

Principal's Authentic Leadership Practices and Teachers' Job Motivation in the Secondary Cluster Schools of Excellence (Scse) in Johor Bahru

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Abstract

Authentic leadership is leadership that is genuine, authentic and prioritizes behavior according to ethical principles. The Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2015 through the 5th shift outlines the need to place high performance leadership in each school in order to keep up with changes in education at the global level. However, many reports and studies have found that there are still a few principals in schools who do not carry out their roles according to their actual duties. The objective of the study was to identify the level of principal's authentic leadership practices and the level of teachers' job motivation in the Secondary Cluster Schools Of Excellence (SCSE) in Johor Bahru. A quantitative method using a set of questionnaires as an instrument was selected and distributed to 187 teachers through purposive sampling from three SCSE in the Johor Bahru. The data was analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 software. Overall, the findings showed that principals practice a high level of authentic leadership in parallel with a high level of job motivation among teachers of SCSE in Johor Bahru. The researcher suggested that the level of authentic leadership practices can be improved through additional courses or recognition of contributions on a monthly basis covering all areas. Empirical studies supported by qualitative methods taking into account of different target groups to deepen authentic leadership collectively with a focus on principals of private schools or various types of schools under the Malaysian Ministry of Education should be carried out in the future.

Keywords: Authentic Leadership, Work Motivation, Principal, Teacher, Excellence Cluster School

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian government always takes the initiative and acts proactively in an effort to put the country's education system on par with other developed countries and follow the current of change that is in line with global needs. The Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM 2013-2025) has outlined a fifth shift to ensure high performance leadership is practiced in every school. The principals must administer, lead and place the school at a high level and be competitive at the global level (Marlia & Yahya, 2016). Excellence in school leadership is one of the factors that contribute to the success expected by the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM).

The implementation of Cluster Schools of Excellence (CSE) which is supported by the decentralization process leads to the school's ability based on the guided autonomy power given to the principal's administration and management in its operation. Indirectly according to Ali Zeb, Nor Hazana & Altaf (2019), it promotes employee motivation to improve performance in tasks through the application of skills received from superiors. The issue of a principal who does not have accountability and credibility in his duties thus affecting the acceptance of members in the organization towards leadership invites internal conflicts that affect the entire education system. The formation of leadership competencies received through training through courses or at the Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB) is expected to be the basis of the strength to carry out the entrusted trust. Principals should be able to guide school members as expected. However, research shows that there are still many principals who fail to carry out their proper educational functions and roles (Azian, 2010; Taufik, 2012).

The principals should also diversify their leadership style practices that are appropriate to the situation and needs of teachers from time to time. This is because the teachers are the pillar that have a role to motivate and encourage students through the quality of their teaching and the development of teacher-student relationships (Santisi, Magnano, Hichy, & Ramaci, 2014). In general, teacher motivation is an important element because of its impact on the classroom and school organization. According to Ebrahimi and Mohamadkhani, (2014), if observed nowadays, the workload of teachers in clerical tasks is increasing in addition to their main focus in teaching and this situation does not support the development of teachers to teach. If this issue is left to linger and is not dealt with professionally, it will make teachers demotivated to carry out their essential duties. Finally, the quality and performance of teachers decreases and affects students as a whole. Therefore, if the principals are attentive and considerate of the problems faced by his citizens, it will indirectly restore the teachers' motivation to face various competitive challenges. Teachers should have standards in their teaching in adapting knowledge that is expanding in line with the demands of the increasingly complex Standard Secondary School Curriculum (KSSM). Furthermore, hard work needs to be done to maintain academic achievement status for secondary cluster schools of excellence.

The importance of an authentic approach in leadership is able to overcome the conflict of values and ethics of a leader in an increasingly challenging world. Leadership in today's 21st century with a traditional or conservative approach is no longer appropriate where subordinates are directed to just follow the directions of superiors in completing tasks without many questions. A lack of effective two-way communication, a large relationship gap between the leader and members and low motivation, the effect of not being appreciated by the leader will slow down the mission to be achieved. Some studies conducted within the scope of educational institutions by Ahmad, Zafar & Shahzad (2015) found that the improvement of school excellence is greatly influenced by the effectiveness of the principal's leadership.

A positive environment and culture in the organization can be developed and trigger aspects of complex thinking and employee motivation through authentic leadership (Farooq Ahmed et al., 2018). The principal's authentic leadership is able to open a new page that has the potential to restore community confidence as well as a form of reform in the field of education for the benefit of students in particular and the quality of teacher professionalism. Therefore, principals have the opportunity to practice leadership style authentically as an alternative to the current situation that is relevant to be explored at the highest level of school organization.

