

EVALUATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP SELF-EFFICACY AMONG  
THE ASPIRING SCHOOL LEADERS

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To,

Mum and Dad....

Thank you, for what I am today.

To,

Beloved hubby, Ravi,

For your endless love, encouragement and sacrifice.

To,

Mummy's little women, Neeta, Surekha & Alysha...

For tomorrow.

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## ABSTRACT

Trainings given to aspiring school leaders (ASLs) play a crucial role in setting the direction for successful schools. The inadequate ability of leadership preparatory training to prepare and support ASLs to take on the challenging task of school leadership has been severely criticized and continues to be a major concern locally and internationally. Literature on training has focused on training design, individual and organizational factors but studies on self-efficacy, especially among school leaders' have not been given due consideration. The study evaluated the effectiveness of the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQELs) preparatory training in developing the leadership self-efficacy beliefs of ASLs. This encompassed an investigation of individual characteristics and determination of training design characteristics and how these contributed to the self-efficacy development of the ASLs. The study adopted a sequential explanatory mixed methodology. A survey was carried out on 226 NPQEL trained ASLs and in-depth interviews were conducted on seven selected ASLs based on criterion sampling. Non-parametric statistical techniques were used to analyse the quantitative data. The findings showed that among the individual characteristics, only age and experience significantly influenced the improvement of the ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs. Among the four training design characteristics, training internship revealed a moderate influence in all the self-efficacy dimensions and this was followed by the relevancy of coursework to practice sub-factor. Thematic analysis of the qualitative data based on Bandura's concept revealed that three of Bandura's sources of efficacy beliefs, namely mastery experience, vicarious experience and physiological arousal were evident in the NPQEL training design. However, there was only a low level of social persuasion, the fourth source in the training. Overall, the findings showed that there were insufficient conditions of these sources of efficacy in the NPQEL training to give significant impact on the development of the ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs. The study proposed a framework for self-efficacy development initiatives in the preparatory educational leadership training of ASLs in Malaysia.

## ABSTRAK

Latihan yang diberikan kepada bakal pemimpin sekolah (ASLs) memainkan peranan yang penting dalam penetapan arah untuk kecemerlangan sekolah. Ketidakmampuan latihan persediaan kepimpinan untuk menyediakan dan menyokong ASLs untuk menghadapi tugas kepimpinan sekolah yang mencabar, telah mendapat kritikan hebat dan menjadi isu utama yang membimbangkan di peringkat kebangsaan dan antarabangsa. Kajian lepas dalam bidang latihan berfokus kepada reka bentuk latihan, faktor-faktor individu dan organisasi tetapi kajian berdasarkan efikasi sendiri terutama dalam kalangan para pemimpin sekolah tidak diberikan tumpuan yang sewajarnya. Kajian ini menilai keberkesanan latihan persediaan *National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL)* dalam membangunkan efikasi sendiri ASLs. Kajian ini melibatkan penganalisan ke atas faktor individu dan faktor reka bentuk latihan dan cara kedua-dua faktor ini menyumbang kepada pembangunan efikasi sendiri ASLs. Kajian ini menggunakan '*sequential explanatory mixed methodology*'. Pentadbiran soal selidik dijalankan ke atas 226 orang ASLs yang menjalani latihan NPQEL serta temu bual diadakan dengan tujuh orang ASLs yang dipilih berdasarkan *criterion sampling*. Teknik statistik bukan parametrik digunakan untuk menganalisis data kuantitatif. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa dalam faktor individu, hanya umur dan pengalaman secara signifikan membawa perubahan positif ke atas efikasi sendiri ASLs. Di antara empat faktor reka bentuk latihan, faktor *training internship* menunjukkan kesan yang sederhana dalam semua dimensi efikasi sendiri yang dikaji. Ini diikuti oleh faktor *relevancy of coursework to practice*. Analisis tematik data kualitatif berdasarkan konsep Bandura menunjukkan bahawa tiga daripada sumber efikasi Bandura iaitu *mastery experience*, *vicarious experience* and *physiological arousal* telah dikesan dalam reka bentuk latihan NPQEL. Walau bagaimanapun, *social persuasion* yang merupakan sumber keempat, hanya didapati pada tahap yang rendah dalam latihan ini. Secara keseluruhannya, dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat kekurangan sumber efikasi sendiri dalam latihan NPQEL untuk memberikan impak yang signifikan ke atas pembangunan efikasi sendiri para ASLs. Kajian ini turut mencadangkan rangka kerja bagi inisiatif pembangunan efikasi sendiri dalam latihan persediaan kepimpinan para ASLs di Malaysia.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATION

ASLPSE	-	Aspiring School Leaders' Preparatory Programme and Self-efficacy
ASL	-	Aspiring School Leader
EFA	-	Exploratory Factor Analysis
EPRD	-	Educational Planning, Research and Development Division
IAB	-	Institut Aminuddin Baki
LSE	-	Leadership Self-efficacy
LR	-	Logistic Regression
MaSPSES	-	Malaysian School Principal Self-efficacy Scale
NPQH	-	National Professional Qualification for Headship
NPQEL	-	National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders
PSES	-	Principal Self-efficacy Survey
QSR N7	-	Qualitative Data Analysis Computer Package (Version 0.7)
SCT	-	Social Cognitive Theory
SPSS 18	-	Statistics Analysis in Social Science Software (Version 18)
SREB	-	Southern Regional Educational Board
KPM	-	Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction

In Malaysia, there is a huge increase in the government allocation for training and development in recent years, which indicates the growing importance placed on the development of human resources (Tenth Malaysia Plan, 2010). This is in line with the development at the global front where a number of forces such as globalization, technology, political and economic changes with various other factors, bring with it a massive non-optional change that effect society on the whole (Noe, 2005; Kanter, 1996; Toffler, 1972). Embracing and managing these forces of change, which is essential for the survival of organizations in this global era is certainly well anticipated by the Malaysian Government. This is very evident with the various policies and programmes implemented over the years, current and new projects that are introduced taking into account the goals and aspirations of the National Vision Policy, in order to have a competitive edge in the global market (Haslinda & Mahyuddin, 2009; Ho, 2004).

In this endeavour, the education sector has a vital role to play as the “*development of education in Malaysia, is directly interwoven in the planned national development agenda of the nation*” (Ibrahim, 2000, p. 50). The National Education Blueprint (NEB) 2013-2025 clearly identifies the important roles of school leaders in leading and managing the school organization to cope with future challenges to take the national education to greater access and heights (The New Malaysian Blueprint, 2012).

In brief, the school leaders need to become change agents who are constantly rethinking new approaches to be implemented when necessary (Buchanan & Badham,

1999; Handy, 1996; Senge, 1999). Efficient and effective change agents will have to develop their leadership skills, experiences, behaviour, personalities, creativeness, innovativeness, knowledge and attitude in order to lead their teachers towards school excellence (Buchanan & Badham, 1999, Kee & Ponnusamy, 2010; Ho, 2004; Khuan, Chua & Abdul Razak, 2004; Senge, 1990). This is parallel to the aims of the National Blueprint Plan 2013-2025 to promote school leaders who can work towards achieving world-class education system by developing individual potentials to attain excellence (The New Malaysian Blueprint, 2012).

Therefore, professional training and development of school leaders are essential for school effectiveness. Research on effective schooling and on the importance of preparation of school leadership (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988; Fullan, 1991) are all underpinned on the assumptions that effective leadership creates effective schools (Edmonds, 1979; Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Sergiovanni, 1984; Thody, 1998). Understanding the current challenges that the school leaders in Malaysia face and the future demands that they have to meet, trainings of these leaders are of ultimate importance. Hence, quality training programmes that are suitable and which are designed specifically to support them to meet the educational challenges are extremely vital (Chan & Sidhu, 2009; Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Wallace Foundation Report, 2008).

The National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership (Institut Aminuddin Baki/IAB) is the sole institution in Malaysia, which is accountable to train, and design training programmes for aspiring and serving school principals (Ibrahim, 2000). Institute Aminudin Baki had conducted numerous courses and trainings in its quest of providing better school leadership. The Institute's training programmes such as the School Leadership and Management Program (SLMP), National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), National Professional Qualification for School Leaders (NPQEL) and School Leadership Assessment Program are all testimonies of the importance attached by our Ministry of Education to the training of effective school leaders. This commitment has been further underlined in the National Education Blueprint (NEB) 2013-2025 and by the establishment of a High Standard of Quality Education (HSQE), pioneered by the School Inspectorate Division in Malaysia (Chan & Sidhu, 2009; The New Malaysian Blueprint, 2012). In the Tenth Malaysia Plan, IAB had targeted to further increase the number of participants in its training provided to school leaders to 14000 per year as compared to 8,000 previously.

