The level of transformational leadership and the effectiveness of primary school organization

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this quantitative survey type study was to find out the effectiveness of transformational leadership practices in primary school organization in Kota Bharu District, Kelantan, Malaysia. Data were collected from 244 teachers randomly selected from 11 daily primary schools. The measurement tool used was the "Transformational Leadership Inventors" (TLI) which contained 22 items related to the six dimensions of transformational leadership developed by Podsakoff, McKenzie and Boomer (1996). For organizational effectiveness, the Effectiveness International School Questionnaire (EISQ) by Doran (2004) which contained 55 items with 11 dimensions was used. The IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26.0 (IBM SPSS 26.0) was used to analyze the data. Overall, the results of the study showed that transformational leadership practices were at a very high level (mean = 4.32 and SD = 0.503). As for organizational effectiveness, the results showed that organizational effectiveness was at a high level (mean = 3.92 and SD = 0.430). Overall, this research has achieved the set goals.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an essential topic for any research aimed at a research organization (Mat, 2018). Leadership research has contributed to the development and advancement of leadership literature (Yusof et al., 2020). Leadership research has contributed to the development and advancement of leadership literature (Yusof et al., 2020). Extensive knowledge without borders allows every school citizen to adapt to the development and change of increasingly challenging educational trends (Borman & Diebig, 2020). The cooperation of all stakeholders is very important to achieve the goals of the educational organization (Saberi & Hamzah, 2020).

However, the evolution of the current education system takes the form of an educational leadership style that can propel the education system into the global market with transformative leadership. This is because education in Malaysia must face curriculum reform challenges before the 21st century to provide quality education (Talip & Malikun, 2020). In general, it is found that transformational leadership style and organizational effectiveness must co-exist, although the results of long-term research on transformational leadership style and organizational effectiveness are still ambiguous. Therefore, further studies are needed to determine how primary school leaders are using this method to improve organizational effectiveness in the 21st century. This situation remains a question mark.

In the face of the globalization era, the education world is becoming increasingly challenging and facing a variety of educational changes. The current educational process must be able to stimulate and fully develop students' potential and achieve a mature level of educational quality to meet the needs of the social environment (Karim, 2020). The Ministry of Education Malaysia has prepared a Malaysia Education Development Plan 2013-2025 in improvements to the increasing International Education Standards and provide equal access to the quality of education of international standards (MOE, 2013). However, skills that are more efficient and in line with the needs of the international market have not yet been fully achieved. It is found that an effective organization needs excellent leaders because, without excellent leadership, there will definitely be problems among students in schools. Similarly, the problem of school organisation effectiveness where the biggest challenge in a teacher's career is to develop human capital and generations who have high morals, ethics and viability by the 21st century. This is because social problems among school students are at a very alarming level. This situation should not be underestimated because a statistical report by the Department of Social Welfare 2018 found that the percentage of children involved in the crime was very alarming at 4886 cases in 2016, and there was a sharp increase with 5443 cases in 2017 and continued to increase in 2018 to 5492 cases making the number of such cases too high and should not occur among children.

The same goes for cases of drug abuse among children and adolescents, whereby drug abuse cases should not have existed among children and adolescents. Therefore, school leaders have a responsibility to ensure that there are no more cases of crime and drug abuse in groups of children and adolescents by ensuring that school organization remains effective. Clearly, it is pertinent for headmasters to choose the best leadership style to practice to ensure effectiveness in leadership and also school organization but strangely, in the first three years of being headmasters, almost half of them have never received training as school leaders (MOE, 2013). This problem has become even more chronic because it is said that some of the current headmasters are still scouting for the best leadership style to practice (Yusof et al., 2020). To solve this daunting problem, the Malaysian education system needs to study the extent to which school leaders can implement transformational leadership styles on school effectiveness as there has been no comprehensive study on transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness being conducted (Seciady & Subidjo, 2020). This statement was also supported in research on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness that was apparently not implemented (Ali et al., 2019). Therefore, it was appropriate to conduct this study because it could help explain the initial picture of the headmasters' success in applying transformational leadership styles that should be studied and given attention; also to the factors that impact the effectiveness of school organisation more seriously to ensure the existence of organisational effectiveness in schools towards elevating the prestige of the Malaysian education system.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is usually associated with organizational change through the participation of leaders and subordinates.