There is still lack of study related to authentic leadership among principals in SCSE, that focuses on secondary schools in the Johor Bahru district to determine the principals' authentic leadership practices

and teachers' job motivation. This study was conducted to identify the level of authentic leadership practices among principals of secondary cluster schools of excellence in Johor Bahru. The four dimensions of authentic leadership that will be studied are self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency. In addition to this, this study also aimed to identify the level of job motivation of teachers in SCSE in Johor Bahru.

Authentic leadership is a form of leadership approach developed in line with the current needs of effective leadership in the 21st century. Many authentic leadership models have been introduced. Among the famous models in authentic leadership are the Authentic Leadership Model of George (2003), the Authentic Leadership Model of Klenke (2005), the Authentic Leadership Model of Avolio et al. (2004), Authentic Leadership Model Walumbwa et al. (2008) and several other models. Authentic Leadership Model Walumbwa et al., (2010) was introduced based on the need and continuity of the leadership approach, openness of relationship and transparency which is the driver of authentic leadership that is efficient to generate the creative thoughts of members (Walumbwa et al., 2010). The Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) is a questionnaire instrument designed by Walumbwa et al., (2008) aimed at measuring four dimensions that support authentic leadership, namely self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing as well as relational transparency. The principal's leadership is integrated through the four dimensions stated where he is able to manage and administer his school organization members efficiently to ensure continued excellence.

Job motivation refers to the internal nature that motivates an individual to move, develop and set behaviour towards a set objective (Ishak, 2006). Motivational theory is the basis of guidance and knowledge developed for scientific purposes and solving problems, especially those related to the increase and decrease in job performance among employees (Nik Badrul Hisham & Mastura. (2015). Many job motivation models have been introduced. Among the famous models related to motivation or job motivation are Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1954), McClelland's Achievement Theory (1961), Alderfer's ERG Motivation Theory (1965), Herzberg's Two Factor Theory (1966) and several other models. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory Model (1966) is divided into two factors, namely the Intrinsic Factor (Motivation Factor) which refers to the drive or spark that exists from within and the Extrinsic Factor (Environmental Factor) which focuses on the drive that comes from outside, especially from the organization workplace (school).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to identify the level of principal's authentic leadership practices and the level of teacher's job motivation in SCSE in Johor Bahru. This study uses a quantitative research design that uses a set of questionnaires as an instrument. A set of questionnaires that were verified by three experts were used and distributed to 187 teachers through purposive sampling from three SCSE in the Johor Bahru district. The data obtained was analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 20.

3.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1 The Level of Principals' Authentic Leadership Practice

The findings of the study show that the three principals at SCSE practice authentic leadership and have a high level of authentic leadership for all four dimensions, namely self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing and relational transparency. (**Table 3.1**). It was found that the dimension of internalized moral perspective recorded the highest mean reading value among the four dimensions of

authentic leadership. Therefore, it can be concluded that leadership through the dimension of internalized moral perspective becomes the dimension of authentic leadership that is preferred or dominant for principals in SCSE.

NO	CONSTRUCT	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)	LEVEL
Dimension of Self Awareness				
1.	Sincerity	4.57	0.747	High
2.	Control emotions	4.56	0.614	High
3.	Personality	4.70	0.557	High
4.	Confident	4.72	0.486	High
5.	Punctual	4.74	0.453	High
6.	Positive thinking	4.59	0.619	High
7.	Helping	4.44	0.623	High
MEAN OVERALL			4.62	High
OVERALL STANDARD DEVIATION			0.586	
Dimension of Balanced Processing				
8.	Give encouragement	4.53	0.607	High
9.	Checking information	4.64	0.555	High
10.	Respect	4.52	0.625	High
11.	Give justification	4.60	0.582	High
12.	Fair	4.55	0.657	High
13.	Refer to the guide	4.74	0.465	High
14.	The truth of the information	4.75	0.471	High
MEAN OVERALL			4.62	High
OVERALL STANDARD DEVIATION			0.566	
Dimension of Internalized Moral Perspective				
15.	Exemplary example	4.71	0.523	High
16.	Personality	4.77	0.447	High
17.	Application of value	4.81	0.409	High
18.	Prioritize others	4.51	0.608	High
19.	Maintain a view	4.50	0.698	High
20.	Responsible	4.72	0.506	High
21.	Stand firm	4.49	0.617	High
MEAN OVERALL			4.64	High
OVERALL STANDARD DEVIATION			0.544	
Dimensi of Relational Transparency				
22.	Share expertise	4.60	0.571	High
23.	A good listener	4.59	0.610	High
24.	Be cautious	4.71	0.541	High
25.	Appreciate	4.51	0.659	High

