the same thing about having very little information about the GCM policy. She also mentioned that she did not really understand about what it was about. However, she was approached by her deputy principal. Initially she could not decide whether to apply for it or not until after consulting with her husband, and then she applied for the post. She was quoted as saying:

“I didn’t really know much about the scheme at that time. My husband encouraged me to apply for the post” -Noor-

Another teacher, Melur also reported that she was approached by her school administrator and did not have enough information about the GCM policy. According to her, she was motivated more to apply after getting the encouragement from her friend and was informed that a GC post would ensure that she could still teach in the classroom and she would not be given an administration post, as she said:

“I did not really know about the GCM policy, but I knew that unlike teachers who are promoted to the administration level, a GC could still teach when he gets his promotion. At the same time, I was not interested in an administration post” -Melur-

“The school Principal asked to me submit my application for the post. I was the only candidate for my school. If my school Principal did not insist on me

applying for the post, I would not have applied. I felt that I still had not reached the level of an excellent teacher. I shared my apprehension with my school Principal but he still wanted me to fill in the application form. At the same time, one of my friends who was already a GC at that time told me that I had a very good chance because based on his observation on my teaching; I could be put into the excellent category” -Melur-

Like other teachers, Roby also had very little knowledge about the GCM policy. However, he did mention that the GCM topic was often discussed among his peers at his school. Most teachers talked about the increase quota by the Ministry, however during the discussion, he observed that many of the teachers were not interested in applying for the award. He took the initiative to find more information about the GCM policy on the Internet. During the interview, he explained how he came to a decision to apply for the post. He said:

“At first I overheard a conversation among my colleagues about GC. At that time every teacher was talking about this. They said that there were many vacancies that needed to be filled, but the responses were not that good from teachers. I was intrigued by this GC concept and did my own research about the scheme on the Internet to know more about it. After getting and reading all the information about the scheme, I decided to apply” -Roby-

Another teacher, Syed, also reported the same as Roby that he had very little knowledge about the GCM policy. Currently, there are no other GCs at his school to ask clearly about what the GC post is There are also no teachers to refer to and many of his peers just gave their own opinions and perceptions of the GCM policy from their own knowledge. Further, his school also never called teachers together to explain it. Syed was encouraged by his school to apply with limited time because the the deadline for application was approaching. Syed said:

“There weren’t any GC in my school at that time. I was recommended by the school to apply at the very last minutes. I couldn’t imagine what a GC’s responsibilities or identities were like. Plus, there was no role model to look at” -Syed-

Two of teachers in this study, Siti and Munir also reported that they perceived many teachers still lack information about the GCM award policy as a promotion scheme and reward incentive for teachers. The policy was introduced in 1994 with the objective of providing an alternative promotion scheme for those teachers who are excellent in their performance and to retain teachers in teaching rather than becoming school administrators. Siti perceived that many of teachers, especially who are excellent lose their opportunity to receive the award because they do not know what GCM means;

“Many don’t know that GCM provides a platform for teachers to be promoted” -Siti-

Munir also reported that he found many teachers still do not know about the opportunity to apply through the GCM award scheme policy despite the fact that it allows teachers to remain in teaching and had the opportunities of receiving higher pay and level. He compared himself with others:

“I applied for a higher post (54 and Jusa) because I want to improve my professionalism. I don’t believe in being complacent when the opportunity for me to reach a higher level is there. As GC, we can hold a higher post but at the same time we are not required to leave teaching. We need to grab whatever opportunities given to us”. -Munir-

“The GCM scheme is definitely a career opportunity. A teacher is promoted but at the same time he can still teach. Unless he is not interested in teaching



in classrooms, he has nothing to lose. I was actually a school head before I became a GC. I let go of the post of School Principal because of two things: first, I love teaching. Second, the GC post is a promotion for me. I think this is important in my career” -Munir-

- *Less support from peers and school after being GC*

Another issue reported by the participants in this study is the negative perception of other teachers towards GC teachers. One of the teachers in this study, Noor found that after receiving the GCM award, she felt left out and she intended to resign her post when she did not receive enough support from her peers in carrying out some school activities, as it was different to before she held the GC post. Some reasons that were given by her peers were because she has received extra pay to do the duties she is therefore capable to do it without help. Although she felt sad, however, after consulting her husband and giving it a proper thought, she realised that it was a challenge she had to face up to and overcome. She also reported that one of her friends advised her to keep going and that she deserved to receive the GCM award scheme. Her friend advised her that all the difficulties that she experienced are quite normal as many teachers still do not understand the GC concept and some of them are jealous that they have not received the award.

“Before I was a GC, I enjoyed doing everything but once I became a GC, whenever I asked for others’ help, they would say that I should do it because it is a GC’s duty. That’s the one thing that I am not happy about. Before this, we worked as a team but now I feel that I am alone” -Noor-

Noor also reported that she believed that the problem occurred also because of the lack of support from the school administrators such as providing information to all teachers about what the GCM award scheme is and why the Government offers it to teachers, thus giving a negative perception of the GC post. As a GC is perceived as a

perfect figure and having the ability to execute teaching with excellence, Noor was seen as a very capable teacher who did not need any help and support from others. Below are some of Noor's interview excerpts:

“As a GC, I never have the feeling to quit until recently. Because of one incident, I stopped taking the extra miles when I do anything. I do not want people to say that I overdo things” -Noor-

Noor also reported that she perceived a lack of support from the school after becoming GC as compared with other schools. Her friend told her that in her school GCs are better supported and are respected by teachers and students as their names were announced as GC during formal school activities such as weekly assembly, as she said:

“In this school, people only got to know I was appointed as a GC after a month. It was never announced during the school assembly like it's always done in other schools. I didn't have the intention to share the news because I saw that my colleagues, and even the school administrators, were not very appreciative of the title and there is no supportive environment in this school. -Noor-

- *Conflict*

Participants in this study also reported experiencing the “conflict” of being a GC who is at the same level as the school principal like Lina, Munir, Siti and Noor. One of the opportunities available after receiving the GCM post is that teachers are able to receive a higher pay and higher grade in their career, equivalent to their school head / principal, thus arises conflict between GC and their school head / principal.

Teachers also reported of feeling “shocked” after becoming a GC, as one of the teachers in this study, Lina, shared her experience of being overwhelmed with her new post when she said:

“At first, I didn’t really understand the concept of GC. I was grateful as the grade promotion was huge for me. I was at grade 41 and was promoted to grade 48. There was no grade 44 then at that moment. It was all too sudden for me. Just imagine, all in a sudden, I was holding a post which put me at the same level as the school Principal. When I was transferred to a new school, then only I really understood the job descriptions of a GC. I felt burdened by it” -Lina-

Teachers also felt that the roles that they needed to play were also quite complicated as they were sometimes seen as trying to undermine the school principal. One of the teachers in this study, Munir, reported that the GC award required him to be transferred to other school with the mission to ‘help’ the school. He felt that this created the perception that the school principal was a weak individual and he said:

“As a GC, I was transferred to another school. There was a conflict then with the school principal because it was stated that I was sent there to help the school. Of course, the school principal was agitated with the term ‘to help the school’. The term indirectly gave the idea that he was not competent” -Munir-

“GC can contribute to improve the administration of a school, but most of the time, the impact is not that big. In the end, I knew that I had to focus on my job and I tried not to let other things interfere with my job. I think, things are better now because now people start to understand that GC’s are not sent to certain school because of weak school administration, but rather to help their students to improve their academic achievement” -Munir-

Teachers also reported that there were some inconsistencies in the implementation of the GC appointments. The GCM award scheme policy stated that a teacher who is appointed as a GC in a grade B school should be transferred to a grade “A” school (Grade A school means that the total of students are more than 1800 pupils) or to any other schools that need a GC’s expertise. However, this was not the case for some teachers. Siti was quoted as saying:

“When the scheme was first introduced, those who were selected for the GC post would be transferred to other schools. However, in some cases, a GC was allowed to stay at the same school. This irregularity caused some teachers to feel sidelined” -Siti-

Noor reported that she perceived that she was not really appreciated as a GC as her school principal may have felt that they are same level in grade and salary, thus believed it led to difficulties for her principal decision whether to treat her as a subordinate or to let her do her duties as a GC should:

“Now I am at the same level with my school administrators, I think. Maybe that makes them not really comfortable” -Noor-

- *Need for professional development and training*

The findings also showed that teachers in this study saw the need to attend more CPD training after being appointed as a GC. They believed it could help them improve themselves. One of the teachers in this study, Rosie, felt that as a new GC, she needed to attend related courses to be successful. This teacher is very passionate about improving herself. She is very humble and still need supports from people around her. She said:

“I really hope I can fulfil all the requirements of a GC. I want to do the best in everything I do. I want to carry out the best programme for my students. I want to expose myself to more possibilities and experience because that is the only way I can become excellent. I want to equip myself with new techniques in teaching through courses organised by the ministry or by private companies -Rosie-

“Right now I am still waiting for letters to attend any Professional development courses. I really look forward to attending those courses as I think I need them to improve myself” -Rosie-

“I was hoping I could be more successful. I consider myself a new comer when it comes to GC. I really want to teach in rural areas where the students are not as fortunate as my students now and I want to see vast improvement in my students’ achievement. Now, in this school, my students are the selected ones, so they are not academically challenged. (She become very emotional when saying this) -Rosie-

- *Uncertainty over what type of task to play after appointment as a GC*

Teachers in this study also reported that they were still not clear about the roles they had to play as GCs besides teaching in classrooms. Two out of ten teachers in this study, Roby and Syed, found that after their appointment as GCs, they did not receive any specific directive from the district or State Department of Education about the roles they have to play in schools. Roby reported that he still continued his contributions to the district Physics Panel which he joined before the GC appointment. He was informed that all the new GCs were required to go out each Wednesday for certain tasks but there were still no directives or invitations for him to

attend such events. So, this was quite confusing for him. He was still not sure about what kind of tasks the GCs were supposed to carry out on Wednesdays.

“I have not really contributed significantly outside my school since becoming a GC. So far, I have never received any directives from the Education Department or anyone to carry out any programmes outside my school” - Roby-

“Before this, I was informed that we, the GC’s, are required to go out each Wednesday to attend programmes or activities organized by the education department, but so far I have yet to receive any letters asking me to go out. However, normally teachers are invited by other schools to give out talks to their students. Sometimes your own school will send you for such talks. So, even if you are not a GC, you can still be invited to such events outside your school” -Roby-

However, interview sessions with other participants showed different findings with regard to the understanding and clarity of GC roles. Ahmad, Munir and Melur were quite clear of what roles they were supposed to play as GCs. Melur, for example, described herself as being busy on Wednesdays when she said:

”I do a lot of things especially on Wednesdays. I could not describe it to you. A lot” -Melur-

“Whenever time permits, almost every afternoon I give talks to students about answering Exam questions techniques and I also give in-house courses to teachers in a few districts in the Kedah state. That is what I meant by committing yourself to the post of GC and this is what makes us different from non GC teachers” -Munir-

“I got a lot of letters of invitations for courses and talks from other schools in other districts. Normally, these invitations come through the District Education Office or the State Education Office depending on whether the schools are from the same district or a different one. Those schools who wish to invite me for talks, courses or workshop have to inform the State Education Office and then only I will receive a letter issued by the State Education Office. Mainly, we need to decide on when I am available for these events. There are also schools that directly contact the District Education Office to get my service. For those who know me, they normally will write a letter to my school Principal whenever they want to invite me for talks”  
-Munir-

In a further discussion with Munir, it was found that Wednesday was allotted for GCs to attend outside events or to complete any task related to GCs’ responsibilities. Wednesday was officially the day for them to share their expertise with other schools in the district. If certain schools needed their help, they would invite all these GCs to carry out activities in their schools on Wednesdays. However, if they did not receive such invitations, they should spend the day on something beneficial, especially anything that has to do with planning and managing tasks related to their roles as GCs and their subject matters. Munir, for instance, would tell his school that if he did not have to go out on Wednesdays, he wanted the school to give him relief classes to teach.

- *Stress and burden due to status and duties*

Teachers reported being stressed and burdened by the extra job and responsibilities of a GC. Six out of ten teachers in this study, namely Lina, Melur, Munir, Roby and Yati concurred that the post required high commitment especially with regard to time and effort, thus causing stress at the beginning of their GC appointments. Lina opined that a GC post required a teacher to sacrifice her time with her family.

Teachers acknowledged other factors that contributed to the extra responsibilities that to stress but they thought the main reason was the high expectation from school and peers of a GC. Lina summed up the burden and stress she experienced as a GC when she said:

“Being a GC requires you to sacrifice a lot. At that time, I felt that I had to carry out a huge burden which should be shouldered by 10 people instead of one! I had to think twice before taking a leave because the job at school was never ending. I spent less time for the family” -Lina-

”If you are a Guru pakar (Master Teacher) people would expect that you know everything and can do everything. Now the term has been changed to Excellent Teacher, people expect you to be excellent in every aspect. That is the root of the stress I talked about just now” -Lina-

“At that time, the grade promotion was from 41 to 48. It is the same level as the school Principal. The promotion is very sudden and it is a new post. Every single move we made was scrutinised by people around us” -Lina-

Melur also reported that she had a lot of things to do as a GC as she was the person in charge of the Remedial Room at her school and she was also appointed as a mentor for trainees doing teaching practicum in her school. She was grateful, however, that her school administrators did not assign any relief classes to her. She was quoted as saying:

“I have a lot of work to do. I am in charge of the school’s Remedial Room. On top of that I also have to supervise some teacher trainees. I am never given any relief classes. I think a GC should not be given any, considering the responsibilities he shoulders in school. But then again, it all depends on the school administration. I really am grateful to and respect the Senior Assistant



of my school. I am only assigned relief classes during examination. The school knows that I am always tied with a lot of things, so they never give me any relief classes” -Melur-

“If you are a GC, you don’t only carry the title of “excellent”, but also you always need to be prepared for teaching and learning observation. Plus, many people are monitoring your work” -Roby-

Another teacher, Munir, was reported as saying that he used to be stressed about his job, of being a GC, especially during the earlier times of his GC appointment due to the change of job culture. When asked about what he meant by the culture of GC, he explained that a GC was supposed to show excellent qualities of teaching and learning, fulfil other people’s expectation of what a GC should be and to adhere to the guidelines of the responsibilities of a GC outlined by the Ministry of Education Malaysia. According to him:

“I used to be stressed by the title especially during the earlier times when I was still trying to adjust to the working culture of a GC. I knew I had to meet the high expectations. I must work according to the framework of GC and I must promote excellence in my job” -Munir-

“I would say that a GC is seen as a car which can accommodate four people. However, most of the time, people think that the car can take as many as ten people! That expectation has burdened many GC’s. The Ministry of Education put a very high expectation on us. We are not “superhuman”. I think the Ministry should look at this aspect” -Munir-

Yati perceived that being a GC is stressful as the teacher should always be strong and have a mental endurance to accept criticism and comments from people around them. In her opinion, carrying the title of Excellent Teacher is quite tough as it was

perceived by other people that the teacher was perfect in all aspect. She described this by saying:

“As a GC, we need to be strong. We must have mental endurance. People would jeer at us and we need to learn to accept it. If not, you will not be able to move forward” -Yati-

- *Negative perception of GCM policy from teachers*

Through the interviews, it was evident that there were some negative perceptions about the GCM policy among teachers. Teachers in this study reported that some teachers were not interested in applying for the GC post because they thought that the post would increase their workload because a GC was expected to be excellent in all aspects, thus would need to spend extra time to get the job done. The study also found that teachers were also intimidated by the term “Excellent Teacher” and thought that they had not reached the level of excellence. Robby was quoted as saying:

“Many of my friends stated that they didn’t want to apply and were not interested in this scheme. They felt that being a GC will increase their burden and they were not really excellent at doing their work. For me, GC is only a promotion scheme in our career path” -Roby-

Munir also shared the same opinion that the title “Excellent Teacher” brought with it a very high expectation. Many teachers were afraid to hold the title as they perceived it negatively. He acknowledged the fact that he was not perfect in every aspect of teaching but to make other people see that was difficult. He said:

“I would like to touch on other people’s perception towards the GC post. The expectation is sometimes too high. The title itself and the concept of

excellence can sometimes be a burden to these GCs. A GC is an expert in his subject matter i.e. the subject he teaches but people see a GC as someone who knows everything. For me, this is a challenge that we have to face” -Munir-

Munir also said that rather than applying for the GC post which came with job promotion, many teachers preferred to wait for the time-based promotion. Munir had been told by his peers that they were not ready to sacrifice the time and energy which was required of them if they were given the GC award, and they were willing to wait another few years before they could be at the same salary level as a GC because for a teacher at DG41 level to be promoted to DG44 level according to the time-based scheme, he or she would need to be in the DG41 scale for 10 years. Even with encouragement from Munir for them to apply for the post, many still preferred to wait for the time-based promotion.

