Leadership Patterns among Schools’ Administrators in Malaysia

Wan Marfazila Wan Mahmud, Habibah Ab. Jalil, Fadzilah Abd Rahman and Masrah Azrifah Azmi Murad

1Department of Foundations of Education, Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang 43400, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
2Department of Language and Humanities Education, Faculty of Educational Studies Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 UPM Serdang, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia
3Department of Software Engineering And Information System, Faculty of Computer Science And Information Technology Universiti Putra Malaysia, Serdang 43400, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia

Abstract: This paper aims to observe the most dominant leadership patterns within the Malaysian schools administration practitioners. The administrator is a very important person in all matters in schools and one of the matters that seek important role of the administrator is their leadership. This study is to look at the most dominant leadership patterns used by school administrators in the management of their schools based on the results of previous studies that were conducted and also to observe the extent of the leadership pattern used to improve management and achievement in school. Discussion in this paper is based on the analysis of previous journal articles and studies. This paper is written to study the current approaches in leadership patterns used in schools’ management. It will also cover the findings of several studies undertaken in related area. In addition, this article can benefit the school administrators in the aspect of best practices in leadership and management in schools.

Key words: Leadership • Leadership pattern • School management

INTRODUCTION

Education at every level shares a common but significant responsibility in producing knowledgeable citizens. The Malaysian educational system requires a high quality system to realise the mission and vision stated by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) to increase the potential within each individual in achieving national excellence [1]. Based on the mission given by the MOE, continuous commitment and effort is needed from the leaders of the school primarily from the administrators and teachers who are the central core in shaping and improving the development of students in academics, co-curriculum and character at the school level [2]. Ministry of Education, Tan Sri Dato’ Hj. Muhyiddin Hj. Yassin mentioned in his excerpt that “the excellence of professional leadership is the second factor that can increase the productivity of student learning. In relation to that, more effort will be carried out to strengthen school leadership through the establishment of selection methods, preparing trainings and supporting mentoring programmes” [3]. This shows that the MOE regards school leadership as an important factor and therefore arranged strategies that can help in improving the quality of school administration. Leaders and managers are responsible for change strategy, implementation and monitoring, thus they function as change agents [4].

Previous studies in the field of educational leadership have shown theoretical proofs on the leadership excellence by administrators in reinforcing the school community effectively. Thus, administrators are able to select different styles and also to observe the conflicts for guiding subordinates [5]. They can choose their leadership styles and methods according to conditions and realities, the nature of work and
employees' tasks and characteristics [6]. This is supported by a study by [7], where principal leadership is found to be an important part in determining the excellence of the school. According to them, leadership is an important matter in the social and organised life. Based on the explanations above, it is found that the fitting leadership model has to be given more focus towards the administrators so that the school organisation can be developed more efficiently.

**Leadership Pattern Concept:** According to [8], leadership pattern is a consistent behavior method that is sown by a leader when influencing the activities of his subordinates. Every instance requires a certain pattern or leadership because on certain behavior may not fit all. Leadership styles are defined the objective organizational goals as permanent and consistent patterns of behavior that people interact with each other while working and having good understanding other individuals. Leadership styles are a tool to achieve desired results through activities of employees [5].

A leader is an important individual who helps in the success of an organisation. Success of a nation, organisation and group is usually tied to effective and respected leadership of people who are influential such as Mahatma Ghandi, Abraham Lincoln and Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. According to [9], leadership pattern is defined as patterns in behavior as a leader. This behavior is aimed to influence or order individuals or groups to complete tasks and objectives set by the organization. In the context of school organization, the position of the administrator is recognized, which is to say that the administrator is officially responsible in the administration of his school. Leadership pattern is considered as a principal’s ability in taking care of his school so that it functions smoothly while at the same time maintains its relevance to the society around it [10].[9] also stated that the job scope of an administrator in school includes being able to function as an educator; being able to carry out analysis to collect, record and define tasks; being able to expand syllabi of subjects and teaching programs; being able to diversify teaching techniques and be an example to teachers; being able to plan and execute research in education as well as use the results in education; being able to implement instruction, teaching materials and be receptive with the happenings outside school related to education and; being able to become an effective leader. Therefore, it can be said that an administrator’s leadership pattern plays an important role in school development. This is also in line with Malaysia Educational Development Plan implemented by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOEM), where Wave 1 focuses on standard increase, support system improvement and development basics preparation to generate a big group of competent leaders in school; Wave 2 introduces new job paths and progressive schemes as well as support the transition towards the implementation of distributive leadership involving senior assistant teachers, head of department and head of subjects and; Wave 3 provides more empowerment to all school leaders consistent with change towards school based management. Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that leadership pattern is the behavior of each pattern in administrating an organization where every organization is different in leadership behavior. The leadership pattern in this study is the leadership pattern found in previous studies related to methods and behaviors of administrators in developing the school and leading teachers and students.