In fact, this extraordinary leadership style is seen to motivate followers and enable them to achieve organizational objectives as well as inspire them in achieving organizational goals while also boosting overall employee performance (Xie, 2020). while for this leadership style helps inspire and motivate followers to address their self-interests for collective purposes (Jensen et al., 2020). Clearly, transformational leadership is the most practical leadership in practice when responding to changes occurring around the organization in influencing staff to build their capabilities and share school vision and goals with school leaders (Rahim, 2018). However, the ability of individuals and organizations to change must be complemented by the moral responsibility of a transformational leader. Leadership refers not only to the excellence of the leader's personality but also the responsibilities played by the leader, including the professional ways related to the vision, goals, and values of the school as well as methods in making change (Basir et al., 2016). So leadership is also considered to be more consistent with the evolution of educational change, such as strengthening the combination of leadership and organizational learning.

Previous studies have been conducted on transformational leadership, starting with Burns (Burns, 1978), followed by studies by Bass and Avolio (Bass & Avolio, 1994), and followed by Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson, and Fullan (Leithwood et al., 2004) until now. As we all know, research related to transformational leadership is exciting. To date, a study by Vijian and Wahab found that the level of transformational leadership practices of teachers is very high because the increase and decrease in satisfaction depend on changes in organizational leadership practices (Vijian & Wahab, 2021). This means that if employees feel comfortable being under a leader's leadership, then performance and productivity will also increase and vice versa. Meanwhile, research by Ragil and Solovida found that transformational leadership and motivation positively affect organizational commitment because transformational leadership style can attract employees to remain loyal to the organization and thus do not want to leave the organization without good reason (Ragil & Solovida, 2020). This is due to the leader's attitude, who is sensitive and concerned about the problems and the relationship with his subordinates, causing his subordinates to continue with the organization no matter what happens.

Meanwhile, the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness also found that there is a meaningful relationship between transformational leadership and organizational effectiveness because supervisors and subordinates will maintain their personal harmony (Ali et al., 2019). This is because interpersonal relationships and frequent interactions with subordinates or employees can attract employees to increase commitment in the organization. This also increases the effectiveness of the organization. However, the overall implications described by Zulkarnean, Supriyati, and Sudiarditha show that there is a relationship between transformational leadership style and teacher performance because the application of transformational leadership style can accurately improve teacher performance and is a driver and booster to increase teacher motivation to achieve maximum work performance (Zulkarnean et al., 2020).

Organisational Effectiveness

Various interpretations have been given in relation to the effectiveness of the organization; among them is whether an organization knows about the goals to be achieved or to what extent the best achievements of the organization. According to Thompson, an organization is a combination of unique members, where these members, usually not being personal but rational, work together to achieve a goal in finding the strength of the management system (Thompson, 1999).

For new researchers, organizational effectiveness has been determined in various ways, but no single definition is universally accepted. This is because organizational effectiveness is inherently tied to the definition of what an organization is. Although attention is given to organizational effectiveness, the widely shared definition of organizational effectiveness has proven difficult to be understood (Quinn & Rohrbaug, 2015), but for Ramalakshmi and Kandappan, organizational

effectiveness always measures the success of an organizations mission through strategies and plans they set (Ramalakshmi & Kandappan, 2020). This is because organizations are very beneficial in our lives, and they absorb into the life of the community because in fact, most people live in an area and spend their lives as members of the organization (community, job, school, etc.).

Meanwhile, Sabri and Hamzah stated that the sustainable leadership of headmasters has a positive influence on the effectiveness of schools because headmasters who can lead well can encourage teachers to work together to generate excellence and, in turn, can impel the school to make it an effective school. On the other hand, Isik claims that a positive relationship between ethical leadership and affective commitment will result in job satisfaction and organizational effectiveness in the school (Isik, 2020). This is because part of the teacher's attitude is to strengthen the relationship between ethical leadership and the effectiveness of the school organization.