Another teacher, Yati, also found that her peers preferred to wait for the time-based promotion as they saw the GC post a burden. She said:

“I do encourage my colleagues to apply for the post, but most of them said they are not interested after seeing me so busy with my work. They would rather wait for the time-based promotion. They couldn’t be bothered by this GC post” -Yati-

- *Less opportunity to make an impact after being a GC*

The study findings also found that there were some teachers who had quite limited opportunity to excel more in their careers. One of the teachers, Roby, had to teach a subject which was not his area of expertise because the subject he was supposed to teach was not offered for students in his school. It could be seen that he was frustrated with the situation as he said:

“I am quite sad because I can’t teach my area of expertise. The subject is only for students in upper secondary of form 4 and 5” -Roby-

Roby also reported that, even after more than one year holding the GC post, there was no official letter for him to carry out any specific task or give talks to students or teachers, thus reducing his opportunity to shine. His school also never asked him to carry out such activities with students or teachers. According to him:

“I do not really feel burdened carrying this GC title. I am still trying to increase my performance. I realise that I must improve on my work a little bit. In any committee I am involved in, I am working as usual. However, sometimes I feel that I am not given the opportunity to shine” -Roby-

- *Information hoarding and bias*

The study also found issues related to bias among school Principals / school heads in selecting candidates who should apply for and receive the GCM award scheme. Munir thought that he was one of those who were ‘victimised’ as he was not informed by the school head about the GCM award scheme. Instead he only knew about it from his peers. He was of the opinion that the school administrators were afraid of losing talented teachers to other schools after being they were appointed as a GC. Munir was quoted as saying that some school principals would not reveal the information about the GC scheme or would even provide wrong information about the GC scheme such as teachers would be transferred to a far away school if they received the GC award. He said:

“Some school principals / heads would try to influence our mind about not applying by telling us it would be troublesome for us to transfer to other places. This should not have happened. They should encourage teachers to apply, not otherwise” -Munir-

“I was told in one case, a teacher who applied for the GC post was not given the recommended by his own school Principal because she/he did not want to lose an excellent teacher. What happened after that was, the teacher taught at that same school until he retired. In my opinion, the teacher should have been given the chance to hold the GC post as she/he was indeed an excellent teacher” -Munir-

“Some school heads did not give their recommendations for some teachers when they applied for the GC post because they were afraid they would lose these teachers to other schools. This is not good as it robs the teacher of any opportunities for him to get a promotion and also to improve himself” -Munir-

There were also examples of bias where GC applicants were given very low marks by their peers and students, a process of GC selection in the previous GC assessment process even though they were actually good, as Munir explained:

“There are some teachers who are not yet capable of holding the GC post. That is why they do not get the job. However, some were victimised. For example, a Discipline Teacher or a very reserved teacher might not get good marks from his colleagues because they are not well-liked by others. This hinders their chances of getting the promotion to the GC post” -Munir-

- *GC convention should serve as command platform for GCs*

Teachers in this study also agreed on the importance of the annual GC Convention which is held to highlight GC contributions to the academic field. During this convention, GC teachers are given the opportunity to present research papers according to their area of expertise or discuss academic publication. They could also

voice their needs to the authority during this annual event. However, one of the teachers, Munir, believed that the Ministry of Education did not take all the matters brought up during the event seriously. He said:

“GC Convention is a very important event for all GC’s that to be held at the end of the year, but in my opinion, the Ministry of Education does not take it seriously. During this GC Convention we launch many academic writings and publications produced by GCs. We also discuss many things related to our job as we are trying to look after GCs’ welfare” -Munir-

- *Possibility for school to lose talented school head / principal due to GC path*

The findings in this study also found that teachers are sometimes reluctant to apply for school principal posts due to the GCM award scheme policy being considered to be more competitive and advantageous for future career development. Munir reported that he was promoted to principal and had been in the post around two years and after that he resigned from the post after receiving the GCM award scheme.

“The GC scheme is a career opportunity. A teacher is promoted but at the same time he can still teach. Unless he is not interested in teaching in classrooms, he has nothing to lose. I was actually a school head before I became a GC. I let go of the post of School Principal because of two things: first, I love teaching. Second, the GC post is a promotion for me. I think this is important in my career” -Munir-

Munir reported that, compared to principal post and GC post, it would be better for his future career advancement and development to choose GC path because it gives the opportunity to reach the highest level in teaching career, to reach the JUSA post and at the same time there is no need to hold an administration post:

“I applied for a higher post (54 and JUSA) because I want to improve my professionalism. I don’t believe in being complacent when the opportunity for me to reach a higher level is there. As GC, we can hold a higher post but at the same time we are not required to leave teaching. We need to grab whatever opportunities given to us” -Munir-

Another teacher who reported something is Melur, who was also invited to be an officer at the District and State Educational Department based on her excellent performance. However, she refused the offer of promotion due to several factor such as feeling closes to teaching at the first front line and also found that an administration post is quite busy, especially with outstation duties. Melur grabbed the opportunity was offered by the Government that for those who want prmotion in teaching promotion through but still remain I teaching is through application of the GCM award scheme, as she said:

“I was not interested in administration post. Even after I became a GC, I was offered administration post. I rejected the offer as I prefer to be in school, teaching my students. I met and knew alot of people in the administration line and they were very busy with their work. That was also one reason why I did not want to be an administrator” -Melur-

For some teachers the findings have shown that the GCM award scheme policy is a very good opportunity for career advancement interms of salary and also for those who wish to teach, they could remain in teaching. However, it has changed the traditional structure for promotion in the teaching profession in Malaysia. Normally, those teachers who are excellent are promoted to be in administrator post such as school principal or school head. However, through the GCM award scheme, teachers are able to apply the award, thus in the future, it may in certain ways influence the

quality of leadership at school because some of them would choose the GC path rather than to be school administrator.

- *GC is neither a reward nor motivation to change if teachers have their own existing beliefs*

The study also found that some teachers did not perceive the GC award to be a motivating factor in maintaining excellence. Four out of ten teachers in this study, Yati, Lina, Ahmad and Noor are reported seeing some changes in the way they worked but they believed that they were already excellent. Thus, for them, the GC award scheme was a factor in maintaining the qualities they already possessed. It was explained by Yati when she said:

“To do Excellent job is my nature. GC award is just a reward for me and the title is marginal. I do my work without asking for rewards. I will still work as hard even though I am not a GC. That is not my goal. I maintain excellence and then was rewarded. God bestowed me with good things in life and I accept them. Never mind if they don’t give me the GC title, but I will still do my work” -Yati-

“The most important thing is we are the selected few who receive more than others. We must do our job as best as we can. This responsibility is a trust that must be carried out well” -Yati-

Lina acknowledged the fact that the GC award was a source of motivation for her to improve but she believed that she could still be successful in her career even without the GC title as she said:

“I feel that I can still succeed without the title but I have to admit that the title takes me further. For me, not just a GC can strive for excellence. The title, no doubt, has helped me a lot in improving myself. I think the objective of this



GC scheme is achieved as it really pushes a teacher to reach excellence in his teaching career” -Lina-

Ahmad was quoted as saying that he embraced the excellence culture from the beginning of his teaching career and he had already done many of things required of a GC long before he received the GC title. He worked hard, mentored other teachers, gave talks to teachers and students and never stopped learning throughout his teaching career. He did not see many changes in himself after receiving the GC award. He saw the award as recognition of his excellent job performance, not as a motivational factor to excel more. He believed that the quality of excellence was already inside him even before he received the title:

“I am naturally hardworking and willing to learn. For me, education is a lifelong process because our job is to impart knowledge to our students. We must always be striving towards looking for more knowledge” -Ahmad-

“I was very confident to be chosen for the GC award because I carry the job well. I have done all the activities at the state and national level” -Ahmad-

“There are not many changes in my teaching after I become a GC. I think this is because I have been practicing what a GC should be doing even before I was appointed. For me, the GC title is just recognition for my excellent performance in teaching” -Ahmad-

“As for GC post, pay rise or promotions are not my concerns. For me, self satisfaction is more important” -Noor-

“I think Excellence should be nurtured. Once we have reached it we should not look back. I was asked by the school to apply for the post. I was an excellent student when I was in school and at Teacher Training College. I

was once featured in the newspaper. I bring along the excellence culture to my teaching career” -Noor-

“Many new GC’s are always stressed out. It should not be happening because if they are good teachers, they would not see their task as a GC as a new thing. I think those who are stressed out by the GC post are those who are only good in certain field and they apply for the post because they want to get promoted” -Noor-

Syed stressed the important for teacher to strive for improvement in order to help student successful. Syed expressed his opinion that teachers should not too calculative about how much the pay that they received but need to concerns more on their responsible to help their students for better future. For Syed, even if he not received the GCM award scheme, he still strive for excellence as he quoted;

“We must strive to improve students’ performance. We should not be calculative. Teachers’ job is to help the students and help them to get a better future even if we do not hold the GC post, we’ll strive for excellence in everything we do” -Syed-

Siti was reported that GCM award that she received is not much important and valued compared to hers’ family. Siti expressed that;

“For me, family comes first. They are my priority. They are everything to me. Coincidentally, I got the GCM award” -Siti-

To sum up, this section discusses the issues arising that could be considered as challenges to the successful the implementation of the GCM award scheme policy. The findings suggest that although teachers reported some changes in their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award, it was also found that certain issues such as a lack of information about the GCM award scheme

policy and very little opportunity for teachers to attend CPD courses, may hinder teachers to perform at the highest level and could reduce their opportunity to help improve the quality of education in the country.

## **5.7 Incentives and teacher professionalism**

This section discusses issues related to teacher professionalism. The aim of this study was to investigate Malaysian Excellent Teachers' perceptions of their motivation to change and their efforts to improve the quality of teaching after receiving the Malaysian Excellent Teacher Award. The three variables investigated were changes in teachers' attitudes, changes in teaching strategies and changes in teachers' contributions to promote quality teaching and learning. As the GCM award policy, which was introduced in 1995, was a scheme to reward high performing teachers and was a motivation tool in improving teacher quality, the impact of this incentive on teachers' professionalism should not be sidelined.

Given the considerable amount of money spent by the Malaysian Government for the implementation of the GCM award and the growing interest on the impact of financial incentives to teachers' motivation in improving the quality of teaching, it is important to investigate the impact this process has on those teachers who choose to become a GC. This study did not only investigate teachers' perceptions on the changes they made after receiving the GCM award, but also explored how teachers apply all the changes to their teaching to become more professional. One way that the GCM award scheme might have influenced these teachers to change was the title Excellent Teacher that distinguishes them from ordinary teachers. The title may have a positive impact on teachers' efforts, and may motivate them to become role models to other teachers, as required in the policy.

The Guru Cemerlang Malaysia Award Scheme policy that was introduced in 1994 by the Malaysian Government was perceived to be one of the important efforts by the Government to help increase teachers' professionalism as stated in the Book of term that teachers who received the GCM award scheme would have opportunities to receive higher salary and opportunities to be promoted to a higher grade. Thus the introduction of the GCM award scheme also would attract more high achievers to choose teaching as a career, thus making it a prestigious profession. Due to certain requirements and standard that teachers need to attain and achieve, and also the evaluation process they have to go through, teachers need to keep on increasing the level of effectiveness and professionalism. Through knowledge sharing, collaboration with other teachers, skills and experience, a GC can bring positive impact to other teachers within or outside their schools. According to Sockett (1993) and Tichenor & Tichenor, (2005), professional teachers' roles are not only limited to activities inside classrooms but also activities in other schools in the same district or state.

The teachers in this study, Munir, Lina, Syed, Melur, Roby, Noor, Yati, reported that they tried their best to bring good perception to the title Excellent Teacher by improving their teaching strategies, increasing their ICT knowledge, doing action research and taking active part in all activities carried out by their schools. Teacher also reported change in time management, arriving early at school and leaving late, completing tasks in good time, thinking positively, striving for excellence and committing to continuous learning. These aspects may describe, in part, what it means to be professional.

Below are some of what teachers reported in changing of teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award scheme.

“Whenever time permits, almost every afternoon I give talks to students about answering exam question techniques and I also give in-house courses to teachers in a few districts in the Kedah state. That is what I meant by

committing yourself to the post of GC and this is what makes us different from non GC teachers. Just imagine, before you give all these talks and courses, you must do the necessary preparation such as notes for the participants” -Munir-

“When I was first promoted to this post, I came very early to school and was one of the last to go back home. Every task given, I made sure I finished it early. I made sure my Teaching Record Book is always updated. I felt like people were scrutinising every single thing I did and they expected perfection from me” -Lina-

“When we hold the GC post, automatically we’ll strive for excellence in everything we do” -Syed-

“Every GC must do some innovations. Don’t keep on using the same teaching aids, for example. We must always change” - Melur-

“My student teachers that I supervised are from Teacher Training College; they come here for their practicum and learn from me. I need to observe, teach and supervise these trainees. I need to see that these trainees learn whatever they need to learn. It is a very big responsibility and the demand to train students teachers increased after I received the GC award” -Melur-

“I try to double the ICT usage, whether in classroom teaching or when I want to look for any related materials for my teaching aids. I try to improve my quality of teaching as far as I can. Of course, previously, I did spend some time surfing the Internet to find such information, but it was not as much as I do it now” - Roby-

“I felt better after becoming a GC; I can contribute more outside my school. I am always invited to give talks outside”. - Noor-

“As a GC, we are supposed to be the one other teachers turn to when they have problems in teaching and learning. However, sometimes I have to listen to my colleagues telling me about problems they face with other teachers, their students and sometimes they even ask me to help them with paper work. Sometimes I am also seen as a bridge between my colleagues and the school principal. They always rely on me to relay any message to the Principal”  
- Yati-

The introduction of Malaysian Excellent Teacher Award scheme showed a commitment by the Malaysian Government to increase the prestige of the teaching profession by giving teacher a status of “Excellent Teacher” with a higher salary. It is also one of the ways in motivating teachers to increase their efforts to change for improvement and perform at the highest standards and at the same time could gain respect from the community. Although issues arises in some ways could be said as de-professionalise teachers in the ways it undermined teachers intrinsic motivation to perform and do change in improving teachers’ quality, the data have supported that the used of pay for performance system in increasing Malaysian teachers’ professionalism by encouraging teachers to change in attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award scheme policy.

## **5.8 Summary**

This chapter presents the findings relating to the three research questions on whether GCM award influences teachers to change their attitudes, teaching strategies and contribution after receiving the award. In summary, most of the teachers who participated in this study reported that some changes did happen after they received the GCM award scheme in the three categories of the research questions. Teachers reported that they increased their efforts to improve their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

However, the study also found that the same changes did not happen to some teachers as they perceived themselves as already possessing the excellence culture before being appointed as GCs. The award helped them to maintain the excellence qualities they already have. It is therefore reasonable to be said that the GCM award scheme did not only increase teachers' motivation but was also a medium to encourage teachers to maintain excellence.

Such changes in what teachers were reported showed that there is a positive data come out as a signal of the used or effectiveness of the pay for performance system that include teachers' status and pay in motivating teachers to improve their performance thus uplift the teachers' professionalism. Although the findings suggested that the GCM award was successful in the objective to reward high performance teachers and at the same time motivate teachers to improve their quality of teaching and learning however, there also issues and challenges to the successful of the implementation of the GCM award. Some of the issues that have been brought out should be taken into consideration in order to bring the impact of the scheme to the development of educational system in Malaysia in improving the quality of teacher and uplift the teaching profession.

The following chapter of chapter six will discuss the findings of the research questions about teachers' changes in attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award and the challenges of the implementation of the policy in Malaysian context.

## **CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The aim of this study is to investigate whether or not the implementation of GC award could motivate teachers to improve the quality of teaching and increase teachers' contribution to educational development in the Malaysian context. This chapter discusses the study findings of Malaysian Excellent Teacher award scheme policy in changing teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving Guru Cemerlang Malaysia award scheme (GCM) and becoming Excellent Teacher (GC).

This chapter will be divided into five sections. Section one discusses the Malaysian Excellent Teacher award scheme policy which will cover the definition of GCM award, background and objectives of the award, characteristics and how teachers are selected for the award. Section two, three and four discuss question research one, two and three respectively. Section five discusses the issues and challenges in the implementation of the policy among teachers and the implications of GC award scheme to teacher quality in Malaysia and it is followed by the summary of the discussion.

### **6.2. Summary of findings**

This study used three research questions in order to investigate whether the implementation of GCM award could motivate teachers to improve the quality of teaching by changing their attitudes, improving their teaching strategies and increasing their contributions to the educational development in Malaysian context. The next section discusses the findings of the influence of GCM award on teachers' motivation among primary and secondary school teachers in Malaysia. The research addresses three key issues which are changes in attitudes, teaching strategies and



contributions after the teachers receive GCM award. This chapter address the following questions on:

- a. Do performance incentive systems change teachers' attitudes toward improving the quality in teaching and learning?
- b. Do performance incentive systems change teachers' strategies toward improving the quality in teaching and learning?
- c. Do performance incentive systems increase teachers' contributions toward improving the quality in teaching and learning?

The research questions of this study are:

- a. **Research question 1:** *How did the teachers perceive the changes in their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?*
  - Research findings indicated that changes took place; teachers are reported that attitudes have changes after receiving the GCM award scheme and becoming a GC
- b. **Research question 2:** *How did the teachers perceive the changes in their teaching strategies in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?*
  - Research findings indicated that changes happened; teachers' teaching strategies have changes after received the GCM award scheme and becoming a GC

c. **Research question 3: *How did the teachers perceive the improvement in their contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?***

- Research findings indicated that teacher contributions increased; teachers' contributions positively increased after receiving the GC award and becoming a GC.

The findings showed that there are significant improvements of the current teachers' attitudes toward teaching, teaching strategies and contributions after being awarded the GCM award. It was found that pay for performance policy of the GCM award increased teachers' effort in improving teaching performances. Figure 1 below shows the model of GCM award scheme impact on teachers' work motivation in relation with changes in teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to peers and students to promote quality teaching in Malaysia. The model shows that GCM award which comes with an increase in teachers' pay, promotion to a higher service grade and title or recognition of Excellent Teacher is used as a way to reward high performance teachers and as a tool of motivation in encouraging teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

In order to improve the quality of teaching, Excellent Teachers are required to play certain roles and given specific responsibilities as being outlined in the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia;

- a. Planning and implementing teaching lesson in their area of expertise. Developing and helping students to as predetermined by Ministry of Education Malaysia.
- b. Leading and helping other teachers in the curriculum and co-curriculum tasks related to their area of subject expertise and specialization.

- c. Becoming a consultant by giving advisory services and guides to other teachers in the area subject expertise and specialization.
- d. Conducting studies and presenting the results., producing academic and research documentations, and exploring innovation in their area of subject expertise and specialization
- e. Implementing tasks directed by District Education Officer, State Director Officer and Director of Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE, 2006).

The above roles and responsibilities that GC teachers should play are in line with the Government objectives in improving the quality of teachers through teachers' knowledge, skills and experiences in planning and developing teaching lessons. GC teachers' are not only confined to classroom activities but they are also required to help and mentor other teachers especially in the area of their expertise. In order to improve their students' knowledge of the subject matter, skills and attitudes (OECD, 2009), GC teachers are required to carry out studies, produce academic and research documentations and come up with innovations in instructional teaching and share their knowledge with other teachers in seminars and conferences. GCs are seen as the leaders who make positive changes in educational development in Malaysia.

