

Relationship between the Dimensions of Senior Subject Teachers' (GKMP) Instructional Leadership and the Learning Organisation at Schools

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Abstract-Generally, education is aimed at ensuring that every student is provided with the knowledge, skills and values to succeed in future life. In Malaysia and around the world, awareness of the importance of change in education towards ensuring our country remains globally competitive, has to take place in parallel with the post-industrial IR 4.0 era. Flexible human capital requirements necessitate a change in the education system. Accordingly, schools as a learning organisation is a concept that was firstly examined by researchers and school leaders in the field of education. Schools that show improvements in performance are schools where not only are their students learning, but all of the school's staff are constantly learning and improving work practices for excellence. One of the catalytic factors for change in school is instructional leadership. The focus of this study is to examine the relationship between the dimensions of instructional leadership practice by senior subject teachers with learning organisations at secondary schools. This study uses as instrument adapted from the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale questionnaire, PIMRS by Halinger (2000) and modification of instrument by Zamzam (1999) to measure instructional leadership of senior subject teachers. Learning organisation was measured by Learning Dimension of Learning Organizational Questionnaire (DLOQ) built by Watkins and Marsick (1996). The findings show that the instructional leadership of senior subject teachers has a significant correlation to the learning organisation in school. This means that when the instructional leadership of senior subject teachers increases, the learning organisation in the school also increases. Improved practice of instructional leadership by senior subject teachers in all three dimensions which are defining school missions, managing teaching programmes and creating a positive learning environment can enhance the practice of learning organisation. In line with this finding, GKMP should always be clear and understand the vision and mission of the school as well, and together with its team members from various departments, establish their respective vision and mission that are consistent with the school's. Senior subject teacher should also act as mentors to team members in guiding the implementation of best practices in the learning process in the classroom and thus promoting collaboration in teams. Most importantly, senior subject teachers should be able to create a positive learning environment to improve the practice of learning organisation at schools.

Keywords: Instructional leadership, senior subject teachers, learning organisation

I. INTRODUCTION

Education is an obligation that a country has towards its children as it is a direct link to a prosperous economy and nation. As such, providing quality education has become a goal for the Malaysian Ministry of Education. Changes in the economical and technological sectors are closely

related to education. In this case, the industrial revolution IR 4.0 which leads to the growth of information technology has impacted and altered the direction of national education. Prior to this, the industrial sector focused mainly on computers and automation, but now, the focus has shifted to cyber physical systems, such as Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing and cognitive computing.

The rapid changes taking place in the industry enforced changes in the education field. An educator's responsibility is to prepare his students to live in the world that is coming some 30 to 50 years in the future. Therefore, schools and institutions of learning can no longer remain static with the existing learning methods. Upon realising this, the Malaysian Ministry of Education launched the Main Education Development Plan (PIPP) 2006-2010 (KPM, 2013). In the PIPP, the human capital development programme aims to increase the mastery of knowledge, instill skills and discipline in students as well as ensure they have a strong sense of identity in order to navigate the challenges of the 21st century.

In facing global challenges and changes, the organisation that excels and has the ability to compete, is more often than not said to be the learning organisation. The learning organisation refers to an organisation wherein the members are skillful and always expanding their own potential in addition to the organisation's; the organisation's environment that cultivates fresh thinking values, continuous and cooperative learning; and collective action in detecting changes and sharing knowledge so as to produce new products or services (Senge, 1994; Watkins & Marsick, 1993).

A school as a learning organisation, does not only put priority on students, but is also comprised of teachers, professional community members with the opportunity to collaborate with and learn from each other. Educators are seen as the most valuable source in a learning organisation such as schools. Without educators, schools cannot function effectively because educators are the ones who mold students with their experiences and skills. Based on literary research, the two factors that influence students' success is the quality of their teachers (*Kajian Antarabangsa Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran* 2013, 2016) followed by the quality of leadership in schools (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2013; Luyten, Scheerens, & Slegers, 2012).

Subsequently, the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2015 put forth Shift 4, which is: transforming the teaching profession into a choice

profession. One strategy of the Ministry is to start the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme that has been implemented since 2013. The programme aims to enhance teachers' knowledge and professionalism practices to ensure they are always up to date and following individual needs throughout their tenure. Through this programme, teachers receive guidance from a vast network of colleagues, including counsellors, senior teachers and principals/headmasters, to spread the best practices. This strategy is in line with the learning organisation concept (Muhammad Faizal & Crow, 2013; Pedder & Macbeath, 2008; Senge et al., 2000; Senge, 1994).

