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The Impact of Instructional Leadership and Emotional Intelligence Competency of Principals in Relation to the Academic Achievement of Secondary Schools in Malaysia

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Abstract

Education transformation in Malaysia's Education Development Plan (PPPM) and continuous change to improve the effectiveness of the education system, demanding high-performance school leaders. Leadership was found to have a significant positive impact on student achievement. Many studies have found that the practice of instructional leadership style of principals can produce effective teaching and learning among teachers and pupils in turn for outstanding academic performance. While leaders practicing transformation efforts continuously have significant relationships with their emotional intelligence competencies. The leader's emotional intelligence competence is a skill that can and should be learned by an organization leader in which it will be able to help them make better decisions in subsequent work to improve organizational achievement. Instructional leadership and emotional intelligence competencies are among the key factors studied in determining the academic performance of the school. The results of this study have confirmed that instructional leadership practice and emotional competence provide a significant correlation to the academic performance of the school.

Keywords: Malaysia's Education Development Plan (PPPM), Instructional Design

Introduction

In any developing country, education plays a fundamental role. This is for the fact that education is the process of nurturing the development and potential performance of individual and fulfilling the nation's aspiration in identity building which is to enhance the development of human capital for future challenges (The Continuous Professionalism Development Plan, 2014). The world class development of human capital in meeting the future challenges demands comprehensive support from all parties and the joint effort from the civil and private sector as well as the nation. Therefore, a strategic paradigm shift has to be planned in order to produce human models with a high

performance achievement with reference to the Malaysian's moulding and identity module to face the challenges of globalization. Thus leadership is seen as an essential element in the PPPM for the coming decades (PPPM, 2014).

In view of that, current excellence must be fostered besides striving for greater improvements. The continuous effort to increase the effectiveness of the education system demands leaders to be more adaptive, work in a more effective manner, always increasing the achievements of the school, being more focused towards the welfare and the advancement of the student and at the same time sharing the goals to further develop the school and to increase the level of education in Malaysia (Abdullah, 2010). In the aim to speed up the standard of the schools, teacher quality and leadership management (RM ke10, 2014) are deemed important in giving greater impact.

As leaders of the schools, principals have a positive effect which is significant on the student's achievement (Mad Shah & Mahfar, 2007; Marzano et al., 2004). Principals play an important role in planning, supervising, monitoring the learning and teaching procedures, ensuring the conducive environment of the school and lessening inner and outer issues and pressures as well. According to Feeney (2007), effective instructional leadership encourages professional learning and in a positive way influences students' achievements. As for Hussein (2008), to attain an excellent school, the principal has to play two main roles at the same time, which are, be a manager or administrator and also an educational leader or an instructional leader.

Research done by Mansor (2006), has found out that 1.1% of principal's time is spent in teaching and 0.7% for observing teachers. As for Andi Audryanah (2007) and Jamelaa & Jainabee (2015), result shows that in reality the principal mostly plays the role of a manager and the administrator of a school. According to Lee & Syukri (2016), as a consequence of the instructional leadership patterns, effective teaching and learning process among teachers and students were produced thus giving greater impact on the academic performance.

Berita Harian (24 August 2000) highlighted that a headmaster in a school in Melaka, threw a computer at a colleague due to a misunderstanding. Again, another incident was reported in Berita Harian (7 May 2004) that a headmaster caned a teacher due to opinion differences. The situations above, describes the emotional intelligence among the top level administrators in the school. According to Yahya (2009), leaders who make the effort to practice transformation have a more significant relationship with their emotional competency. However studies of instructional and emotional competency and the effects of the performance of the school is still new (Shahril & Yahya, 2007).