The model in figure 1 showed the relationship between GCM award in influencing teachers' work motivation in increasing teachers' efforts in improving their professional and personal attitudes towards teaching, improving teaching strategies and increasing contribution to other teachers of their expertise in subject teaching, knowledge and skills.

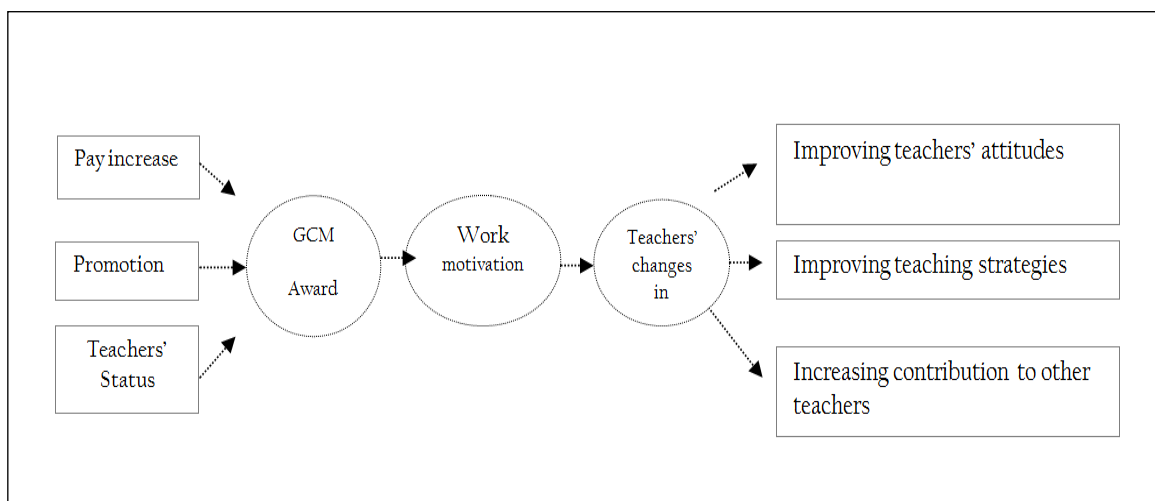


Figure 6-1: Model of GC Award impacts on teachers' work motivation in changing teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning

### 6.3. Research question one (Teachers' attitudes)

This section discusses the results of the first research question: how did the teachers perceive the changes in their attitudes in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving GCM award scheme?

This study found that teachers reported to have seen some positive changes in their attitudes after they received the GC award. The study identified seven categories of changes in attitudes that took place after receiving the GCM award based on the participants' perceptions. The teachers in this study regarded GCM award scheme as a motivation for improvement. Below are some of the summaries of what teachers said:

Lina: "I feel that the title brings along with it a very high expectation from people around you. When I was first promoted to this post, I came very early to school and was one of the last to go back home. Every task given, I made sure I finished it early. I made sure my Teaching Record Book is always

updated. I felt like people were scrutinising every single thing I did and they expected perfection from me”

Rosie: “I make it a habit to come to school before 7.15 every morning. I know I must manage my time well”

Munir: “As a GC, I have a clear vision and mission. I want to be a creative and innovative GC and always promote excellence to my students. How can I achieve my goal? The answer is continuous learning. For things I do not know, I always learn about them through reading or self exploration”

Melur: “People have a very high opinion on us. I see the title as a factor that controls my behaviour. I need to always show good examples to other people”

This study found that the GC teachers or also known as Excellent Teachers in this study are not only teachers who are recognised as possessing knowledge, expertise and skills in their subject area but also possess positive attitudes such as being committed, dedicated, creative and highly motivated in carrying out their duties and responsibilities, striving for continuous excellence and promoting quality in teaching and learning. Teachers reported changes in their attitudes after receiving the GCM award scheme such as improvement in their time management, arriving early at school and leaving late from work, completing tasks within the stipulated time, and meeting deadlines for submissions. Improvements in time management include spending extra time not only to finish any work assigned to them but to ensure quality in them. The findings also indicated that after receiving the GCM award scheme, the teachers in this study were more positive in the way they think and became more committed to their work. They also worked hard to become role models to peers and students and made improvements to their personal values, became creative and highly motivated in carrying out their duties and

responsibilities. They also reported that they adopted the continuous learning perspective and strove for continuous excellence.

Some of the changes reported by the teachers are:

- a. Improvement in time management such as arriving early at and leaving late from school and completing tasks early. This would help them to be the role models to other teachers.
- b. Becoming more positive such as striving for excellence and never giving up in achieving objectives or target in teaching and non-teaching duties
- c. Adoption of continuous learning concept such as self learning and exploration. Teachers reported that they read more books in order to increase subject matter and instructional knowledge, attend professional development to increase knowledge and get exposed to up-to-date information.
- d. Increase in work commitment and accountability such as working extra hard than everybody else at school, showing willingness to do extra duties such as replacement classes, not turning down any tasks assigned by school, accepting invitations for talks, seminars or in-house trainings in or outside school.
- e. Improvement in inner or personal values such as such as having strong desire to further studies until the doctorate level, having intention to apply for promotion in a higher scale, aiming to be a lecturer at the Teacher Training Colleges, applying for the Form Six post as it was considered as better post than GC, and intention in applying for “Jusa” (Special Grade) post as it is regarded to be the highest-ranked post for civil servants. In addition, a few teachers in this study wanted to write books about

effective teaching and learning based on their experience as a GC. Some of the teachers in this study were already appointed as the authors for Government school text books and reference books which are used by most students.

The study of teachers' attitudes is an important aspect to explore because it could give us information and more understanding on how it could influence the process of teaching in teachers' daily activities especially in classroom (OECD, 2009) thus provides us ways to improve students' learning. Teachers' beliefs and attitudes are believed to have a very close relationship in influencing how they manage and cope with the challenges of managing their duties as teachers, thus influencing students' learning and achievement (OECD, 2009). The effort in improving teachers' personal and professional attitudes, knowledge of subject matter and skills instructions in order to be effective is parallel to the research findings that those teachers who received the GC incentives showed positive changes in order to be better teachers.

The findings of this study indicated that teachers who received the GCM award did make some positive changes in their personal and professional attitudes toward teaching.

To be effective or excellent, a teacher must have the right attitude and should possess multiple skills, techniques and strategies to deliver his lessons. Although some attitudes are formed long before someone enters the profession, it was believed that some behaviour characteristics are developed through learning and training and it was suggested that providing incentives could motivate teachers to improve their attitudes. Psychology in motivation theory also found the evidence that attitudes and behaviour could change for some reason for example through training, experiences, incentives or enforcement (Hume, 1995). Previous study on quality teacher (Hussain et. al., 2011) has found that one of the characteristics of quality teacher is to have positive attitudes in order to promote the quality in teaching and learning such as being committed and dedicated to teach and being highly creative in teaching

instruction. The demand for teachers to make positive changes in their attitudes is very high as it can help produce high quality students; therefore, to see significant improvement in teachers' motivation, incentives together with praise and recognition of teachers' achievement can be used on teachers (Lavy, 2007; OECD, 2005, 2009; Podgursky & Springer, 2007).

Teachers in this study reported that they felt they became more concerned with time management and after receiving the GC award they made it a habit to complete a task before its due date and they came early to school. They also managed their time well in planning their lessons and preparing the necessary teaching materials before class. Teachers in this study understood the importance of changes as they were aware that once they took up the GC post, they were seen as role models and the onus was on them to show other teachers that they were capable and deserving of the GC title. Moreover, teachers reported an increase in motivation and accountability such as willingness to carry out extra or replacement classes whenever they had to miss classes for meetings or seminars outside school. Some teachers also reported that after receiving the GC award, they became more active in helping those weak students to improve their academic performance by providing academic clinics. The findings concurred with the study carried out by Yenice (2009) that found the relationship between teachers' attitude and teaching performance to students' learning.

The interviews with teachers provided information on how incentives influence teachers' attitudes toward teaching after receiving the GCM award. The findings showed that most teachers in this study saw a significant increase in the level of their motivation toward their job. The increased motivation was reflected in positive changes in teachers' time management, the way of thinking, commitment and accountability. They also changed their physical appearance and personal values, adopted the continuous learning attitude, became more creative, and became role models. Teachers' attitude towards their teaching job is very important to improve



their teaching performance and students' learning. The finding of this study indicated that most of the participants perceived all the changes they made after receiving the GC award scheme as positive and encouraging. This could send a strong message to the policy makers that such incentives could increase teachers' motivation for positive changes and it will that lead to improvement in teaching profession as outlined in the objectives of the GCM award scheme (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006).

The findings of this study supported the findings from previous research by (Frase & Sorenson, 1992; Rosenholtz & Smylie, 1983) that showed teachers' incentives influenced teachers' motivation through an increase in teachers' effort to improve themselves. Generally, psychologists agree that extrinsic reward such as pay and promotion could motivate people the same way intrinsic reward such as pride in their work could (Johnson, 1986) and this is supported by other researchers who concluded that one of the ways of motivating workers is through rewards and incentives that improve performance and commitment to the job (Kelly & Milanowski, 2002; Leach & Westbrook, 2000; Muller & Alliata, 2009). As Lavy (2007) stress the importance of providing workers with rewards and incentives as it is believed that they can increase workers' motivation and accountability and some would feel the obligation to carry out their job and duties in accordance to the incentives that they received, thus improve the quality of job (Lavy, 2007).

#### **6.4. Research question two (Teaching strategies)**

This section discusses the findings of the second research questions: how did the teachers perceive the changes in their teaching strategies in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?

Effective teaching strategies are important in ensuring teaching and learning effectiveness. Seven out of ten participants in this study have reported that changes

happened in their teaching practice after they received the GCM award and becoming GCs. Such changes include becoming more creative and willing to adopt new techniques to improve teaching by developing modules for difficult topics, carrying out more activities outside classroom, using multiple techniques like singing, relating stories, grouping, exploring, drilling and using teaching aids such as educational television channel, the Internet, OHP, music, newspaper and article cuttings that can improve students' understanding of the lessons. They also used material and non-material rewards to motivate students. Five out of ten teachers in this research also reported changes in their target setting and planning. Munir, Lina, Melur, Rosy and Syed perceived that positive changes happened i.e they set specific targets and planned their lessons more seriously after receiving the GCM award.

Melur: "Every GC must do some innovations. Don't keep on using the same teaching aids, for example. We must always change"

Roby: "I try to double the ICT usage, whether in classroom teaching or when I want to look for any related materials for my teaching aids. I try to improve my quality of teaching as far as I can. Of course, previously, I did spend some time surfing the Internet to find such information, but it was not as much as I do it now"

Lina: "I do reward them but not by showering them with presents. I praise them when they do good things. I want them to know that I care about them. If students make noise, a non GC might just ask them to keep quiet"

Rosy: "Now I set a target in my teaching and I do everything to achieve it"

Brophy (2006) and Brophy and Good (1986) have suggested that to achieve effective teaching, teachers must do a detailed and organised planning before, during and throughout the school year. Among the things teachers need to do are to plan the rules and classroom procedure, organise the physical environment of the classroom,

prepare teaching materials before school year begins, ensure all teaching materials are appropriate to the topic and to plan ways to tackle the problems of having students with different learning styles and abilities. Three participants in this study namely Munir, Rosie and Syed reported that after receiving the award, they began to plan their teaching and learning activities at the beginning of every school year. They also have specific weekly and monthly plans for their lessons. All of them saw the importance of early planning to achieve their target. This finding concurred with what (Marzano et. al., 2001) found in their research on teaching effectiveness that the way teachers plan for their teaching instruction would influence students' learning and enhance students' achievement.

Teachers in this study reported changes in having good planning in their teaching after becoming GCs. Good planning in teaching instruction is one of the crucial elements in effective teaching. A good planning comprises three key elements such as knowledge of the subject matter, specific objectives of the lesson, and suitable plan which caters to students' proficiency levels. Whatever activities planned for the students must take into account the target groups. In a class with mixed ability, teachers will have to plan different activities for different level of proficiency and post-lesson assessment should be carried out to help teachers identify the strengths and weaknesses of their lesson plans and strategies. If the lesson objectives are not achieved, teachers must look for strategies to improve their lesson plans (Kyriacou, 1997, p.87). Objectives can be divided into two categories: long term and short term objectives. In addition, learning outcomes can also be categorised in terms of knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes (Kyriacou, 1997). If the objective of the lesson is assessed in terms of students' attitudes, teachers must know how far they manage to inculcate the values in their students so that they will continue adopting the values in their daily lives. As theory and practice go hand in hand, teachers' identity and personality play a role in impacting students' attitudes. If teachers can be role models to their students, their job in instilling good values in the students would become easier.

On the other hand, if the objective of the lesson is for the students to master certain skills, teachers must ensure that all the equipment which will be used during the lessons are working well. If they are not functioning, they must look for alternatives so that the lesson can still be carried out. Teachers should be able to anticipate problems and solutions before delivering the lessons. Another factor that is essential is students' skills and previous knowledge regarding the topic of the lesson. Teachers should not just focus on how to deliver new knowledge and skills, but what is more important is to help students apply whatever they learn in class to their lives. A lesson would not be successful unless teachers know in advance students' prior knowledge regarding the topic. To be effective, teachers must know students' background before they can plan on their next course of actions.

The findings also found that teachers in this study managed to increase students' motivation by adopting certain teaching techniques such as using stories with moral values and inviting counsellors to give talks to students. Four out of ten teachers in this research, Lina, Yati, Melur and Syed perceived changes happened in their teaching strategies after receiving GCM award and becoming a GC. Teachers reported that they realised the importance of motivation in increasing students' performance. Motivation is one of the important aspects of a child's development (Babad, 2009). Motivation is seen as energy for a child to lead certain behaviours and to attain particular goals (Babad, 2009). In the literature of motivation, it could be distinguished into two types, namely intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is always influenced by internal incentives such as when pupils do something which was driven by their "curiosity, excitement, enthusiasm and a positive self image" (Babad, 2009, p.18) whereas extrinsic motivation is influenced by external reinforcements or controlled by outside factors. The actions taken by individuals could come from the desire to avoid punishment or reinforcements such as "a reward, recognition, status, or good grades" (Babad, 2009, p.18).

One of the participants in this study, Melur, reported that she used gift hampers as one of the ways to motivate her students. In this case, the gift hampers were used as extrinsic motivation to the students. Studies on rewards on students' motivation suggested that rewards are not always effective as they do not always improve students' achievement, but sometimes can decrease intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1971; Marzano et. al., 2001). The study of the impact of reward was done by Deci (1971) who used money to reward students to solve problem during their free time. In this research, two groups of students were given the task, where one group was given USD1 for every correct answer they got. In summary, the findings of the research showed that students in the group which was paid money for answering the questions correctly spent less of their free time to solve the task compared to the group who did not receive money and he concluded that providing students with reward such as money would decrease students' motivation to perform or to do certain task Deci (1971). The findings of this study was replicated in another research by (Lepper et. al., (1973) who found that material reward may reduce intrinsic motivation among students and for future action, they may do work if their teacher provide them with such a reward rather than having desire to do it for self accomplishment and self fulfilling desire to learn.

Teachers also reported to have made changes in instructional planning and teaching delivery. The studies on school improvement (Pollock, 2007) has found that students' achievements have very close relationship with teachers' action in doing their teaching instruction and delivery because it would help teachers to implement teaching and learning better and in a more arranged setting. Gagne (1965) proposed nine instructions as guidelines for effective teaching including trying to attract student's attention to learn, giving learning guides on the topic taught, giving feedback if their students face problems and also providing feedback on students' performance. Marzano et al (2001) also suggested that teachers have the ability in influencing students' learning by having good planning, using various ways to assess

students' performance, giving feedback to students' work and performance and providing clear information to students.

### **6.5. Research question three (Teachers' contributions)**

This section discusses the results of the research questions: how did the teachers perceive the improvement in their contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality of teaching and learning after receiving the GCM award scheme?

Of the ten teachers participating in this research, a total of seven teachers perceived an increase in their contributions in the form of giving motivational talks to students and teachers on effective teaching and conducting workshops on examination question techniques to student and teachers after receiving GC award. Lina, Melur, Siti, Noor, Munir, Ahmad and Yati perceived that after becoming a GC, their contributions increased as they were asked to give talks, mostly motivational, for both students and teachers inside and outside of their school. They were also requested to conduct workshops on answering examination question techniques for students and teachers and give talks to other teachers on effective teaching.

Lina: "I am always invited to give talks regarding Teaching and Learning especially effective teaching. I am involved at the district and state and national level"

Munir: "In my school, there is another GC besides me that we were work together to give motivational talks to other teachers to help them improve their job performance"

Noor: "I felt better after becoming a GC; I can contribute more outside my school. I am always invited to give talks outside"

Syed: “Sometimes I give my opinion and suggestions regarding the things that I know and I share everything with everyone in the school”

Melur: “Even before I got this GC post, people always consult me when they have problems or need help. When I am appointed as a GC, people become more confident in me. People have a very high opinion of us”

Lina: “I think I have served other people and I contribute a lot to the betterment of many schools. I feel that I make full use of my experience as a GC to help others. I helped a lot in making my previous school excellent. I have helped schools and students to reach excellence”

One of the teachers reported that her contributions to students, other teachers and school increased after becoming a GC. She was always invited to give talks regarding teaching and learning, and especially about effective teaching at school, district, state and national level. Her other contributions include helping peers and students with techniques on answering examination questions. Other teachers also reported an increase in contributions especially in giving talks to students and teachers at school, district, state or national level. Besides, they were also involved in planning activities which could help improve their school’s performance and students’ achievement.

Teachers (Munir, Syed, Yati, Siti and Lina) also reported an increase in contributions in terms of giving out advice and opinion in teaching committee especially on their area of expertise after receiving the GC award. They also found that they work more with other teachers in conducting and managing school clubs and societies because as GCs, their expertise was always sought after. They conducted talks on examination techniques, helped their colleagues prepare teaching materials, and helped out in any programmes conducted by their schools.