It is important to examine how the training addresses the educational leaders' needs related to learning, behavioural change and performance improvement. This study is an effort to further enhance the quality of development of preparatory training for school leaders in Malaysia. There is a huge investment in the preparatory trainings conducted for school leaders by IAB. Consequently, training evaluation is a necessity to re-evaluate and ascertain the strengths, weaknesses, suitability, significance and applicability of the training provided for the development of school leaders in our country (Kirkpatrick, 1994; Wan, Khuan, & Sarver, 2002). The following section 1.2 will explore the issues related to the training of school leaders.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

Trainings given to aspiring school leaders (ASLs) play a crucial role in setting the direction for successful schools, however existing knowledge on the best ways to prepare and develop these educational leaders is sparse (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007). There is an extreme limitation of literature in Malaysia regarding the preparatory training and development of educational leaders especially pertaining to ASLs (Singh, 2009; Sazali, 2006). Therefore, literature reviews had to be drawn from other countries in order to have a deeper understanding of this area, which is the core of this study. A review of literature from different perspectives showed that school leaders' preparatory programmes had been greatly criticized by researchers in this area (Creighton & Jones, 2001; Levine, 2005, Mitgang, 2012). A report entitled "Educating School Leaders" by Levine (2005) provided a thorough analysis of school leaders' preparatory programmes. Although there are some criticism to Levine's (2005) report, most critics agree to his reasons that training programmes often are inadequately prepared and supported for ASLs to take on the challenging task of school leadership (Chapman, 2005; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Wallace Foundation Report, 2008). These common reasons identified in Levine's (2005) report were also evident in the limited literature and number of studies done locally on school leaders' preparatory training in Malaysia (Aziz, 2003; Educational, Planning and Research Department /EPRD, 2006; Kamaruzaman, Norasmah, & Siti, 2009; Rusinah & Lee, 2006; Singh, 2009).

The most common themes that emerged as reasons for the criticism of school leaders' preparatory training in United States included (1) weak or low selection and

recruitment criteria, (2) irrelevant curricula (disconnection between theory and practice), (3) inadequate clinical practice, (4) weak faculty (teaching staff) and weak instructional practices (Levine, 2005; Mitgang, 2012). Firstly, selection and recruitment criteria were found to be poor as many programmes admitted all who applied based on paper qualification without gathering evidences or information regarding their resilience, integrity and beliefs of their ability to work with teachers in a challenging environment (Mitgang, 2012). Little screening was done to identify candidates whose primary motive could be other than to become school leaders but for salary jump or promotion (Levine, 2005; Mitgang, 2012). Secondly, the preparatory training was criticized for the disconnection between theory and practice. (Levine, 2005; Mitgang, 2012). The training curriculum was poorly integrated with practices therefore failing to adequately prepare the ASLs to cope with school realities (Levine, 2005; Mitgang, 2012). The participants expressed disappointment, as they were not able to practice what was learnt. There was lack of opportunities to experience real leadership. They called for more practical or hands-on opportunities in the learning, which are similar to real issues dealt by school leaders (Levine, 2005, Mitgang, 2012).

The third criticism was on internship. It was found that internships were poorly designed and insufficiently connected to the rest of the curriculum (Mitgang, 2012). Internships carried out were usually in the school that the participants taught prior to attending the training and with their current school heads as their mentors. This inevitably narrowed and limited their perspectives, as there was no new exposure outside the school (Levine, 2005). Internship completed via projects and report writing also did not have much significant application in their learning (Levine, 2005). Many programmes, which offered internships commonly, settled for short passive exercises and experiences, for example, shadowing a school head. An analysis of internships at 60 training programme by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) concluded that many lack "...purposeful 'hands on' experiences that would prepare the aspiring leaders to lead the essential work of school improvement and higher student achievement prior to being placed at the helm of a school" (Mitgang, 2012, p. 12).

Fourthly, the criticism on weak faculty (teaching staff) and instructional practices was based on findings that many of the lecturers/ trainers did not have any prior experience as school heads. Many had minimal or very recent experience in the practice of school administration (Levine, 2005). Therefore, they were not able to relate theory into

context. This issue also posed a problem for the lecturers/trainers when it came to mentoring the ASLs.

As mentioned earlier, these common reasons identified in Levine's (2005) report, reflect the issues in school leaders' preparatory training programmes both internationally and locally. At the local front, these issues were also evident and highlighted in the limited local literature on the NPQH/ NPQEL school leaders' preparatory training in Malaysia.

Generally, the limited number of studies done locally on the NPQH/NPQEL preparatory training in Malaysia found that the participants perceived the training to be effective, as they had improved significantly in the respective areas of knowledge/skills, dispositions and performance. The NPQH/NPQEL graduates were found to demonstrate good ability in applying knowledge and skills acquired from the training (Aziz, 2003; Educational, Planning and Research Department / EPRD, 2006; Amin, 2007; Kamaruzaman, Norasmah, & Siti, 2009; Rusinah & Lee, 2006; Singh, 2009). However, there were also many areas of concerns documented which were similar to the criticism of school leaders' preparatory training at the international front (Chapman, 2005; Creighton & Jones, 2001; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Levine, 2005; Mitgang, 2012; Wallace Foundation Report, 2008).

There were two main points of dissatisfactions or key issues highlighted by the first study on the NPQH preparatory training in Malaysia by Aziz (2003). First point of dissatisfaction was on the lack of expertise of some of the trainers in adult learning and also in understanding of adult needs. This criticism on weak faculty (teaching staff) was based on findings that many of the lecturers/ trainers did not have any prior experience as school heads. Secondly, was the dissatisfaction on their non- appointment to headship even several years after attending the NPQH training and this was seen as an apparent wastage in resources. These two points of dissatisfaction highlighted in Aziz's study (2003) were later confirmed by EPRD of the Malaysian Ministry of Education study in 2006 which researched the effectiveness of the NPQH graduates at the management level in schools and the extent of support accorded to the graduates by the education authorities. Firstly, the EPRD (2006) study cited lack of systematic planning to be the issue regarding the ASLs dissatisfaction with their placement after the training, as many participants (ASLs) were posted back to the post which they held prior to the training or as classroom teachers. Their plight was due to the existence of many 'senior' teachers and time-based promotion. Even though these senior teachers did not possess the NPQH certification,

priority to take on the headship position was given to them as they were in the time-based promotion zone. This raised dissatisfaction among the NPQH graduates who had the certification. Accordingly, they expressed disappointment as they were not able to practice what was learnt – “theory without power is difficult to practice” was their point of argument (EPRD, 2006). This reflected poor selection to the training and the EPRD (2006) study recommended that stringent procedure is followed in the selection of the participants to the training.

The second issue highlighted was that the NPQH theoretical component was too extensive and compact to be covered in a short period of time, which was about six months (EPRD, 2006). Due to the time constraints, the theoretical component was covered in a rushed manner in the training. This had a negative impact on learning. In addition to that, thirdly, the participants were not convinced with some of the knowledge areas of the training as the trainers / lecturers who disseminated the knowledge had no prior experience on aspects of leading and managing schools. This was a credibility issue (EPRD, 2006). Other areas of concern highlighted by EPRD (2006) study revolved around the limitation in topics covered in the curriculum.

Kamaruzaman (2009) also found that although the results of his study were mainly positive, however there was vast room for improvement in all six areas (facilities, resource materials, delivery of content by trainers, practicum programme, attachment programme and course content) of the training identified to further enhance the programme effectiveness. Similar to Aziz’s (2003) and EPRD’s (2006) studies, Kamaruzaman (2009) also highlighted the lack of professionalism of some of the teaching staff and their lack of experience in school management and administration. It was also found that the NPQH internship had limited scope, as the three projects that were required to be done by the participants during internship did not cover all the nine aspects of management and leadership as stated in The Malaysian School Head Competency Standards. This resulted in the participants not able to fully apply what they had learnt in the training. Insufficient coaching and supervision during internship was also highlighted as one of the shortcomings of the NPQH training (Kamaruzaman, 2009).

