

## Business and leadership Quality In Educational Management

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** ó This research is attempt to examine school principalsø organizational effort to create an innovative and creative environment to govern efficient and effective high quality educational Institutions. The culture and climate of certain educational institutions have great influence in determining the level of achievement. Demographic factors, such as age, gender, race, academic and professional achievement and working experiences are also taken into consideration.

**Design/ methodology/ approach** ó Six dimensions of educational institutions (schools, demographic continuum, leadership quality, managerial strategy, communication, organizational culture and practice, personal and working experience) were examined to determine the performance achievement and excellence of management in schools.

**Finding** - In general, there is a significant difference among factors stated above with school management. The climate of the educational institutions is also closely related to the leadership management skills of the schools respectively. In addition, the school principals and management are another two essential factors found to be the strong fundamental of schools with towering quality.

**Research limitations/ implications** ó This study represents an addition to the extant literature on performance achievement towards the excellence of management in schools.

**Practical implications** ó The achievement of high performance within an educational institution is a pivotal role in managing an organization effectively. Even the Malaysian Prime Minister suggested that it was of utmost important for the civil service to improve its efficiency and integrity as the country geared up to carry out programs under the Ninth Malaysian Plan (9MP) In the effort of overcoming organizational debility in the education management, we could devise a creative and innovative move to overcome those shortchanges.

**Originality/ value** ó This study provides further groundwork to assist existing and would be educational managers to improve work quality and to deliver the maximizing of performance achievements towards the excellence in managing the school.

**Keywords:** performance achievement; excellence; management; schools,

**Paper type:** Research paper

Changes in Malaysian school management in the 21-century differ greatly when a country has excellent insights. The National Development Policy, Vision 2020 and the National Education Development Blueprint 2006 -2010 have provided efficient ideas, new innovation and great challenges to the country. Many ministries are on the move proactively in nurturing and venturing new steps in working out new management concepts for the various organizations and the agencies under their care. The programs that have been implemented are carried out through public sectors with "Excellence in Services" as priority. Thus, the development of organizations will help public administrators preparing for the future challenges.

The Malaysian Prime Minister in his speech in the OIC Conference On Human Capital Management in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah said that the Malaysian civil service has yet to achieve a satisfactory level of efficiency and integrity, which is crucial for the nation to maintain its competitive edge (Star, 24 Nov 2006). Peters and Waterman (1982) have suggested that organizations that are effective should focus on their core businesses. In the educational institutions, the management and administration are carried out based on stakeholders namely the society and students' needs; students' welfare and the expanding of the development of the quality of life. The meaning of clientele charter has to be understood properly. Success or failure of an educational institution is based on several factors and restrictions, particularly negligence and administrators' shortcomings in jurisdiction.

Thus, school principal should be held responsible of the management from every angle. Leadership skills in education management have certain consequences in achieving a holistic development in the educational organizations, which leads to success and supreme educational institution. The fervent foundation of this is very much related to the Total Quality Management (TQM) in organizations. ISO 9000 and the newly mooted key-performance-indicators (KPI), which are widely practiced by the Malaysian ministries in achieving a first-class success in the administration and management of public organizations, is an assessment of the value of a quality.

The achievement of high performance in educational institution is an on-going process and also the final output. The validity of management in educational institutions and departments can be determined through assessment and "benchmarking". In this aspect, "TQM" and KPI is a process of continuous improvement in a better way is applicable since management and customers' administration are part of the process.

Despite the fact that ministries and educational institutions are working towards achieving first class services in the organizations, this effort requires absolute commitment. Well-organized public organizations are vital as they serve as the platform towards excellence and leadership skills are the essence in mobilizing this mission.

An ineffective and languid educational institution will agitate the institutions' plan in achieving total excellence. Thus, the development of human capitals should be reinforced in accomplishing the target.

Principals in educational institutions are considered as successful when they managed to sustain high performance and productivity in the development of their organization. In doing so, teamwork and collective performance are needed in the effort of promoting remarkable services. Beach (1980) suggested that departments in any organization should manage their human resources thoroughly. This is to make sure that the workforce will be able to utilize their knowledge and skills towards a better management. Thus, the primary objective in the development of educational institution is to achieve a holistic development.

There are several critical elements in the school principal's managerial perspective. One has to have good education background, which includes excellent leadership skills and knowledgeable. Among other elements are work environment and amicable public relations or communication among school principal, administrators and teachers within the educational institutions and other educational institutions. These factors are considered as critical as professionalism and productivity are the essence of education management.

In an organization, workforce and human resources is the key in developing the organization. Naisbitt (1994) has listed ten characteristics in restructuring an organization. These traits are applicable in any situations; quality, intuitive beliefs, ideal leadership aptitude and gratuity towards the productivity.

When an educational institution outlined its policies, the guiding principles are proposed based on the National Education Development Blueprint. Thus, the culture of knowledge, excellence, leadership and management skills are part of the policy. However, human relations are the most important aspect for the managements of any educational institutions since society and environment have evolved through time.

## STRATEGY AND SUPERVISION

Strategy and supervision are two vital tools in achieving total excellence in education managements. Strategy is a structure or a process that is based on information and it is part of management surveillance. Other aspects include competition analysis, environment investigation and aptitude assessment.