**Problem Statement:** In school, the administrator is the leader in all matters whether it is in teaching, co-curriculum or school discipline. According to [10], a headmaster plays an important role in determining the direction of a successful school and consequently improve and maintain that level. The role of school administrators has become increasingly complex with wider job scopes that require them to communicate with various hard-to-understand human characters as well as being challenged by the responsibility, expectations and the direction of education in a country. Therefore, effective leadership should be given priority and attention [11], Studies by [12] and [13], have proven that leadership style is important in realizing an effective and excellent school. This happens when the school administrators usually make policy changes to improve students’ excellence in all aspects [10]. Hence, the researcher feels opine that administrative leadership behavior plays important roles in all school organizations. The administrator is also seen as an icon in school by his subordinates. The variety of leadership pattern implemented in the management of the school is seen to be able to provide different results to a school, positive or negative.

However, the main problem here is the determination of the most chosen leadership patterns among administrators in school management and their impact towards the subordinates. With that in mind, the researcher wishes to study the document analysis (journals, articles and theses) on previous studies done by previous researchers on leadership patterns and their effect towards school development.
Objectives of the Study:
This study is to:

- Identify the leadership model within administrators in school
- Determine the most dominant leadership model used in school
- Identify the extent of the leadership model in influencing school excellence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Document Analysis: Document analysis is an orderly procedure to review or evaluate both printed and electronic documents [14]. A variety of such documents (ranging from advertisements and charts to journals and reports), which comprise of words and images void of a researcher’s intervention, are analysed to draw out meaning, increase understanding and cultivate empirical knowledge. In this study, the document analysis is focus on articles, journals and theses from previous studies.

Analysing Document: This paper uses document analysis which consist of three phases which are skimming (superficial examination), reading (through examination) and interpretation. The skimming phase is a process where the researchers will take all materials related to the prospective study. For this study, all journal articles and theses related to educational administration will be taken. The next phase is the reading phase where all collected journal articles will be scrutinised in order to find the theme related to the conducted study. In this study, the main theme is the administrative leadership patterns in school. The last phase is the interpretation phase, one by explaining and interpreting the leadership patterns of school administrators based on the findings in previous studies.

Theme analysis is a form of pattern identification in the possessed data, which is choosing the wanted and categorised theme to be analysed. This process requires careful scrutiny because it is very important that a suitable theme for the study is found. In this study, the theme is leadership pattern. Leadership patterns are categorised into four which are transformational, instructional, charismatic and situational leadership. These four patterns were chosen because based on the readings, researchers use the four patterns in their research. Next, the findings from these leadership patterns would be observed and analysed to see the extent of the most dominant leadership pattern.