Singh’s (2009) study on the effectiveness of the NPQH programme identified eight themes, which pointed towards the shortcomings of the NPQH training as perceived by the ASLs. Some of these shortcoming themes identified further confirmed the previous studies done by Aziz (2003) and EPRD (2006). The first theme highlighted was on the over-



emphasis of the theoretical aspect. Although the theoretical knowledge was found to be one of the strength of the training, the ASLs also viewed it as a shortcoming. As too much emphasis was given on the theoretical knowledge, it resulted in it dominating the whole training and hands-on input compromised. Lack of hands-on experience was also a highlighted theme as the ASLs wanted exposure to the real school situation so that they could experience the application of what they had learnt in the programme. Similar to Aziz's (2003), EPRD (2006) and Kamaruzaman (2009), lack of experience and competency in trainers were also found to be the shortcomings of the NPQH programme by Singh (2009). The trainers were found to be good in theories but were not able to link it specifically to the practical aspect of school management and leadership as they themselves did not have much or any experience in it. The NPQH training was also perceived as being too exam oriented. The participants found the solely objective-based exams tested more on their ability to remember than application. Another shortcoming mentioned was the lack of depth in certain subject areas such as financial management, schools' legal aspects, students' affairs and research and development. The participants were in opinion that the delivery and practical aspect should have been better. Participants also viewed the lack of experience sharing by senior heads in the programme as a missed opportunity for them to gain firsthand experience. The respondents recommended that support should be extended to the NPQH graduates by IAB and the experiences from the NPQH heads ought to be utilized by the organizers. They called for more practical or hands-on opportunities in the learning. They also wanted the policy of engaging aspiring teachers into the NPQH programme implemented in a supportive way.

Apart from these studies, there were a few attempts by other local researchers to investigate the NPQH training. These researches certainly added knowledge about the training and provided understanding of the training from several dimensions. Rusinah and Lee (2006) investigated the motivational orientation of the teachers in the NPQH programme. Their research had put forth the 'pulling factors' or the reasons for the teachers to participate in the NPQH training. The findings indicated that teachers were basically motivated by positive motivational orientations. Professional advancement was found to be the highest motivation for the teachers to participate in the NPQH training. This was followed by educational preparation and cognitive interest, communication improvement, family togetherness, social contact and social stimulation. Although the findings indicated positive orientations to participate in the training, selection and recruitment of the NPQH certainly warrant further investigation as the reasons for participation in the training could be other than to become a school head. It is vital to

select who has high intellectual ability, good work ethics, truly desire and most of all believes that he or she can take on the responsibility and demands of the position with all the new developments in the educational field.

The limited number of studies done on the NPQH/NPQEL training in Malaysia showed that there existed a positive reaction by the participants about the training effectiveness. However, the issues and weaknesses reported highlights that more improvement is needed in the training to produce educational leaders who are capable to meet the demands of education in today's rapid world. The issues and weaknesses reported locally also resonated and confirmed the four key criticism of school leaders' preparatory training identified at the global front namely, (1) weak or low selection and recruitment criteria, (2) irrelevant curricula (disconnection between theory and practice), (3) inadequate clinical practice, (4) weak faculty (teaching staff) and weak instructional practices (Aziz, 2003; Creighton & Jones, 2001; Chapman, 2005; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Educational, Planning and Research Department /EPRD, 2006; Kamaruzaman, 2009; Levine, 2005; Mitgang, 2012; Norasmah, & Siti, 2009; Rusinah & Lee, 2006; Singh, 2009; Wallace Foundation Report, 2008). Thus, there is a need to investigate and evaluate the effectiveness of the school leaders' preparatory training for further improvement and support for ASLs to take on the challenging role and task of leadership.

However, evaluation of training effectiveness is not an easy task ([Haccoun](#) & Saks, 1998; Goldstein, 2002). Training effectiveness is defined as "the extent to which training yields desired or relevant outcomes" (Tannenbaum, Cannon-Bowers, & Salas, 1993; Mathieu, Martineau, & Tannenbaum, 1993). Literature on training effectiveness identified a large number of organizational, individual and training design characteristics that affect training effectiveness (Mathieu, et al., 1993). However, past research on training effectiveness had concentrated mostly on training design (content, instructors, facilities etc.). Only until recently, individual and organizational factors are given more attention (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993). Recent literature showed that attempts to further identify these factors that had been overlooked and understanding their impacts on training goals are still ongoing. Researchers agree that training studies have been incomplete in their studies on these individual and organizational factors that influence training effectiveness (Alvarez, Salas, & Garofano 2004; Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Mathieu, et al., 1993). The search to further investigate the influences of these vital individual and organizational variables is evident from the evolution of training literature from Kirkpatrick's model to the studies of multidimensional models in variety of educational and organizational

psychology and human resource development publications (Alvarez, et al., 2004; Holton, 2005; Noe, 1986). These models go beyond training per se to assess training effectiveness by taking into account the importance of these individual and organizational factors.

Individual factors (demographic factors, self-efficacy, locus of control, motivation, anxiety, attitude, abilities) and organizational factors (organizational climate, selection process, management/peer support, time) influence pre-training motivation to learn and post-training motivation to transfer (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993). Of all the individual factors identified, self-efficacy (trainee cognitive processes) was found to play a critical role in influencing pre-training motivation and post-training motivation in accomplishing learning, retention and transfer back to the job (Bandura, 1997; Fisher, 2010; Goldstein & Ford, 2002; [Haccoun](#), 1997; McCormick, & Taguma, 2007; Tannenbaum, et al., 1993). The psychological construct of self-efficacy although recognized in the general training models and literature (Mager, 1992), is often overlooked and not given due consideration in leadership trainings (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; McCormick, 2001; McCormick & Taguma, 2007). The researcher also found this to be very true in the Malaysian context as there is an extreme limitation in the local literature on self-efficacy in educational training especially in the preparatory training of ASLs. In addition, Sazali (2004) asserted that most of the findings on self-efficacy were based on research done in the western countries; therefore, Sazali (2004) argued that there is a possibility that these findings cannot be generalized to the Malaysian contexts, as there are cultural differences between the East and the West.

As of the researchers' knowledge, Sazali (2004) was the first to study specifically on principals' self-efficacy in the Malaysian context. Although Sazali (2004, 2006) did not specifically investigate the NPQH/NPQEL training in his studies, but the studies in so far were the first to acknowledge and explore self-efficacy of the school principals in Malaysia. Sazali (2006) was also the first to develop a scale named Malaysian School Principal Self-efficacy Scale (MaSPSES) to measure principals' self-efficacy in the Malaysian context.

Sazali's (2006) study explored the school principals' self-efficacy beliefs and its relationship with schools and principals' personal attributes. The school principals' self-efficacy in school management (managing academic success, managing staff, managing pupil affairs, managing school facilities, managing school finance, and managing school-community affairs) were investigated. School's attributes were measured by pupil

enrolment and school-type. Whereas, principal's attributes were measured by principal's age, principalship tenure, number of posts held prior to principalship appointment, and peer-support. Sazali (2006) found that the number of post held prior to principalship appointment, pupil enrolment and peer-support to be related to principals' self-efficacy in school management. However, the principalship tenure, age and school type were not significantly related to principals' self-efficacy.

At the principals' personal attributes level, the number of post held prior to principalship appointment was found to be only positively related with principals' efficacy beliefs on managing school facilities and did not correlate with other five principals' self-efficacy dimensions studied. Sazali (2006) inferred that this phenomenon could have been due to the principals' delegating their entrusted tasks to other senior teachers and ending up not learning anything from the experiences of holding various positions in schools. Rationally, the cumulated experiences gathered from the number of posts prior to principalship should have increased their self- efficacy. Similarly, the principalship tenure and age were also not related to any of the principals' self-efficacy beliefs. Sazali's (2006) finding confirmed Tschannen-Moran and Gareis (2004) study which also found that the number of years served as principal did not relate to principal self-efficacy beliefs. These findings need to be explored further as to understand why the number of post held prior to principalship appointment, principalship tenure and age did not enhance the principals' self- efficacy beliefs, as logically these variables should have further boosted the principals' self-efficacy beliefs. The current research was undertaken to further shed some light in this area.