An effective school is not only equipped with infrastructure but also presses on teaching, learning and curricular aspects (Ramlan, Ahmad, & Wan Rashid, 2009). Therefore, the Ministry of Education in PPPM 2013-2025 outlined Shift 5: guaranteeing there is high-performance leadership in each school. This is based on the rationale that principals and headmasters who focus on instructional leadership can increase students' success rate by 20%. This notion is supported by the opinion that instructional leadership is related to students' success (Hallinger, 2011; Valentine & Prater, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Hallinger, Bickman & Davis, 1996). As clarified by Shift 5, the tier of success measured by the foundation of leadership in each school which must be strengthened by developing and making administrators such as senior teachers, senior subject teachers and committee heads as teaching leaders.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

A principal's role as a teaching leader is a factor in students' success (Baharom & Mohamad Johdi, 2009; *Kajian Antarabangsa Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran* 2013, 2016). However, intermediate leaders at schools also play a key role in encouraging learning (Seong and Ho, 2012). Intermediate leaders at schools include assistant principals, senior subject teachers and committee heads, all of whom have the responsibility to lead all teachers under their respective departments to safeguard the quality of teaching and learning (Shaked & Schechter, 2016).

In 2011, the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) conducted a study on the quality of teaching and discovered that 50% of what is taught is not delivered effectually. Students are not actively included, wherein teachers prefer to employ the lecturing method in delivering the content of the subject. Teachers are more focused on ensuring that students understand the basic content of a subject instead of higher-level thinking skills. With regard to that, schools, like trading companies, have to explore new methods of managing and exploiting intellectual assets within their teachers. Although the core business of schools is learning activities, and many learning activities occur among students, but among teachers, learning activities are scarce (Ramlan Zainal Abidin, Ahmad Esa & Wan Mohd Rashid Wan Ahmad, 2009).

There has been more awareness on how important it is for learning among teachers to happen informally while they are on the job. Learning takes place whether in groups or in dialogue form, and this must be supported by the workplace environment and culture. Workplace environment and culture can be built by the leaders and teachers with more experience in creating a conducive surrounding that supports the fulfillment of collective goals (Marsick & Watkins, 2003). Hence, to realise the learning organisation in schools, change is more effective when there is coordination and cooperation among the staff, especially by taking into account the role played by intermediate leaders in the process of generating a learning environment and culture (Barton & Ambrosini, 2013).

Instructional leadership is considered the engine of the formation of a learning organisation (Chan, 2004). Based on that rationale, this study aims to look into the relationship between the instructional leadership of senior subject teachers (GKMP) and the learning organisation in the context of secondary schools. Referring to questions and issues that have been raised, the study's primary focus is to identify the level of GKMP's instructional leadership practices and the level of learning organisation practices in the relevant state. The study also has the goal of identifying the contribution of GKMP's instructional leadership toward the learning organisation in secondary schools.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Specifically, this study intends to delve into the relationship between the dimension of GKMP's instructional leadership and the learning organisation in secondary schools.

IV. CONCEPTUAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

In this study, the researches use the instructional leadership model of Hallinger & Murphy (1987) to explain the instructional leadership of GKMP. The model put forth three dimensions of the role of instructional leadership, which are: i) defining the School Mission; ii) managing the Teaching Programme; and iii) creating a positive learning environment. All three dimensions are further elaborated upon with 10 functions that teaching leaders at school must show.

The first dimension, defining the school mission, is made up of two functions, namely: F1 – crafting solid goals, and F2 – delivering those goals clearly. The second dimension, managing the teaching programme, requires actions that necessitate GKMP working directly with teachers within their departments. The functions of duties within the management of teaching programmes dimension are F3 – supervising and evaluating teachers' teaching, F4 – standardising the curriculum and F5 – overseeing students' academic progress. The third dimension in the Hallinger & Murphy (1987) instructional leadership model is creating a positive learning environment in which GKMP bear the responsibility of cultivating the teaching and learning

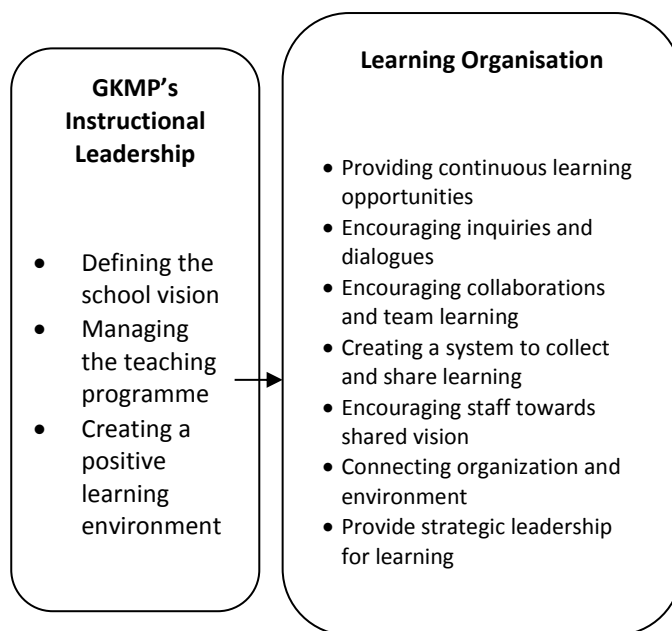
environment, namely the norms and attitudes of the teachers and students which can influence teaching and learning. It encompasses the following functions: F6 – protecting teaching times, F7 – maintaining visibility, F8 – providing incentives for teachers’ efforts, F9 – making staff development into a culture and F10 – rewarding students. As a result of this framework, Halliner & Murphy (1987) built a set of questionnaires on instructional leadership (*Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale, PIMRS*).