26.	Open-minded	4.43	0.703	High
27.	Sharing	3.87	1.145	Moderate High
28.	High confidence	4.50	0.721	High
MEAN OVERALL			4.46	High
OVERALL STANDARD DEVIATION			0.707	
Mean Overall Level of Authentic Leadership of Principals			4.59	High
Overall Standard Deviation of Principals' Levels of Authentic Leadership			0.601	Moderate

Table 3.1 Levels of Authentic Leadership for the Four Dimensions

There are several perspectives that can be related to the findings of this study. First, the principal has a high appreciation of the virtues through the feedback given by the study respondents. The findings of this study are relevant to the findings of previous studies. Appreciation of the principal's moral values shows that they are a principled person despite receiving pressure (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Northhouse, 2013), the practices of authentic principals smooth the management in their leadership so as to create a sense of security among teachers. Teachers place high trust in the leadership of this authentic leader (Haryokusumo, 2016). Principals easily act to coordinate elements of values, ethics and morals collectively in the organization (Peus et al., 2012). According to Baharom et al. (2016), the principal's actions through practice and appreciation of noble values create a conducive school atmosphere, the leader becomes an example to his subordinates and is positive to advance and improve organizational excellence. Isharae and Azlin's (2019) study shows a moderate level of authentic leadership practices for the management of matriculation colleges in the east zone, and also they found that the dimension of internalized moral perspective is the dominant dimension and this finding is relevant to the findings of this study.

The findings show that the dimension of information processing balance and self-awareness recorded the same mean value to be in the next position after the dimension of internalized moral perspective. Based on Walumbwa et al. (2008), the dimension of information processing balance refers to the leader's ability to process information rationally as a key step to make the best choices to produce good results. Therefore, it was found that principals put emphasis on making wise judgments with a high level of knowledge without being influenced by personal elements or elements of third-party incitement that often make them end up being disrespected by teachers in their own schools because their decisions will determine the impact for the organization. Previous studies conducted by (Siti Fairos, 2019; Isharae & Azlin, 2019; Baharom et al., 2016; Mohamad Razi, 2013; Samsudin et al., 2012) also found that the dimension of information processing balance is a dimension that is in the middle group of the principals' practices.

Next, the dimension of self-awareness which is related to the extent to which a leader knows himself and knows his strengths and weaknesses. The findings of this study found that principals have high self-awareness through the sincerity of their actions and their character which is trusted by members, including in achieving the direction and subsequently influencing the teachers towards achieving the aspirations of the SCSE. The findings of this study are contrary to the findings of a study conducted by Siti Fairos (2019) and Mohammad Razi (2015), who found authentic leadership to be a moderate practice by the five outstanding principals with the dimension of self-awareness being the most frequent dimension practiced. Meanwhile, according to the Isharae & Azlin (2019) study, it was found that the dimension of self-awareness is at a moderate level of practice, which is also contrary to this study.

The lowest dimension that ranks last compared to the other dimensions is the dimension of transparency in relationship. This dimension focuses on aspects of the principal's wisdom that is transparent in his interactions and relationships with teachers according to the current situation. Findings through the mean score show that there is a relatively large gap score when compared to the other three dimensions. Among the possibilities that can explain this situation is that the principal does not emphasize the dimension of transparency in relationships because the three principals in the three SCSE are principals who have only served at the school for less than two years and are unable to show their true condition following the closure of the school in a long period because of covid. Kernis (2003) argues that there is an element of transparency in relationships through individual sharing of knowledge, opinions, ideas and emotions with others. Therefore, principals were found to have lack of effective communication with teachers due to the current constraints that existed during the study. The findings of this study are relevant to the findings of Siti Fairos (2019) who found that the level of authentic leadership practice is at a moderate level with the dimension of relationship transparency being a dimension that is less practiced by private kindergarten leaders.

Based on previous studies, all the findings show that the authentic leadership practices practiced by the school leaders are at a moderate level, which is contrary to the findings of this study, which is the principals' authentic leadership practices at SCSE are at a high level. This finding indirectly gives an assessment that the placement of principals in SCSE is really quality and selective considering that there are not many SCSE in Johor Bahru and this number needs to be taken care of by Johor State Education Department in order to produce students towards excellence. Relatively speaking, the score difference between these dimensions is very low which demands a deeper understanding of the phenomenon which is a limitation of this study. Therefore, it can be concluded that a high level of authentic leadership is found among the principals in the SCSE in Johor Bahru through the most dominant leadership dimension that becomes practical is the dimension of internalized moral perspective.