However, looked at it from a different angle and found that there is a positive but moderate relationship between teacher commitment and the effectiveness of school organization (Nartgunam et al., 2020). Thus teachers who give a full work commitment can improve the performance of the school, in turn, can increase the effectiveness of the school organization. Thus referring to previous studies, the researchers found that transformational leadership can influence organizational effectiveness through improved student achievement, the relationship between leaders and teachers, and teamwork.

METHOD

Research Population

Data for the study population were taken from the Kota Bharu District Education Office, Malaysia. There are 96 primary schools in Kota Bharu District, but only 11 schools were selected. According to the Human Resource Division of PPD Kota Bharu, the population of teachers in the 11 schools selected consists of 526 teachers, namely 162 male teachers and 364 female teachers from various backgrounds and levels of education. The data collection took four months to conduct, and all respondents gave good cooperation during this study. The research design of this study using a cross-sectional survey.

Research Sampling

This study was conducted on 244 respondents, of which a total of 80 male teachers and 164 female teachers were selected from schools in the Kota Bharu District. Referring to Krejcie and Morgan's sampling formula, a total of 222 samples of teachers were selected as the minimum sample size required for this study (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970). Therefore, researchers have increased the number of samples (oversampling) by 10 percent so that the total of samples increased to 244 people. This is supported by Salkind, where the addition of this sample aims to avoid questionnaires not returned or lost and incomplete (Salkind, 2012). In general, the respondents were directly involved in the teaching and learning process in the classroom. To avoid bias, school administrators were exempted from answering this survey.

Research Instrument

The research instrument was segmented into three important parts. Part A was to obtain the teacher's personal information, including gender, age, teaching experience, and educational level. Part B was used to measure headmasters' transformational leadership style, which contained 22 items from six dimensions that have been modified based on the Transformational Leadership Behavior Inventor (TLI) questionnaire (Podsakoff et al., 1996). This instrument was selected because of the reliability of items in studies in Malaysia. The six elements of transformational leadership were a) expressing vision, b) being an appropriate example, c) implementing acceptance of group goals, d) high-performance expectations, e) individual support, and f) intellectual stimulation. This section was measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Finally, Part C was to measure the effectiveness of the school organization containing 55 items with 11 dimensions. This questionnaire used the Effectiveness International School Questionnaire (EISQ), introduced by Doran among the elements were (1) instructional solid leadership, (2) clear and focused mission, (3) safe and orderly environment, (4) positive school environment, (5) expectation of high work performance, (6) frequent monitoring of student progress, (7) emphasis on basic skills, (8) maximizing learning opportunities, (9) parents and community participation, (10) effective professional development and (11) a shared decision -making process (Doran, 2004). The questions in this section were also measured using a five-point Likert scale.

Validity and reliability

The questionnaire in this study was set based on the western countries, and to overcome cross -cultural problems and misunderstandings, it was translated using the "back to back" translation method to ensure its reliability and validity as suggested by Harkness that in order to obtain an instrument equivalent to cross-cultural factors, the translation method must be performed (Harkness, 2003). To meet the needs of this study, the questionnaire was translated from English to Malay by the English committee chairman of Sekolah Kebangsaan Mulong (2), who holds a Bachelor of English as a second language from the Open University of Malaysia and has also been awarded English Excellent teacher in the Kota Bharu district. The instrument was then submitted to the Bahasa Melayu committee chairman to be checked and made sure that the items were easily understood without prejudice to the original questionnaire and were then translated back into the original language. Once the translation process was completed, the instrument was re - compared to ensure translation accuracy. Instruments that have been translated were referred to the supervisor for accuracy and final verification.