Instructional Leadership

Hallinger & Murphy (1985) defined instructional leadership as the attitude of a principal that involves eleven functions of the instructional leadership. For the purpose of this study, the proposed instructional leadership that is intended to look into are the behaviour and the practices of the leader in boosting the effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools, which covers eleven functions of instructional leadership, that are, (i) outlining school goals (ii) defining the school goals (iii) evaluating and monitoring teaching (iv) Coordinating curriculum (v) monitoring student's progress (vi) protecting instructional time (vii) supporting teaching activities (viii) providing incentives for teachers (ix) promoting professional development (x) Enforcement of academic foundation and (xi) Providing

incentives for students. Sheppard (1996) put forward that the instructional leadership was a disparate entity from the routine matters of the administration in schools but it was also closely related to the treatment in the supervisory duties of the teacher in the classroom and the observation of the students' progress.

James & Balasandran (2012) stated that from the opinion of prominent figures, it can be summarized that the term instructional leadership refers to all acts and activities which has been carried out by the principal for the purpose of strengthening the process of teaching and learning in schools. An instructional leader should also possess the hands-on skills which is unique in handling classes and which can be an exemplary to the teachers. Among other skills which have been proposed by James & Balasandran (2012), are as follows:

1. The ability to identify the potential of each student and to take the necessary follow – up actions which are suitable.
2. The ability to get the exact attitude of the student through the habitual management of effective classroom.
3. To have an effective presentation technique.
4. The ability to supervise the teaching process of teachers and to take further action in boosting the quality of teaching.
5. The ability to identify students' weaknesses and to take necessary steps for remedial purposes.
6. The ability to identify the needs of students and to take necessary actions for enrichment activities in order to ensure continuous development of students' academic performance.

Several aspects of instructional leadership practises which is prominent in schools based on previous studies (Cotton, 2003; Weber,1996; Murphy,1990; Hallinger & Murphy,1985) are as follows :

1. To focus on students' high level learning.
2. To coordinate resources in terms of time and materials.
3. To use data collection to improvise programmes.
4. To acknowledge teachers and students performance
5. To observe and supervise the process of teaching.
6. To respect the authority of teachers.
7. To protect teachers' instructional time.
8. To provide incentive for teachers.
9. To promote teachers' professional development opportunities and activities.
10. To maintain high visibility in terms of instructional issues.
11. To become the role model.
12. To monitor students' progress and report the findings.
13. To establish continuous enhancement programs.

All the above practices have always been around and can be observed when a person steps into any schools. The intensity of the presence or absence of the practices will be reflected on the quality of the school hence reflecting on the competency of the instructional leader of the school. Mortimore (1993), states that a school which is led by a competent instructional leader depicts an overall situation which is calm and well organized with students showing a very high level of self-control. The learning environment will be attractive, conducive and all the facilities will be well maintained.

In the dimension of promoting school climate, principal plays an important role to encourage the norms and attitudes of teachers and students that influence the teaching and learning of the school. This dimension of sustainable school climate would indirectly enhance the up grading of the school. A positive school climate is where teachers and students used up all their time indulging in the teaching and learning process. Thus an instructional leader would, in turn be able to avoid disturbances during the teaching and learning process by implementing policy and strictly protecting instructional teaching time.

Instructional Leadership and the School's Excellence

Many studies have contributed towards the field of leadership in schools. Previous studies have shown that principals have little direct effects on students' outcomes (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood, et al., 2004). However, several researchers have clearly found out that leadership has direct effect on the organization of the school, ethos, teacher efficacy, staff morale and satisfaction, staff retention, commitment of teachers, teachers' extra effort and the attitude of teachers towards the reformation and the changing of the school, which gives a direct effect on the student's outcomes (Leithwood, et al., 2004). Thus, leadership can influence the reformation and give a positive effect on students' achievement.

Mohd Saleh (1997), in his research on 162 senior assistants and senior subject supervisors chosen from 16 secondary schools in the district of Seberang Perai, Pulau Pinang showed that there was a significant relationship between the instructional leadership principal with the academic performance of the school. Research carried out by Kroeze (1983), Sapore (1983), Brookover et al.(1979) and Rutter et al.(1979) stated that, the most effective school consist of principals who could understand their role and play it well in the teaching and learning of the schools. Not only that, effective school leaders are highly ambitious in carrying out their responsibilities towards the overall academic performance of the students. Many past reviews have supported the strategic implementation of the instructional leadership principal that gives positive effects on students' outcomes. (Kelley, Thornton & Daugherty, 2005; Barnett & McCormick, 2004; Quinn, 2002; Day, 2000; Leithwood,et al., 2004; hallinger & Heck, 1996; Hoy,W.K & Woolfolk, A.E.1993).