Learning organisation is further explained using the learning organisation model by Watkins and Marsick (1996). According to this model, learning organisation exists at individual, group, organisation and global (community) stages. There are seven dimensions which have been identified:

- i) Providing continuous learning opportunities;
- ii) Encouraging inquiries and dialogues;
- iii) Encouraging collaborations and team learning;
- iv) Creating a system to collect and share learning;
- v) Enabling staff toward the fulfillment of a common vision;
- vi) Connecting the organisation with its environment; and
- vii) Providing strategic leadership for learning.

The dimension which aims to provide continuous learning opportunities and encourage inquiries and dialogues is the dimension that frequently occurs at the individual stage. Learning takes place when an individual acquires and applies the necessary knowledge, attitude and skills to respond better. The dimension that encourages collaborations and team learning occurs at the group stage. At the organisation stage, the learning organisation is more easily seen via the dimension of creating a system to collect and share learning and the dimension that enables staff toward the fulfilment of a common vision. The dimensions of connecting the organisation with its environment and providing strategic leadership for learning typically take place at the global stage, or the State Education Department/Malaysian Ministry of Education. Based on this model, Watkins and Marsick (1996) made the questionnaire ‘Dimension of Learning Organizational Questionnaire’ (DLOQ).

The conceptual research framework shows the connection between the three dimensions of instructional leadership and their relation to the learning organisation, which has seven dimensions. The framework is based on the instructional leadership model by Hallinger & Murphy (1987) as a free variable and its link to the learning organisation model by Watkins & Marsick (1996) as a bound variable. The framework also depicts the relationship between the instructional leadership of GKMP and the learning organisation as per the figure below.



V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is a quantitative study with a descriptive correlational study design. Data is collected by way of observation, using a questionnaire targeted towards a sample group for the purpose of identifying trends, behaviours, opinions or characteristics of the population (Creswell, 2012). The study was conducted on 400 teachers at secondary day schools in the state of Perak, chosen at random in two stages according to the locations of the schools, whether in the city or in the suburbs.

To measure the GKMP’s instructional leadership, the questionnaire instrument was adapted from Hallinger’s ‘Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale’ (PIMRS) (2000), and also modified from Zamzam’s (1999) instrument. This is because Hallinger’s (2000) PIMRS, with its three dimensions and 10 functions, is tailored specifically to measure the instructional leadership of principals or headmasters. The modification on Zamzam’s (1999) instrument was done because that particular instrument was built to measure the instructional leadership of GKMP with three dimensions but still using 11 functions. With that being said, the questionnaire instrument was built to measure the construct of GKMP’s instructional leadership with dimensions that cover the following aspects: (a) defining the school mission, (b) managing the learning programme and (c) creating a positive learning environment. On the other hand, to measure the learning organisation construct, the study employed the ‘Dimension of Learning Organization Questionnaire’ (DLOQ) that was crafted by Watkins & Marsick (1996) based on seven dimensions: (1) providing continuous learning opportunities, (2) encouraging inquiries and dialogues, (3) encouraging collaborations and team learning, (4) creating a system to collect and share learning, (5) enabling staff toward the fulfillment of a common vision, (6) connecting the organisation with its environment and (7) providing strategic leadership for learning. Each item is followed by five answer choices as per the Likert scale.

On the analysis of probabilities, both instruments had Chronbach values of .983 and .976.