The same teachers also reported to have increased their contributions by giving out advice and consultation to their colleagues in matters related to teaching and learning, preparation of paperwork for school programmes or research, pedagogical techniques in teaching, classroom management and matters related to student problems. Other examples of contributions are teaching other teachers techniques on how to use Microsoft PowerPoint in presentation (Munir), becoming trainer and mentor to other teachers especially new teacher (Melur, Siti, Munir), and also giving advised to teachers regarding their interpersonal problems (Yati). Siti reported that she increased her contributions by giving special training to her colleagues on how to carry out action research. One of her colleagues had presented her paper at the state level and another teacher presented her paper in a competition at national level.

Teacher also reported (Munir, Yati, Lina and Noor) to contribute their expertise in by involving themselves into academic writing such as becoming authors for text books, internal writing distribution for school, producing teaching modules for students in certain topics and academic writing in journals of education. Among other writing projects these teachers were involved were the Malaysian Education Development Blueprint, discipline and reading problem among students, and discipline at school. One of the teachers also reported contributing as a writer of text book used by Ministry of Education Malaysia and reference book published by private publishers. He also produced internal teaching materials like modules to be used by other teachers teaching the same subject in his school. To ensure effective teaching, teachers (Yati, Munir, Lina and Siti) increased their involvement in action research after receiving the GC award. According to them, they carried out action research not because it was required of them to do so, but more because they believed it would help their students to improve their achievements. Five teachers (Lina, Noor, Rosie and Ahmad) also reported an increase in their contributions of developing modules and producing teaching syllabus at district and state level after receiving GC award. The modules were produced by a team of Excellent Teachers to help low-performing schools.



Teachers' efforts and contributions at their schools are key in ensuring the success of school activities because they would indirectly help students to learn and encourage parents to be involved in school programs (Rosenholtz, 1989). Thus, it is important that teachers are encouraged to give more contributions to their schools by providing them with incentives which would motivate them. It is believed that teachers who are highly motivated in their duties would perform well, show high commitment, enjoy their job and always be willing to carry out their responsibilities (Rosenholtz, 1989). Some of the collaborations that could exist in most schools are discussion on teachers' instructional strategies in teaching, ways to manage students' behaviours, professional advice on how to improve teaching performance and current issues in teaching careers (Rosenholtz, 1987). However, it was found that such collaborations did not materialise because of various factors such as teachers avoided discussing certain issues as they felt that they could be considered by their peers as lacking knowledge and experience in certain areas thus could possibly be embarrassing to talk or discuss about that (Rosenholtz, 1989). If this happened, it could be a disadvantage for teachers' development and improvement especially for new teachers. Students would be the ones to lose if teachers started to work individually.

Four participants of this study (Rosy, Ahmad, Noor and Lina) have reported that they contributed their efforts in developing modules and producing syllabus at district or state level to help other teachers become more effective in teaching. The findings suggested that the incentives of the GCM award were successful in encouraging teachers to contribute more to their peers in the same school and in other schools. Contributions of teachers' professional knowledge, skills and experience among teachers could help those teachers who are new or have lack of skills in developing solutions in managing their teaching duties to find ways to overcome their obstacles in teaching (Lortie, 1975; Rosenholtz, 1989). Daily teaching problems such as managing students' behaviour, encouraging low motivating students, choosing the best modules and materials for teaching aids could be discussed, shared and

produced during the collaborations among teachers. Such sessions could be carried out in formal or informal manner. For example, the knowledge sharing could be done in an in-house training or subject panel committee meeting. By getting some assistance and advice from their peers, teachers would feel motivated to work and experience less stress as they know that they are not alone in facing any difficult situation (Rosenholtz, 1989).

The contribution reported by participants in this study such as giving in house training to colleagues about effective teaching and learning, creating and intervening in teaching aids and professional advised includes coaching, mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching and sharing of good practices (OECD, 2009, p.49) could be done through formal or informal events such as workshops or formal qualification programmes, collaboration between schools and teachers. The findings indicated that GCs' contributions could benefit in helping teachers to become more effective in teaching in improving quality teachers. Teachers' contribution reported in the findings could be important for Malaysian teachers as the report in OECD (2009) found that Malaysian teachers wanted more professional development in becoming effective teachers as shown below.

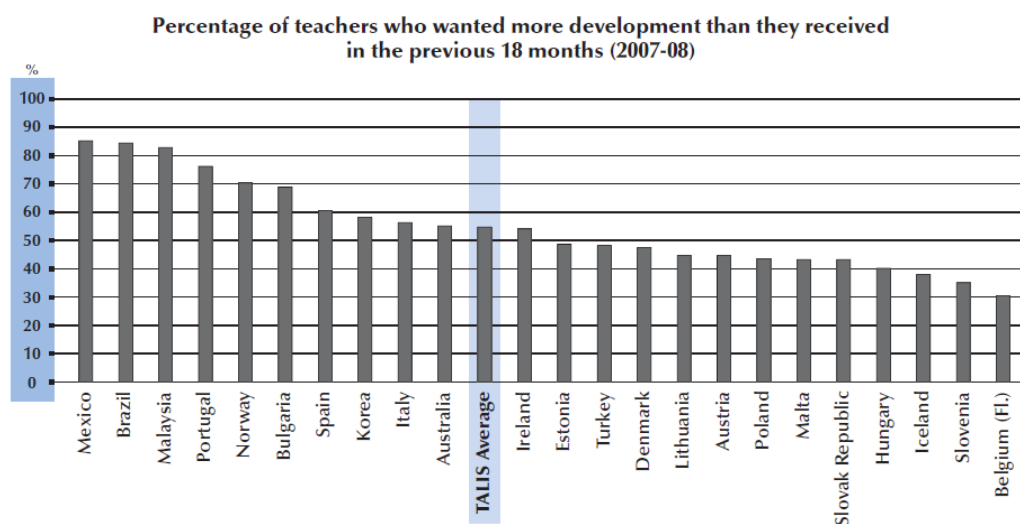


Figure 6-2: Percentage of teachers who wanted more development than they received in the previous 18 months (2007-08): OECD. (2009). *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments: First Results from TALIS*

The study by the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) provides information about education systems in 23 countries as comparative perspective on the conditions of teaching and learning in the countries such as Mexico, Malaysia, Korea, Australia, Denmark and Hungary. This is done by reviewing teacher policies that address useful information to the countries that took part in the study. From the study, it was found that more than 80% of Malaysian teachers wanted more development than they received such as informal dialogue to improve teaching, courses and workshops, individual and collaborative research, education conferences and seminar and professional development network (OECD, 2009). The participants of this study perceived an increase in contribution to other teachers whether in formal or informal events. Their contributions could be seen as enrichments to the available professional development provided by the Government through formal events to improve the quality of teachers in Malaysia. The Ministry of Education, State and District Education Departments and schools principals must make sure all the GCs play their roles in school as they have excellent knowledge and skills in teaching instruction. Their contribution should be highlighted to promote the quality of teaching and learning in Malaysian schools. They should be encouraged to make more contributions and realise that they are needed to the teachers' development and for students' learning improvement

However, despite the findings that indicated monetary or non monetary incentives in the GCM award could improve the quality of teaching and contributions to other teachers, these incentives can also bring negative influences for example, they could reduce the peer interaction among teachers in collaboration and working together as teachers are intended to receive the award (Rosenholtz, 1987). Although in case of GCM award, the data showed that peer interaction between teachers increased. GC

award changes teachers' nature of collaboration, previous research have found that by providing teachers with individual incentives, the opportunities for teachers to share among themselves are quite limited because teachers are needed to concentrate in improving instructional strategies such as planning and preparing, multiple teaching aids and preparation and at the same time also need to concerns on students' achievement through mentoring and providing *necessary* supporting functions, thus limit their time in contributions to other teachers (Johnson, 1986; Lortie, 1975) and destroyed team work among teachers (Murnane & Cohen, 1986; Podgursky & Springer, 2007). As some teachers in this study have reported that there are a lot of work to do after received the award and appointed as a GC, thus there also certain possibilities that the objective of Government to increase teachers' contribution could fail if the GCs fail to manage their time or the workload as a GC increased due to the post could reduce teachers' contributions.

## **6.6. Summary of findings**

In summary, teachers in this study reported that changes did take place in their attitudes teachers' teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award. The changes include having better time management, being more committed, dedicated, creative and highly motivated in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. In addition, they saw themselves as becoming more creative and willing to adopt new techniques to improve teaching by developing modules for difficult topics, carrying out more activities outside classroom, using multiple techniques like singing, relating stories, grouping, exploring, drilling and using teaching aids such as educational television channel, the Internet, OHP, music, newspaper and article cuttings that can improve students' understanding of the lessons.

Research findings also indicated that teachers perceived that their contributions were increased after becoming GCs. The data revealed that these teachers were asked to give talks on motivation, effective teaching and learning, and answering examination question techniques to both students and teachers. The three main findings of the study showed that giving incentive can be a factor in increasing teachers' work motivation to improve the quality of teaching. It could be said that Malaysian Excellent Teacher Award scheme policy is successful in its objective to reward performing teachers and at the same time improve teaching quality. The introduction of GC Award could also be one of the government's strategies in attracting people to choose teaching as a career and getting quality teachers to remain teaching in classrooms. As showed and discuss on the model of this study in Figure 1, the GCM award than consists of pay increase, promotion to higher grade of services and title in teachers' status supported the previous theories of work motivation that incentives could influences on human work motivation in increasing effort for improvement.

## **6.7. Issues and challenges in the implementation of GCM policy**

This section discusses the findings of the study regarding the issues and challenges in the implementation of GCM policy. This section contains eight subsections:

- Teachers reported having inadequate information about the GCM award scheme
- Teachers reported getting less support from peers and school after being GC
- Teachers reported having conflict with peers and school administrators after being GC
- Teachers reported the need for more professional development and training
- Teachers reported having less opportunity to shine after appointed as GC teacher
- Uncertainty over what type of role to play after appointed as a GC
- Stress & burden due to status and duties
- Negative perception of teachers on GCM award scheme

Below discusses the findings of the study regarding the issues and challenges in the implementation of GCM policy

- *Inadequate information about the GCM award scheme*

Several teachers in this study reported that they did not have adequate information about the GCM policy before applying for the award.

Siti: “At first, it was known as Guru Pakar (Expert Teacher). “I did not know much about the scheme. In fact I think, I knew very little about it. Then I got the information that a GC gets a better pay than other teachers. Not long after that, the Principal gave out the application forms to me and 6 other teachers”

Rosie: “Even though this GC scheme was introduced more than 10 years ago, many teachers still do not understand it. As you can see, I am now teaching in a good school but still there is not a single GC in this school. Thus, I have no one to turn to for advice and it’s very difficult for me as there is no benchmark of what a GC is supposed to be. I wish the ministry had done more to promote the scheme among teachers and provide them with clear explanation of what GC is all about. Because teachers have no common understanding of the concept of GC, they are reluctant to apply for the post”

Noor: “I didn’t really know much about the scheme at that time. My husband encouraged me to apply for the post and I did”

Syed: “There weren’t any GC in my school at that time. I was recommended by the school to apply at the very last minutes. I couldn’t imagine what a GC’s responsibilities or identities were like. Plus, there was no role model to look at and refer to”

Clear information about the objectives of GCM award is important in order to provide teachers with information of why the Malaysian Government introduces the policy award. As stated in the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, the three main objectives of the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia Award are as stated below:

- a. to acknowledge teachers who are dedicated, motivated, highly skilled, experienced and excellent in their field or subject;
- b. to provide opportunity for teachers for a job promotion without having to leave classroom teaching for administrative duties;
- c. to provide opportunity for teachers to get promoted to a higher grade through a fast track system

The detailed information about the GCM award scheme was outlined through the Ministry of Education Circular letters that were send to every school in Malaysia. These circular letters were aimed at helping both group of graduate teachers and non-graduate teachers in understanding the definition, rationales and requirements to apply for the GCM award scheme. School heads or principals were supposed to disseminate the information about GCM award to all educators teaching in schools and colleges as the award is open to all eligible teachers. At the same time, it was stated in the letters that school heads or principals could identify and nominate teachers who meet the criteria for the award.

As mentioned earlier, seven out of ten teachers reported that they did not receive enough information about the GCM award and, moreover, there was no clear information provided by their schools about the policy. Siti, Rosie, Noor, Melur, Roby and Syed reported that they had been approached directly by the school administrators to apply for the post based on their excellent job performance. Had they not been approached and encouraged by their school administrators to apply, these teachers would not have applied for the GC post as they did not have the information about it even though they met all the requirements for the title. The lack

of information given to teachers by school also means that those who were not identified and approached would not have the chance to get the GCM award despite it being open to all teachers in the country.

The findings of this study indicated that there was very little encouragement from school heads or principals for teachers to apply for the GCM award. As the quota for the post was even increased by 300% in 2006 after it was first being introduced in 1994, it means there were many vacancies for the GC post and the chances for a teacher to get the award if he/she applied for it is very high.

However, the Government and school heads or principals were not the only ones to be blame if teachers did not know about the GC award as they as teachers must always make themselves informed about what is happening in the education field especially matters regarding their professional development such as job promotion. How can we gauge teachers' awareness of things related to their career? In today's IT world, teachers should take the initiative to carry out research, do a lot of reading and look for information on the internet. As GCM award scheme promotes excellence in teaching and learning process, many fail to see this. At the same time, many teachers do not take the opportunity to ask about this GCM award to the school administration despite the issues of GCM award being talked about everywhere in the staff room, school canteen and even published on the newspapers.

Both sides, the school administrators and teachers, should be held responsible for the issues of many teachers not in the know about the GCM scheme. Teachers should be proactive by asking about the information from the school administrators and searching the information through reading materials or the Internet. The school administration should ensure that the information about the scheme is properly disseminated to all teachers so that every teacher who is eligible for the post gets the opportunity for the job promotion. If a school has many GCs, it would definitely help in improving the students' academic performance. In the long run, the school image



will be uplifted. A GC is equivalent to a doctor whose job is healing and curing people. The more doctors they have, the more patients can be helped.

- *Less support from peers and school after being GC*

Another issue reported by the participants in this study was the negative perception of other teachers towards GC teachers. One of the teachers in this study (Noor) found that after receiving the GCM award scheme, she always felt left out and when she did not receive enough support from her peers in carrying out some school activities she nearly decided to quit the post. She reported that the situation was different before she held the GC post.

Noor: “Before I was a GC, I enjoyed doing everything but once I became a GC, whenever I asked for others’ help, they would say that I should do it because it is a GC’s duty. That’s the one thing that I am not happy about. Before this, we worked as a team but now I feel that I am alone”

Noor: “As a GC, I never have the feeling to quit until recently. Because of one incident, I stopped taking the extra miles when I do anything. I do not want people to say that I overdo things”

Noor: “In this school, people only got to know I was appointed as a GC after a month. It was never announced during the school assembly like it’s always done in other schools. I didn’t have the intention to share the news because I saw that my colleagues, and even the school administrators, were not very appreciative of the title and the environment in this school is not very supportive of a GC”

Teachers in this study reported that the reason why they did not receive enough support from their peers was because many teachers were not well-informed about the concept of GCM award scheme. Many would assume that once a teacher gets the GC title, he must give justice to the title and the increased pay he received by doing

extra work on his own without asking questions. Many fail to see that the success of schools depends on the team work of the teachers. Besides, many teachers did not know that one of the objectives of the GCM award scheme was to offer promotion to teachers so they do not have to leave classroom teaching by taking up administrative post.

Secondly, there are also some perceptions that GCs are “super teachers” or extraordinary teachers, thus, other teachers think that GCs can carry out all duties without help.

Jealousy might be one of the reasons why many GCs do not get enough support from peers. Other teachers who did not receive the award might be jealous because these GCs receive quick promotion and higher salary than others. Moreover, many teachers only came to know about the award after other people got the promotion. They might feel victimised as they missed the opportunity to apply for the post due to lack of information. Some might have negative feelings towards GCs as they felt that they were more deserving for the award as they were at the same age with the GC or sometimes even older, and also doing the same thing in terms of teaching and other responsibilities in school. Those are some of the possible reasons why some teachers did not lend their support and showed resentful feelings toward GCs.

Although the GCM award scheme was introduced by the Government as a promotion scheme to reward high quality teachers and retain them in the classroom, it is also aimed at having the GCs to play important role in planning teaching and learning process to achieve the required standards set by School principals / heads / Directors, leading and assisting curriculum planning and co-curricular activities supervision, being a consultant and a mentor to other teachers in teaching and learning process, carrying out research, publishing academic writing, creating innovation and sharing it with the community and also carrying out special task

related to area of expertise in other schools, at district, state, national and international levels as showed in table 6-1 below.

### GC ANNUAL WORK TARGET

No	Tasks/grade	DG4 4	DG48	DG52	DG54	JUSA*
1	Planning teaching-learning process and teaching to achieve the required standards set by School Heads/Directors	75%	70%	65%	60%	50%
2	Leading and assisting in curriculum planning and co-curricular activities supervision	10%	10%	15%	15%	15%
3	Being a consultant and a mentor to other teachers in teaching and learning process	8%	10%	10%	10%	10%
4	Carrying out research, publishing academic writing, creating innovation and sharing it with the community	2%	5%	5%	7%	10%
5	Carrying out special task related to area of expertise in other schools, at district, state, national and international levels.	5%	5%	5%	8%	15%
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

NB: \* JUSA in this category is under Grade C

Table 6-1: GC Annual work target: Adopted from Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia (2006).

As shown in Table 6-1, besides teaching duties, GCs are also expected by the government to carry out extra tasks such as assisting school and peers in co-curricular activities supervision, helping other teachers in the area of their subject expertise and also contribute to the development in education by doing research and presenting papers at seminars or conferences. A GC needs proper and strong support from his/her school and peers in order to be effective. If a GC did not receive the support she/he was supposed to have, as experienced by one of the teachers in this

study, it might weaken her motivation to be a true GC and in the long run it might have negative impacts on the objective of the GCM award scheme. This is because when the teacher feels de-motivated, it would affect her overall job performance. The Government, school heads and principals, or even experienced/senior GCs should lend their supports towards GCs, especially the newly appointed so that they would not be victimised by other people's misconception of the GCM award. Getting enough support from the school and other teachers would help motivate GCs to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to contribute their knowledge, skills and experience for the betterment of society.

