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## A Review of Resilience Leadership in Challenging Circumstances: A Case Study of Malaysia Primary School Head Teachers

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### Abstract

Educational leaders were faced with the combined difficulty of handling noticeable improvements outside their organisations and all across the ministry of learning plan and execution in addition to reacting to unprecedented requires the social. Education in Malaysia saw an unusual rate and degree of change over some few fortnight in March 2020, trying to equate earlier worldwide trends. The outbreak made it the more crucial to act quickly in the field of education. The syllabus has already been altered, facial expression instruction is in jeopardy, and the public primary school test has already been delayed. Effective school administration is the responsibility of school administrators, especially in basic schools. There were many decisions that needed to be made, conveyed, carried out, and evaluated, all of which called for resilience. Throughout this study, we provide a number of important resilience elements and lessons discovered from the head teachers' perspectives as educational leaders in Malaysian primary schools, both in the now and in the years to come. We depend on the knowledge of six principals of Malaysian public primary schools. Resilient leaders must meet stringent standards in primary schools. The standards are broken down into leadership categories where school leaders' social skills and compassion more towards the school community, parents, and stakeholders should be handled. People as educational leaders gained a fresh appreciation of the resiliency and ingenuity of teachers and elementary school students as a consequence of the ramifications of these responses. In order to prepare for an exceptional event that may emerge in the modern day, we provide illustrations of these classes and topics, as well as suggestions for how to operate the school mostly in "new baseline" of dealing with COVID-19 and help overcome.

**Keywords:** School Leaders, Resilience Leaders, Emotional Intelligent, Leadership.

## Introduction

### Introduction to Emotional Resilience

Controlling school is difficult, particularly during the COVID-19's unpredictable and difficult circumstances. Leaders of schools demand mental, moral, and physiological stamina (Allen 2009; Harris, 2017; West-Burnham, 2009). The necessity for school administrators to possess "high levels of emotional resilience" is mentioned by Flintham (2003a, 22). Resilience is defined as enduring adversity, holding onto hope despite the difficulties, becoming positive, brave, inventive within oneself, demonstrating the ability to bounce back swiftly from failures, and possessing higher imperative. Resilience is defined as "carrying your power wisely to arise from tragedy better than before" by Patterson and Kelleher (2005) as becoming "a useful catchphrase for things that recover fully" (2005,1). (2005, 3). Resilience is "the potential of an organisation to endure and recover quickly from shocks that challenge its capabilities for continued successful transaction," according to Barret (2010, 399), who also stresses the need of investing in resilience. Writer Daniel Goleman links resilient managers to the capacity for empathy. These entail controlling interactions, being conscious of others, controlling oneself, and being mindful of others. Goleman expands on our understanding of fundamental cognitive processes in his latest book, *Social Intelligence*, and broadens the backdrop to encompass society, which is essential for school managers to use in running the school. These EQ skills enable us to alter our behaviour in ways that increase our resilience and adaptability, close "understand" deficits, and identify areas of improvement, difficult circumstances, and usefulness across term. There is no fast cut to effectiveness as a school manager, according to a variety of recent empirical investigations. There are many different management philosophies that need to be learned, with government's legislation placing a heavy emphasis on classroom management, or governance for gaining knowledge (Hallinger, 2010), along with a big emphasis offered by "leadership style" theory (e.g., Leithwood et al., 2006) only upon performance of the educational atmosphere, pretty much the entire vision, set strategic, overhauling organisations, and enhancing and preserving the aptitudes of educators to impart knowledge to the standards. Every one of these abilities seem to assist the executive capacity for resilience in schools. The research concentrated on the abilities in hopes of gaining a greater comprehension of the components that support or detract from a school leader's ability for mental fortitude.

## Problem Statement

Throughout the interest of developing a fresh National Education Blueprint that will prepare Malaysia's children to meet the demands of contemporary society globally and increasing community and child rearing preconceptions of educational policies, the Malaysian Ministry of Education opened a critical study of the country's educational system in October 2011. The system has to be transformed across eleven periods.

As when the level of school executives is the second-largest classroom determinant in affecting academic results, after teaching effectiveness, the fifth shift is to provide high-performing school management throughout each school. An exceptional principle is someone who focuses on teaching and not managerial leadership, which may enhance student results by as much as 20%, according to international studies on educational leadership (Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2015, Executive Summary).

Because of this, if school leadership have no ability to handle trying circumstances and lack resilient capabilities, the whole strategy will not succeed. The performance of the institution demonstrates the calibre of the administrators. Moreover, the Malaysian government is currently putting into action its elaborate project to overhaul the Malay education apparatus with the goal to turn the nation into a regional centre of education and is highlighting the critical role of school leaders in raising the standard of instruction within the classrooms (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2012)

Most importantly, school managers are in charge of setting the standards, goals, and norms for everyone who works there. Individuals must always and in all situations serve as role models for intellectual positivism, faith, confidence, and sense of morality; this calls for resilience since the road ahead is lengthy. The majority of school leadership benefits on teachers' well though kids' academic progress are tangential, according to prior studies. Effective leaders collaborate with and use others. To achieve this effectively, they must be familiar with their staff members so they can develop their resilience in approaches that are suitable for each person and the requirements of the children. Hence, more study on school administrators' emotional fortitude is essential to foster the kind of leadership necessary to meet present and future problems and possibilities. Supporting educators and kids in the classroom benefits not just businesses but also homes, neighborhoods, and the community as a whole.

