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Instructional leadership and attitude towards organizational change among secondary schools principal in Pahang, Malaysia

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Abstract

The study tries to explore the practice of instructional leadership among principals, based on four dimensions, being i) define and establish school goals, ii) manage instructional program, iii) promote learning environment and iv) create friendly and cooperative school environment. This study also focuses on the relationship between principals' instructional leadership and attitude towards change based on the aspects of cognitive, affective and behavioural. The study uses survey with an explanatory mixed method design consisting of collecting quantitative data, followed by qualitative data. Number of principals involved in the survey was 123. To examine the practice and the relationship, PIMRS (Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale) develop by Hallinger and Murphy and "The inventory of attitudes towards change", developed by Dunham et al. has been used as an instrument, followed by an interview. Quantitative data will be analyzed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson Correlation The qualitative interview data will be analyzed using Nvivo.

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Keywords: Instructional leadership; attitude towards organizational change; secondary schools; principal;

1. Introduction

The 21st century is an era of globalization which requires all Malaysians to compete with other developed countries in order to achieve progress. Education system has been reformed since the independence and changeably to suit the Malaysians' needs. The changes also have influenced the management educational organization. According to Hatch (2009), the change is natural and cannot be controlled, and changes occur when there is economic development, climate and technology. Schools must accept any changes and embrace the changes in order to move in line with the current global changes. On top of this, Busher (2006) agrees that school environment is a strategic place to start the effort to make changes. This is due to the existence of school culture, social interaction between individuals and knowledge building through teaching and learning. Thus, school organization need to have an effective leader to administer changes at the school level properly.

Fullan (2001) has stated where principals who make any changes have the sophisticated thoughts. Ayob Jantan (2007) agrees that principals who are successful in changing are able to make his own paradigm shift in the school system itself. Instructional leaders are individuals who are responsible for organizing; developing and ensuring a positive attitude towards change in schools (Kursunoglu & Tanriogen, 2009). Therefore, the top leaders such as the school principal are responsible to provide a healthy environment, in accordance with the National Philosophy of

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Education. Ministry of Education also emphasizes the role of school leaders as instructional leaders in managing change in schools and provides students towards Vision 2020. Hallinger (2005) explains that instructional leadership still relevant and appropriate practice in the 21st century despite competition with transformational leadership and distributed leadership. Many researches have agreed that the principal is the main factor in implementing change and innovation in schools (Hoy & Miskel, 2005; Leithwood & Strauss, 2009; Fullan, 2007). Principals must be prepared to face the challenges and changes in the new vision in order to bring success to the organization. According to Azahari Salleh (2002), any changes should have clear objectives. The role of principals as instructional leaders must have a positive attitude to make changes and this role is a crucial question that must be addressed. In this case, it is important that the principal role as instructional leaders and also as a change agent who are able to bring any improvements into the organization.

Instructional leadership of principals who practice in the face of pressure as the principal has a big responsibility in school. So, what are the criteria of principal in secondary school in Malaysia, generally successful in instructional leadership reflecting to the positive attitudes toward school change? Too much burden shouldered from the tasks where principal focuses in the curriculum management. The evident in the findings Bity Salwana (2009) and Azlin Norhaini Mansor (2006), showed that activity in the administrative duties of principals and service principals cannot lead to better distribute the principal and hinder efforts to revise the lesson plan book carefully and to check on students exercises (in the Monitoring Report 2009 from Department of State Education, Pahang). This is a critical issue in strengthening accountability of principal should be highlighted as a leader of education (James & Balansandra, 2009).

Busy of work is one of the reasons whether a principal is able to spend time to manage the monitoring and supervision of the teacher? Principal's responsibility is to make the most important aspect of supervision by assess the content and teaching methods in accordance with the requirements of the curriculum (James & Balansandra, 2009). According to Weber (1996), the main weakness of the principals is to deepen the knowledge and skills in certain subjects causing avoidance among them to monitor. Thus often times put responsibility on principals to supervise and to monitor the Senior Teacher (Hallinger 2005). Principal responsibility in the areas of monitoring and supervision is very important to ensure effective teaching and learning (Robinson et al., 2009). Baker (2009) showed that if the principal implementing organizational change by emphasizing the concept of mobilizing and evaluation, it will be given the effectiveness of principals' behavior.