Instrument Validity

To prevent the instrument's accuracy exposed to defects, the effectiveness and reliability of the instrument are very important (Kamal et al., 2015). If the value and level and its reliability are high, then the accuracy of the data obtained will result in a better quality study (Konting, 2015). Validity and reliability are tools that can be used to determine the stability and consistency of a research tool, which may or may not answer constructed research questions (Bryman, 2004). Therefore, the validity and reliability of the instruments are very important for the construction of study instruments (Hoy & Miskel, 2001; Biesta & Burbules, 2003). Here it is clear that the basis for the validation and reliability of the instrument can refer to the measurement results produced by the instrument, which will give the measurement value influenced by the error (Konting, 1993). Hence, researchers who want to determine the value of the study instrument can use Cronbach's Alpha statistical analysis to obtain a reliability index for each dimension of the instrument to be used. Items for each dimension are acceptable if the co-operative value exceeds 0.60, as well as each aspect to be studied must have high validity (Creswell, 2014).

The results (table 1) obtained from the pilot study showed that the reliability value based on Cronbach's Alpha obtained was 0.963 for the independent variable and 0.983 for the dependent variable. These findings indicated Cronbach's Alpha reliability exceeded 0.70 and were suitable for research (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994)

Research Procedure

Before data were collected and the study results reported, the researchers first obtained approval from Awang Had Salleh Graduate School (AHSGS), Universiti Utara Malaysia, obtaining permission from the Research and Policy Planning Division (EPRD), Ministry of Education Malaysia. The next step was getting approval from the Kelantan State Education Department (JPNK) and Kota Bharu District Education Office. The researcher contacted the headmaster of the selected schools to brief them about the research. The researchers got the Senior Administrative Assistant's help to distribute the questionnaire to the respondents to ensure the process ran smoothly. A briefing

was given on how to complete the questionnaire, and two weeks were given to complete the questionnaire. Respondents were also told that their feedback would be kept confidential and would not adversely affect them.

Table 1. Comparison of Reliability Test for Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

Variables		Cronbach's Alpha Pilot Study
Independent		
Transformational Leadership		.963
i	Expressing vision	.934
ii	Being an appropriate example	.967
iii	Implementing acceptance of group goals	.946
iv	High performance expectations	.845
v	Individual support	.636
vi	Intellectual stimulation	.888

Variables		Cronbach's Alpha Pilot Study
Dependent		
Organisational Effectiveness		.983
i	Strong instructional leadership	.944
ii	Clear and focused mission	.930
iii	Safe and orderly environment	.895
iv	Positive school environment	.890
v	Expectation of high work performance	.928
vi	Frequent monitoring of student progress	.910
vii	Emphasis on basic skills	.897
viii	Maximizing learning opportunities	.767
ix	Parents and community participation	.858
x	Effective professional development	.869
xi	A shared decision -making process	.866

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

After the field study was performed, the information collected was analyzed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Science (IBM SPSS) version 26 for windows. The data reports were related to the demographics of the respondents and descriptive analysis of the responses. Inferential statistics, Pearson correlation, and Stepwise regression were also used to test the differences and relationships between the study variables and hypotheses.

Respondents' Profile

Respondents in this study (table 2) consisted of teachers who teach in primary schools in the District of Kota Bharu. Researchers collected a total of 244 completed questionnaires. This study involved primary schools in Kota Bharu District, Kelantan, and 11 schools participated with a total of 244 teachers. A total of 76 male teachers (31.1%) and 168 female teachers (68.9%) were involved. The number of female teachers exceeded male teachers by 92 people.

In terms of age, most respondents aged between 41 to 50 years (49.2%), followed by 51 to 60 years (32.4%), 31 to 40 years (15.6%), and 21 to 30 years (2.9%), respectively.   The majority of teachers have 21 to 25 years of experience (34.4%), followed by teachers with experience between 11 to 15 years (20.1%), 26 to 30 years, and more than 30 years of experience, respectively by 12.7%, 16 to 20 years (12.3 %); and 19 teachers with least experience between 6 and 10 years (7.8%). The number of teachers with a bachelor's degree (79.1%), diploma (9.8%), teaching certificate (6.6%), and a master's degree was only 4.5%. The respondents' details can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Respondents' demographic profile