### **Literature Review**

Investigation on resilience that has been conducted for almost 50 years has produced a variety of viewpoints and voices (Dugan & Coles, 1989; Glantz & Johnson, 1999; Joseph, 1994; Taylor & Wang, 2000; Thomsen, 2002; Unger, 2005). In spite of the large volume of research on resilience, there's currently no consensus among academics over a single phrase that describes the idea. In reality, academics use the word "res" (2004) Carle & Chassin. In their definition of resiliency from 1990, Richardson and his workmates stated that it is "the procedure of learning to cope with troublesome, difficult, or prepared to overcome situations in a manner that leaves the person with additional defense system and coping mechanisms than before the to the interruptions that consequences from the event" (p.34).

Similarly, Higgins (1994) described resiliency as the "process of self-righting or growth" (p. 1), while Wolins (1993) defined resiliency as the "capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair yourself (p. 5). Resiliency, or resilience, is commonly explained and studied in context of a two-dimensional here is considerable agreement among school managers concerning what impacts positively on their sense of well-being. A healthy work-life balance is frequently cited, along with pursuing other professional opportunities; time for reflection; and networking with other head teachers (Flintham, 2003a, 2003b, Pass, 2009, Patterson, 2006, Steward, 2011). These are all factors which can be regarded as 'activities' which require setting aside time for a particular purpose.

Well-being is also influenced by attitude of mind, however. Having sense of the significance of the role, appreciating the opportunity to make a difference to the lives of others and noticing and celebrating success (Pass, 2009, Bristow, 2010) are possible when individuals value their own work. When they also value themselves, they are in stronger position to say 'no' and manage their own workload so that they are not at the beck and call of all stakeholders. The ability to set boundaries around their work helps them to put problems in

perspective, rather than taking them personally (Hartle et al., 2010). Boyatzis et al (2006) argue that the power stress associated with school managers adversely affects the school managers' ability to sustain him or herself overtime, and shows the benefits of coaching others as a means of maintaining compassion for self, which makes the role more sustainable.

*How School Managers Clarify the Purpose of Organization and Resilience Organization*

Clearly communicating the purpose and objectives of the team and providing role clarity is the foundation upon which resilience is built. Reinforce the links between people's work and the objectives of organization. Teams that understand how their efforts contribute to organizational objectives can see meaning and value to their work. Without a clear purpose, it is difficult for the team to work as a cohesive unit and be autonomous and create resilience organization. Building resilience within organizations is of vital importance to understand and respond to crisis situations (Lengnick-Hall and Beck, 2005). The concept of "resilient organisation" has gained popularity as a concept that will help organizations survive and thrive in difficult or volatile economic times (Riulli and Savicki, 2003). Tillement et al. (2009, p. 231) define organizational resilience as the ability to manage disturbances of the normal workflow and to regain a dynamically stable state that allows the organization's goals of production and safety to be achieved. Whereas Vogus and Sutcliffe (2007, p. 3418) defined it as the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions such that the organization emerges from those conditions strengthened and more resourceful.

#### *How Trust Creating a Resilient School Teamwork*

Trust is a complicated aspect of the relationships between persons, but trust on the team level is even more subjective and complex. Trust increases communication, commitment, and loyalty between team. Trust plays a crucial role when global busine teams, startups, and networks are being created (Harisalo and Miettinen, 2010). In modern organizations, trust has become increasingly important because the organizations cannot rely on formal policies and rigid rules (Erdem et al., 2003).

This is perhaps the most important ingredients to creating a resilient team. When trust is present, school team will feel comfortable: admitting their weaknesses and mistakes; asking for help or advice; taking risks; giving each other the benefit of doubt before jumping into negative conclusions; focusing on objectives parents and stake holders instead of politics and gossip; offering and receiving constructive criticism; sharing ideas; and working collaboratively. Building trust takes time.

Staff who feel that manager value, respect, and trust in their abilities are more likely to feel the same way to their manager. Trust is an individual, relational and organizational concept, and its presence and repeated enactment are as vital to successful school improvement as any expression of values, attributes and decisions that managers may make. Research has suggested that 'trust in leaders both determines organizational performance and is a product organizational performance' (Seashore-Louis, 2007:4).