Evaluating the Evidence: The process of elaborating and summarising is important to prove that the document findings are complete or otherwise (lack of content, no suitable variable, very few variables and incomprehensive findings). In the case where the previous studies are used as data source, it is important to see more than one research results. That research also needs to identify the research design (horizontal or vertical), methods and instruments as well as the theoretical framework of each study. In the conducted studies, the researcher looks to 15 previous studies that were conducted. These studies encompass the themes that have been categorised by the researcher. Based on the previous studies, it has been found overall that the researcher was too obsessed with one leadership pattern; the transformational leadership. This could have happened due to the fact that the Malaysian education needs a paradigm shift where the administrator needs to be more innovative and progressive in developing their schools. Because of that they feel that transformational leadership is suitable with the implementation of education in the future. Besides that also, based on previous studies, it was found that transformational leadership has become a popular research topic and has become a trend for many to study. Besides that, many researchers were found to use only one variable in their research. Therefore, it can be said that these research studies are not comprehensive and the findings are also incomplete. For example, when studying about the leadership styles and teachers’ job satisfaction, the only studied variable is the teachers’ job satisfaction, while it could not present the leadership style comprehensively in the aspect of school achievement and excellence. What was elaborated were only one variable in each study while the effectiveness of the leadership style was not seen. After that, it was also found that all the previous studies found use the same instruments which are questionnaires. Through the questionnaires, it was found that the reliability were quite low. This is because of the time given in answering the questionnaires. The time factor may also cause the respondents to answer recklessly without properly reading and understanding the questions clearly. Thus, the data retrieved may not be accurate and may not reach the intended objective. Based on this weakness, the researcher may choose to use other instruments in gaining the data such as interview or observation. Besides that, to strengthen the research findings, the researcher may also use the mix method such as using both interview and questionnaires.
Previous Studies: [15] conducted a study to identify headmaster leadership style, readiness and job satisfaction among the primary subjects in secondary school in Pahang. This study shows that headmasters in the state of Pahang practice the “selling” leadership, where they still give orders but at the same time allow questions and providing explanations. This study proposes that leaders of schools should be given training on leadership styles so that they obtain knowledge on the aspects of management and leadership so that they can adapt their leadership styles based on the situations that exist in the managed organisation. With this, they can carry out their tasks more effectively and consequently lead the school to excellence. Based on the study conducted as shown above, it was found that headmasters are still unable to apply effective leadership styles that should be practiced based on the situation in school.

A study by [16] was conducted to observe the transformational leadership within excellent headmasters in Malaysia. This study was carried out to identify whether excellent headmasters of secondary schools in Malaysia are transformational leaders and also to observe the extent of transformational leadership practiced in school by the outstanding headmasters. 9 excellent headmasters were selected to be interviewed based on the “snowballing” method and the saturation of information. A transformational leadership model was shaped based on the findings of the study. Findings show that excellent headmasters of secondary schools in Malaysia are transformational leaders. The transformational practices found in the study were concluded in 8 dimensions: inspirational motivation, ideal influence, intellectual stimulation, individual consideration, vocal and ready in overcoming conflicts. This study found out that excellent headmasters use a democratic or autocratic leadership style depending on the need of the situation. Besides that they also practice transactional leadership by giving contingent rewards.

The next study was conducted showing transformational leadership such as roles of work experience, intellectual stimulation and the impact of behaviour ideas in affecting the organisational culture and learning organisation. Transformational leaders perform in behavior that permits them to dole out as act models for their followers [17]. The researcher found out that the study conducted must be broader to the variety of leadership patterns to ensure the school administrators’ ability in managing and administrating the school effectively especially in the aim to reinforce national schools. In the appendix, a few previous studies were presented (refer to appendix).

Leadership Pattern Analysis (Based on Objective): Based on previous studies, it was found that many leadership patterns were implemented in school. Among the implemented leadership patterns in school were instructional leadership, transformational leadership and situational leadership (success oriented leadership, participation oriented leadership and team leadership). The obvious characteristics revealed in each pattern and are as follows. The sequent is from the most dominant one to least dominant:

Transformational Leadership: An administrator who carries out transformational leadership is a person who is always working diligently to change every aspect of management in his school. He is also a person who works to change the behaviours of his subordinates who were selfish in to team players in handling any programmes in school. Based on the finding through the research, it was found that this kind of administrator would give the correct information to the teachers he lead, support them and are committed to the tasks they are doing to gain the best result from the programmes.

Success Oriented Leadership: It was found that administrators who use this kind of leadership is more easily accepted and liked by the teachers and staffs in school. They are found to be more interactive with their staffs in any activities and programmes in school to ensure the best shape within the organisation. The administrators are also found to discuss and participate more in developing the excellence in school.