Mohd Nor Jaafar (2004), spells out a theory about the effectiveness of the school by stating that, "An effective school is a school that has a principal who functions as an instructional leader who is very effective, whereas the teachers are highly committed with high job satisfaction. This is in line with the previous study pertaining to the perception of 800 teachers from 78 different schools in the rural areas of Kedah, Perlis and Pulau Pinang resulted that instructional leadership practices of a principal in an excellent performance school is high and clear in subscale vision, motivation and incentives with high supervision compared to the schools with low performance level.

The study is in line with the case study of Shahril Marzuki (1997) and Abdul Karim (1998), who found out that the factor of an instructional leadership principal or headmaster in a school of an excellent achievement level is high and positive compared to a school with lower achievement level. It is parallel to the case study conducted by V.Smith, Guarino, Strom & Reed (2003), Southworth (2002), Brookover et al.,(1979), Rutter et al.,(1979), Hallinger & Heck (1996). Studies done showed that schools with high level achievement always have principals who functions as an effective instructional leader. Murphy (1990) again stresses that;

“Principals should spend 80% of their time attending to the technology (that is, curriculum, teaching and learning matters) and the other 20% of their time attending to the more routine matters.

The concept of Emotional Intelligence Competency

Emotional intelligence refers to the integration between emotion and cognition in the personality of an individual which is a type of psychological element produced when emotion interact with cognition. Mayer & Salovey (1993) defined emotional intelligence as cognitive community, which consists of three main categories, which are: The ability to differentiate the emotions of one person from the other, the ability to control the emotions of one’s self and equalize it with the emotions of others and the ability to use information from the emotions to encourage thinking.

Goleman (1995) on the other hand categorized emotional intelligence as follows: self-awareness which is the ability to observe one’s self, self-management as the ability to organize one’s self, self-motivation with the ability to encourage one’s self, relationship management that is the ability to control feelings of excitement and successfully manage interpersonal relationship. Gardner (1993), in his book ‘Frame of Mind’, identified seven types of human intelligence, whereby two of which were closely related to emotions. According to Gardner (1998), interpersonal intelligence is the ability to understand others whereas intrapersonal intelligence is the ability to establish themselves as suitable models and able to use the models to operate effectively in everyday life.

According to Mayer & Salovey (1999), the pioneer who initiated Emotional Quotient Concept stated that emotional intelligence means creative in thinking and use emotions as problem solving. The individual who possesses the emotional intelligence are skilled in four fields which are; identifying emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions and controlling emotions. The concept explains that a person who has the ability to identify emotions, possess emotion awareness and able to control emotion well, is considered as possessing emotional intelligence.

Goleman (1995) has categorized emotional intelligence as follows:

1. The ability to observe one’s self
2. The ability to manage one’s self
3. The ability to motivate one’s self-Theoretical Framework

Goleman (2002) stated that the emotional competency is the ability based on emotional intelligence of a leader resulting in an outstanding performance at work place. The emotional intelligence competency of a leader is a skill that can be built and has to be learnt by leaders in an organization for it will be an additional tool in decision making in the midst to reach high level performance. In describing an intelligent individual in terms of his emotions, Boyatzis et al., (2003) stated that a person is considered to have emotional intelligence when they exhibit the competencies of self-awareness, self-management and social skills in a manner liable to the suitability and time.

The definition given by Boyatzis was found to be more complete and measurable because it refers to the ability to recognize and manage emotions in oneself and others. According to Goleman (2001a), the ability to manage emotions in one’s self and others is a domain referring to any of the emotional intelligence models. Briefly, there are four dimensions in the particular concept which are, self-awareness, self –management, social realisation and social skills.