VI. RESULTS

In this study, the researchers utilized the Pearson correlational analysis to identify the relationship between the dimensions of GKMP's instructional leadership and the learning organisation at secondary schools. Research findings are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Relationship between the dimensions of GKMP's instructional leadership and the learning organisation at secondary schools

Relationship		Learning organisation		Strength of the relationship
		r	Sig.	
Defining Mission	School	0.585	0.000	Medium
Managing Learning Programme	the	0.609	0.000	Medium
Creating a Learning Environment	Positive	0.674	0.000	Medium
Overall		0.670	0.000	Medium

The findings in Table 1 show that there is a positive and significant relationship between the dimension of defining the school mission and the learning organisation, with the value $r = 0.585$ and $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). The strength of this relationship is medium. It signifies that the more enhanced the dimension of defining the school mission, the more enhanced the practices of the learning organisation. The dimension of managing the learning programme also indicates a positive and significant relationship with the learning organisation at the value $r = 0.609$ and $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). The strength of the relationship is medium-positive. This means that the more enhanced the dimension of managing the learning programme, the more enhanced the practices of the learning organisation. Last but not least, the dimension of creating a positive learning environment also shows a positive and significant relationship with the learning organisation, with the value $r = 0.674$ and $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). The strength of the relationship is medium-positive. Again, it shows that the more enhanced the dimension of creating a positive learning environment, the more enhanced the practices of the learning organisation.

As a whole, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between GKMP's instructional leadership practices and the learning organisation, wherein $r = 0.670$ and $\text{sig} = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). It means that GKMP's leadership practices possess a strong, positive relation to the learning organisation, which is that the more enhanced GKMP's instructional leadership practices, the more enhanced the learning organisation practices are at

schools. These findings imply that should GKMP increase their instructional leadership practices, the learning organisation will also tend to do so. As such, the learning organisation can be predicted based on the level of GKMP's instructional leadership practices.

VII. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that there is a significant relationship between GKMP's instructional leadership and the learning organisation at schools. This means that when the GKMP's instructional leadership is enhanced, the learning organisation at schools is also enhanced. The findings also indicate that the three dimensions of instructional leadership showcase a significant and positive relationship with medium-level strength. The dimension of creating a positive learning environment shows the highest significant positive relationship with the learning organisation, followed by the dimensions of managing the teaching programme and defining the school mission. These findings correspond with Chan's (2004) study which provides that instructional leadership plays a key role in building a learning organisation.

Although the findings have proven the existence of a medium positive relationship between GKMP's instructional leadership and the learning organisation, GKMP's instructional leadership practices have to be focused on because past studies by scholars have verified the importance of instructional leadership in improving the learning organisation (Silins & Mulford, 2002; Fitzgerald & Gunter, 2006; Melville, Bartley, & Weinburgh, 2012; Leithwood, Patten, Jantzi, 2010; Nor Foniza & Mohd Izham, 2013; Yusof & Fadzlon, 2011 dan Chan, 2004).

Overall, teachers have the perception that GKMP's instructional leadership is related to the learning organisation. This paints the picture that GKMP have conducted instructional leadership practices and in doing so, have affected the learning organisation through dimensions endorsed by Hallinger & Murphy (1987), which is defining the school mission, managing the teaching programme and creating a positive learning environment.

In the context of this study, it is evident that GKMP have the ability to enact instructional leadership well and become a good example to other teachers, on top of facilitating professional learning within teachers. This can be achieved when GKMP, in their instructional leadership practices, prioritise the dimension of creating a positive learning environment (Melville, Bartley & Weinburgh, 2012).

VIII. CONCLUSION

This study shows that GKMP's instructional leadership has a positive and significant relationship at the medium level with the learning organisation at schools. The improvement of instructional leadership should consequently improve the teachings of teachers and increase students' achievements as a whole. By conducting tests empirically, using GKMP instructional leadership and learning organisation instrument within

the secondary school population in Perak, this study has indirectly contributed to the knowledge of the level of GKMP's instructional leadership practices and the learning organisation from the perspective of teachers. The findings of this study are aligned with the recent study by Bush, (2013); Wan Roslina, (2011), which is on GKMP's instructional leadership and the study by Rosnah, Muhammad Faizal & Saedah (2014); Muhammad Faizal et al., (2014) on the learning organisation at schools. GKMP must also act as mentors and exemplary models to their teammates in ensuring the best practices are carried out during the learning process in the classroom, subsequently encouraging collaboration in groups. Most importantly, GKMP must be able to create a positive learning environment so as to increase learning organisation practices at schools.

From the study, the significant positive relationship between the GKMP's instructional leadership and the learning organisation imply that the programme enacted by the Malaysian Ministry of Education to increase instructional leadership among GKMP via Shift 5 of the PPPM was successful in revealing the concept and role of teaching leaders within the context of Malaysian schools. The success of Shift 5 is measured when the foundation of leadership in every school is strengthened by the development and capabilities of the assistant principals, GKMP and committee heads to practice instructional leadership. GKMP appointed at schools have taken the initiative in conducting instructional leadership practices as part of their duties as leaders. Therefore, courses and trainings on instructional leadership among GKMP should be continued by the PPD, JPN and KPM. This advice is further supported by the finding that such leadership is also impactful on the development of teachers' leadership, considered by other researchers to be directly correlating to students' performance.

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