Additional of principal's duties in managing a variety of fields limit the time allocated for planning, organizing, directing and controlling the school curriculum. For instance, one of the principal's responsibilities is to ensure that teachers and students to use enough time in the process of teaching and learning. Act 1996 of the education regulations PU (A) 531 has been allocated time schedule according to teachers teaching a particular subject. Tee (2004) in his study found that often occur when the neglect of academic teachers and teaching students to ignore the losses due to negligence of teachers use the time for teaching.

Weakness in the guiding principles and goals shared by the teachers cause teaching program designed schools often do not achieve the goal. SQEM (Standards Quality Educational Malaysian) monitoring levels of Pahang (2009) shows that there are schools that do not formulate, prepare and disseminate the vision and mission of the school. This resulted in a school community to act without any specific direction and focus. Findings Robinson et al. (2008) explains the goals and expectations of a significant impact on academic achievement. However, to what extent the goals developed in parallel with the academic goals in school? The problem described is what lead the investigators conducting research on instructional leadership practices? The study may also serve as a guideline to school principals in Malaysia to impose the need of strong instructional leadership practices and their positive attitude in managing change to improve school management. Align with these aims, the school quality as well have impact on school performance. The relationship between principals as, instructional leadership practices and attitudes to make changes in the mutual need for school performance.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

Framework of this research is built on a combination of the Instructional Leadership Model (Murphy, 1990; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). Attitudes toward change depend on the model of attitudes toward change by Dunham et al., (1989). The rationale in choosing these two models is these models are aimed as the first dimension in the justification of instructional leadership. In addition, these models prior to the curriculum management, learning environment and school environment.

The four dimensions of instructional leadership based on Hallinger and Murphy (1987) and Murphy (1990) that selected for this study are i) define and establish school goals, ii) manage instructional program, iii) promote learning environment and iv) create friendly and cooperative school environment. The first dimension defines and establishes school goals includes two functions, namely (i) formulate and explain the school goals and (ii) delivering school objectives. The second dimension of manage instructional program has four functions, namely (i) to oversee and evaluate the instructional, (ii) to coordinate the curriculum, (iii) to monitor the progress of students and (iv) to promote the teaching quality. The third dimension of promote learning environment includes six functions of (i) to protect the instructional time, (ii) to look (to maintain high visibility), (iii) to provide incentives to teachers, (iv) to promote professional development, (v) to provide incentives for learning students, and (vi) to establish standards and positive expectations. The fourth dimension of create friendly and cooperative school environment and mutual assistance has five functions, namely (i) to create a safe learning environment and in order, (ii) to provide opportunities for meaningful student involvement, (iii) to foster cooperation and cohesiveness among staff, (iv) to obtain external resources to support school objectives and (v) to build a relationship between home and school. Hence, researchers will investigate the four dimensions and the seventeen functions of instructional leadership of principals in this study.

Attitude model towards change is also dependent on the model of Dunham et al., (1989) which attitude toward change that are also applied by Kursunoglu and Tanriogen (2009) in their studies of instructional leadership behaviours related to a change in attitude towards school organization. Vakola et al., (2004) also identify the role of emotional intelligence and personality and attitude of employees toward organizational change, while Yuosef (2000) investigates the relationship between Islamic work ethic and attitude of employees toward organizational change. Attitudes towards changes in the model are divided into three dimensions, namely cognitive, affective and behavioural. Cognitive dimension of meaning in terms of changing views on the advantages and disadvantages, benefits, requirements, knowledge needed to manage change. Affective dimension refers to feelings associated with dissatisfaction and concern in making the changes. Dimensional behavior is the action taken or to be taken in future in the face of change or resist change.

2. Method

The research design of this study is survey. According to Creswell (2008), studies carried out by using the survey method is able to collect data directly from the subject under review and to make generalizations onto the population. For quantitative data, a set of questionnaire will be administered to the respondents.