In addition to this, Sazali's (2004, 2006) findings on self-efficacy were quantitative in nature, therefore in this present study, a mixed-methods approach was undertaken considering that there is a gap in this area in the Malaysian context. Literature reviews show that along with the knowledge and skills, self- efficacy is an essential element in contributing to a leader's success (Bandura, 1986; Mc Cormick, 2001; Paglis and Green, 2002). Self-efficacy, which is the key element in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, is defined as an individual's judgment of his or her capability to embrace appropriate behaviours and actions to accomplish the expected outcome (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Self-efficacy has been found to affect behaviour in three ways. It affects task-related coping behaviour, individual effort and persistence (Bandura, 1986, 1997). Preparatory leadership training for ASLs, which include knowledge, and skills (competence based) are good but are found to be insufficient conditions to determine performances (Bandura, 1989;

Hinrichs, 1966; Imants, 1994). Social Cognitive Theory (1986, 1997) asserts that although competence or skills are important, the judgement of what one can do with the skills is even more crucial (Bandura, 1986, 1997). This is because to accomplish the goal set, it is the belief of capability that drives oneself and not the actual ability (Bandura, 1997). The definition differentiates between component skills and ability to execute actions (Bandura, 1986). The difference is between having a certain degree of abilities and being able to use them (Bandura, 1989; Mathieu, et al., 1993). People tend to abandon their trained skills when they fail, if they are not convinced of their self-efficacy. It was identified that a fundamental prerequisite of training that had been ultimately ignored in the developing countries' environment is the trainees' fitness for training. The spirit to learn and develop was found to be lacking and this internal motivation coined as self-efficacy is an important trait of trainees (Gist, et al., 1991). Those with higher pre-training self-efficacy beliefs have higher motivation to learn and transfer skills to the job more effectively (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005, Salas & Cannon- Bowers, 2001).

Literature reviews supports that developing the self-efficacy in leadership training would be a vital strategy for improving leader's effectiveness (McCormick & Taguma, 2007; Paglis & Green, 2002; Wood & Bandura, 1989). In fact, Popper and Lipshitz (1993) stated that "developing self-efficacy is the basis of any programme of leadership development" (p. 23). This is because self-efficacy mediates the relationship between knowledge and action (Imants, 1994). Therefore, leadership-training programmes can be expected to influence the school leaders' self-efficacy beliefs in a positive direction (Imants, 1994). There are evidences that appropriately designed training interventions can alter leaders' self-efficacy particularly if one or more of the four sources of efficacy beliefs (mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and psychological arousal) identified by Bandura (1989) are provided during the training experience (Bandura, 1997; Fisher, 2010; McCormick & Taguma, 2007; Saks, 1995). Given the important role of self-efficacy in behaviour and performance, there is a need to further investigate this construct in relevance to training effectiveness. Therefore, in the context of this study, it is vital that evaluation on the effectiveness of the NPQEL preparatory training for ASLs in developing their self-efficacy is undertaken.

Training effectiveness is done via a training evaluation study, which involves comparing post-training performance to a specified criterion or standard. There is not a single, all-encompassing, universally accepted training effectiveness criterion, as different training has different goals and processes, and thus different measures of training

effectiveness (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993). Research shows that although there are many training evaluation models, organizations still regard training evaluation as difficult as there are many issues and constraints surrounding training evaluation (Goldstein, 2002; Haccoun & Saks, 1998; Truelove, 2006). The effectiveness of the training depends on the outcome criteria used for evaluation (Haccoun & Saks, 1998; Tziner, Fisher, Senior, & Weisberg, 2007). The validity and reliability of the measurement scale used becomes questionable when the required standard criterion of quality is not adequately specified as it may involve both objective and subjective measures (Philip, 1991). This is especially true in management trainings particularly as the subjective outcome such as behaviour cannot be quantified (Ho, 2001; Rae, 1991). This is a measurement issue and there continue to be a vacuum in this area as it is under-researched.

Most of the training evaluation studies had framed their studies by utilizing the well-known and well-accepted Kirkpatrick's (1987, 1998) four levels training evaluation model (Haccoun & Saks, 1998). The Kirkpatrick's (1998) four frame evaluation model specified four types of output indicators at increasing level of complexity; Level 1-reaction, Level 2-learning, Level 3-behaviour and Level 4-result. Ideally, training should be evaluated at all levels to identify at which level the training has been effective. Complex research design and adequate financial resources will be needed to evaluate at a higher output levels (Haccoun & Saks, 1998; Imant, 1994). Traditional training evaluation designs that utilize rigorous experimental designs with control groups or longitudinal time series are neither easy nor realistic to conduct in practice. Therefore, difficulty in identifying and utilizing a parsimonious and result-oriented evaluation criterion (Haccoun & Saks, 1998; Imant, 1994; Philip, 1991) had also led to most training evaluation to be done at the Level 1- immediate post-training reaction (91%) and Level 2 - cognitive learning (51%) of Kirkpatrick's (1998) model. Evaluations at deeper levels such as on the impact on learning and job performances are largely not done (Goldstein, 2002).

Research shows that usually, educational management training programmes are evaluated at Level 1 by utilizing "happiness ratings" or "satisfaction sheets" which assess the subjective appraisal of the training by the trainees (Imants, 1994). This subjective appraisal of training is regarded as a very poor indicator of training effectiveness (Alliger & Janak, 1989; Imants, 1994; Joyce & Showers, 1988; Truelove, 2006). There are also questions as to what extent are the information collected at the reaction level (Level 1) are of value and related to the other three levels ([Haccoun](#) & Saks, 1998; Kirkpatrick, 1998) as it was repeatedly found that the affective reaction measures rarely show variance as

trainees usually react positively to their training experiences ([Haccoun](#) & Saks, 1998; Alliger & Janak, 1989). Therefore, acknowledging this limitation, training evaluations that depend solely on affective reaction measurement had been recognized as an unacceptable estimate of training effectiveness (Alliger & Janak, 1989; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Warr & Bunce, 1995). Yet, until now, post-training reaction evaluation remains as one of the most acceptable measure of training effectiveness ([Haccoun](#) & Saks, 1998). This is because there are evidences that training reaction may actually play a much complex role indirectly to the other levels (learning and behaviour) based on Kirkpatrick's model if "utility" based reaction measure is used (Alliger & Janak, 1989). For example, higher level correlations with learning or outcome measures was also found with the usage of "utility" reaction measure in a study by Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennet, Traver and Shotland (1997).

However, the complex role of reaction to other levels of training; such as learning and behaviour are under- researched ([Haccoun](#) & Saks, 1997). Therefore, researchers had proposed more reaction measures are designed to include "utility" measures that allow extraction of more meaningful information. One such "utility" measure proposed is self-efficacy as self-efficacy is a strong predictor of transfer and it is a stable predictor of behaviour and performance in training and organizational effectiveness (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Hancoon & Saks, 1998; Mathieu, Tannennbaum, & Salas; 1992). Changes in post-training self-efficacy are considered as an important outcome of training and one potential indication of training effectiveness (Gist, 1987; Latham, 1989; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992).

Self-efficacy can also be incorporated easily into post-training self-report type of evaluation to yield more meaningful insights about the effectiveness of training programmes ([Haccoun](#) & Saks, 1998). Literature suggests that evaluation of training should not only focus or be based on evaluation models (Imant, 1994). As these trainings are huge investment of money, time and labor (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001), it is crucial that training efforts are fully realized based on psychometrically sound evaluation criteria (Alliger et al., 1997). Evaluation utilizing a cognitive approach whereby measuring the changes in the sense of efficacy belief is an appropriate criterion for the evaluation of the training programmes (Bandura, 1997; Imants, 1994; Mc Cormik, 2007). This practical and parsimonious criterion for evaluation can actually predict training transfer that subsequently predicts training effectiveness.

Traditional evaluations of training programmes have relied heavily on purely pedagogical approach (Haccoun & Saks, 1998) and this is still ongoing. This study attempted to move away from the norm and evaluate the training effectiveness from a psychological aspect by measuring changes in self-efficacy beliefs as the training outcome variable, as it is a potential indicator of training effectiveness (Gist, 1987; Latham, 1989; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Therefore, this study hoped to ascertain the effectiveness of the NPQEL training by using the self-efficacy beliefs as an assessment criterion in the overall evaluation.

As mentioned earlier, developing the self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs would be a vital strategy in preparing them for school leadership roles in a more effective manner. Consequently, knowledge about the contributing factors to school leaders' self-efficacy beliefs can support the improvement and development of preparation programme (Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). However, in spite of the positive findings, there are very limited number of studies conducted that empirically examined the effectiveness of leadership training that incorporates self-efficacy components (Mc Cormick, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). It is important that preparatory training incorporate these sources of efficacy beliefs namely; mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and psychological arousal to enhance the ASLs self-efficacy beliefs. Thus, there is a need to investigate what are the sources of efficacy beliefs that are incorporated in the training design and to evaluate how effective are these sources of efficacy beliefs in developing the self-efficacy of the ASLs.

To the researcher's knowledge, to date the educational leadership trainings in Malaysia have never been examined under the lens of school leaders' self-efficacy beliefs. Research specifically addressing the self-efficacy development of the ASLs' preparatory training is non-existent especially in the Malaysian context (Sazali, 2006). There remains a vacuum in this area specifically on how to develop the self-efficacy of the ASLs to meet the ever-increasing change in the education field. Information gathered from the limited number of research done on the preparatory educational leadership trainings (Aziz, 2003; EPRD, 2006; Kamaruzaman, 2009; Rusinah & Lee, 2006; Rohaya, Risnarizah, & Shariffah, 2006; Singh, 2009) assisted in concluding that despite the positive aspects of the training, there are still wide areas of the training that are understudied in Malaysia. It is with this view in mind that this study, which focuses on the individual and training design factors that affect training effectiveness, was undertaken.



### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Evidences from different perspectives showed that leadership preparatory trainings had been severely criticized (Creighton & Jones, 2001; Levine, 2005, Mulford, 2003; Mitgang, 2012) for its inadequate ability to prepare and support ASLs to take on the challenging task of school leadership (Chapman, 2005; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; Wallace Foundation Report, 2008). At the local front, this inadequacy of the leadership preparatory training was evidenced by the moderate basic knowledge of the ASLs on educational leadership and management (Amin, Rosnarizah, & Rohaya, 2007). The most common criticism identified for this inadequate ability both at the local and international front, were mainly on the training design characteristics, which included (1) weak or low selection criteria, (2) irrelevant curricula (disconnection between theory and practice), (3) inadequate clinical practice, (4) weak faculty (teaching staff) and instructional practices (EPRD, 2006; Kamaruzaman, et al., 2009; Levine, 2005; Mitgang, 2012; Rusinah & Lee, 2006; Singh, 2009).

A more meaningful redesign of the preparatory training for ASLs is yet to occur (Petersen, 2002) and this is associated to the underdeveloped training evaluation (SREB, 2006) on the multitudes individual and organizational factors that influence training effectiveness (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993). There are significant gaps in the training literature for training design, individual and organizational factors (Kavanagh, 1998). Training evaluation is often neglected in educational leadership trainings as it is viewed as difficult due to many issues and constraints surrounding it (Haccoun & Saks, 1998). Literature supports evaluation based on the changes in post-training self-efficacy as one potential indication of training effectiveness (Gist, 1987; Latham, 1989; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). However, school leaders' self-efficacy is often not given due consideration in leadership trainings (Mc. Cormick, 2001; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). To date, evidences of past research on the influence of demographic factors on self-efficacy beliefs and training have been inconsistent (Sazali 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2005). Generally, research findings from studies on school leaders' self- efficacy beliefs have not been consistent due to inconsistency in the instruments used. There is also a significant gap in the methodology used this area especially in the Malaysian context.

Another serious shortcoming is that relatively little attention has been given to understand how training can be effectively designed to increase school leaders' self-efficacy beliefs (Haccoun, 1999). Knowledge of which specific variable of the training

bring about high or low influence on the strength of self-efficacy beliefs are also unknown. There still remains a vacuum specifically on research addressing the evaluation of self-efficacy development of the ASLs in leadership training especially in the Malaysian context (Sazali, 2006). Although the sources of efficacy beliefs can be theorized to be present and embedded to some degree within the NPQEL training in Malaysia, to date, there is no hard evidence on it.

This study proposed that developing the self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs would be vital strategy in preparing them for school leadership roles in a more effective manner. The outcome of this study was an integrated framework for self-efficacy development initiatives in the leadership trainings for school leaders in Malaysia. Herein, lays the contribution of this research. The study also proposed a practical and parsimonious evaluation criterion utilizing self-efficacy beliefs as strategy in the overall evaluation by measuring the changes in the sense of efficacy beliefs of the ASLs.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the NPQEL preparatory training in developing the ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs in school leadership. It was also the intent of the study to determine the factors that influenced in how their self-efficacy beliefs were changed or developed. This was achieved by the execution of the research questions in the study which were specifically designed to obtain the information on training design characteristics and individual characteristics of the preparatory training that influenced the self-efficacy development of the ASLs. Therefore, from the findings, the study developed a framework of self-efficacy development initiatives specifically, for the training of ASLs in Malaysia.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- (i) To identify the differences in the pre-training and post-training level of self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management) of the ASLs in school leadership.

- (ii) To identify the individual characteristics (gender, age, educational background and work experience) of the ASLs that influenced their self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management).
- (iii) To examine the relationship between the training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, relevancy of coursework and training internship) and the self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management) of the ASLs.
- (iv) To identify the training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, relevancy of coursework and internship) of the NPQEL preparatory training that best determine the improvement of the ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs.
- (v) To identify the specific factors identified as the sources of efficacy beliefs (mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and physiological arousal) within the training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, relevancy of coursework, training internship) of the NPQEL preparatory training that contribute to the ASLs self-efficacy development.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

The research questions of this study are as follows:

- (i) Are there any differences between the pre-training and post-training level of self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management) of the ASLs in school leadership?
- (ii) What are the individual characteristics (gender, age, educational background and work experience) of the ASLs that influence their self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management)?
- (iii) Is there any relationship between training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, relevancy of coursework, training internship) and self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management) of the ASLs?

- (iv) Which of the training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, relevancy of coursework and internship) best determine the improvement of the ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs?
- (v) How did the specific factors identified as the sources of efficacy beliefs (mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion and physiological arousal) within the training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, relevancy of coursework, training internship) of the NPQEL preparatory training contribute to the ASLs self-efficacy development?

## **1.6 Hypotheses of the Study**

### **(i) Null Hypothesis 1 (H01)**

There are no statistically significant differences between the pre-training and post-training level of self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management) of the NPQEL aspiring school leaders in school leadership.

### **(ii) Null Hypothesis 2 (H02)**

There are no statistically significant influences of the individual characteristics (gender, age, educational background and work experience) of the ASLs on their self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management).

### **(iii) Null Hypothesis 3 (H03)**

There is no statistically significant relationship between the training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, relevancy of coursework, training internship) and the ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs (instructional leadership, moral leadership and management).

### **(iv) Null Hypothesis 4 (H04)**

There are no statistically significant training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, relevancy of coursework to practice and internship) that best determine the improvement of the ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs.

## 1.7 Development of Conceptual Research Framework

The conceptual model for this study was derived from the identification of research gaps in the preceding literature of training, evaluation and school leadership. The convergence of concepts from Tannenbaum's model of training effectiveness (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993, p. 18) as in Appendix D and also Bandura's (1989) *triadic reciprocal* model (Figure 1.1) from his Social Cognitive theory provided the basis for the emergence of the conceptual framework in this study.

### 1.7.1 Tannenbaum's model of training effectiveness

Tannenbaum's process model was chosen for this study as his model had taken into account various individual and organizational factors that have been overlooked in previous literature and showed clearly how these critical factors plays a domino's effect on training effectiveness (Holton, 2005; Tannenbaum, et al., 1993). The development of the conceptual framework of this study was based on some of the key variables in the Tannenbaum's model of training effectiveness (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993). A brief explanation on some of these key variables is given below and a list of these variables is shown in Appendix D.

Tannenbaum's model of training effectiveness proposed that individual variables (e.g., demographic factors, attitudes, self-efficacy, abilities, locus of control, motivation, anxiety, et. cetera), and organizational/situational characteristics (e.g., organizational, climate, trainee selection process, purpose of training, organizational policies, task characteristics) influence trainees' desires and expectations (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993).

These pre-training variables (individual and organizational) influence training needs analysis that drive the training design (content, instruction, teaching staff, method). These pre-training variables and training design influence trainees' motivation to learn which subsequently affect learning and behaviour change (Behaviour I – training performance in the training). The post-training motivational variables (similar to pre-training variables) affect the post-training motivation of the trainees to perform the learnt skills during training and to transfer learning to the job. Result / Organisational

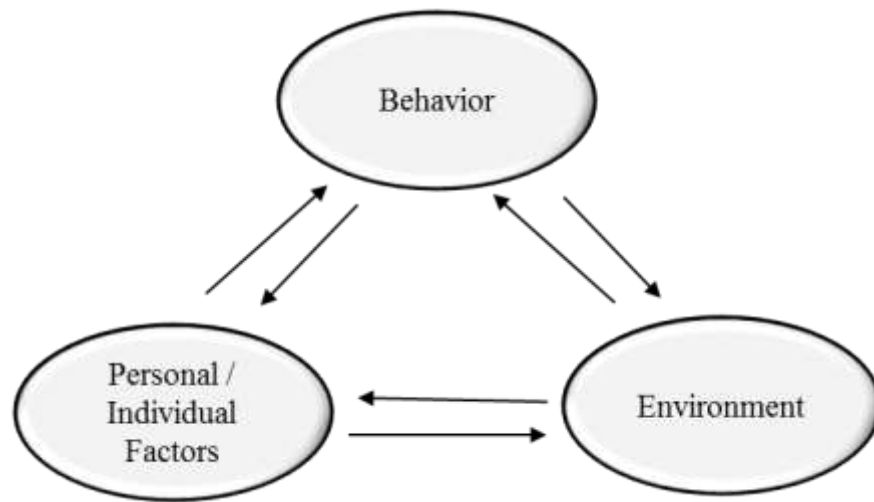
effectiveness is achieved when behaviour change (Behaviour II – performance on the job) due to training is moderated by training needs analysis.