- *Conflict with peers and school administrators after being GC*

Participants in this study also reported to have experienced some “conflicts” after they received the GC title. The first conflict is due to the fact that the GC post is at the same level as the school heads or Principals, and the second conflict was because of the confusion in the roles they need to play as GCs. Since the GCM award enables a teacher to be promoted to a higher grade, some of the GC award recipients found themselves to be at the same if not higher grade as their school heads. Conflicts arose between GCs and their school Principals because many people gauge a person's ability to manage a school by his grade level and salary.

Lina: “At first, I didn't really understand the concept of GC. I was grateful as the grade promotion was huge for me. I was at grade 41 and was promoted to grade 48. There was no grade 44 then at that moment. It was all too sudden for me. Just imagine, all in a sudden, I was holding a post which put me at the same level as the school Principal. When I was transferred to a new school, then only I really understood the job descriptions of a GC. I felt burdened by it”

Munir: “As a GC, I was transferred to another school. There was a conflict then with the school principal because it was stated that I was sent there to help the school. Of course, the school principal was agitated with the term ‘to help the school’. The term indirectly gave the idea that he was not competent”

Noor: “Now I am at the same level with my school administrators, I think. Maybe that makes them feel really uncomfortable”

One of teachers reported that he has a conflict when carrying out his role as a GC because he was seen as trying to undermine the school principal. This conflict came about because some GCs were sent to some selected low performance schools and they were given the ‘mission’ to ‘help’ the schools. For other teachers, this might give the idea that the school heads / principals were weak administrators and failed to manage their schools. In reality, the GCs’ ‘mission’ was not focused on the school management but more towards managing their subject matter. This should be made clear to all parties so that the misunderstanding would not prolong the conflicts some GCs are experiencing with their school administrators and influence the quality of their performance.

The role of a GC might be similar to the roles and responsibilities of Chartered Teachers as stipulated in the Scotland Chartered Teacher Scheme which states:

“Subject to the policies of the school and the education authority the duties of teachers, promoted and unpromoted, are to perform such tasks as the Head teacher shall direct having reasonable regard to overall teacher workload related to the following categories” (The Scottish Government Edinburgh, 2008)

Among the roles and responsibilities Chartered Teachers need to play include working in partnership with parents, lending support to staff and other professionals, taking part in school planning, contributing effort in improving students' learning and achievement and contributing their knowledge, skills and experience according to schools' needs (The Scottish Government Edinburgh, 2008). Just like the Chartered Teachers in Scotland, GCs in Malaysia are required to lend their hands and expertise mostly in the process of teaching and learning rather than matters related to school management.

The Objectives of the Guru Cemerlang Promotion Scheme are:

- a. To acknowledge and recognise teachers who are excellent in their field or subject.
- b. To improve the quality of teaching.
- c. To promote Guru Cemerlang as role model to other teachers.
- d. To enhance school excellence by utilising the experience and expertise of the

(The Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006, p 2)

The objectives of the scheme clearly indicate that a GC may need to be transferred to another school due to the capacity of his knowledge, skills, experiences and deep understanding of his subject matter which are needed to help a school improve the quality of students' learning. It is imperative that school heads or principals should be informed about the reason why a GC is transferred to their school i.e it has nothing to do with incapability of the school administrators to run the school. However, schools are encouraged to seek GCs' opinions and involve them in the planning of school activities. The schools are also encouraged to utilise GCs' expertise by asking them to mentor and help other teachers, especially the new ones, in their area of expertise.

As far as feeling “uncomfortable” for being at the same grade and salary level as their school heads/ principal is concerned, it could be rooted in Malaysian culture and Asian culture where employees accept the hierarchical structures of having to be loyal and respectful of their bosses (Rose et. al., 2007 as cited in Idris, 2010). Studies by Lu et. Al., (2003) and Rose et. al., (2007) suggested that Malaysian employees are expected to respect their leaders and avoid confrontations and reduce disagreement with their superiors due to the cultural belief and status and it was supported by (Idris, 2010) who concurred that this is a norm in Malaysian organisation culture whether in Government or non-Government organisations. The reason behind why teachers in this study experienced conflict in their job might be explained by the fact that there was a miscommunication between school heads and GCs due to the aforementioned hierarchical structures. Teachers perceived that the school heads find it uncomfortable to work with them because they are at the same level of grade and salary, thus they felt that they are not welcome in the school. On the other hand, the school heads might also have the perception that the GCs would feel uncomfortable to receive instructions or directions from them.

Teachers also reported that there conflict of need to transfer to other school after received the GCM award.

Siti: “When the scheme was first introduced, those who were selected for the GC post would be transferred to other schools. However, in some cases, a GC was allowed to stay at the same school. This irregularity caused some teachers to feel sidelined”

The GCM award scheme policy stated that a teacher who is appointed as a GC in a grade B school should be transferred to a grade “A” school (Grade A school means that the total of students are more than 1800 pupils) or to any other schools that need a GC’s expertise. However, this was not the case for some teachers which means in certain cases teachers still could teach at the same school (Ahmad, Melur, Rosie).

The inconsistencies in the implementation of the GCM appointment in transferring teachers could have the possibilities that some teachers felt (Siti) sidelined. It is good if GCs know the reason of their moving to other school in order to utilise their expertises and at the same time the Government should look the consistency of implementing certain issues in the GCM award scheme policy to be sure that GCs felt that they are treat well and fairly.

- ***Need for more professional development and training***

The findings also reported that one of the teachers in this study expressed the need to attend more continual professional development or CPD after receiving the GCM award scheme Rosie:

Rosie: “Right now I am still waiting for calling letters to attend any Professional development courses. I really look forward to attending those courses as I think I need them to improve myself”

Rosie: “I was hoping I could be more successful. I consider myself a new comer when it comes to GC. I really want to teach in rural areas where the students are not as fortunate as my students now and I want to see vast improvement in my students’ achievement. Now, in this school, my students are the selected ones, so they are not academically challenged. (She become very emotional when saying this)

One of the teachers in this reported that she believed CPD training could help her improve her teaching and enhance students’ learning. The teacher also believed that as a new GC, she needed to attend CPD training to be more successful in playing her role as a true GC. As the Government’s target is to fulfil the GC quota, there will be more GCs serving in schools around the country. School administrators and other teachers will be assessing all these GCs’ performance and scrutinizing how they



carry themselves in schools. It is therefore important that these GCs receive enough support in order to effectively play their roles in schools. This can be done by providing them with more continuous professional development. In this case, the Ministry of Education should see that all GCs are assisted in every way possible, and given the opportunity to attend professional development and training.

As stated in Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2008, pg 30) GCs are required to attend at least seven days of CPD training based on the grade of GC post as shown below.

Grade of GC	Duration
DGA32	At least 7 days per years
DGA34	
DG44	
DG48	
DG52	
DG54	
Khas C (JUSA)	

Table 6-2: Allocation of GC in attending professional development and training a year. Sources: The Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia (2006; pg 30) Malaysia Ministry of Education

GCs teachers are required to attend continuing professional training in order to increase teachers' excellence to optimise their roles as GCs as intended by the Ministry of Education (The Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, 2006). Several areas of training suggested by the Ministry that are relevant to GCs are shown below:

- a. Teachers knowledge in subject teaching matters especially in teachers' expertise area
- b. Pedagogical content knowledge to encourage teachers to apply multiple strategies and relevan to classroom. During this training, teachers are exposed

to the used of information technology (ICT) in education and alert to change following the teaching context

- c. Curriculum management as oportunities for teachers for example to manage in building items and evaluation of students' asesment and ability to analysis students' achievement
- d. Becoming a trainer as an opportunity for teachers to build confidence in conducting courses or in house training with certain knowledge such as power point presentations and managing paper work
- e. Academic writing

It could be argued that GCs should not be left to carry out their responsibilities on their own. As reform in education requires and depends on other reforms in other related areas, the Government should take some action in reforming CPD training to all teachers and especially to GCs. Since GCs are willing to attend professional development courses to improve their self development, the Government should not hesitate to invest some money for this purpose. These professional development courses will be a good avenue for these excellent teachers to learn new things in order to improve themselves.

At the same time, the Ministry of Education could hold discussions with the Guru Cemerlang Council to identify programmes or courses that these GCs need. The GC Council could even plan and carry out these courses on their own and the Ministry of Education could finance such events. This would arguably be better for the teachers as they know what they really need. These courses would help them to meet all those GCs from the earlier batches and expose them to a lot more new knowledge. Even the Schools Inspectorate admitted that, based on their observations and inspections in schools, many new GCs have not fully embraced the concept of GC and they need a lot of support from the Ministry and other teachers in order to improve themselves (The Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006). It is not fair for all these teachers to be denied professional development

courses just because the Ministry do not have enough officers to plan for these courses. The Ministry can always collaborate with the Schools Inspectorate and the Guru Cemerlang Council to plan and carry out such events. Time should not be a factor as these courses can always be carried out during long school breaks. By doing this, these teachers will not have to miss classes. In short, it is reasonable to conclude that all these GCs want to attend professional development courses or any courses that can provide an avenue for them to meet as many other GCs as possible to exchange opinions and experiences. Even during the Guru Cemerlang annual seminars, not all GCs are invited to attend as there is a quota of how many teachers from every state can attend this annual gathering.

The OECD (2009) reported that there is a need for continuing professional development training for teachers as it could:

- a. Update individuals' knowledge of subject in light of recent advances in the area
- b. Update individuals' skills, attitudes and approaches in light of the development of new teaching techniques and objectives, new circumstances and new educational research
- c. Enable individual to apply changes made to curriculum or other aspects of teaching practice
- d. Enable schools to develop and apply new strategies concerning the curriculum and other aspects of teaching practice
- e. Provide an avenue for teachers to exchange information and expertise help weaker teachers become more effective

(OECD, 2009, p.49)

It could be suggested that to ensure all GCs get the opportunity to attend professional development courses, they should be put in smaller groups. Based on the number of GCs which has reached 12,000 nationwide, these teachers could be divided into two groups: primary school and secondary school GCs; or they could also be divided into

their subject matter. If there is a need, they can also be divided into the states where they serve. Road shows can also be carried out throughout the country. This can be done once in every two years or even in every school term holidays. These programmes, if being planned and carried out well by the Ministry would not be a waste of money and energy as they would give a very big impact on GCs' momentums. Such a large gathering is the time when these teachers can be together and exchange experiences, knowledge and at the same time help improve their understanding of the concept of GC. This can help mould a strong identity amongst them. Only with an appropriate attitude, these GCs can perform well in their job.

- ***Uncertainty over what type of role to play after GC appointment***

Teachers in this study also reported that they were still not clear about the roles they had to play as GCs besides teaching in classrooms.

Roby: "I have not really contributed significantly outside my school since becoming a GC. So far, I have never received any directives from the Education Department or anyone to carry out any programmes outside my school"

Syed: "Before this, I was informed that we, the GC's, are required to go out on every Wednesday to attend programmes or activities organized by the education department, but so far I have yet to receive any letters asking me to go out. However, normally teachers are invited by other schools to give out talks to their students. Sometimes your own school will send you out for such talks. So, even if you are not a GC, you can still be invited to such events outside your school"

Two out of ten teachers in this study, Roby and Syed found that after their appointment as GCs, they did not receive any specific directives from the district or State Department of Education about the roles they have to play in schools. Roby still continued his contributions to the district Physics Panel that he already joined before his appointment as a GC. He said that he was earlier informed that all the new GC's were required to go out on each Wednesday for certain task but there were still no directives or invitations for him to attend such events. For him, this is quite confusing. He is still not sure about what kind of task the GCs are supposed to do on Wednesdays.

The findings showed that the teacher was not clear about his role as a GC because he was still not sure about what he was supposed to do on Wednesday. The interview with Ahmad regarding GC duties especially on Wednesday shed some lights on the issue. According to Ahmad, Wednesday is the day for GCs to attend outside events as it gives teachers the opportunity to contribute their expertise to other schools which need them, especially low performing schools. It means that if certain school needs their expertise, they can invite these GCs to their schools on Wednesday to give talks to students or teachers. However, if they do not receive such invitations anywhere, GCs should spend the day doing something beneficial, especially anything that has to do with planning and managing tasks related to their roles as GCs and their subject matters. Ahmad, for instance, will tell his school that if he does not have to go out on Wednesday, he wants the school to give him relief classes.

In the case of Roby and Syed, even though they never receive any invitations for talks outside their schools, they can always use the day to do anything that helps in improving their teaching and learning process such as preparing teaching aids. GCs who do not receive any invitations for such talks or seminars can always carry out activities in their own schools including giving an in-house course or talks to teachers or students. At the same time, the school should be informed that these teachers should not be given or assigned too much unrelated tasks on Wednesdays so

that they can use the day to explore things which can improve their professionalism as GCs. The schools should always encourage GCs to contribute their expertise to the development of the school in general, and especially in helping students' learning and achievements by conducting useful activities involving school, teachers, parents and students.

The data also showed that different GCs have different understandings about how they are supposed to contribute to others. Some GCs showed more understanding than others about what they should do on Wednesdays.

Melur: "I do a lot of things especially on Wednesdays. I could not describe it to you, a lot"

Munir: "Whenever time permits, almost every afternoon I give talks to students about answering Exam questions techniques and I also give in-house courses to teachers in a few districts in the Kedah state. That is what I meant by committing yourself to the post of GC and this is what makes us different from non GC teachers"

The findings showed contrasting understanding amongst the GCs about the things they have to do on Wednesdays. It is suggested that these teachers should collaborate with other GCs to help maximise the knowledge, skills and experience. New GCs might think that they should wait for a specific directive from school or State Department before they can start making contributions but they should be aware that there are a lot of ways in doing contributions, regardless of whether the events are formal or informal (OECD, 2009). At the same time, schools especially school administrations also should play their roles as suggested in the Scottish Chartered Teacher reviews (2008) that other people in the schools such as teachers, school administrators, local authority directorates and students itself could help Chartered Teachers to contribute in their school.

“The Chartered Teacher could best be used in schools to enhance the quality of learning and teaching across the school community as a whole” (The Scottish Government Edinburgh, 2008, p.23)

The same approach could be adopted by the GCM award policy where teachers, school heads / principals, parents and students could also help GCs to utilise and maximise their potential in improving their schools. GCs should be considered as valuable assets for schools.

- *Stress & burden due to status and duties of GC*

Teachers were reported as being stressed and burdened by the extra job and responsibilities of being a GC. Six out of ten teachers in this study, namely Lina, Melur, Munir, Roby and Yati concurred that the post required high commitment especially with regard to time and effort, thus causing stress at the beginning of their GC career.

Lina: “Being a GC requires you to sacrifice a lot. At that time, I felt that I had to carry a huge burden which should be shouldered by 10 people instead of one! I had to think twice before taking a leave because the job at school was never ending. I spent less time for the family”

Lina: ”If you are a Guru Pakar (Master Teacher) people would expect that you know everything and can do everything. Now the term has been changed to Excellent Teacher, people expect you to be excellent in every aspect. That is the root of the stress I talked about just now”

Lina: “At that time, the grade promotion was from 41 to 48. It is the same level as the school Principal. The promotion is very sudden and it is a new post. Every single move we made was scrutinised by people around us”

Roby: “If you are a GC, you don’t only carry the title of “excellent”, but also you always need to be prepared for teaching and learning observation. Plus, many people are monitoring your work”

Munir: “I used to be stressed by the title especially during the earlier times when I was still trying to adjust to the working culture of a GC. I knew I had to meet the high expectations. I must work according to the framework of GC and I must promote excellence in my job”

Melur: “I have a lot of work to do. I am in charge of the school’s Remedial Room. On top of that I also have to supervise some teacher trainees. I am never given any relief classes. I think a GC should not be given any, considering all the responsibilities he has to shoulder in school. But then again, it all depends on the school administration. I really am grateful to and respect the Senior Assistant of my school. I am only assigned relief classes during examination. The school knows that I am always tied with a lot of things, so they never give me any relief classes”

The GC role which comprises teaching and non teaching activities could be tough to some, thus putting a lot of stress among teachers (Halim et. al., 2006). The increase in teachers’ responsibilities and workload have increased stress, pressure and dissatisfaction thus affecting teachers’ job motivation and their commitment to work (Day et. al., 2005; Day, 2000; Louis, 1998; Riehl & Sipple, 1996; Tsui & Cheng, 1999). As reported by The World Health Organization (2007), stress in the profession has an influence not only on human health, but also on the quality and productivity of work. Examples of such cases are teachers’ absenteeism and teachers leaving the teaching profession to find another job (see Farber, 1991; Jenkins & Calhoun, 1991).



Teachers' stress could possibly come from teaching activities and non-teaching activities such as managing students' behaviours and managing unmotivated students. Besides extra responsibilities, the failure to get enough support from peers and schools' administrators, and poor school conditions with lack of facilities at their school could also contribute to the level of stress among teachers (OECD, 2009). Helping teachers to cope and manage stress should be taken seriously as stress can reduce teachers' productivity and quality and it could influence the performance of students (World Health Organization, 2007). School management should reduce teachers' workload and send these teachers for training and courses to help them cope with stress or learn to manage students' behaviour problem.

A study by Idris et.al. (2010) focused on stress among 48 workers that came from a range of occupations in Malaysia such as managers, lecturers, teachers, government employees, nurses and medical doctors, and found that spiritual beliefs such as "wanting to be close with God, reading al-Quran, and thinking about death" are important for some Malaysian respondents in order to cope with stress (Idris et. al., 2010, p.145). The findings of the study reflect what one participant of this study experienced. Lina reported to be stressed due to increased workload after receiving the GCM award but she tried to relieve her stress by trying to be close to God. She said:

Lina: "I tried to be calm always by reciting prayers. I stayed up all night and woke up early to finish everything but yet things kept on compiling on my table. At that time I commuted from Jitra to Guar and the distance was quite far. Eventually I look for a house in Guar so that I would be nearer to my school. At the same time I was appointed as the hostel warden"

This finding is quite similar to the results of a study carried out by Loewenthal et al., (2001) which showed that "Muslims are more likely to engage in religious activities when dealing with depression, than to seek professional help or use other methods"

(Idris et. al., 2010, p.145). However, other methods such as personal training, school support and increased teachers' collaboration could be important sources in order to help teachers in coping and managing stress. In addition, some changes in Government policy such as increasing teachers' salary also helps to increase teachers' work motivation to face the challenges in teaching profession (Day, 2005; Zhao, 2008) and in doing so, we could still retain and maintain quality teachers in classroom so that they can still contribute their knowledge and experience especially to new teachers who need help (Engelking, 1986; Johnson, 1986; Lee, 2002; OECD, 2009).

