**MIDDLE LEADERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW**

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Professional learning communities require support and guidance from dedicated school leaders as efficient leadership styles (i) catalyse educators’ self-efficacy and professional development, (ii) initiate school-based enhancements, and (iii) sustain the communities themselves. School-based leadership extend beyond principals and headmasters to include middle leaders who competently initiate the changes propounded by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia (MOE). Locally, middle leadership has demonstrated positive implications following much emphasis on middle leadership under the Education Development Master Plan (PIPP) by MOE in 2006-2010 (MOE, 2013). Middle leaders’ professional development agenda under the Malaysian Education Blue Print (2013-2025) continues to be implemented with MOE striving to shift from top-down to bottom-up leadership and acknowledge middle leaders’ explicit engagement in school-level leadership. Middle leadership ascertains the success of professional learning communities within schools. For example, the School Transformation Programme launched in 2015 focuses on middle leaders’ empowerment to head professional learning communities in schools. This qualitative literature review aims to identify contemporary middle leadership studies on local professional learning communities and bridge existing literature gaps. Journal articles on middle leadership (instructional, distributive, transformational, and teacher leadership) in professional learning communities within Malaysia were extracted from relevant databases (Google Scholar and MyThesis Online or MyTho) and university websites. Notably, empirical works on middle leadership and subsequent implementations in professional learning communities remain lacking given the emphasis on secondary-school middle leaders rather than primary counterparts which is focused in this study. Zone or state-specific study locations also pose restrictions on research performance in Malaysia. The study outcomes proved insightful in offering additional support and information on middle leadership in professional learning communities in Malaysia.

*Keywords*: Middle Leaders, Middle Leadership, Professional Learning Community,

Schools in Malaysia