Instructional Leadership: The administrator who carries out this kind of leadership is found to involve himself directly in teaching and learning. Besides that, it can also be seen that the administrator would stress more on academic achievement in the development of his school. This leadership behaviour is suitable for administrators who put their focus on the academics in their daily duties so that the schools can carry out their main function as learning institutions.

Based on the findings, it was found that the most dominant leadership pattern implemented in school is transformational leadership as it has become the focus in most of the studies conducted and therefore the
topic chosen indicates the researchers’ political agenda. This might be due to the fact that the researchers were also among the academics who believe that this leadership style gave more room for improvement i.e. through development and gaining continuous achievement. Furthermore, such style is more closely matched to the schools’ missions, visions and the key performance index i.e. not particularly aiming for academic achievement per se. In addition, the transformational leadership is usually associated to prominent world academic leaders and this affects the administrators’ leadership choice in his administration.

Based on previous studies, it was found that ‘achievement and development’ is the key to school improvement for all types of leadership patterns chosen to be implemented. Most of the administrators implement the leadership style they find suitable for the situation of their school. However, excellence in school is found to depend on the wisdom of the administrator in interacting with the teachers and staffs in school, which particularly is a profound in Success Oriented Leadership approach. Teachers are found to be more compliant of administrative orders and would carry out their duties more willingly if the administrator is more easily approached for all matters in school. They will also be able to work more easily with administrators who are more open in all matters in school. However, it was also found that some school reported only moderate development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was found that a variety of leadership patterns were practiced by the administrators in schools. To conclude this study, it was found that previous researchers have yet to conduct comprehensive and balanced studies on leadership patterns. This conclusion made due to the fact that in previous studies, the most dominant administrative leadership used in schools is the transformational leadership. Based on the implementation of transformational leadership, it was found that administrators are highly motivated, innovative and enthusiastic in developing and changing the school in order to maintain the schools’ position within the most excellent schools in the nation. It was also found that based on the school achievement, transformational and success-oriented leadership have brought the success of the school and the job performance of teachers to greater heights. However, it is of the researcher’s opinion that transformational leadership is not suitable for all schools, particularly schools which are poor and possess teacher disciplinary problems. This is because administrators face difficulties and need time in training them towards changing the teachers’ negative habits which were within them for a long time. The analysis of this study is hoped to be helpful and be a guide for those who are involved with education such as school administration, teachers and the MOE in determining suitable leadership patterns for their schools. Besides that, the purpose of this article is to provide a small illustration for the educationalists on the leadership pattern that gives effective impact towards the school. It is hoped that administrators can be the main agents in improving performance in school.