#### *How Resilience Related in Managing School Workloads*

Managing workload isn't easy for school managers as they're often caught between achieving organizational objectives and supporting their teams. School managers have to involve the team in identifying causes of excessive workload, inefficiencies and developing solutions within team's control. The school managers also must assist the team to manage the workload effectively and efficiently by providing flexibility in when, where, and how they work

which could reduce stress. Encourage the team creative and critical thinking about how to achieve the expected outcome. Recently, research has focused on teacher resilience in order to understand teacher's job satisfaction and motivation (Kitching et al., 2009) and teacher burnout and stress (e.g Howard and Johnson, 2004).

#### *Is Autonomy Important in Self Resilience Within School Team*

A 2006 Cornell University study looked at how autonomy or lack thereof affected 320 small businesses. Half demonstrated old fashioned command and control management practices, while the other half gave employees autonomy. Those businesses that gave employees autonomy grew four times faster than the businesses using command and control management and experienced only one third turn over. Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics model have some valuable implication for supporting employee resilience. First, it introduces the job characteristics of autonomy as a key factor in the psychological experience of work. Rigid schedules with little autonomy will allow less freedom for teachers and school staff to foster such relationships where they can meaningfully provide support.

#### *What Is the Capacity for School Managers to Build Team Cohesion*

A team is said to be in a state of cohesion when its members possess bonds linking them to one another and to the team as a whole. As school manager, the team is encouraged to seek for advice and support and also encourage the team to ask each other for assistance. This will help to create positive, cooperative environment and also helps build resilience. Teams that support each other can better resolve problems and overcome setbacks. Among the most important factors in constructing team cohesion within workplace is trust. Since individual possess their own values and beliefs, it can take time for each team member to develop trusting relationships with other coworker. Group similarity is another important factor in building cohesive relationship. Greater similarity among coworkers increases the ease at which a group can attain cohesiveness (Wikipedia, 2009).

#### *How Resilient Leadership Can Contribute to Resilient Teachers*

School leadership, like classroom teaching, is a complex process and managing complexity is, in itself, inherently stressful. It is stressful because it involves influencing others in order to achieve the organizational goals and improvement involves change. Successful school managers know that there are associations between the quality of classroom teaching and the quality of student learning and achievement. They know also that classroom teachers work to influence a range of students who themselves may or may not wish to learn and may not wish to learn in the way their teachers wish them to learn. The efforts to influence students learning, which teachers who are teaching to their best must take daily basis, are considerable, and in order for them to grow and sustain their passion, expertise and success, they themselves will need support. Like students, they may be in different phases of their professional learning lives and demonstrate different levels of competence and commitment (Day et al., 2007).

While most research aims at exploring the problems with teachers work and how to restrict its influence on the formation of distress, the resilience or hardiness perspective focuses more on what factors lead to greater levels of teacher engagement and a host of other positive workplace outcomes (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Such personal capabilities are not only protective, leading to lower levels of strain, but also enabling, leading to more positive experiences, well-being and a sense of achievement (Bandura, 2006). Research from this

perspective has identified a range of typical personal capabilities of resilient teachers, most which appear to be the outcome of superior coping strategies (Howard & Johnson, 2004). Likewise, loss of hardiness may result in teachers being more susceptible to environmental stressors of their job where research has shown that negative attitudes towards the amount of challenge in the job, commitment to the job, and the amount of control over ones job predicts higher level of stress (Chang, 2003).

Some recent research has suggested that certain types of social support communication, particularly those that focus on negative aspects of teacher work, may actually related with higher levels of teacher burnout (Kahn et al., 2006), social support, especially when it is positive and job related, appears to be linked with increased resilience and lower stress and burnout for many teachers (Brunetti, 2006; Galloway et al., 1985; Griffith et al., 1999; Kahn et al., 2006; Kyriacou, 2001; Punc & Tuetteman, 1996).

#### *What Impacts Positively on School Managers' sense of Well-Being*

There is considerable agreement among school managers concerning what impacts positively on their sense of well-being. A healthy work-life balance is frequently cited, along with pursuing other professional opportunities; time for reflection; and networking with other school manager (Flintham, 2003a, 2003b; Pass, 2009; Patterson, 2006; Steward, 2011). These are all factors which can be regarded as 'activities' which require setting aside time for a particular purpose. Well-being is also influence by attitude of mind. School managers who are able to balance the need for the highest possible standards against the cost of excessive working to their own well-being are more likely to be able to settle for 80% perfect (Hartle et al, 2010).

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, by doing this review researcher will proceed with the empirical study by collecting the data from school managers within east coast of peninsular Malaysia. This data will be analyzed using appropriate leadership, teamwork, and emotional resilience model (Hamid et al., 2021; Hamid & Ghazali, 2018) to find out what are the major determinants of high performing school managers and its impacts toward schools' performance. By collecting data from various types of schools, researcher to understand more completely the challenging situations experienced by primary school head teachers and to interpret how they influence their coping mechanisms with their resilience factors (Hamid & Ghazali, 2022). The findings of this study provide evidence that clarity purposes with the team, resilient organization, nurture trust, understand workload, encourage autonomy, encourage team cohesion and resilient leadership contribute resilient teachers should be considered as a vital part to develop unshakeable foundation upon with to build personal and organizational success.

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