

SHORT REPORT

Readiness to teach and perform CPR: A survey amongst secondary school teachers in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Teachers should be trained in resuscitation techniques as they often teach or perform CPR on children during an emergency in the school setting. Still, it was rarely mentioned in the literature, especially in the Malaysian school setting. This study aims to investigate secondary school teachers' readiness (knowledge, attitude, and willingness) to teach and perform CPR. Through stratified random sampling, 308 secondary school teachers from eleven schools across Petaling Perdana district, Selangor, responded to an online survey. The results showed a low passing rate in CPR knowledge (1.9%), while 84.1% refused to participate in any CPR courses. However, a higher proportion of teachers were willing to teach CPR courses (62.3%). A total of 72.1% of respondents stated that there is no automated external defibrillator (AED) within their school compound. More than half (53.0%) were unwilling to use the AED machine during an emergency. Nevertheless, more than half (65.0%) were willing to start CPR if they witnessed a cardiac arrest incident. A one-way MANOVA analysis showed that there was a significant effect of the courses taught among the secondary school teachers on the knowledge, $F(4, 303) = 4.374$; $p < .05$, attitude, $F(4, 303) = 5.2$; $p < .05$, and willingness, $F(4, 303) = 5.236$; $p < .05$. The teachers who taught language subjects reported significantly higher knowledge ($M = 16.50$) than others, while those teaching applied sciences and technology reported significantly higher attitudes ($M = 9.28$) and willingness ($M = 31.56$) than those teaching humanities and arts, respectively. Secondary school teachers are aware of the importance of CPR, and there is a need to explore how to integrate CPR into the current educational curriculum.

Key words: attitude, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, knowledge, readiness, willingness

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INTRODUCTION

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD) claim around 17.5 million lives annually¹. Unexpected out-of-hospital cardiac arrest (OHCA) is a major public health issue that causes many deaths. Adult OHCA is expected to affect 55/100,000 people in the US, and 300,000 in Europe, with a 10% survival rate². Bystander CPR improves outcomes after OHCA³. CPR should be taught and practised globally as the second link in the survival chain. When correctly performed before the medical intervention, it significantly improves victims' survival rates⁴⁻⁵. Bystander CPR increases the survival rate by 2 to 4-fold. A skilled individual's quick response could save a victim's life⁶⁻⁷.

Training laypeople to perform CPR improves the survival rate. A public health plan aimed at laying the groundwork for CPR training will require society's readiness. Increasing the bystander CPR knowledge and skill is one way to implement elementary CPR training. CPR training is becoming increasingly common in schools worldwide⁸. Given the amount of time students spend in school, basic CPR training is essential⁹. Educating school children is critical to improving bystander CPR. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a two-hour CPR course for children 12 years and older. It is an effective method for improving CPR¹⁰. Basic life support (BLS) is recommended by the American Academy of Paediatrics and the American Heart Association¹¹⁻¹². The American Academy of Paediatrics and the American Heart Association have issued guidelines emphasising emergency response procedures for school teachers⁹. Thus, teacher education benefits students.

Our society depends on school teachers to educate the next generation. Knowledgeable teachers will educate their students, who will educate the community¹³. This will eventually benefit the person who has learned CPR¹¹⁻¹². A

study found that teachers must perform CPR on children in an emergency. Teachers should be trained in resuscitation techniques. They often detect cardiac arrests first¹⁴. Malaysia has around 10,000 schools with 5 million students and 420,000 teachers from pre-school to high school¹⁵. However, the Malaysian school curricula lack such concepts and materials¹⁶.

The trainer is mentioned during school-based CPR training. Physicians or teachers usually teach CPR. Studies on teachers' BLS/CPR knowledge and attitudes have been conducted globally¹⁷⁻¹⁸. Teaching CPR has many benefits. It is a long-term commitment for teachers to educate students. Teachers can teach CPR just as successfully as doctors¹⁹. Over 90% of school teachers who led the program expressed confidence in their students. Nevertheless, only half of 4000 Belgian teachers surveyed felt confident or excited about teaching CPR in school²⁰. Nonetheless, the efficacy of teacher or healthcare professional education is unknown. Various surveys showed that roughly half of the teachers refused to teach CPR due to a lack of knowledge and skills²¹. Spain and Greece wanted doctors to teach CPR²²⁻²³. A similar survey of 553 Hong Kong educators found a lack of support and readiness to teach CPR²⁴.

Teachers should be thoroughly trained in CPR, but this is rarely mentioned in Malaysian literature. It is also unknown the number of secondary schools in Malaysia that provide CPR training and assessment. This study's goal is to assess teachers' readiness to teach CPR in schools. Teacher readiness is defined as knowledge, attitude, and willingness to teach CPR in schools. Understanding teachers' readiness could help determine the practicality of incorporating CPR education into Malaysian secondary schools' curricula.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Research Design

From May to July 2021, a cross-sectional survey of 1,194 secondary school teachers from 49 Malaysian public secondary schools was conducted in Selangor, Malaysia²⁵.