Emotional Intelligence Competency and the Excellence of a School

Emotional intelligence can be defined as the efficiency in using one's emotional intelligence competency which involves empathy skills, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills including social skills. An emotional intelligence competency is the main criteria for assessing an individual's mastery of emotional literacy. Emotional intelligence competency establishes the effectiveness of work place. According to Goleman (2002), the emotional intelligence competencies are the skills that leaders can and should learn in order to assist in better decision making thus increase the performance of the organization.

Emotional intelligence competency is a competency that can be learnt, built and polished as long as the leader is willing to improve. The notion has been supported by Goleman (2002), who states that, it is the ability which can be learnt based on the emotional intelligence and it is a combination of emotional intelligence and social competence. The term competency that is originally used by McClelland (1993, 1973) to describe the exiting of differences at work place has also being used by Goleman (2002) to explain how personality and social skills could be used to enhance individual excellence performance at work place.

The Influences of the Instructional Leadership and the Emotional Intelligence Competency towards the Academic Achievement of the school.

Researchers from North like Purkey & Smith (1983) and Leithwood et al., 2004 have identified the leadership of a principal is crucial in ensuring the academic success of a school. Studies done by two prominent researchers from the North, Mortimore (1993) and Edmonds (1979), has given rise to the concept of an effective schools which improve overall students' academic achievement. Studies by Southworth (2002), found out that the leader of a school has successfully shown instructional leadership approach by using three strategies that are, being models to teachers, supervising the school activities and conducting regular professional dialogue sessions with teachers and staffs.

Emphasizing the effectiveness of instructional leadership practises is also stated in the Malaysian Development Plan of Education (PPPM, 2012) which was launched earlier. In the Harian Metro Newspaper, on 2 July 2013, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin as the Minister of Education in Malaysia said that, the process of recruiting a principal and headmaster or headmistress is done based on the training and evaluation of the National Education Professional Leader Qualifying Programme (NPQEL) which was carried out at Institute Aminudin Baki (IAB). The effort is to bring up the quality of education in the country which is in line with the goals of Malaysia Development plan of Education (PPPM, 2012)

The practice of instructional leadership among school principals is significant in producing successful schools (Sazali, Rusmini, Abang Hut & Zamri 2007; Shahril Marzuki, 1997). In the 21st century, the instructional leadership practice is still relevant and contributes to the excellence of the school (The Prime Minister's Department 2010; Hallinger 2005). Hopkins & Jackson (2003), claimed that the effectiveness of the instructional leadership principal is the key to the success of the school. Studies conducted by Munroe (2009) found out that there is a significant correlation existence between the instructional leadership behaviour and the emotional intelligence of the school leader. Dinham (2005), has further stressed on the effectiveness of leadership that will give attention to the interpersonal relationship and the involvement of the subordinates in carrying out improvement of

the teaching and learning process. In the 21st century, the practice of instructional leadership is still relevant and will contribute towards the excellence of the schools. (The Prime Minister's Department 2010; Hallinger 2005).

According to Freed (1995), in schools, leadership and teaching is a process or activity that involves emotions. Fullan (2002) stressed that the main factor of success in change management is building good and effective relationship among multilevel of subordinates. For that purpose, the emotional intelligence of all the leaders is very important as stressed by Goleman, Boyatzis and Mckee (2002), the leader who possesses the emotional intelligence is able to build relationship because they realize the intelligence of oneself and others, sensitive towards environmental changes and trigger subordinated spirit.

Conclusion

The influence of instructional leadership and emotional intelligence competency of a principal towards the academic achievement of a school is deliberated through the findings of previous studies done on various organizations and work sectors. The main similarity of the finding is that, the most common factor studied in research which is the instructional leadership and emotional intelligence competency in securing school's excellence performance. The result of this study was then able to confirm that the leadership practices and emotional competencies are of crucial importance towards achieving the academic performance of the school. School leaders should be able to practice instructional leadership and appropriate emotional intelligence competencies continuously and sustainably. Indeed, efforts to acquire instructional leadership and emotional competencies can be reached with commitment to continuously learn from time to time.

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