In sum, as increased workload in teaching profession causes stress among teachers, providing them with training, changing school management to be more effective and providing teachers with material or non-material incentives could be tools of motivations for teachers to overcome and manage stress and encourage them to remain in classroom rather than leaving the profession.

#### ***Negative perceptions of GCM policy from teachers***

The findings of the study also showed that teachers had some negative perceptions about the GCM policy. It was reported that some teachers were not interested to apply for the GC post because of two reasons. Some teachers thought that the GCM award would increase teachers' workload because a GC was expected to be excellent in all aspects, thus he needs to spend extra time to get the job done. Secondly, teachers were also reported to be intimidated by the term "Excellent" and many of them perceived that they had not yet reached the level of excellence as stated in the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia.

Roby: "Many of my friends stated that they didn't want to apply and were not interested in this scheme. They felt that being a GC will increase their burden

and they were not really excellent at doing their work. For me, GC is only a promotion scheme in our career path”

Munir: “I would like to touch on other people’s perception towards the GC post. The expectation is sometimes too high. The title itself and the concept of excellence can sometimes be a burden to these GCs. A GC is an expert in his subject matter i.e. the subject he teaches but people see a GC as someone who knows everything. For me, this is a challenge that we have to face”

Yati: “I do encourage my colleagues to apply for the post, but most of them said they are not interested after seeing me so busy with my work. They would rather wait for the time-based promotion. They couldn’t be bothered by this GC post”

It could be suggested that the Government must come up with a more effective mechanism to disseminate the information about the GCM so that teachers would be well-informed about the scheme and it could encourage eligible and deserving candidates to apply for the award. At present, even after the quota was increased in 2006, certain GC quota has already been fulfilled; therefore many teachers will now have to wait in line to get the award. Moreover, the title “Excellent Teacher” is now being used by the Ministry of Education Malaysia to replace the term Guru Pakar (Expert Teacher) which was reported as intimidating to some teachers thus hindering them from sending in their applications for the post. Many teachers perceived those who apply or asked by the school to apply for the post as “extraordinary” or “super” teachers. Perhaps, the Government should revise the term “Guru Cemerlang” (Excellent Teacher) that is used now and change it to a different name so that teachers could differentiate it with the term “Guru Pakar” (Expert Teacher). It may then provide clearer picture about what the term means to teachers who receive the award.

Even one of the participants in this study (Siti) admitted being intimidated by the term ‘master Teacher’ initially. Only after receiving the GCM award scheme and appointed as a GC she came to understand that the award is an opportunity for teachers to get promoted to a higher level and also could motivate and encourage teachers to improve their performance because those GCs would strive to reach the excellent level and eventually would help to uplift the teaching profession. The school administrators should find opportunities to explain what GCM award scheme is all about during formal or informal events such as teachers’ meeting or through circular letters to teachers. In the same light, the GCs who already received the award should also play their role in explaining and encouraging their colleagues to apply for this award.

Some teachers still do not know and realise that GCM award scheme provides a platform for teachers to be promoted. In Malaysia, there are three ways to get promoted. First, teachers may be appointed to the school administration post or as an administrator in Federal, State or District Education Department. Secondly, teachers could also choose the opportunity for the promotion through the GCM award. Both ways enable a teacher to be promoted up to JUSA level (The highest rank in the public service in the country). Thirdly, a teacher can get a promotion through time-based promotion in which he has to wait for a certain number of years before he can be promoted to a higher grade. Teachers have the options to choose one of the three ways available for job promotion. As the findings in this study indicated that teachers were still intimidated by the term “Excellent Teacher”, it is very important to explain to them that the policy was introduced by the Government not only to reward and recognise those who are perform well, but to also promote excellence among teachers and help uplift the status of teaching profession in the country.

- *Less opportunity to make an impact after being a GC*

The study findings also showed one of the teachers in this study (Roby) perceived that he had a limited opportunity to excel more in his teaching career even after receiving the GCM award scheme. He gave several reasons for this, the first one was because there was no opportunity for him to utilise and practice the knowledge of his subject matter as he was asked by the school to teach other subject. The reason given was because the subject that teacher was supposed to teach was not offered for students in his school. Normally, in Malaysian secondary schools, students are allowed to choose the subjects they want to take for examination, thus if certain subjects are not popular and too few students want to take the subjects, the school will not offer the subject to students in that school. That was what happened to the teacher (Roby) as he was requested to teach a different subject which was not his expertise. The teacher was frustrated with the current situation because based on the main document used in this study, Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, characteristics of Malaysian Excellent Teachers include:

“... a teacher who dominates and fully appreciates his subject content and his expertise. He is a very resourceful person who is wise in managing time, source materials and learning devices. He also has the ability to identify students’ learning needs and problems and is capable of setting follow-up programs for students, besides being knowledgeable and skilled in the field of information technology and communications”

(Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006, p.2).

One of the teachers reported that:

Roby: “I am quite sad because I can’t teach my subject content. The subject is only offered for students in the upper secondary form (4 and 5)”

What has been reported by a teacher (Roby) - that he was not given the opportunity to teach his subject – was a contrast to the objective of GCM award in promoting improvement in teacher quality especially in the subject area of teachers' expertise, as stated in Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia (2006, p.2). It is suggested that there should be a more careful planning in GC's relocation. They should be asked to teach their subject of expertise and even though the requirement of GC award is the potential relocation of teachers, they should only be relocated to schools which really need their services. The situation that happened to Roby could adversely affect both the teacher and his students as the teacher was not able to practise his expertise and knowledge in his area of expertise and the students lose the opportunity to be taught by an 'expert'. It also means that the GCs could not bring the impact of their title in terms of knowledge and skills because errors in relocation of teachers.

Similar to Roby who reported that he did not feel that he was able to make a big enough impact on the students, Rosie also said that she wished to teach at a rural school so that she could make more impact on students' learning:

Rosie: "I was hoping I could be more successful. I consider myself a new comer when it comes to GC. I really want to teach in rural areas where the students are not as fortunate as my students now and I want to see vast improvement in my students' achievement. Now, in this school, my students are the selected ones, so they are not academically challenged"

Rosie and Roby felt that they were not teaching where they were supposed to teach. Both shared the same opinion that if they were to be sent to a different school, where their expertise is really needed, they would have given a better impact to the students and school. To avoid the same problems in the future, careful planning is required so that these teachers are sent to suitable schools. Roby also reported that:

Roby: “I do not really feel burdened carrying this GC title. I am still trying to increase my performance. I realise that I must improve on my work a little bit. In any committee I am involved in, I am working as usual. However, sometimes I feel that I am not given the opportunity to shine”

Later during the interview, when he was asked to explain what he meant by “not given the opportunity to shine”, the teacher reported that he managed to teach well, improved his teaching performance and had a very good relationship with colleagues and school administrators, but he was disappointed that the school did not appreciate his existence as a GC and he felt that he was being treated like an ordinary teacher even though he was always readily available to make contributions to the school. Increasing teachers’ commitment to improve and increasing their contributions are quite hard to do unless they see meaning to their work and they truly believe that their commitment and contributions are needed for the improvement of the school. It would also boost their confidence and increase their motivation if they see improvement in other teachers due to their help.

The teachers need to feel that their contributions are meaningful and beneficial to others (Rosenholtz, 1989). In this situation, recognition or encouragement by others such as school heads, peers and students is important to inform and give feed back to the teachers of their contributions (Rosenholtz, 1989). For this reason, Roby as a new GC, needed to have the feelings that he was important to his school and once he has it, he would be able to increase his contributions not only to his school but also to other schools. Teachers also need to be given the opportunities to practice their knowledge and skills, and learn new thing in order to develop themselves and enrich their experience and thus giving them the opportunity to experience progress, failure and a sense of accomplishment (Hackman & Oldham, 1980).

- *Information hoarding and bias*

The study also found issues related to bias among school principals / school heads in selecting the candidates for the GCM award. A few were reported to hoard certain information about the award:

Munir: “Some school principals / heads would try to influence our mind about not applying by telling us that it would be troublesome for us to transfer to other places. This should not have happened. They should encourage teachers to apply, not otherwise”

Munir: “I was told in one case, a teacher who applied for the GC post was not given the recommended by his own school Principal because she/he did not want to lose an excellent teacher. What happened after that was, the teacher taught at that same school until he retired. In my opinion, the teacher should have been given the chance to hold the GC post as she/he was indeed an excellent teacher”

Munir: “Some school heads did not give their recommendations for some teachers when they applied for the GC post because they were afraid they would lose these teachers to other schools. This is not good as it robs the teacher of any opportunities for him to get a promotion and also to improve himself”

The Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia (2006) stated that:

“School Head / Principal / Head department are required to identify teachers / lecturers who are entitled to receive the GCM award” (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, 2006, p.9).



This circular mentioned that School Heads, school Principals or Head of Departments are required to select eligible candidates from their school for the award. All applications forms must be signed and endorsed by school administrators before they are submitted to the Ministry. Some teachers were not informed about the scheme and some were even given the wrong information about the scheme. The reason for this could have been because the school Heads or Principals were afraid of losing talented teachers to other schools if they received the award. One teacher (Munir) has reported that some school Heads / Principals would not reveal the information about the GC scheme or would even provide wrong information about the GC scheme by informing teachers that they might be transferred to schools far away from their current workplace if they get the award.

It would be a big loss for some teachers for their career development if they are working under such school administrators as they are subject to bias and information hoarding. They would miss a lot of benefits that the “Malaysian Excellent Teacher” status could offer including an increased salary, a promotion, and a chance to be promoted without having to take up administrative post (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, 2006). As the award is considered as a reward only for those who deserve it is only fair that those who meet the requirements for the award should be given the chance to apply for it. Immediate action must be taken so that every teacher who is eligible for the award be well-informed about it.

- *Suggestion for GCM Convention to serve as command platform for GCs*

Teachers in this study saw the importance of the annual GC Convention for GCs in the whole country:

Munir: “GC Convention is a very important event for all GC’s that to be held at the end of the year, but in my opinion, the Ministry of Education does not take it seriously. During this GC Convention we launch many academic

writings and publications produced by GCs. We also discuss many things related to our job as we are trying to look after GCs' welfare”

During this event, GCs are welcome to present their academic papers or research according to their area of expertise. At the same event, teachers can get the opportunities for knowledge sharing. Besides, the event can also be used as a platform highlighting GCs contributions to the academic field such as promoting books. During this convention, teachers are given the opportunity to present research papers. Teachers could also voice their needs to the authority during this annual event. However, one of the teachers (Munir) has reported that he felt the Malaysia Ministry of Education did not take all the matters brought up during the event seriously.

The second chapter has explained the rationale for the introduction of the GC policy by the Government in 1994. In 2006, the quota was then increased by 300% in 2006. It is hoped that with the introduction of the award, all GCs can play their roles in schools to achieve the goal of improving the quality of education in the country. The ability and performance of these GCs has been evaluated and acknowledged (The Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006). They can offer the Government, policy makers, teachers, school administrators, parents and students what they have to promote a high quality teaching, learning and leads to the increasing of student attainment and achievements. It is important that the Government listen to what GCs have to say about their welfare and needs during the annual convention. The support that the GCs receive hopefully could maximise their potential as front liners and uplift the teaching profession.

- *Possibility for schools to lose talented school heads / principals due to the GC pathway*

The study also found one issue related to the possibility that the GCM award policy caused schools to lose talented candidates for the school principal post. A teacher in this study, Munir, reported that he was once a school principal, but resigned from the post because he wanted to be a GC:

Munir: “The GC scheme is a career opportunity. A teacher is promoted but at the same time he can still teach. Unless he is not interested in teaching in classrooms, he has nothing to lose. I was actually a school head before I became a GC. I let go of the post of School Principal because of two things: first, I love teaching. Second, the GC post is a promotion for me. I think this is important in my career”

Munir: “I applied for a higher post (54 and Jusa) because I want to improve my professionalism. I don’t believe in being complacent when the opportunity for me to reach a higher level is there. As GC, we can hold a higher post but at the same time we are not required to leave teaching. We need to grab whatever opportunities given to us”

Munir reported that due to the attractiveness of the GCM award in terms of quick career path, he decided to let go of his post as a school principal and become a GC. He did this after he was informed that through the GC career path, he could be in the highest grade in public service, the JUSA grade as compared to only the DG 52 or DG 54 grade if he stayed as a school principal at that time. The teacher (Munir) is currently in the JUSA grade, a post which is higher from a school principal post and at the same level as the State Director of Education. As an officer at the JUSA grade, one is entitled to attractive perquisites including transportation, entertainment and house repair allowance. Besides that, they are also eligible to get house maid

allowance. Although there was only one teacher in this study who quit his school principal post to become a GC, there is a possibility that other teachers with good leadership and good management skills might choose a GC post instead of administrative posts at schools or at State Education Department because of the attractiveness of the GCM scheme. Schools and State Education Department could be at a disadvantage in preparing new leadership for educational management as they may not have the best candidates for the posts. One of the participants of this study (Melur) is a very good candidate for such administrative post as she is a very successful teacher and has contributed a lot of contributions at school, state and national level (see appendix).

Melur: "I was not interested in administration post. Even after I became a GC, I was offered administration post. I rejected the offer as I prefer to be in school, teaching my students. I met and knew a lot of people in the administration line and they were very busy with their work. That was also one reason why I did not want to be an administrator"

The findings have shown that the GCM award scheme policy offers teachers a very good opportunity in terms of salary and career advancement and enables those who wish to teach to remain in classroom. However, it affects the structure of the traditional promotion scheme in the teaching profession in Malaysia, in which those excellent teachers are normally promoted to administrator posts. This could influence the leadership at schools and at the State Education Department and even at national level.

- *GCM award policy is not a reward for teachers in maintaining teacher quality*

The participants in this study reported that they did not perceive GCM award as a motivation factor in improving and increasing their effort for changes, but more as a

reward to maintain excellence. Four out of ten teachers in this study, Yati, Lina, Ahmad and Noor believed that they were already at the excellent level at the beginning of their teaching career, thus, for them the GC award was a factor in maintaining the qualities they already possessed.

Yati: “GC is just a reward for me and the title is marginal. I do my work without asking for rewards. I will still work as hard even though I am not a GC. That is not my goal. I maintained excellence and then was rewarded. God bestowed me with good things in life and I accept them. Never mind if they don’t give me the GC title, but I will still do my work”

Ahmad: “I am naturally hardworking and willing to learn. For me, education is a lifelong process because our job is to impart knowledge to our students. We must always be striving towards looking for more knowledge”

Noor: “I think Excellence should be nurtured. Once we have reached it we should not look back. I was asked by the school to apply for the post. I was an excellent student when I was in school and at Teacher Training College. I was once featured in the newspaper. I bring along the excellence culture to my teaching career”

Teachers reported that they believed they were given the award as a reward for their excellent performance. The award also motivates teachers to maintain their excellence. This shows that the GCM award has been successful in the objectives of rewarding high performance teachers. However, the findings also indicated that the teachers were not motivated to change because of the award because they believed that they were already excellent to start with. This gives some indication that the GCM award has not achieved its objective of motivating teachers to change for improvement.

## **6.8. The influence of incentives in enhancing teachers' professionalism**

Do teachers' incentives such as the GCM award policy influence the enhancement of teachers' professionalism in Malaysian context? In the context of teacher reform, Taylor (2007) believes that teachers' professionalism is considered from the objectives and targets that teachers need to fulfil in their profession as a teacher. Helsby (1999) and Taylor (2007) believe that teachers' professionalism seeks to outline what teachers do and need to do, rather than giving more opportunity to teachers to exercise their practice with more autonomy in classroom activities.

In this study, some teachers reported that the incentives of the GCM award scheme did motivate them to change, and they became more aware of their teaching practice. Almost all of the teachers in this study perceived that positive changes happened in their attitudes and they were more motivated to improve in order to fulfil Government's, parents', teachers' and students' expectations of GCs. Besides improving themselves, the teachers in this study also became more aware of their responsibilities to share knowledge with other teachers in their school as well as those from other schools. These teachers gave talks on how to be effective teachers, mentored other teachers who were teaching the same subject, wrote paper work and carried out action research. They realised that they needed to share the knowledge and skills that they have and the title "Excellent Teacher" made them more confident in the classroom. However, some teachers in this study reported that they did not think incentives were necessary because teaching is their job and they felt that it is their responsibility to carry out the job well.

As the teaching profession is responsible for educating and producing a generation with knowledge and skills that equip them to survive, it is in line with the national agenda and the wishes and hopes of parents and community in sending their children

to school (Hargreaves, 2000), thus teachers' incentives can be used as one of the ways to encourage teachers to increase their efforts in achieving certain standards or targets in any educational reform. As the findings in this study showed that teachers saw changes and improvement in their attitudes and teaching strategies to promote quality teaching and learning, it could indicate that these teachers have increased their professionalism. According to Cruess et. al., (2004), to be a professional, a teacher must show high standards of behaviours and quality of work and these standards were achieved through the introduction of the reward to increase teachers' motivation for improvement.

Bottery and Wright (2000) argued that teachers have less autonomy in classrooms today as they have to accommodate policy makers' and Government's agenda. Bottery and Wright (2000) believe that such incentives 'force' teachers to fulfil the government's expectations rather than encouraging teachers to freely to exercise their knowledge and skills in the profession. If this happened, it contradicts the concept of autonomy which is said to be central to professionalism (Cruess et. al., 2004). Besides having to adhere to all directives from their school principals in order to achieve school objectives, teachers are also tied to educational reform or national curriculum targets (Taylor, 2007). It is believed that if teachers feel pressured to fulfil what is required of them by the government because of the incentives they receive, they would become less autonomous and this could de-professionalise the teaching profession.