Sampling Procedure

A sample size of 306 was estimated with a 5% attrition rate from 11 separate schools, each representing Petaling Perdana district in Selangor, Malaysia²⁵. The criterion for inclusion was Malaysian secondary school teachers from the Petaling Perdana district. The study excluded primary school instructors, private institutions, and secondary school teachers outside of Petaling Perdana. The Faculty Ethics Committee evaluated and approved this study. The questionnaire's structure was discussed in detail, and participants were asked to select a box in an online form showing their informed consent to participate in the study.

Data Collection Procedure

We used a Google form to conduct the survey online. The Registrar helped distribute the questionnaires to all secondary school teachers via email. The researcher reminded all school teachers twice to complete the survey.

Research Instruments

The survey has 30 questions in four areas, including socio-demographics. An 11-item multiple-choice questionnaire assessed CPR knowledge (MCQ). Selected experts previously verified the questions in terms of face, construct, criteria, and content validity and were evaluated for reliability with a value of $KR_{20} = .98$.²⁶⁻²⁸. The study used the AHA's official MCQ passing grade of 84 % (9 out of 11)²⁹. Correct answers were worth one mark, while incorrect answers carry no

marks. The attitudes and willingness to teach and perform CPR were measured using a 4-point Likert scale with 6 and 7 items, respectively³⁰. The survey's validity and reliability were previously evaluated. A pilot test revealed Cronbach's alpha values of 0.64 (attitude) and 0.86 (willingness), which indicated satisfactory reliability³¹.

Data Analysis

All data from the Google form were extracted and analysed using IBM SPSS Version 27. Data on demographics and responses for knowledge, attitude, and willingness were compiled and analysed using descriptive statistics. A one-way MANOVA test was used to compare the teachers' knowledge, attitude, and willingness to teach CPR. The statistical significance level was set at $p < .05$ in a two-tailed test.

RESULTS

A total of 308 out of 321 online questionnaires were returned and analysed, with a response rate of 96%. Most respondents were females ($n = 187$; 60.7%). There were nine age categories, with most respondents aged 36–40 (19.2%). The study included 11 schools. Most respondents had a bachelor's degree ($n = 157$; 51%). In terms of teaching experience, ($n = 95$; 30.8%) teachers had 4–6 years of experience, followed by ($n = 78$; 25.3%) experience with 10 years or more. Finally, most respondents taught applied Sciences & technology ($n = 105$; 34.1%).

The second section of the survey looked at all teachers' CPR knowledge. The highest score reported was 10. The number of teachers who passed the test was 6 (1.9%), even though (40.7 %) of teachers have attended CPR courses organised in schools for the past few years.

The third section of the survey focused on teachers' attitudes toward CPR.

Surprisingly, 84.1% refused to attend more CPR classes. Moreover, only half of the schools (50.3%) offered CPR courses in recent years. However, if CPR courses are included in the national curriculum, most teachers agree that teachers, school board members, and professionals are responsible for teaching CPR to students. Teachers were willing to teach CPR courses (62.3%) if instructed, and most agreed (87.1%) that school management would provide the time and resources to assist the students in using digital self-learning platforms to learn CPR.

The final section of the survey asked about teachers' willingness to perform CPR. Surprisingly, 72.1% said their school had no AED. Only half (53%) would use an AED in an emergency. They lack proper CPR and AED training. However, if using an AED was as simple as turning it on and following the instructions, the majority (84.4%) would use it to save a life in an emergency. Also, 66.2 % can distinguish between CPR and AED use. Despite not having seen or witnessed a cardiac arrest before (72.7%), more than half (65%) of teachers are willing to start

CPR if they detected one (57.5%). More people would be ready to perform chest compression (76%) or both (73.4%).

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to compare teachers' knowledge, attitude, and willingness to perform CPR. Univariate normality was assumed via Shapiro-Wilk tests and boxplots. No multivariate outliers were discovered in the data, confirming multivariate normality. No excessive correlations between the dependent variables indicated that multicollinearity was not an issue. Also, the dependent variables' relationship was linear. Finally, at $\alpha = 0.001$, Box's M was not significant, showing that variance-covariance matrices were homogeneous. The teachers' courses had a significant effect on the combined dependent variables, $F(4, 303) = 3.56, p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.106$. Individual dependent factors demonstrated an effect on the teachers' course groupings. The knowledge, attitude, and willingness were all statistically significant at a Bonferroni corrected alpha level of .017 (Table 1).

