

Strategic Collaboration between BPLTV Officers, External Assessors, Subject-Matter Experts, and the Curriculum Development Panel in Strengthening the Effectiveness of Curriculum Assessment for the Malaysian Vocational Diploma Program

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DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v15-i10/26772>

Published Date: 19 October 2025

Abstract

The effectiveness of curriculum assessment in technical and vocational education is fundamental to preparing students for real-world challenges. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Vocational Diploma Program (DVM) is governed by the Bahagian Pendidikan dan Latihan Teknikal Vokasional (BPLTV) under the Ministry of Education. This conceptual article explores the strategic collaboration between BPLTV officers, external assessors, subject-matter experts (SMEs), and the curriculum development panel in enhancing the effectiveness of curriculum assessment. Anchored in collaborative governance and constructive alignment theories, the study develops a framework that promotes coherent, industry-relevant, and quality-assured curriculum assessment processes. The article concludes with policy implications and recommendations for sustainable collaborative practices in vocational education.

Keywords: Strategic Collaboration, Curriculum Assessment, Vocational Education, BPLTV, Subject-Matter Experts, TVET Malaysia

Introduction

The Malaysian Vocational Diploma Program (DVM) serves as a cornerstone in preparing youth with employable skills and adaptive competencies essential for a rapidly evolving workforce. Yet, ensuring relevance, coherence, and accountability in curriculum

assessment within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) remains a persistent challenge globally (Peter et al., 2025). Since the transformation of vocational schools into Vocational Colleges in 2012, Malaysia has aimed to reposition TVET as a credible and attractive educational pathway aligned with market demands (Mukhter et al., 2022). Despite these efforts, fragmented stakeholder coordination, uneven institutional readiness, and limited mechanisms for data-driven assessment continue to constrain effectiveness (Amin et al., 2023; Ngatiman et al., 2023).

Recent scholarship emphasizes the need to integrate collaborative governance and digital transformation in TVET systems to meet Industry 4.0 and Education 5.0 requirements (Suhana et al., 2025; Yang & Wu, 2024). Global studies highlight that curriculum assessment must evolve beyond measuring academic outcomes to validating competency, creativity, and sustainability values (Ye et al., 2025). However, in Malaysia, limited research has systematically examined how collaborative structures involving BPLTV officers, external assessors, subject-matter experts (SMEs), and curriculum developers can improve the quality and accountability of curriculum assessment. This gap underscores the significance of establishing a strategic collaboration framework for vocational education governance.

From a social science perspective, this issue is deeply linked to debates on public-sector collaboration, educational governance, and institutional trust. Collaborative governance frameworks demonstrate that inclusive decision-making, when supported by shared accountability and transparent processes, enhances innovation and legitimacy in policy implementation (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Cai & Kosaka, 2025). Hence, this study aims to investigate how multi-stakeholder collaboration can strengthen curriculum assessment in Malaysia's TVET context, addressing the broader challenge of creating a responsive, equitable, and sustainable education system.

Stakeholders in Curriculum Assessment

Role of BPLTV Officers

BPLTV officers act as custodians of policy and quality assurance for the Diploma framework implemented in Vocational Colleges under the Ministry of Education. They oversee curriculum implementation, standardization of assessment guidelines, and compliance with national policy directions. Their coordination of curriculum evaluation processes ensures that institutional practices reflect national educational priorities and industrial expectations. Through workshops, monitoring visits, and stakeholder consultations, these officers also facilitate professional capacity building and foster continuous improvement across institutions (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Role of External Assessors

External assessors serve as independent evaluators who uphold objectivity and integrity in assessment processes. By providing impartial evaluations of student outcomes, instructional delivery, and assessment validity, they ensure transparency and public confidence in TVET qualifications. Their reports contribute to data-informed decision-making and continuous enhancement of program quality (Tam, 2014).

Role of Subject-Matter Experts (SMEs)

SMEs bridge the gap between academia and industry by ensuring that curriculum content remains relevant, current, and future-oriented. Their expertise enables curriculum review teams to integrate new technologies, industry standards, and workplace competencies into learning outcomes and assessments. SMEs thus serve as vital connectors between theoretical knowledge and real-world practice (Cedefop, 2015).