However, some have argued (Kynigos and Argynis, 2004) cited in Taylor (2007) that the linking of teachers' pay with teachers' performance does not erode teacher autonomy because it has been recognised that teachers are professionals who are not only motivated to perform at the highest level, but they also realise their roles and responsibilities in improving students' learning. This argument was supported by the study carried out by Kynigos and Argynis (2004) which showed that there was no strong evidence that educational reform such as the one which encouraged teachers

to use technology in teaching and learning could de-professionalise teachers because such instructional changes are influenced by teachers belief (Kynigos & Argynis, 2004). It means that, if teachers have their own beliefs about something, they would not easily be changed or be forced to do things that contradict these beliefs such as changing their teaching methods or strategies. It was supported by Sparkes (1991) Cited in Taylor (2007) who indicated that teachers are capable of deciding and judging certain things that are related to their duties, thus are able to manage change in practising their work. This study found that two teachers (Ahmad and Noor) reported no changes in their attitudes and contributions after receiving the GCM award as they believed that the award was given to them as recognition of their good work and not as a motivational tool for them to change for improvement. They also said that they thrived on becoming excellent in everything they do, and this had nothing to do with the GCM award scheme.

Other findings in this study showed that teachers expressed the desire to engage in more professional development to help them improve, especially for a new GC (Rosie). A small survey by Taylor (2007) in exploring teachers' perceptions towards the impact of education reform and the new public management (NPM) on the discretion of school teachers found mixed findings on whether such educational reform could influence teachers' professionalism. Although teachers in the survey felt that some elements of educational reform such as the need to achieve certain target set by the school principal and the need for them to play their roles as prescribed in the policy could de-professionalise teachers, some researchers believe that the issues could be solved through the training that the teachers attended that were found to bring positive impact in improving teachers' professionalism (Taylor, 2007). In the context of this study, teachers reported that they experienced stress due to high expectation from peers, school and the Government and this stress may affect teachers' performance. However, the support that the teacher receives from professional development activities that are offered to all GCs could help to enhance



teachers' professionalism and to maximise their impact to educational development in Malaysia.

The mixed findings from this study indicated that the GCM award scheme could or could not enhance teachers' professionalism in Malaysia because although most teachers reported that change did happen for improvement, there were also some teachers who reported no change to their attitudes and contributions. However, although teachers reported that change did not occur, it was not because they have negative attitudes. It was because teachers believed that they were already performing at an excellent level and perceived that the GCM award scheme was recognition of this performance.

## **6.9. Summary**

Teacher quality is viewed as one of the most important inputs in improving students' learning and achievement (Hanushek, 2005; Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006; OECD, 2005, 2009). Hence, there is a broad consensus that academic achievement of students can be raised if the quality of teachers improves thus there is an increased concern by most countries in improving the incentive systems for teachers as it is believed to increase teachers' motivation. This chapter discussed the impact of the GCM award scheme introduced by the Malaysian Government to motivate teachers to improve their attitudes, instructional strategies and increase teachers contribution such as collaboration, mentoring and helping peers within or outside teacher's school in promoting teaching effectiveness. The results of this study showed that GCs believed that changes in the three aspects had occurred after the teachers received the GCM award scheme. However, as the research questions of this study were designed to explore and investigate changes in teachers, this study is not intended to judge whether the changes are good in improving teacher quality, thus affecting students' learning and outcomes. In addition, issues related to the challenges that the Government and

teachers would face in the implementation of the policy were also discussed. The highlighted issues could prove to be detrimental in the effort to achieve the objectives of the GCM award scheme; therefore they should be considered immediately and addressed by the authority. Data also showed that there is a positive data of what teachers were reported about change for improvement as a significant impact of pay for performance system of the GCM award scheme to the development of educational system in Malaysia in improving the quality of teacher and uplift the teaching profession.

The following chapter which is chapter seven will summarise the main findings and contributions of this study, and present conclusions. It also provides discussion on the limitations of the study, impact and some recommendations to the policy makers of how GCs could bring impact to the educational improvement. As this is the first study carried out to explore and investigate the impact of GCM award since it was introduced in 1994, the researcher also provides some recommendations for future research.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION, REFLECTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1. Introduction**

This final chapter outlines the conclusions and contributions of the study, and presents recommendations. First the chapter presents the main conclusions, drawn from key findings discussed in the previous chapter. It then goes on to acknowledge the limitations of the study. The next section provides recommendations for the Government on how it might maximise the impact of the GC scheme in improving education in the Malaysia and also makes some recommendations for future research. Section five considers the applicability of this research to policy makers, GCs and teachers and how the introduction and implementation of the policy is affecting Malaysian schools. Finally this chapter discusses how teacher change can contribute to educational reform.

### **7.2. Key findings and related conclusions**

The aim of this study was to investigate Malaysian Excellent Teachers' perceptions of their motivation to change and their efforts to improve the quality of teaching after receiving the Malaysian Excellent Teacher Award. The three aspects investigated were changes in teachers' attitudes, changes in teaching strategies and changes in teachers' contributions.

#### ***Teacher change***

Change in Plain English Dictionary (1996) indicate that change is "if there is a change in something or if it changes, it becomes different in some way" (Plain English Dictionary (1996; pg 104). Changes in this study are towards teachers' effort

for improvement in three areas of teachers' attitudes. Change in teachers' teaching strategies and change in teachers' contribution to other teachers in term of teaching activities such as instructions, preparing, marking and grading students' work and also non teaching activities such as extra curricular activities and professional activities (Rutter, 1986). Other teachers' contributions that are referred to in this study include coaching, mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching and sharing of good practices (OECD, 2009; pg 49). The term "improvement" in Plain English Dictionary (1996) is defined as "if something improves or there is an improvement in it, it get better" (Plain English Dictionary (1996; pg 321).

In addition to the term "change" that is the focus in this study; the Collins English Language Dictionary cited in Wu (2004) indicates that change can be classified into four types namely;

- i. a continuum change or assumed as reformation
- ii. gradual change or assumed as metamorphosis
- iii. big change or a little change that also could be said as modification or moderation
- iv. partial change or assumes as later or amend (Wu, 2004; pg 10)

This study explored the issue of whether teachers changed by making improvement in their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to others in promoting quality education after receiving the GC award. This study did not intend to measure the types of change suggested by (Wu, 2004), rather it aimed at investigating whether the GCM award could influence positive changes in teachers' attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions to other teachers in promoting the quality in teaching and learning

The chapter discusses the implications of the performance incentive system in the GCM award in motivating teachers to increase their efforts to improve the quality of

teaching and learning. Three research questions were developed and the following section outlines the key findings in relation to each research question.

***Research question 1: Do performance incentive systems change teachers' attitudes toward improving the quality in teaching and learning?***

The findings showed that teachers reported changes in their attitudes. The findings revealed that there were significant changes in improvement of the current teachers' attitudes toward teaching after receiving the GC award. The findings suggest that the pay for performance policy of GC increases teachers' motivation to improve job performance. This shows that teacher incentive such as the GCM award could increase teachers' work motivation and from what the teachers reported, it could be suggested that the Government has been successful in both rewarding high performing teachers and motivating teachers to improve their efforts in the three aspects investigated in this study namely teachers' attitudes, teachers' teaching strategies and contributions to other teachers.

***Research question 2: Do performance incentive systems change teachers' strategies toward improving the quality in teaching and learning?***

Teachers in this study reported that changes did happen in their strategies after receiving the GCM award. Teachers reported an increase in the use of several new strategies and they found these new strategies effective to their teaching. Among the new strategies are the use of educational television channel, OHP and pictures to explain difficult concepts to students and the Internet to help students search for information. Teachers also reported that students' performance was improved and this could be seen through their test and examination results. Teachers also reported that they saw an increase in students' collaboration and interaction after giving encouragement to students to help each other in problem solving through classroom activities.

***Research question 3: Do performance incentive systems increase teachers' contributions toward improving the quality in teaching and learning?***

The findings have shown that changes did happen in teachers' contributions toward improving the quality in teaching and learning. Teachers' contributions include all teaching related activities such as giving instructions, preparing for lessons, marking and grading students' work and also non teaching activities such as extra curricular activities and professional activities (Rutter, 1986). Other teachers' contributions include coaching, mentoring, collaborative planning and teaching, and sharing of good practices (OECD, 2009; pg 49). As stated in the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, some of the contributions by teachers are in the form of action research, mentoring and coaching other teachers, especially in their subject, and other activities like giving motivational talks to teachers and in house training within or outside of their school (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, 2006, pg 2).

### **7.3. Key findings related to research questions**

Many education reforms such as rewarding teachers through incentives are done with the intention of changing teachers to be better teachers but studies show that some teachers are not responsive to change. Several issues such as lack of teaching materials, lacks of support from their schools, less time to collaborate among teachers due to an increase in teachers' workload and teachers' beliefs have been identified as the causes of some teachers not being responsive to change (Anderson & Helms, 2001). This study explored teachers' motivation to improve and the focus of the study was mainly to see changes teachers reported in their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions. It is clear that if we want to see improvement in teachers, many factors must be taken into account. Even though teachers in this study

reported that they saw changes in their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions, the impact of these changes would not contribute much to the educational policy reform in the country if not supported by several factors such as continuing professional development training, support from school leadership and school context. In addition, changes in teachers could happen through reading or research, and the changes depend a lot on school environment or culture (Richardson & Placier, 2001).

The data also uncovered some challenges in the implementation of the GCM award policy as reported by the participants of this study. In the findings, teachers reported a need for more professional development training, the limited support that they received from peers and school administrators and confusion over the roles they have to play. These factors should be considered by policy makers and school administrators in striving to enhance GCs to bring the impact of their status of Excellent Teachers.

### **The impact of teachers' professional development on teachers' change**

The findings indicated that teachers in this study expressed the need for more professional development and training after receiving the GCM award scheme to make an impact on educational improvement. Continuing professional development (CPD) is important in order to improve the quality of teachers' teaching and learning (Gatt, 2009; Guskey, 1986) and some would say that teachers' professional development is one of the most important elements in educational improvement in curriculum and teaching instruction (Begoray & Morin, 2002).

Teachers' professional development is an important component in helping teachers, especially GCs, to make an impact through their status, knowledge and skills in promoting the improvement in teacher quality. Previous studies have suggested and stressed the importance of teachers' professional development in improving the quality of teachers because it would also influence students' learning and achievements. As some of the key components in teachers' professional development training are engaging teachers in the context of their own classroom with knowledge in class management, managing students' behaviours, strengthening content, or subject matter, and pedagogical knowledge, providing opportunities for teachers in collaborating with other teachers and including experiences that engage teachers as learners, teachers' professional development can help to fulfil teachers' intention for improvement as demonstrated in the research findings. Besides, as found in previous studies, teachers' professional development could give positive influence to students' learning, increase teachers' competence, improve teachers' knowledge and skills, and give them greater satisfaction in being a teacher.

### **The role of school leadership in teacher change**

Even though the main aim of the GCM award policy is to reward high performing teachers and to use it as a motivational tool in changing teachers for improvement in the teaching profession, the focus should not be solely on teachers. One of the issues to tackle is poor school leadership which has been identified as a factor that hinders teachers' motivation for improvement (Stockhard & Lehman, 2004). Previous research found that school leadership is one of the important factors in instructional changes of teachers' development.

### **The roles of peer supports in teacher change**

It was found from the findings that teachers in this study reported receiving less support than GCs teachers received from non GCs teachers due to the negative



perception of GC post. One of the teachers in this study reported that after receiving the GCM award scheme, the teachers felt left out and did not receive enough support in carrying out some school activities the teacher nearly decided to resign the GC post and the situation was different before the teacher received the GCM award scheme. Although the GCM award scheme was introduced as a promotion scheme to reward high quality teachers, it is also intended to influence the GCs to play an important role in school development and improvement such as becoming a leader in assisting curriculum planning and co-curricular activities, becoming a consultant and a mentor to other teachers in teaching and learning process. As GCs, it is important that they receive support from peers in order to fulfil the objectives of the GCM award scheme policy.

It is suggested from the findings that there could be clear information about the GCM award scheme policy to all teachers in order to build collaboration between GC teachers and non GC teachers. From that collaboration, both parties would benefit from the GCs knowledge, experience and skills and would improve the quality of teaching and learning. It could be suggested that that the involvement of school administrators is also worth exploring' in order to encourage more collaboration between teachers and GCs within their school. It would be helpful in helping GCs to bring impact of their title of the "Excellent teacher" and fulfil the Government objectives of the GCM award scheme.

### **Policy on teacher development and appraisal**

Based on the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia (Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006), the award is a recognition of the excellent performance of a teacher, hence those who receive the award are considered as a high performing teachers. There are several issues regarding teacher development and appraisal especially on the appraisal of these teachers after they received the award. It is quite difficult to measure whether the teacher has improved his/her performance in skills

and knowledge. Since the GCM award is a permanent career rank, there is a possibility that a teacher stops improving once he/she receives the award. Some might work hard to get the award and after that become passive. It is not stated in the Term Reference Book that the title will be retracted if a teacher's performance decreases. In addition, there is an issue of the teachers not receiving enough professional development after they receive the award, hence it would not be fair to punish them by taking away the title. Based on the data from the study, the teachers mentioned that they need more training to improve themselves as Excellent Teachers.

Before a teacher receives the GCM award, she / he is assessed in these aspects:

- a. performance appraisal report annual
- b. evaluation form
- c. evaluation by panel of evaluation
- d. evaluation and monitoring by panel of evaluation and interview (for special grade only)

(Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006)

The findings indicated that teachers in this study expressed the need for more professional development and training after receiving the GCM award to bring the impact to educational improvement. Continuing professional development (CPD) is important in order to improve the quality of teachers' teaching and learning (Gatt, 2009.,OECD, 2005) and some would say that teachers' professional development is one of the important elements in educational improvement in curriculum and teaching instruction (OECD, 2005).

Teachers' professional development could be considered as an important component in helping teachers, especially GCs, to make an impact of their status, knowledge and skills in promoting the improvement in teacher quality such as to increase teachers' competence, improve teachers' knowledge and skills, and give them greater satisfaction in being a teacher. Therefore, the Ministry of Education could find a specific mechanism to monitor the development of these teachers. This could be done to ensure that these teachers could keep on improving. Some of the approaches that can be used are by monitoring these teachers on the training they have to attend and by observing their classroom teaching. These observations can be carried out by the school administrators or the school inspectorate. It would be a waste if these teachers' potentials are not used to the maximum.

These tasks required of an Excellent Teacher are taken from the Term Reference Book (2006):

No	Tasks/grade	DG44	DG48	DG52	DG54	GRADE C
1	Planning teaching-learning process and teaching to achieve the required standards set by School Heads/Directors	75%	70%	65%	60%	50%
2	Leading and assisting in curriculum planning and co-curricular activities supervision	10%	10%	15%	15%	15%
3	Being a consultant and a mentor to other teachers in teaching and learning process	8%	10%	10%	10%	10%
4	Carrying out research, publishing academic writing, creating innovation and sharing it with the community	2%	5%	5%	7%	10%
5	Carrying out special task related to area of expertise in other schools, at district, state, national and international levels.	5%	5%	5%	8%	15%
	TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Table 6-3: The annual work target of an Malaysian Excellent Teacher**

Table shows the annual work target of an Excellent Teacher. It can be seen that the bulk of the task lies in the teaching and learning process inside the classroom which is 75% for those in the DG44 scheme, 70% for DG48, 65% for DG52, 60% for DG 54 and the weighting is less for those in the Grade C scheme which is 50%. This shows that teaching and learning is the core task of these GCs. Their knowledge and expertise in the content area is very much needed to improve the quality of education in the country. Managerial and other tasks are only accounted for 5% - 10%.

Research and Development, academic writing, innovation and knowledge sharing are more expected from those in the DG 54 and Grade C. It could be said that the introduction of this promotion scheme for teachers which comes with some incentives by the Ministry of education is a platform for recognizing teachers' contributions to the community. This also works as a catalyst for teachers to make the paradigm shift in order to be excellent in carrying out their duties.

The Federal Inspectorates carry out visits to schools with Excellent Teachers. The reason why Federal Inspectorates carry out visits to schools is to carry out regular inspection for GC in maintaining the quality of teaching and learning, observation of teaching and learning, academic management, and co-curricular activities or teachers' contribution. They also need to identify GC needs or difficulties in bring impact of GC status, so certain support or help could be delivered to the GC. There also should be a follow-up visit after the first one and from the visit the Federal Inspectorates should also inform the schools of their GC performance and support that would be given to the GC. As the data also found that GCS have difficulties at their school, there should be a an effort done to solving the issues.

Support and observation by school head / principal itself is also needed for teacher development and appraisal of their school. As the GCs need to follow some requirements attached to their GC status, the report may become compulsory to be

sent to the Government to ensure that all GCs play their roles in the students' learning and their peers. They also suggested that inspection and evaluation could be done by school on the GCM award recipients. It is suggested that such monitoring might help teachers to improve their professional development and indirectly, therefore, help students to perform better.

#### **7.4. Limitations of the Study**

A qualitative approach was adopted in this study. The researcher believed that the advantage of applying this method for this study was that it could convey meaning for the study of the impact of pay for performance of the GCM award in motivating teachers in changing their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions. The use of the interview strategy with ten teachers provided data for the researcher to understand GC teachers' own perceptions of the effect of incentives on their motivation. Interviews were undertaken with the participants to gain valuable information about their job experiences. However, in certain cases, teachers were found not to be very forthcoming in providing information during the conversation. As suggested by Schermerhorn and Bond (1997) this situation could be linked to the culture in Malaysia where most of the citizens are bound to collective values that prevent them from expressing directly what they felt. Malaysians also are heavily influenced by the shy personality (Goddard, 1996); hence they tend to speak in good manner and always try to reduce complications during the conversations. Although the strategy used was semi structured interviews and they were therefore more informal in nature, some of teachers were still quite withdrawn, especially the newly appointed GCs. The implications of this are the possibilities that some teachers in this study would try to accommodate the researcher and only provided responses that they perceived as desirable to the researcher in order to reduce complications.

The strategies used to explore the teachers' change in this study included interviews with teachers and Book of Reference of Guru Cemerlang Malaysia. If this study had

used and included other strategies such as surveys or observation, it would provide more information on the changes reported by the teachers. For example, if an observation technique had been applied in this study, there is a possibility that the teachers would be 'acting' whilst being observed. Teachers may select from the timetable classes that would only involved good performance students for the observation, thus would influence the data observed. As the time table would be chosen by the participants, the researcher would not have the opportunity to observe all teachers' classes and the observation again would not provide concrete evidence of teacher change.