The rationale according to Tannenbaum, et al. (1993) is “behaviour change resulting from training should contribute to organizational effectiveness to the extent the training addressed the appropriate organizational, individual and task needs” (p. 18). Tannenbaum, et al. (1993) strongly advocated that training effectiveness could not be optimized without taking into consideration of the pertinent individual and organizational factors regardless how well the training system is. There are a host of factors that affect training effectiveness and these individual and organizational are factors that have often been overlooked until recently. These factors are found to have a significant impact on training effectiveness (Noe, 1986; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). This research was undertaken to investigate specifically the individual factors influencing training effectiveness.

### **1.7.2 Bandura’s social cognitive theory**

This research also had its roots in Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and applied his ‘triadic reciprocal causation’ model (Bandura, 1986) which posited that individuals can self-regulate their thoughts, motivation and behaviour. The justification for applying Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory and self-efficacy construct to leadership training was because of the very strong validity of the theory and well-supported ‘triadic reciprocal causation’ concept by a large body of empirical research (Mc Cormick, 2001). In addition, Bandura’s framework although has been recognized by researchers in other fields, it has not been the case in the leadership studies (Mc Cormick, 2001). Herein, lays the contribution of this research. A thorough explanation on how Bandura’s ‘triadic reciprocal causation’ model was applied within the context of this study will be provided here. This will assist to further extend understanding of this idea in the discussion of the conceptual framework of this study (*Detailed discussion of the theoretical framework and the concept of self-efficacy are included in the Literature Review of Chapter Two*).

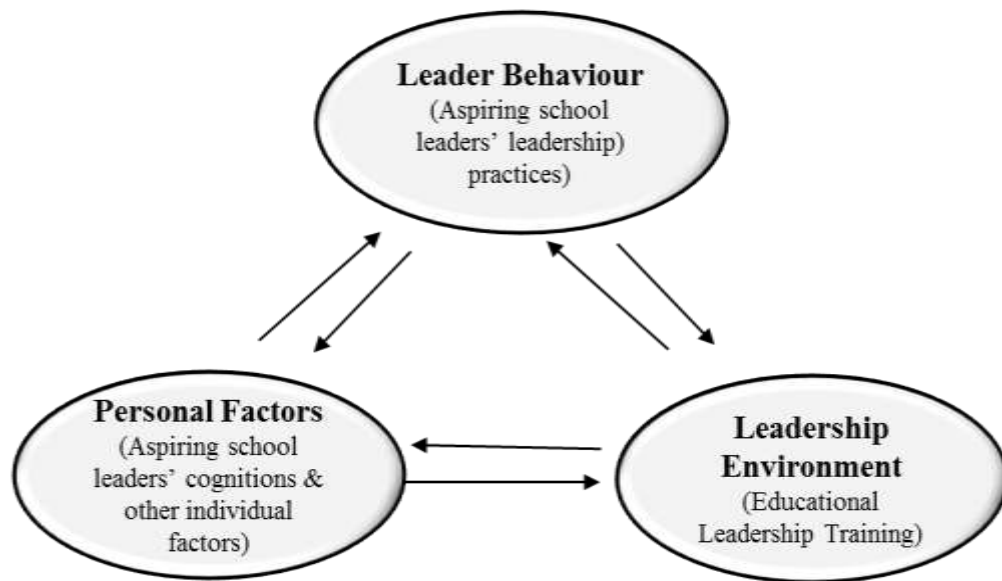
Bandura through his Social Cognitive Theory (1986) had posited that human behaviour is dynamic and it operates in a process called ‘triadic reciprocal causation’ as shown in Figure 1.1 below.



**Figure 1.1:** Bandura's (1977) 'triadic reciprocal causation' model

This theoretical perspective believes human functioning to be the result of continuous active interaction among personal/individual factors (cognitive, affective and biological events), behavioural and environmental influences (Bandura, 1986). This denotes how individuals interpret the consequences of their behaviours influence their environment and personal factors, which in turn inform and alter their subsequent behaviour (Figure 1.1). These three factors influence each other and according to Bandura, are 'inseparably entwined' to create learning in an individual (Bandura, 1986, p. 18). Therefore, individuals are viewed as both the product and producers of their own environment. However, the degree of influence among them depends on whichever factor that is the strongest on a specific moment (Bandura, 1986).

Application of this *triadic reciprocal causation* model within the context of this study is shown in Figure 1.2 where the personal, environment and behaviour factors are represented by school leaders' personal/individual factors, educational leadership training and leadership practices/behaviours respectively. The environment in the context of this study referred to the educational leadership training for ASLs' in our country.



**Figure 1.2 :** Bandura's (1977) 'triadic reciprocal causation' model as applied in this study

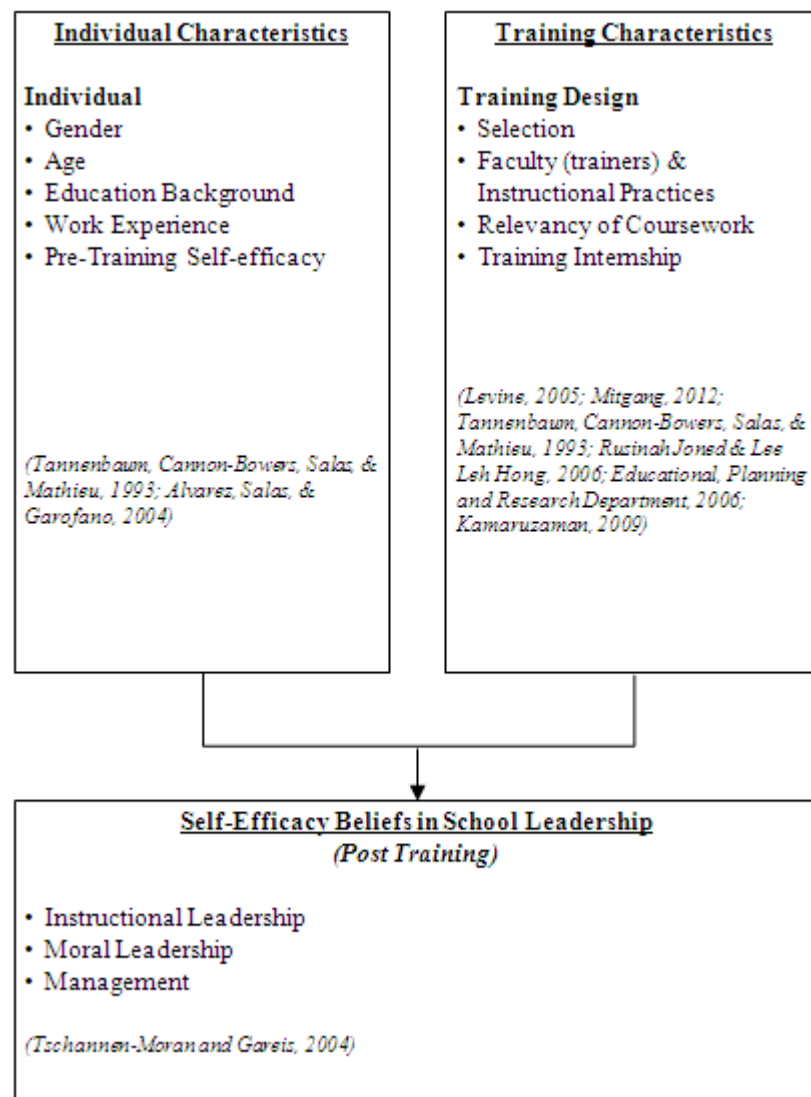
Therefore, applying the *triadic reciprocal causation* model in the context of this study, ASLs' personal factors such as internal thoughts, self-efficacy beliefs, influence their leadership behaviours and these elements in turn are shaped by the external environment, which is the educational leadership training. The central idea of this perspective is that individuals can self-regulate their thought, motivation and behaviours. Therefore, based on Bandura's concept, it is the beliefs that the ASLs have about their capabilities rather than their actual abilities that make them persist to achieve their goals (Bandura, 1997). This means that the behaviours or the courses of actions undertaken by the ASLs can be better predicted from the self-efficacy beliefs that they possess about their capabilities. This is because these self-efficacy beliefs help determine what individuals do with the knowledge and skills they have. Therefore, how well these ASLs' integrate the knowledge and skills from the training into their school leadership is also determined by how much the training is able to heighten their self-efficacy beliefs.