Table 1 Multivariate test of knowledge, attitude, and willingness towards CPR from different teaching courses

Source	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Pillai's Trace	0.135	3.56	12	909.00	<0.001	0.045
Wilks' Lambda	0.868	3.63	12	796.63	<0.001	0.046
Hotelling's Trace	0.148	3.69	12	899.00	<0.001	0.047
Roy's Largest Root	0.119	9.00	4	303.00	<0.001	0.106

Source	Dependent Variable	df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Partial Eta Squared
Teaching Course	Knowledge Score	4	11.83	4.73	<0.001	0.059
	Attitude Score	4	16.79	5.20	<0.001	0.064
	Willingness Score	4	194.13	5.23	<0.001	0.065

A pairwise comparison of the mean using LSD revealed a significant difference in knowledge scores between the applied sciences & technology course with four other courses taught by the secondary school teachers. More specifically, the score of knowledge on applied sciences & technology ($M = 16.06$, $SD = 1.62$) was significantly lower compared to languages ($M = 16.50$, $SD = 1.53$), pure sciences ($M = 16.23$, $SD = 1.83$), humanities ($M = 16.26$, $SD = 1.29$) and arts ($M = 16.35$, $SD = 1.64$) respectively. On the other hand, the attitude score on humanities ($M = 8.13$, $SD = 1.84$) was significantly lower than applied sciences & technology ($M = 9.28$, $SD = 1.69$). Lastly, the score of willingness on Arts ($M = 27.11$, $SD = 6.07$) was significantly lower compared to the mean score of applied sciences & technology ($M = 31.56$, $SD = 5.51$) (Table 2).

Table 2 Comparison of knowledge, attitude, and willingness score from different teaching courses

Dependent Variable	Teaching Course	N	Mean	S. D
Knowledge	Languages*	78	16.50	1.52
	Pure Sciences*	28	16.23	1.83
	Humanities*	55	16.26	1.28
	Arts*	42	16.34	1.64
	Applied Sciences & Technology*	105	15.56	1.66
<i>* LSD posthoc indicates significant difference at $p < .005$ between Applied Sciences & Technology and Language, Pure Science, Humanities & Arts</i>				
Attitude	Languages	78	8.31	1.90
	Pure Sciences	28	8.83	1.75
	Humanities*	55	8.13	1.84
	Arts	42	8.46	1.80
	Applied Sciences & Technology*	105	9.27	1.69
<i>* LSD posthoc indicates significant difference at $p < .005$ between Applied Sciences & Technology and Humanities</i>				
Willingness	Languages	78	28.84	6.46
	Pure Sciences	28	29.49	6.95
	Humanities	55	28.49	6.14
	Arts*	42	27.10	6.07
	Applied Sciences & Technology*	105	31.56	5.51

** LSD posthoc indicates significant difference at $p < .005$ between applied sciences & technology and arts*

DISCUSSION

The differences between various courses offered in schools throughout the Petaling Perdana district were investigated. In summary, this study demonstrates low CPR knowledge scores, although less than half of teachers have recently completed regular CPR training. According to the study, only 2% of all teachers were trained in CPR. The majority of teachers received a score of three to six, falling short of the standard AHA minimum²⁹. Despite having received CPR training several years ago, all teachers failed the knowledge assessment. The findings corroborated numerous studies demonstrating insufficient CPR knowledge among teachers³²⁻³³. Furthermore, as shown in this study, not having been exposed to cardiac arrest-related emergencies or a person in need of emergency CPR may result in limited knowledge and knowledge loss^{32, 34}.

At times, knowledge retention is critical. The current school curriculum incorporates CPR concepts into subjects, such as science and physical education. While some teachers had received CPR training for one to three years or longer, their knowledge retention was low. Numerous professions have demonstrated a deficiency in declarative information retention. For instance, studies indicated that healthcare practitioners' knowledge and skills deteriorate three months after training. Despite a genuine medical emergency, the loss of information was obvious³⁵⁻³⁶. Teachers demonstrated significantly less expertise than the public, despite recent CPR certification or years of classroom instructions. In Malaysia and Pakistan, a student-teachers survey revealed low knowledge retention two months after CPR instruction³⁷⁻³⁸. This entails determining the appropriate duration of CPR training, the frequency of refresher courses, and the types of training programs, resources, and implementation for teachers.

The study's second section examined teachers' attitudes toward CPR. While most teachers disagree with the frequency of CPR training, the authors believe this is a widespread misconception. Since this survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, all Malaysian schools were teaching remotely. Teachers must overcome several stressors to transition to a new norm, including an abnormally high workload, regular online meetings with students, parents, and administrators, and possibly tense encounters³⁹. As a result, many teachers may have felt drained and burned out during the COVID-19 pandemic⁴⁰. Nonetheless, most teachers expressed willingness to offer CPR classes to all students if they were included in the national curriculum.