Other reasons not to use the observation technique in this study included the aim of this study is to explore whether the use of teachers' incentives could increase teachers' work motivation for improvement. However, such change or improvement in teachers' performance is quite difficult to measure because the researcher does not have any evidence of teachers' previous performance to compare with present performance. Moreover, the change in teachers' contributions also presents similar problems because it is possible to observe teachers' non teaching activities inside and outside of their school because what teachers were reported during the interviews had already happened. Thus, the use of interviews was assumed to be appropriate because the research questions focus on teachers' perceptions, rather than on behaviours which could be checked through observations.

There are also some limitations in adopting the observation technique itself. Some of the limitations in observation technique relate to a potential lack of reliability, because during the data analysis, there is no single technique of analysis to confirm the significance of the observation; different researchers will use different types of observation, patterns and trends (Denzin, 1989; Kidder, 1981) including the number of people who were involved in the study. There are also possibilities for teachers in this study to choose the class and students during the observation, thus the findings

could be argued because time and classroom are depend on teachers' time table and their willingness to do with the teachers' choice.

The principal data of the study are the interviews conducted with ten Guru Cemerlang Malaysia teaching at Malaysian primary and secondary schools. The selection process started by the researcher going through the name list of Guru Cemerlang obtained from the Guru Cemerlang Malaysia website and also State Education Department of Kedah. However, before the interviews took place, the researcher was advised by the State Educational Department to refer to the State School Inspectorate officers for suggestions of participants for the study. The researcher followed the advice by contacting one of the officers at the State School Inspectorate Department who then suggested five names from the name list of Guru Cemerlang (GC) in the Kedah state. The researcher then contacted them and all five teachers agreed to be involved in this study. The other five teachers in this study were selected by the researcher based on a list given by the State Educational Department. After selecting the names, the researcher contacted the schools where the selected teachers were teaching to get the permission from the schools' administrators for these teachers to be interviewed.

The data analysis showed that all five names which were suggested by the State School Inspectorate officer were from the first cohort of the GCM award recipients who received the award in 1994, the same year the policy was introduced in Malaysia. Another five teachers were those who received the award after the GCM policy was revised in 2006. The findings of this study might have been different if the selection of all participants was carried out by the researcher independently. The State School Inspectorate Department may have had its own reasons to only select teachers from the first cohort because to-date no other studies have been carried out to investigate teachers' perceptions on the GCM award policy.

Although the study did not intend to find the difference between the teachers from the first and the second cohort, the findings indicated no differences in terms of perceptions of the GCM award policy between these two groups of teachers. Both groups reported changes in their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions. However, it should be noted that the findings indicated that teachers from the first cohort perceived that they had already contributed a lot in promoting the quality of teaching and learning as opposed to teachers from the second cohort who reported that they still need to contribute more. All the teachers from the first cohort (Munir, Lina, Melati, Yati and Melur) reported that they felt they had fulfilled the task of GC such as doing action research, mentoring, coaching new teachers, and being actively involved in curriculum development for the subject they were teaching at the school, district, state and even national level.

Since the GCM award was introduced in 1994, it has undergone two phases. The first phase was when it was first introduced and the second phase was in 2006 when the Ministry of Education revised the quota of GC and increased it by 300%. Besides the increase of GC quota, the Government has also made it possible for teachers to apply for the post instead of appointment through recommendations from school head/principals. The Government also reduced the minimum length of year of service for those who want to apply for this award from 10 years to 7 years. For non-graduate teachers who further their studies to obtain a degree, they only need 5 years instead of 7 years before they can apply for the award. The Government also changes the evaluation system of teachers' application. With the new system, teachers who wish to apply do not have to be observed by the School Inspectorate Board; instead, they will only be evaluated by the school heads / principals. This system differs from the previous system that required teachers to go through a process of evaluation by not only school heads / principals, but also by School Inspectorate Board officers.



It would be interesting in future research to study whether there exist different perceptions between the two cohorts of GCs as this could provide valuable information to the Malaysia Ministry of Education regarding whether the changes in some of the terms in the policy could influence the quality of GC.

The findings are also based solely on what the teachers reported, not on what other people such as school heads / principals said or thought about the participants. As the research questions of this study seek to explore or investigate teachers' perceptions, the participants in this study are only GCs. The researcher decided that by focusing on the GCs' perceptions, it could provide in-depth information of how teachers felt after receiving the GCM award, rather than on the quality of students' achievement. This study sought only to explore whether teachers perceived changes in their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions after receiving the GCM award and further research may continue to explore whether it has impacted on the quality of education as a whole.

## **7.5. Recommendations for policy makers regarding factors that influence the development of quality teachers**

- *Improve the policy in selecting new student teachers who want to enter teaching profession*

Teachers' incentives could be used as one of the ways of improving teacher quality. However, teacher quality could also be improved through careful selection of new student teachers and preparing them to enter the profession (Cornet & Gainis, 2002). It is important that new teachers get proper training which can equip them with knowledge in subject matter and supporting knowledge such as pedagogical and class management skills that help new students to be good teacher. The study has

found that there are teacher (Noor) reported that the teacher is already excellent at school and in the teachers' training school. The teacher then, brings the excellent culture when she becomes a teacher. Thus, it could be suggested that it would be important in selection of new student teachers who want to enter the teaching profession in order to produce high quality teachers.

### **Combination of promotion and merit pay**

Although the study findings found that teachers reported that change happened in their efforts to improve their teaching, it could be suggested that there is a need to combine promotion and performance pay used in the organisation because it would bring more benefits towards employees' performance. It is suggested that pay for performance be used as rewarding and motivational tools for improvement, whereas promotion should be considered based on the acquisition of new knowledge and skills gained by the employees. The Ministry of Education should provide clear information for teachers that the GCM award policy, which is a combination of a promotion scheme and pay for performance incentives, is a "short cut" for teachers to enhance their career path. This would encourage more teachers to apply for this award. It would avoid inaccurate perceptions among teachers especially regarding the term "Excellent Teacher" which has been perceived as "super" teacher. Besides, all teachers would have the opportunity to be promoted and not just wait for the time-based promotion.

### **Other monetary incentive plans**

Through the study findings, it could be suggested that the Malaysian Government could plan to implement the new policy in the term of school or group incentives that encourage more teachers to participate and opportunity to receive the incentives. In many organisations, both in private of public sectors, there are multiple incentive plans such as pay for skills based, pay for knowledge, group plan incentives, earned

time off or profit sharing plans that could be implemented (Heneman, 1992). As incentives are important to improve employees' skills, the acquisition of certain knowledge for those employees who upgrade and acquire their skills through various ways such as professional development training could be rewarded and acknowledged. Introducing group incentives could motivate improved group performance among teachers, thus reducing the challenges and competition among teachers and enhance teamwork.

- **Opportunities for self-reflection/appraisal**

Based on the Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, (2006), before a teacher receives the GCM award, she / he is assessed in several aspects of area including performance appraisal annual report, evaluation report by panel of evaluation and evaluation and monitoring report by panel of evaluation and interview (for special grade only). Based on document analysis, it was found that all those evaluation gravitated towards external observation and report done by the authority as opposed to having the teachers to do self appraisal. The whole process has made the teachers see the evaluators as a group of people who came to merely judge their performance, not work with them to improve their career development. This caused a concern of the roles of the evaluators. Instead of limiting their roles to just evaluating the teachers, the roles should be expanded to providing assistance and consultations to these teachers regarding aspects of classroom management, time management and skills that promote teachers' effectiveness such as ICT and communication skills. Similarly, internal evaluators such as school heads should be seen as people who are assisting teachers to improve their quality.

## **7.6. Recommendations for Further Research**

## **Investigating the impact of teacher improvement on student achievement**

The findings showed that the ten Malaysian Excellent Teachers perceived the GCM award scheme to have succeeded in changing their attitudes, teaching strategies and contributions. Further explorations and investigation are needed to determine whether these changes that have been reported by teachers would have an impact on students' achievement. Although the GCM award's main objective is to offer opportunities for high performing teachers to be promoted without having to take up managerial posts, it is also intended to help increase teachers' future performance to influence students' learning and outcomes. So, future research that could provide evidence of the impact of GCs on students' achievement could provide some indication to the Government of the success of the policy.

### **Involve a wider range of participants**

There are worth exploring to include school heads / principals, peers or students sources for future study to provide information of the motivational impacts of the GCM award to teachers. This study sought to investigate in-depth information only based on teachers' perceptions. However, if the information is enriched by also considering other stakeholders' perceptions then it could be used by the Government to evaluate the effectiveness of the incentive plans in motivating teachers.

### **7.7. Applicability / Impact of Study**

The findings of the study have shown that the use of pay for performance as one of the teachers' incentive plans is effective in rewarding high performance teachers and as a motivational tool in improving teacher quality. These positive effects have been shown through the changes the teachers reported in their attitudes, teaching strategies

and contributions after receiving the GCM award scheme. The findings should be looked into by the Government so that the objectives of the GCM award scheme policy can be fully achieved. Poor support from peers and school leadership should not hinder teachers to improve. It could be suggested that The Government may look into the issue of teachers being relocated at schools that do not really need GCs' expertise and teachers not being able to teach the subject they are supposed to teach because of the unavailability of the subject at the school they are teaching.

The study also found that from the interviews, participants in this study stressed more that the impact of the GC title (Excellent teacher) was important rather than the increment and pay that they received from the GCM award scheme policy. Teachers in this study were reported that changes happened in their attitudes, teaching strategies and contribution due to bring good impression of the GC title and perceived that other perceptions of GCs roles and responsible that they played such as from peers and school administrators are important in influencing teachers to change for improvement. The decision of the Malaysian Government to change the title of "Master Teacher" to "Excellent Teacher" could be said as influencing the ways GC who received the GCM award scheme to change in improving teacher quality.

Other issues that have been reported and discussed in this study will be useful to other GCs who find that they are not yet making an impact on educational developments. As the study found that some new GC teachers have still yet not felt of the impact of being a GC, the time management skills, positive thinking and continual learning attitudes discussed by teachers in this study could be used as guidelines to become successful GCs.

In addition to the impact of the study on educational development in Malaysia, the researcher also found that the study brought some valuable and useful knowledge

and experience of doing research about the perception of teachers about the GCM award scheme policy that introduced by the Malaysian Government. During the study, the researcher felt the struggle in asking teachers about their perception of changes hard to hard talk to share of their views and ideas on being a truly GC. The researcher personally faced bureaucratic red tape in seeking information about the GCM award scheme from the higher authority such as the Ministry of Education, State Education Department and school principal / head school. Thus, the experience had strengthened the researcher's determination in this study and future research.

### **7.8. Contribution to current knowledge**

It could be concluded from this study that teacher incentive in the form of monetary / financial reward and status are important in motivating teachers to change in increasing their efforts for improvement. However, it could be noted that, results of other studies also found that teachers reported that motivation to change in improving the quality of teaching and learning also comes from non financial incentives such as comfortable work place and space (Engelking 1987), extra equipment at work such as photocopy and fax machines, telephone lines and computers that facilitate them to finish their work and enable them to carry out discussions with students and other colleagues, opportunities to attend or present papers at seminars or conferences for continuing professional development (OECD, 2009). Among other incentives that schools may provide for teachers are special leave for some teachers, study leave for them to further study or gain certificate to improve and increase their knowledge and health benefits not only for them but also for their families (Book of Reference Guru Cemerlang Malaysia, Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2006; Engelking, 1987; OECD, 2009; MOE, 2006).

This research contributes to inform the Malaysian Government that teachers' beliefs also play important roles in developing quality teacher because some teachers reported that they believed that teachers are important in building and developing

future generations; thus teachers must commit to their duties. The findings showed that not all intended changes that the Government expect could be achieved as teachers also bring their personal beliefs to the profession in which they work.

## **7.9. Conclusion**

All the characteristics of a GC outlined in GC Malaysia Term of Reference are the characteristics of ideal teachers needed in every classroom throughout the country/world. The introduction of GCM award policy, besides to reward teachers, was intended to motivate teachers to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, changes would not happen by giving reward and incentives only. Changes depend also on the preparation that the teachers receive, the training and professional development that they attend during their career, the management performance such as whether teachers have been given enough motivation in the form of recognitions and support received from school leadership, and school context. To improve students' academic achievement, a strong and solid team that consists of teachers with capabilities, perseverance and strong sense of team spirit is needed. Besides that, school support and carefully designed development policy could also be available to teachers. Another issue in teacher change is about whether the changes are beneficial for the teachers and whether changes could bring a positive impact to their work. It was found during this study that teachers' changes could increase teachers' stress due to high expectation from other teachers and policy makers and expansion of teachers' work (Bartlett, 2004). It is undesirable if the changes do not come personally from the teachers but rather from some unintended and negative effects which could be the result of job dissatisfaction, reduced teachers' commitment, burnout and loss of self esteem. Teachers may have the intention to resign from the teaching profession if they fail to cope with the pressure. Thus, it could be suggested from the findings of this study that it not to be taken lightly and are open for discussion because they affect not only the teachers' performance but also students' learning and achievement.





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## APPENDICES

### Interview Consent Form



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Sir Henry Wood Building

Telephone 0141 950 3365

Supervisor Professor Rae Condie

Dr Ian Finlay

The researcher will keep the data in a secure place. Only the researcher and the faculty supervisor mentioned above will have access to this information. All the information will be kept confidential. The name of teacher and school will not be mentioned in the report of study. Upon completion of this project, all data will be destroyed or stored in a secure location.

## Participant's Agreement

1. I agree to be interviewed for the purposes of the student research named above. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me, and I have read the entire information sheet as provided by the student.
2. I agree that the interview may be electronically recorded. I am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. I understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without having to give an explanation.

I have read the above form and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in today's interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I have explained the project and the implications of being interviewed to the interviewee and I believe that the consent is informed and that he/she understands the implications of participation.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Participants of the study

	Name	Appointed as a GC	Teaching experience
1	<p>Roby</p> <p>Roby has a Degree in Science Education and a Master in Education. He teaches Physics and Science and has been a teacher for 24 years. This is his sixth school and started teaching there two years ago. Before that, he was a lecturer at a teaching college, but decided to back to school for certain reason.</p> <p>He is one of the Physics Panel at district level and in charge of fire brigade cadet and handball club in his school. He was Appointed as a GC about two years and a half in 2008.</p>	2008	24 years
2	<p>Melur</p> <p>Melur has a teaching certificate and her area of expertise is Malay Language and Mathematics. She has been teaching for 30 years and was appointed as a GC in 2003. She also one of the winner of the Innovative Teacher Award at the National level in 2003.</p> <p>Despite teaching, she also become important person to the Government Teacher Training College, located in one of Malaysian state, namely as Kedah as mentor to student teachers who have their teaching practicum. She is also in charge of the school's Remedial Room and helping other teachers especially with paper work preparation, power point and teaching aids that she did herself with her own initiative</p>	2003	30 years

3	<p>Yati</p> <p>Yati has a degree in Science Education and her teaching subjects are Biology and Chemistry. She started teaching in 1983 and has 28 years of teaching experience. She engaged in a lot of talks on KBKK and teaching techniques. It could be said that she is the only the teacher to produce a module for Chemistry subject using KBKK in the Kedah state and the module will be published in the forthcoming year. She also the secretary of Chemistry Subject Panel for the District. She was appointed as a GC in 1997.</p>	1997	28 years
4	<p>Noor</p> <p>She has a degree in Malay Language and English and Master of Education. After graduating from ITM (MARA Institute of technology) she worked at a factory for a year before she took a degree in teaching.</p> <p>She is in charge of Fire Brigade and Police Cadet, English Society and one of the committee members of the Teachers' Club at her school. She was appointed as a GC in 2008.</p>	2008	16 years
5	<p>Lina</p> <p>She has a degree in Malay Language and Master of Education with 28 years of teaching experience. Her subject expertise is Malay Language. She was appointed as a GC in 1998.</p> <p>As the Malay Language teacher, Lina is normally assigned with some tasks, writing speeches for certain ceremony or for the principal and making</p>	1998	28 years

	plans for certain programmes at her school related to her subject expertise. As an experienced teacher and a GC, she also involved in the school management. She also has a lot of invitations to be a judge in many competitions, at the district and state level.		
6	<p>Rosie</p> <p>Rosie has a degree in English and Master of Education. She has 20 years of experience of teaching English. She was appointed as a GC in 2008.</p> <p>Despite teaching, she also has been involved in a lot of outside activities such as becoming an examiner for Malaysian University English Test and becoming one of the committee members for the District English Panel in the Kedah state.</p>	2008	20 years
7	<p>Siti</p> <p>She has a degree in Islamic Studies and it was her subject expertise when she starts teaching in 1980. She has been teaching for 27 years and was appointed as a GC in 2003.</p> <p>She is involved with a lot of school activities and always asked by her school to become an advisor for example in planning activities with parents and students. She also appointed by State Education Department to give talk to the whole countries about effective teaching.</p>	2003	27 years
8	<p>Munir</p> <p>Munir has a degree in Geography and his area of expertise is Geography. He is in the GC in the Grade C Special. He authored Geography text book</p>	1997	29 years

	<p>for Form 3 and Form 5 for used in Malaysian secondary schools. He served as the Editor of Geography reference books published by Fajar Bakti and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, two reputable publishing houses in Malaysia.</p> <p>He has 29 years of teaching experience and was appointed as a GC in 1997.</p>		
9	<p>Ahmad</p> <p>Ahmad starting his teaching with certificate in 1977 and while he was working, he had a degree in 1994. He has 32 years of teaching experience and his area of expertise is Accounting.</p> <p>He is currently a Rugby and tennis coach and also was a state Master Trainer for the Accounting subject in 1994 and 1995. He was appointed as a GC 2009.</p>	2009	32 years
10	<p>Syed</p> <p>Syed has his first degree in Statistics and after one year has a Diploma of Education in Universiti Sains Malaysia in 1988. He has been teaching for 11 years.</p> <p>He was the head of Discipline in his school and also in charge of the Mathematics and Badminton Club. He was appointed as a GC in 2008.</p>	2008	11 years