2.1 Research Questions

The aim of this study is to explore the practice of instructional leadership of principals based on four dimensions which are a) define and establish school goals, b) manage instructional program, c) promote learning environment and d) create friendly and cooperative school environment. This study also focuses on the relationship between instructional leadership among the principals and their attitude of cognitive, affective and behavioural toward the changes in the organization of secondary schools. For this purposes, four basic questions have been formed:-

1. What are the levels of instructional leadership practice among principals in Pahang, Malaysia based on the dimensions of to define and establish school goals, manage instructional program, promote learning environment and create friendly and cooperative school environment as stated in the four dimension of instructional leadership of principals?

2. What is the attitude level of principals in Pahang, Malaysia towards school organizational changes according to cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions?
3. Is there any relationship between instructional leadership in the dimensions of define and establish school goals, manage instructional program, promote learning environment and create friendly and cooperative school environment and help each other with the attitude of the principals towards school organizational changes in the dimensions of cognitive, affective and behavioural?

2.2 Sample

The targeted population is among the principals and teachers of secondary schools in the state of Pahang. According to education statistics, (January 2010), the total number of schools in Pahang is 187. The sample selection will be based on the multistage cluster sampling. In this study, the sample size of the school principals are Daily Schools (160 people), Boarding Schools (6 persons), School of Religion (2 persons), Technical/Vocational Schools (9 people), Special Model School (4 people) and Religious School of Government Assistance (6 people). The population of teachers is 10,978 and the selection of the samples is 500 teachers (Krichie & Morgan in Chua, 2006).

2.3 Instruments

This study will use a set of questionnaire as the main instrument that is modified from Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and an inventory of attitudes toward change. Researchers have obtained the permission of the original authors by email to administer the questionnaire. Items in PIMRS have been modified to 94 items and items in the inventory of attitudes toward change questionnaire contain 18 items. Questionnaires for the study consisted of two sets whereby Set A is for principals and Set B is for teachers. Both sets consist of three parts: Part A, Part B and Part C. Likert scale score is used for instructional leadership practices and attitudes toward school organizational change. Instruments for an interview based on the constructs are developed in the study.

2.4 Data Analysis

Questionnaire data will be analyzed using descriptive analysis such as mean, standard deviation and variance in order to determine the level practice of instructional leadership by principals and to identify the principal attitude toward organizational change. Inferential analysis will be applied to generalize the sample to the population. In this study, inference analysis is used to describe the independent and dependent variables of the instructional leadership of principals and demographic factors. The dependent variable is the attitude towards organizational change in schools. The data will be analyzed using, Mean Score, Standard Deviation and Pearson Correlation.

3. Results

The results show that secondary schools principals in Pahang, Malaysia practice a high level of instructional leadership in the four domains that is i) define and establish school goals, ii) manage instructional program, iii) promote learning environment and iv) create friendly and cooperative school environment.

Table 1. Principals instructional leadership practice

Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Interpretation
Define and establish school goals	3.98	0.26	High
Manage instructional program	3.75	0.14	High
Promote learning environment	3.71	0.29	High
Create friendly and cooperative school environment	3.90	0.22	High

It is also found that secondary schools principals in Pahang possess positive attitude towards organizational change in the three dimensions of cognitive, affective and behavioural.

Table 2. Principals attitude towards organizational change

Dimension	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Interpretation
Cognitive	4.60	0.21	High
Affective	3.95	0.23	High
Behavioural	4.53	0.16	High

Results also show there exist a strong relationship between the instructional leadership domain of manage instructional program and promote learning environment with the affective domain of attitude towards change. Strong relationship also exist between the instructional leadership domain of promote learning environment with behavioural domain of attitude towards change.

Table 3 Relationship between instructional leadership and the principals attitude towards organizational change.

Dimension	Cognitive <i>r value</i>	Affective <i>r value</i>	Behavioural <i>r value</i>
Define and establish school goals	0.317	0.403	0.237
Manage instructional program	0.265	0.907*	0.272
Promote learning environment	0.272	0.912*	0.925*
Create friendly and cooperative school environment	0.341	0.412	0.195

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