3.2 The Level of Teachers' Job Motivation

The findings of the study show that the respondents in the three secondary cluster schools of excellence (SCSE) have a high level of job motivation. All three dimensions that were studied, namely the *scope of job dimension*, the dimension of *appreciation* and *self-advancement opportunities* recorded high mean reading values with the *appreciation* dimension being the dominant choice among teachers (**Table 3.2**). Teachers who have a high motivation towards their job encourage a feeling of happiness and always positive to carry out their duties at schools (Ahmad Zabidi, 2006). Several factors have been identified for the high level of job motivation among teachers. First, the findings of the study show that the majority of respondents are teachers who have been serving for a long time (more than 10 years), representing 64.1 percent of the total. This statement is supported by Evonne & Crispina (2018) in their study which shows that the level of job motivation of teachers in SMK Sri Aman, Sarawak is at a high level where the majority of respondents have more than 10 years of service (60.6%).

NO	CONSTRUCT	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION (SD)	LEVEL
Dimension of Job Scope				
1.	Skills	4.32	0.404	High

2.	Contribution	4.48	0.365	High
3.	Fair	4.48	0.313	High
4.	Adequate	4.45	0.308	High
OVERALL MEAN			4.43	High
OVERALL STANDARD DEVIATION			0.348	
Dimension Appreciation				
5.	Advance yourself	4.68	0.325	High
6.	Increase professionalism	4.38	0.348	High
7.	Develop talent	4.39	0.396	High
8.	Promotion	4.91	0.375	High
OVERALL MEAN			4.59	High
OVERALL STANDARD DEVIATION			0.361	
Dimension of self-advancement opportunities				
9.	Enthusiastic	4.34	0.485	High
10.	Appreciation	4.33	0.497	High
11.	Attention	4.68	0.183	High
12.	Innovative ideas	4.33	0.420	High
OVERALL MEAN			4.42	High
OVERALL STANDARD DEVIATION			0.396	
Overall Mean for Level of Teachers' Job Satisfaction			4.48	High
Overall Standard Deviation for Level of Teachers' Job Satisfaction			0.368	High Agreement

Table 3.2: Teachers' Job Motivation Level

Next, the findings show that the dimension of appreciation is the dominant dimension for teachers (the highest mean value is 4.59). This situation shows that the teachers feel happy through the recognition given by the principal, which in turn contributes to high work motivation in the school. According to Nadwatul & Farah (2014), giving rewards or incentives has a great effect in influencing the commitment of members in the organization. Teachers are happy when they receive an award as a sign of appreciation for their contributions and efforts that have a great impact on the school's excellence and student achievement. It is in line with the study of Alia, Mohamad Suyafiq, Mohd Haniff, Dianna & Mohd Faisal. (2020). who found that the recognition factor was at a high level and significantly influenced the level of motivation of Islamic Education teachers in Secondary Schools in Perak.

The job scope dimension shows that teachers are very satisfied with the fair distribution of tasks towards them. This situation causes the teachers to feel satisfied completing the assigned tasks because it is in line with their skills and expertise in their field. Nik & Mastura's (2015) study shows that teachers' job motivation is at a moderate level and has a significant relationship in the aspect of teacher participation for secondary schools in Kluang, Johor which is contrary to the findings of this study.

Although the dimension of opportunities for self-advancement is the lowest dimension compared to the other two dimensions, the mean value is still at a high level. The findings of this study show that the teachers in the three SCSEs are always eager to explore innovative ideas through the principal's support. However, the constraints of the school session and the varied workload caused limited support to be

provided. Based on the findings of Maimunah & Norizah (2017), the study conducted found that the motivation of teachers' work is at a high level as a driving factor and the findings are relevant to the findings of this study.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The current demands of the national education system place the principal as an important individual as a driving agent in making reforms towards continuous improvement of quality and performance. Based on this study, principals who administer SCSE in Johor Bahru practice high authentic leadership with the dimension of internalized moral perspective being the most dominant dimension. The principal of SCSE emphasizes the value of trust and through trust, there will be respect and all tasks can run smoothly because they are accepted by all. Next, the level of teachers' job motivation is at a high level based on the three dimensions of the study with the appreciation dimension being the dominant dimension for teachers. Motivation gives a strong influence in mobilizing employees to continue working to achieve the common goals. The findings of the study show that the leadership at SCSE is led by a great leader through a suitable and effective approach that is expected to boost the school's performance. Effective authentic leadership practices should be implemented by using the right strategy, according to the appropriateness and at the right time in an effort to achieve school excellenc

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