Additionally, teachers agreed that teachers and administrators should teach CPR courses to students in collaboration with other experts, consistent with the process by which standards were established. Most of the CPR training was conducted by various professions, such as firefighters and healthcare workers⁴¹. Additionally, because teachers spend most of their time in the classroom, it is expected that they will be primarily responsible for administering effective CPR to students during an emergency while also imparting knowledge and skills to students⁴².

Information and communication technologies (ICT) have been incorporated into the educational pedagogy's new teaching and learning concept known as cybergogy. Because most students learn via electronic devices and gadgets, the school administrators agreed to deliver the CPR courses via a digital self-learning platform. The American Heart Association (AHA) and Laerdal Medical have developed a new method for teaching students CPR education through a digital resuscitation portfolio. This approach ensures the continuity of high-quality CPR education by providing students with safe, distanced,

and self-directed CPR programs, particularly during a pandemic⁴³.

Despite the widespread ignorance regarding the use of AEDs, defibrillation is a critical component of the survival chain. As a result, it is necessary to educate teachers about the use of AED³⁰. In Malaysia, AEDs have been installed in various locations, including malls, airports, and even specific sports complexes and schools. Several studies confirmed that school principals were aware of the value of AEDs on school grounds and were willing to install one²⁰. Budget constraints and a lack of support from the authorities contributed to the AED program's limited implementation and availability in school compounds across Malaysian schools¹⁴.

The willingness to perform CPR is the first step toward enhancing the chain of survival. Nearly half of the teachers in this study were unwilling to perform CPR during medical emergencies. Fear is developed because many of them lack knowledge and experience dealing with cardiac arrest incidents. Additionally, a lack of knowledge about proper CPR techniques results in ineffective chest compression and mouth-to-mouth ventilation⁴⁴. Together, these flawed theories and skills eroded their confidence and instilled fear, contributing to medical negligence. In comparison, when professionals guided teachers via phone during an emergency, their level of willingness increased. The authors believe that these fears and doubts among teachers can be overcome by acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills, exposure, and ongoing training under the supervision of professionals, which will increase their willingness to perform CPR in medical emergencies⁴⁵.

Lastly, this study yielded differences in knowledge, attitude, and willingness among different courses taught by the teachers. Despite the differences in the knowledge scores among the different courses, this does not reflect the acquisition

level. The majority of teachers failed to pass the knowledge test together with a low retention level. However, the applied sciences & technology and pure sciences teachers acquired the highest scores for attitude and willingness to perform CPR. The teachers within these categories taught different science courses, such as biology, physics, chemistry, applied sciences & technology and physical & health education. A science background and pre-exposure to certain subjects related to health sciences during their undergraduate studies would have prepared these teachers in their readiness to teach CPR³⁸.

IMPLICATIONS

Behavioural change is one of the effective methods for increasing the trained layperson's CPR knowledge and skills if supported by suitable structural measures, including education and awareness-raising. It is expected that early CPR education incorporated in the school curricula will affect the knowledge, attitude, and willingness towards teaching and performing CPR among teachers and students. In imparting the CPR knowledge among students, teachers need to be fully equipped with the knowledge and trained accordingly in perfecting their skills by trained facilitators, especially from among healthcare professionals. The coalition between the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health is crucial in supporting the initiative to develop and implement CPR teaching and learning as part of the national curricula. In the long run, the pivotal role of healthcare professionals in teaching and performing CPR can be shared with teachers, who are now the instructors, coordinators, and policy advocates in the school setting. With the increasing number of trained teachers, a domino effect can be created by increasing the number of trained students. Subsequently, the number of

witnesses to cardiac arrests in public who can provide CPR is raised, increasing the likelihood of the victim receiving bystander CPR, reducing risk, and improving survival rates.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, it is recommended that secondary school teachers receive periodic CPR training. The Ministry of Education should be more involved in CPR training. As a result, secondary school teachers would be more prepared to perform CPR.

LIMITATIONS

This study has some limitations. First, the study's sample size was small. The sample may also be unrepresentative, resulting in skewed findings. Second, this study only looks at one district in one state, limiting the results' generalizability. Future research should include more school teachers from different states and districts across Malaysia.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to assess secondary school teachers' readiness to teach and perform CPR. The authors discovered a low passing rate for CPR knowledge (1.9%). Most teachers (84.1%) refused to take any CPR courses. However, 62.3% wanted to teach CPR. More than half (53%) refused to use an AED, and 72% said their school did not have one. However, more than half (65%) would perform CPR if they saw someone in cardiac arrest. The Applied Sciences & Technology teachers knew the least about CPR. This study also found that Arts teachers were less willing to perform CPR. Targeted training should be designed to combat low knowledge and willingness to perform CPR, especially given the increased workload during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Education could use the findings to tailor

training modules for teachers with arts, humanities, and sciences backgrounds.

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