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender :		
Male	76	31.1 %
Female	168	68.9 %
Age :		
21-30 years old	7	2.9 %
31-40 years old	38	15.6 %
41-50 years old	120	49.2 %
51-60 years old	79	32.4 %
Teaching Experience :		
6-10 years	19	7.8 %
11-15 years	49	20.1 %
16-20 years	30	12.3 %
21-25 years	84	34.4 %
26-30 years	31	12.7 %
More than 30 years	31	12.7 %
Level of Education :		
Teaching Certificate	18	6.6 %
Diploma	24	9.8 %
Bachelor's Degree	193	79.1 %
Master's Degree	11	4.5 %

The level of transformational leadership of headmasters and the level of organisational effectiveness

Table 3. The Transformational Leadership Level of Primary School Headmasters in Kota Bharu District

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Level
Transformational Leadership	244	4.32	.503	Very High
Expressing vision	244	4.39	.574	Very High
Being an appropriate example	244	4.26	.683	Very High
Implementing acceptance of group goals	244	4.46	.537	Very High
High performance expectations	244	4.42	.524	Very High
Individual support	244	4.30	.521	Very High
Intellectual stimulation	244	4.06	.640	High

Table 4. *Level of Effectiveness of Primary School Organisation in Kota Bharu District*

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)	Level
Organisational Effectiveness	244	3.91	.430	High
Strong instructional leadership	244	4.03	.573	High
Clear and focused mission	244	4.34	.551	Very High
Safe and orderly environment	244	4.23	.501	Very High
Positive school environment	244	4.23	.501	Very High
Expectation of high work performance	244	4.37	.506	Very High
Frequent monitoring of student progress	244	4.27	.501	Very High
Emphasis on basic skills	244	4.29	.481	Very High
Maximizing learning opportunities	244	4.21	.506	Very High
Parents and community participation	244	3.94	.595	High
Effective professional development	244	4.21	.502	Very High
A shared decision -making process	244	4.96	.669	Very High

The results, as displayed in Table 3, showed that the level of transformational leadership of primary school headmasters in Kota Bharu District was at a very high level, where all six dimensions

were at a very high level. The analysis of the survey results also displayed that the transformational leadership practiced by headmasters in the selected primary schools was at a very high level.

Data analysis for the level of effectiveness of primary school organizations in the Kota Bharu district is shown in Table 4. The results showed that the level of effectiveness of primary school organizations in the Kota Bharu District was at a high level (M = 3.91, SD = .430). These findings indicated that the effectiveness of primary school organisations in Kota Bharu District was very good.

Discussion

The research conducted aimed to prove the transformational leadership level and effectiveness of primary school organizations in the District of Kota Bharu. The findings of this study are similar, and there are some that contrasted with the result of previous studies.

Based on the findings of this study, it is found that the level of transformational leadership of headmasters in Kota Bharu District was very high (M = 4.32, SD = .503). The findings of this study are similar to the studies of (Musa et al., 2014; Ghani, et al., 2016; Ilias et al., 2020) . The research results showed that the leadership style practiced by the headmasters was at a high level. This was because the teachers in these schools have the perception that the headmasters have shown a success-oriented leadership style at the highest level, however, was in contrast to the study by Arifuddin (2020) that transformational leadership cannot bring about greater changes such as values, goals, employee needs and changes to increase. In addition, in the implementation of transformational leadership practices, the highest level is to adopt the acceptance of group goals (mean = 4.46, SD = 0.537, followed by the high performance expectation dimension (mean = 4.42, SD = 0.524), expressing vision (mean = 4.39, SD = 0.574), while for the dimension of individual support (mean = 4.30, SD = 0.521), being an appropriate example (mean = 4.26, SD = 0.683) and finally the dimension of intellectual stimulation (mean = 4.06, SD = 0.640). The results of this study are in line with the study by Shafiee, Hamid, and Darussalam (2018), which was conducted in Sub is a district, Sabah. In describing the dimension of implementing the acceptance of group goals with the highest mean, a truly visionary leader always applies a clear goal or vision to be achieved by the organization and its members, if there is no foresight and no clear goal, then the members will work without a clear purpose. This will result in the organization being easily shaken and collapsed (Mukti, 2018). Leaders must be willing to take the initiative to support good ideas and drive change. In this case, leaders also have the courage to invite the comfort zone of employees as this is the only opportunity to achieve a shared vision with the organization, and leaders take this opportunity by making changes in the organization in order to shape identity, strength, ethics, ability to resolve conflicts and crises as well as the courage to face challenges so as to successfully overcome any problems through the application of high values (Hatim et al., 2020). This is because the ongoing changes require all parties always to be ready and brave, and responsible with every decision made. Therefore, the support of headmasters is very important to attract teachers to be involved in school transformation.