REFERENCES


Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Leadership Pattern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assoc. Prof. Dr.</td>
<td>A Headmaster’s Leadership Behaviour and its relationship to Work Stress and Organisational Effectiveness in a Few Selected Schools in Negeri Sembilan</td>
<td>To observe the relationship between a headmaster’s leadership behaviour, stress experience by teachers and the effectiveness of organisation in a few rural schools under the Seremban, Port Dickson, and Rembu-Tampin District Educational Office.</td>
<td>Structure leadership and structural consideration of task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azizi Hj. Yahaya</td>
<td>Headmasters’ Leadership Styles and its Relationship with the Leadership Factors in Schools that Receive the Excellent School Award in the State of Malacca</td>
<td>Aimed to identify the teachers’ perception towards the headmaster’s leadership style and its relationship with the leadership factor practice by headmasters in schools who received the Excellent School Award (ASC) in the state of Malacca.</td>
<td>Situational leadership (success oriented leadership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noordin Hj. Yahaya</td>
<td>The Relationship between Transformational Leadership of Headmasters and Teachers’ Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>This study is to identify the relationship between transformational leadership that was practices by the headmasters and the teachers’ job satisfaction. Besides that, this study is also aimed to identify the level of transformational leadership that headmasters towards teachers’ job satisfaction.</td>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lim Ting Theng</td>
<td>Principals’ Transformational Leadership Practice and its Relationship with Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>Aimed to study the principals’ transformational leadership practice and its relationship with special education teachers’ job satisfaction in National Secondary Schools (Integrated) in the Hulu Langat District, Selangor.</td>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Felicia, Ishak Sin (2010)</td>
<td>Transformational Leadership Practice and the Leadership Capacity in Two Cluster Schools in Malaysia</td>
<td>This study is aimed to observe the relationship between transformational leadership practice of principals and the leadership capacity of teachers in cluster schools.</td>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habib Ismail, Zainah Ramli</td>
<td>The Influence of Managerial Capability, Leadership Styles and Motivation of Headmasters towards Teachers’ Performance in Mts N Plupuh Kabupaten Sragen.</td>
<td>The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of managerial capability, leadership styles and motivation of headmasters towards teachers’ performance in Mt’s N Plupuh Kabupaten Sragen.</td>
<td>Instructional leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdul Ghani, Kanesan Abdullah &amp; Abdullah Saad</td>
<td>The Influence of Transformational Leadership In Schools and the Collective Efficacy of Teachers towards the Teaching Quality Commitment</td>
<td>This survey is to identify the influence of transformational leadership in schools towards the collective efficacy of teachers towards teaching quality commitment.</td>
<td>Transformational leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jazmi Bin Md Isa</td>
<td>Principals’ Leadership Styles and Job Satisfaction : A Comparative Study between SMKA and SMK</td>
<td>This study is aimed to survey the difference in transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style and job satisfaction between SMKA and SMK. The study is also to identify the relationship or correlation between transformational and transactional leadership styles and the teachers’ job satisfaction in SMKA and SMK.</td>
<td>Transformational leadership and Transactional leadership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mahawa binti Pilus  
**The Difference of Leadership Styles Between Private and Government School Principals in Malacca**  
The purpose of this study is to observe the difference in leadership styles between private and government school principals based on demographic characteristics such as gender and teaching experience. The House and Mitchell Path-Goal Theory (1974) was used in this study.

Hishamuddin Shah Bin Mokri, Mohd Rizal Bin Atan & Supian Bin Hashim -2013  
**The Relationship between Headmasters’ Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction in Sekolah Kebangsaan Kurang Murid Gemilang 7 of Segamat District in the aspects of charisma, thoughtfulness, motivation, inspiration and intellectual stimulation**  
This study is to identify the level of transformation leadership practice among the headmasters of Sekolah Kebangsaan Kurang Murid Gemilang 7 of Segamat District.

Noor Hashimah & Amir Shaukhi (2013)  
**Principals’ Leadership Style in Succeeding the Preparation towards 21st Century Education**  
This study is to observe the extent of awareness and knowledge within school leaders as change agents in preparing the 21st century education.

M. Khata Jabor & Rahmah Md Yusof (2013)  
**The Latest Approach in Charismatic Leadership in School Management**  
This paper is to study the latest approaches in charismatic leadership in school management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Abstract</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mahawa binti Pilus</td>
<td>The Difference of Leadership Styles Between Private and Government School Principals in Malacca</td>
<td>The purpose of this study is to observe the difference in leadership styles between private and government school principals based on demographic characteristics such as gender and teaching experience. The House and Mitchell Path-Goal Theory (1974) was used in this study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hishamuddin Shah Bin Mokri, Mohd Rizal Bin Atan &amp; Supian Bin Hashim -2013</td>
<td>The Relationship between Headmasters’ Transformational Leadership and Job Satisfaction in Sekolah Kebangsaan Kurang Murid Gemilang 7 of Segamat District in the aspects of charisma, thoughtfulness, motivation, inspiration and intellectual stimulation</td>
<td>This study is to identify the level of transformation leadership practice among the headmasters of Sekolah Kebangsaan Kurang Murid Gemilang 7 of Segamat District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noor Hashimah &amp; Amir Shaukhi (2013)</td>
<td>Principals’ Leadership Style in Succeeding the Preparation towards 21st Century Education</td>
<td>This study is to observe the extent of awareness and knowledge within school leaders as change agents in preparing the 21st century education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M. Khata Jabor &amp; Rahmah Md Yusof (2013)</td>
<td>The Latest Approach in Charismatic Leadership in School Management</td>
<td>This paper is to study the latest approaches in charismatic leadership in school management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>