There are vast volumes of literature reviews on the leadership behaviour as a critical aspect in determining the success or failure of any organization (Bass, 1981; Bennis, 1992). Although school leaders' leadership behaviour is an essential factor for the effectiveness of their school (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Sammons, Hilman, & Mortimore, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1984), what determines whether or not those leadership behavior leads to school success ultimately, is believed to be highly dependent on their sense of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977, 1986; McCormick & Taguma, 2007; Paglis & Green, 2002; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Wood & Bandura, 1989).



## 1.8 Conceptual Research Framework

This study was based on the premise that effective educational leadership preparatory training for ASLs should bring significant changes in the self-efficacy of the leaders. As discussed earlier, the conceptual framework in this study was derived based on the key variables of Tannenbaum model of training effectiveness (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993), Bandura's 'triadic reciprocal' concept (Bandura, 1977; 1986), literature reviews on training effectiveness and common criticism of leadership preparatory training (Alvarez, et al., 2004; Chapman, 2005; Creighton & Jones, 2001; Darling-Hammond, et al., 2007; EPRD, 2006; Kamaruzaman, et al., 2009; Levine, 2005; McCormick, & Taguma, 2007; Mitgang, 2012; Mulford, 2003; Rusinah & Lee, 2006; Singh, 2009; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004; Wallace Foundation Report, 2008). Figure 1.3 below shows the conceptual framework for this research.



**Figure 1.3 :** Conceptual Research Framework of the study

The conceptual framework shows training effectiveness is influenced by the individual and training factors. The focus of this study is on one of the critical individual variable in training effectiveness; that is the self-efficacy beliefs. ASLs with diverse background (individual factor) brings with them various strength of pre-training efficacy beliefs to the NPQEL training. Some ASLs may have high self-efficacy beliefs prior to the training while others may come with low pre-training self-efficacy beliefs. These differences in the ASLs' pre-training self-efficacy beliefs are based on the ASLs past success and failure experiences specifically in school leadership. These pre-training self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs affect their pre-training motivation (to attend and to learn). Pre-training self-efficacy beliefs are found to be strong indicators of trainees' training success. Therefore, it is essential to assess the pre-training self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs prior to the training to ensure training success.

The structure and content of the training design (selection, faculty and instruction, coursework, internship) should bring the necessary changes in these ASLs to lead the schools successfully. The preparatory training provides knowledge and skills to the ASLs, however based on Bandura's theory, the pinnacle of the school leaders' successes lie in their sense of efficacy beliefs. Pre-training self-efficacy beliefs influence the post-training motivation to transfer which is also influenced by the post-training self-efficacy beliefs (Tannenbaum, et al., 1993). The post training self-efficacy (individual characteristic) is a critical factor for transfer as it determines training performance on the job and training effectiveness.

Applying Bandura's 'triadic reciprocal' concept, training influences self-efficacy beliefs (individual/personal factor) which in turn affects behaviour (leadership practices). However, this can only happen if the training incorporates sufficient sources of self-efficacy beliefs, which can assist in the development of self-efficacy beliefs. According to Bandura, the sense of efficacy beliefs can be developed through the four fundamental sources of self-efficacy; namely Mastery experiences, Vicarious experiences, Social persuasion and Physiological arousal or Emotional state (Bandura, 1989, 1997).

Mastery experiences are authentic experiences that are gained through past successes or failures (Bandura, 1989). Perceptions of the performance expectations gained from the mastery experiences will determine the level of efficacy beliefs of these ASLs. The second source of efficacy beliefs, which is the vicarious experience, affects the self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs by the degree to which they identify themselves with a role

model (Bandura, 1977). Social persuasion or verbal persuasions, the third source of efficacy beliefs influence the ASLs' self-efficacy through verbal feedback received. The feedback can be either positive or negative and the degree of influence of the persuasion depends on the credibility, trustworthiness, and expertise of the person who provides this persuasion (Bandura, 1986). Physiological or emotional arousal, which is the final efficacy source, refers to the actual physical reaction the ASLs' would have to an event or action. Interpretations of these signs of the physical states correctly either as energizers or as hindrances affect the self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997) of the ASLs.

As discussed earlier, these sources can be theorized to be present and embedded within the educational leadership training in Malaysia to some degree however to date; there is no hard evidence on it. What or which factor in the educational training that provides these sources of self-efficacy influences have never been investigated in the Malaysian context. In addition, how these factors are able to develop the self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs are still unknown. Knowledge of which specific variable of the training bring about high or low influence on the strength of self-efficacy beliefs are also unknown. In order to determine the effectiveness of the preparatory educational leadership training, in enhancing self-efficacy beliefs, training evaluation must be carried out.

Training evaluation on selected training design characteristics (selection, trainer and instructional practices, coursework, internship) and self-efficacy beliefs based on the perception of the trainees assisted in determining training elements that are sources of self-efficacy beliefs that effectively contributed in the self-efficacy enhancement of the ASLs. Pre and post training evaluation done on the strength of efficacy beliefs of the trainees measured the changes in their self-efficacy beliefs. The training evaluation in this study utilized self-efficacy beliefs as an evaluation measure (as justified earlier in the background of the study). Changes in the post training self-efficacy beliefs were used as a potential indicator of training effectiveness. The conceptual framework shows the variables, which influence training effectiveness that were investigated in this study. Section 1.8 below will further discuss the significance of this research to justify the need for the study.

## **1.9 Significance of the Study**

The study contributed to the existing knowledge base of ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs and training. Research specifically addressing the construct of school leaders' self-efficacy beliefs and leadership training is very limited and the construct is still largely unexplored (Mc Cormick, 2001; Sazali, 2006; Smith, Guarino, Strom & Adams, 2006; Tschannen-Moran & Gareis, 2004). Therefore, this research contributed to the deeper understanding of the factors that are related to training and self-efficacy of the ASLs. This research proposed a framework of self-efficacy development initiatives for the educational leadership training of ASLs in Malaysia.

The study made a contribution to the identification and analysis of the training design characteristics/factors that are needed to be emphasized in the educational leadership trainings to enhance the self-efficacy of the ASLs. It provided useful information of the factors in the training that are sources of efficacy beliefs that need to be upgraded or added purposefully to enhance the self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs. This study proposed that the inclusion of the self-efficacy development be made as one of the explicit objectives of the NPQEL training for school leaders to further provide better focus on it to ensure training effectiveness.

This study sets the precedence for further research in the area of self-efficacy development in school leaders training programmes in Malaysia. This is because past research on the educational leadership trainings had concentrated on the investigation of the effectiveness of the training in providing the knowledge and skills needed by the ASLs' in school leadership. They reported the strengths and identified limitations of the training for further improvement of the programme. It was also apparent from the reviews that none of the studies focused particularly on the self-efficacy development of the ASLs' in the training. School leaders' self-efficacy development was an avenue of research that had been mostly unexplored in the Malaysian literature. This study filled this gap and provided a richer perspective on it through its investigation on the development of self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs in their educational leadership preparatory training.

This research provides information to the Ministry of Education on the importance of cultivating high self-efficacious beliefs among ASLs through training. This information can assist to further review the appointment of headship and investigate issues and setbacks of the training programmes to ensure that it can be made as a mandatory

prerequisite for all aspirant school leaders for the school leadership position taking into account other equally important factors that need to be simultaneously considered.

The information and knowledge gained from this study is expected to bring about realization of the importance of high self-efficacious beliefs among the ASLs to enable them to be the leaders in the 21st century school demands. This is certainly very important as only school leaders with high self-efficacy beliefs will be able to face the challenges such as pressures from ministry, budgetary constraints and from other stake holders. The NPQEL without doubt is aimed to increase the professional skills and knowledge. However, these alone are insufficient for the school leaders to directly control 'environmental conditions'. Nevertheless, by understanding how to increase their self-efficacy to equip them to wade in any challenging conditions will be an ultimate skill that the NPQEL training can benefit from this study.

The research and its findings provide an overview to educational training programmes on the importance of self-efficacious beliefs for excellent leadership. This study brings significant implications for school leaders, for supervisors of school leaders and for assessment centres. Understanding how to foster school leaders' self-efficacy will certainly be an added value to these groups of professionals.

The research also provides useful information to be used as a yardstick and guide to the officers at the ministry, department and other governmental agencies to upgrade their self-efficacy beliefs in order to upgrade their performances. The findings of this study will be able to provide further support for school leaders' preparatory programmes in Malaysia as the study offers a new paradigm shift in the educational environment in preparing the educational leaders.