The firm leadership of the headmaster will strive to guarantee the importance of teachers in the school so that teachers remain immaculate, clean, and skilled inside and outside the school. The aim is to enhance the professionalism of teaching and make it highly valued by the community, especially parents who have confidence in educators (Marasan et al., 2019).

In addition explained that the school should set school goals, and the planned annual goals should focus on the desired achievement based on the ability of the school and the ability of students and current staff (Marasan et al., 2019). The school goals, which have been discussed in meetings for decision-making with the teachers, are effectively disseminated to the school community. The set goals are clearly displayed around the school, and the mission, as well as the focus of the school, are always conveyed to the students, especially in assemblies and meetings.

Given that this study found that the relationship between the parents and community participation dimension with organizational effectiveness was very weak, approaches should be considered, and appropriate actions should be taken by transformational leaders in schools. This is because informal learning involving external agencies such as parents, families, and the community is not only able to help increase technical awareness, properly planned and structured programs will help increase the effectiveness of the school organization. The participation and contribution of parents and the community in learning also affect the level of student learning in school as well as

can give a more meaningful impact on what parents and families should do to help their children's education which if they are not aware of this, they will indirectly practice the same old beliefs (teachers are the sole educators of their children) in their lives (Sinau & Yunus, 2020). Children with high-expectation families desire to achieve it either through values in school or participation in co-curricular and sports activities will act and strive to achieve high expectations in performance (Lawrence., 2021). A recent study conducted by the Harvard Family Research Project 2010 found that high expectations in school lead to high performance.

A safe school environment and an effective school atmosphere are determined when the school has clean, beautiful, safe, and adequate learning areas. This means that students can make full use of the school facilities provided comfortably. The headmasters' leadership style is also seen as a contribution to an effective school environment, i.e., the headmaster's practice in open communication when interacting with teachers and students. The friendly attitude of the headmaster will make it easier for every member of the school to discuss any problems. The presence of this atmosphere will reduce the feeling of stress, which in turn will help increase motivation (Taat et al., 2012).

The findings of this study proved that transformational leadership has an impact on school organizational effectiveness. This is in line with Setiawan's study stating that the overall transformational leadership of headmasters is explained in this study where their daily lives act as the determinant of school curriculum direction, change agent, ideal influence, inspiration, motivation, stimulation, and personal consideration (Setiawan, 2020). This means that the overall leadership of the headmasters has been well implemented.

In addition to the transformational leadership factors of headmasters that influence organizational effectiveness, there are other factors such as talent, the ability of principals to influence subordinates, past achievement, student achievement, age development, maturity, motivation, and self-concept. Other factors that influence organizational effectiveness include the environment, human resources, and the ability to positively influence or persuade others. The implication of the study shows transformational leadership still demonstrates the relevance to leadership theory in the 21st century.

CONCLUSION

Transformational leadership is still being studied because it is a model still the practice of school leaders today. The research and writings of several people in the field of management show that transformational leadership can play an important role in determining the stability, efficiency, and effectiveness of organizational management (such as schools) to improve the effectiveness of an organization. Hopefully, this research can add another aspect of research in Malaysia. Data obtained from the quantitative method of questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics have successfully detected the transformative leadership practices of principals in terms of organizational effectiveness. This study found that the selected primary school headmasters practiced transformational leadership in school leadership comprehensively. We must actively mobilize and disseminate the understanding and practice of transformational leadership to form excellent and high-quality leadership models that can adapt to world changes and developments in science and technology. It will also create high-quality school management and a conducive and pleasant work environment, which can ultimately increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

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