Role of Curriculum Development Panel

The curriculum development panel synthesizes input from all stakeholders including BPLTV officers, SMEs, and external assessors to design and revise curriculum content. Their work ensures pedagogical coherence, outcome alignment, and responsiveness to evolving industry requirements. Through periodic review cycles and benchmarking, the panel sustains curriculum quality and innovation.

Theoretical Framework

This conceptual paper adopts Collaborative Governance Theory and Constructive Alignment Theory as its analytical lenses. Collaborative Governance Theory (Ansell & Gash, 2008) underscores shared decision-making among government agencies, educational institutions, and industry actors to achieve common policy goals through trust, transparency, and inclusiveness. Constructive Alignment Theory (Biggs, 1996) advocates alignment between intended learning outcomes, teaching activities, and assessment strategies. Integrating both frameworks ensures that assessment design reflects industry expectations while remaining pedagogically sound. Together, they provide a holistic structure linking participatory decision-making with outcome-based education, promoting synergy between governance and pedagogy in TVET.

Strategic Collaboration Model

The proposed model highlights structured engagement among BPLTV officers, SMEs, external assessors, and curriculum developers to enhance assessment effectiveness. Collaborative mechanisms include regular review workshops, digital platforms for transparent communication, and joint evaluation committees that ensure consistency and fairness across institutions. Feedback loops from industry and graduates further strengthen the employability focus. This model operationalizes Collaborative Governance through shared accountability and Constructive Alignment through coherent mapping between outcomes and assessments. The integration of these mechanisms ensures that the DVM assessment process is responsive, efficient, and quality-assured (Peter et al., 2025; Amdan et al., 2025).

Benefits of Strategic Collaboration

Strategic collaboration yields multiple benefits for Malaysia's TVET ecosystem. It improves curriculum quality through inclusive input from educators, policymakers, and industry experts (Ansell & Gash, 2008). It increases efficiency in assessment processes by reducing redundancies and standardizing evaluation tools. It also enhances stakeholder ownership, leading to stronger accountability and institutional trust. Furthermore, collaboration supports evidence-based decision-making through systematic collection and sharing of assessment data. Collectively, these outcomes create a dynamic and adaptable system aligned with global TVET excellence frameworks (Ye et al., 2025).

Challenges and Considerations

While collaboration offers significant promise, several challenges must be addressed. Role ambiguity and overlapping responsibilities among stakeholders can hinder coordination. Resource constraints, including limited manpower and time, restrict participation. Resistance to change due to entrenched practices and institutional inertia persists. Coordination complexity in managing expectations across agencies also remains an issue. Mitigating these barriers requires clear role delineation, capacity building, supportive leadership, and robust policy frameworks promoting cross-sector cooperation (Biggs, 1996; Ansell & Gash, 2008).

Policy Implications and Recommendations

For sustainable impact, policy interventions should emphasize a unified framework that strengthens collaboration and institutional trust. Collaboration should be institutionalized through national TVET policies that embed joint decision-making practices. Continuous professional development and capacity-building programs should be prioritized to enhance stakeholders' understanding of collaborative assessment methodologies. Digital ecosystems must be utilized to ensure transparent communication and continuous engagement among all stakeholders. Additionally, a robust monitoring and evaluation system with clear indicators should be established to measure progress and accountability. These strategies support Malaysia's commitment to Education 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal 4, ensuring inclusive and quality education that prepares learners for a sustainable future (Suhana et al., 2025).

Conclusion

Curriculum assessment in Malaysian TVET must transition from isolated evaluation practices to integrated, future-oriented systems built on collaboration and alignment. By embedding principles of collaborative governance and constructive alignment, institutions can enhance coherence, accountability, and stakeholder engagement. Addressing structural barriers through clear frameworks, digital integration, and leadership support will further strengthen the ecosystem. Ultimately, such efforts will sustain the relevance and excellence of Malaysia's vocational education in the era of rapid industrial and technological change.

Acknowledgment

Sincere appreciation is extended to my team members for their valuable time, dedication, and contributions in completing this manuscript.

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