### **1.10 Scope of the Study**

The study evaluated the effectiveness of the NPQEL training conducted by IAB for ASLs. The focus of the training evaluation was specifically on the effectiveness of the training in developing the self-efficacy of the ASLs'. Determining the individual characteristics and training design characteristics and how they contribute to the self-efficacy development of the ASLs provided the context and basis for this study. Individual

characteristics specifically examined by the study were gender, age, educational background and work experience, whereas training design characteristics examined were selection, faculty (trainer) and instructional design, coursework to practice and training internship. Post-training self-efficacy was used as a measure of training effectiveness.

The samples for the research comprised of 226 NPQEL trained ASLs. Respondents for the study were limited to those NPQEL trainees' (ASLs) who underwent the training from 2011 to 2012. The study adopted a mixed methodology, specifically a 'sequential explanatory mixed method' (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, the instruments of the study consisted of two parts; that is the quantitative and qualitative components. The quantitative part employed the 'Aspiring School Leader Preparation Programme and Self-efficacy' (ASLPSE) instrument which allowed for the examination of training design elements, self-efficacy and their potential relationships. Self-efficacy is an elusive concept that occurs in the cognitive processes of the participants therefore, self-reported instrument was used. The qualitative part of the study employed the 'The Self-Efficacy Interview Protocol' which consisted of 10 semi-structured interview questions to gain understanding of respondents' experiences in relation to how the NPQEL preparatory training elements contributed to their self-efficacy. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used for data analysis. A combination of Wilcoxon Signed Ranked Test, Chi-Square test, Correlation and Logistic Regression statistical techniques were used for quantitative data analysis. Thematic analysis was used for qualitative data analysis. The results of the study highlighted the training design characteristics that were essential for the development of ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs and presented a valid framework of self-efficacy development initiative for training of ASLs.

### **1.11 Limitation of the Study**

The major limitation for this study was time constraints due to the change of mode of the previous training (NPQH). The change in the mode of the training to the present NPQEL, inevitably pose limitations in terms of time and samples size for this research. The current research had to be redesigned to study the development of self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs' who underwent the current NPQEL training. Originally, the researcher had intended to use the previous NPQH training participants. These factors were very time

consuming but the researcher was not able to continue with the original plan as the mode of the training had been changed. This time constraint posed limitation to the research.

Secondly, the results of the study may also be limited from the effects of common-source bias. This is because the primary data for both dependent and independent variables were from self-reported instruments from the samples.

Thirdly, the study was also limited in the sense that factors other than the NPQEL training that could have caused the changes observed to take place which influence the ASLs' perceptions of the training could not be eliminated. This is because the ASLs' who participated in the NPQEL training could have attended other courses/training that would have given them many different experiences and challenges which could have influenced their pre-training self-efficacy beliefs.

Finally, the statistical treatment of the data collected also posed limitations to the study. As both the predictor variables and outcome variables were ordinal in nature, therefore the statistical treatment of the data was limited to only non- parametric techniques. In addition, the sample size was limited to 226 participants only.

## **1.12 Definition of the Terms**

The following are the definitions of key terms as used in this study. This section will also define the related variables of the key concepts for an in-depth and accurate understanding.

### **1.12.1 Training Evaluation**

**Training evaluation** is 'micro' in nature and is focused on measurement. It evaluates learning and is the basis of determining the training effectiveness of an intervention (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). The term training evaluation in this research referred to the evaluation of the NPQEL training intervention on the self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs. **Training effectiveness** in contrast, is concerned with why training works and is 'macro'

in nature. Its effectiveness does not solely depend on the methods used but on how training is positioned, supported and reinforced by organizations; the motivation and focus of the trainees; and what mechanism is in place to ensure the transfer of the newly acquired knowledge, skill and attitude to the job (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001). In this study, training effectiveness was referred to the effectiveness of the NPQEL training specifically in developing the self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs in school leadership.

### 1.12.2 Leadership Preparatory Training

Koontz, O'Donnell and Wehrich (1984) defined **leadership** as, “the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of group goals” (p. 661). **Training**, on the other hand, is “a planned effort to facilitate employees’ learning on job-related competencies which include knowledge, skills or behaviours that are critical for successful job performance” (Noe, 2005, pg. 3). The goal of training is application of knowledge, skills and behaviours learned in training rather than just mastery of these skills (Noe, 2005). ‘**Educational leadership preparatory training**’ means the training programme, which focuses on the professional development of the school leaders prior to taking up the leadership position in their schools (Cardno, 2003). In this study, the term ‘**educational leadership preparatory training**’ referred to the **NPQEL** training, which is the sole preparatory training for ASLs in Malaysia. It is a five months training programme conducted by IAB which covered six domains of generic competencies: Policy and Direction, Instructional and Achievement, Change and Innovation, People and Relationship, Resources and Operation and Personal Effectiveness (IAB, 2011). The preparatory training also included coursework and internship designed to prepare ASLs for the position of school principals/headmasters.

### 1.12.3 Self-Efficacy

**Self-efficacy** is people's beliefs of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1997). **Leadership self-efficacy** refers to an individual's belief in his or her ability to succeed in the capacity of being a leader ([McCormick et al., 2002](#)). In this study, ‘**leadership self-efficacy**’ specifically was



referred to the NPQEL trained ASLs' beliefs of their capabilities in performing various aspects of school leadership specifically in instructional leadership, moral leadership and management. For the purpose of discussion in this study, the terms 'self-efficacy', 'self-efficacy beliefs', 'sense of efficacy', 'efficacy beliefs' and 'leadership self-efficacy' were used interchangeably.

**'Self-efficacy development'** in this study referred to how the NPQEL training might contribute towards the formation of self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs through each of the four sources of efficacy beliefs (mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and arousal states) identified by Bandura (1986). **Mastery experience** is the primary and most influential source of self-efficacy, which provides the most authentic experiences to leaders (Bandura, 1997). 'Mastery experience' in this study was referred to the ASLs' experiences during their participation in the NPQEL training. **'Vicarious experience'** is the second source of self-efficacy where the leader's self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by the attainments of others who are perceived to have similar capabilities. This modelling of others affects the leader's self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). In this study, 'vicarious experience' was referred to how the NPQEL ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs were influenced by their models in the training. **'Social persuasion'** is the third source of self-efficacy that is built from positive feedback and encouragement from people who are significant (Bandura, 1997) to the leader. In this study, social persuasion referred to positive persuasive reinforcements received in the training by the NPQEL ASLs' of their capabilities from people whom they perceived to have the credibility or who are perceived to have their best interest in mind. **'Physiological arousal'/'Emotional state'** represent the fourth source of self-efficacy. 'Physiological arousal' in this study was referred to school leaders' reliance on the somatic information conveyed by physiological or emotional states in judging their capabilities. These arousal states are read as signs of vulnerability to dysfunction (Bandura, 1997). High physiological arousal can hamper school leaders' performances and vice versa (Bandura, 1997). Here it refers to how the NPQEL ASLs' self-efficacy beliefs were affected by their physiological arousal states in the training.

#### 1.12.4 Aspiring School Leaders (ASLs)

This study used Bennis' (1989) definition to describe **leaders** as people who are very clear of their desired goals and have the skills to communicate to others in a way that gains their support to achieve those goals. The term '**aspiring school leaders**' in this study, referred to participants of the NPQEL training who are aspiring school leaders who held leadership positions in schools such as Senior Assistants, Afternoon Senior Assistants and others.

### 1.13 Conclusion

In the quest of fulfilling our country's mission and aspiration to become a regional hub for educational excellence in South East Asia, leadership effectiveness in schools plays a vital role. The intensity and complexity of the leadership role in today's rapidly changing and more technologically orientated society certainly warrants for effective leadership training especially in preparatory programmes to equip ASLs with the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise to face the world of change. In this endeavour, training to enhance the self-efficacy beliefs of the future school leaders is crucial. Understanding the elements in the preparatory training that contributes to the enhancement of the self-efficacy beliefs of the ASLs would certainly add knowledge in this area.

This thesis is organized and presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides the overview of the study by detailing the background of the research, the aims and the rationale behind the study. Chapter Two reviews the literature related to the theories, models, and concepts in the study. A range of literature on training, self-efficacy, and leadership, importance of self-efficacy in school leadership, training evaluation and effectiveness were synthesized to provide understanding of the study. Chapter Three provides a description and justification of the research design, methodology, detailed procedures of the study and data analysis used in the study. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the findings of the study in the context of the literature and presents the implication of the study, recommendation and areas for future research.

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