On the other hand, supervision comprises of observation and organization aptitude assessment and other activities. This system has been practiced in assessing organization aptitude and at the same time enables the management to identify debility and ways to overcome the situation. As a result, an ongoing assessment will be carried out to monitor the progress.

Koontz (1971) proposed that it is advisable for administrators and individuals to work collaboratively in working out the blue prints of the organizations. Moreover, this is a good move in overseeing the educational institutions' progress. Based on Mintzberg's

The organization's style and arrangement are important to individuals to work effectively. Moreover, he also concluded that organization would be able to achieve its target with the great help of domestic supports; productivity, quality, work environment and job satisfaction. The same situation applies to other organizations that offer other services in which the administrators are the prime force and role model for other workers. Hopkins, Ainscow & West (1994) have proved that work delegation that is based on leadership skills is closely related to the development of the organization, so as any educational institutions.

## LEADERSHIP QUALITY

Leadership skills are one of the critical components in education management. A top-notch education leader possesses the ability to strategize and supervise the operation of the organization such as schools. In addition, when a leader manages to take charge of the management without hassle, organization will be developed holistically. Thus, an effective educational leadership equals to staff achievement in performance and productivity. Hersey and Blanchard (1982) have proved that leadership is a process that influences activities towards achieving the objectives. Thus, school administration is a two-pronged system in which solutions are offered and objectives are executed. Therefore, principals and educational administrator is an individual who have creates a good conducive working environment for his staffs to strive towards excellence. Furthermore Judith Ann Chapman (2001) quote that the main focus of managerial work is changing and those new perspectives are needed as a result. The roles that educational managers play and the expectations that other have of them are evolving to reflect new forms of organization perspectives.

## THE ADMINSTRATION OF AN EDUCATIOANL INSTITUTION

The schools' organizational structure must be formally practiced in order to monitor high quality in every program. This is because any significant changes in the system can be traced down that eventually will lead to the restructuring of public relations between the principal, teachers and other employees. This is a vital aspect since holistic development can be achieved if these two parties work hand in hand. As Judith Ann Chapman (2001) suggested that position and responsibilities are less static and more open-ended, and the familiar boundaries distinguishing upper, middle and lower level managers are being redrawn because managers in the new form of educational organization do much more and they are also active as the architects of organizational arrangements linking people, opportunities and resources. In the aspect of clientele, administration that is structurally oriented is favorable. With the help of advanced technology, principals can delegate tasks accordingly, optimize the supervision and reorganize the activities for the benefits of their clients since students and markets have an immediate impact on the work of principals and the survival of the education organization depend on how well principals can identify or create opportunities and then provide services which satisfy in areas of quality, variety, availability and price and this are the outputs of transformation processes in organizations such as educational institutions.

The success and effectiveness achieved by educational institutions are greatly determined by their on going development. School principals who attend to his subordinates' opinions and perspectives gain few advantages; dynamic innovation, clientele-consciousness, challenges enthusiasts and better administration system.

Seashore (1975) has pointed out that the effectiveness in the organization can be achieved if its administrator is dynamic in developing the internal locale with the help of local resources.

A productive working atmosphere is where an employee is able to learn new things and unlock his great ability for the sake of the organization. The achievement of the educational institution is established from the well-disposed services, innovation and creativity, leadership skills, positive work etiquette and employees' established discipline. This includes the facilities and offices that are comfortable and cozy. Thus, these internal aspects are cardinal in the process of achieving total development.

#### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The output of an educational institution is determined by the success of the prepared goals and objectives. Though the employees' ability is used as the measurement stick in this matter, the said accomplishment is purely depends on employees' hard work, discipline and the work atmosphere. Thus, these aspects are important as employees work as a team (Torrington & Wrightman, 1989).

School administrators who had outlined the organizations' work objectives are believed to achieve success. Raia (1974) has suggested that management that is run through its objectives will be able to gain success.

#### ORGANIZATION AND WORK ETIQUETTE

In a community, demureness is a day-to-day practice that includes beliefs, language and knowledge. When people communicate, they are going through an interaction process and eventually they will pass the social norms and ethos from one generation to another. Thus, these aspects have their own influence in the social relationship in an organization. Freytag (1990) has proved that work etiquette plays a prime role in achieving the organizations' objectives. Hence, work etiquette in organization like school is seen a set of practices and beliefs that need to be greatly considered by all employees in achieving the missions of the school itself.

#### RESPONSIBILITY AND LIMITATION

Dedicated and responsible school staffs and employees have great impact in terms of the efficiency. Based on the findings by Mowday, Poter & Stears (1982), they believe that organization that has a good sense of responsibility will prevent its employees from

er supported by Lee, Ashford, Walsch and Mowday and employees' readiness and sacrifices are solidly related to the above findings.

Studies on the influence towards the political situation and responsibility in the organization are an important aspect for the management. In any educational institution, conscientious employees will optimize their ability in achieving the institutions' objectives.

## PROFESSIONALISM

When a good principal and school administrator possesses a mission, he will lead the organization to achieve it. All these can only be done if the chosen principal and school administrator adheres to the road taken, though it will be a bumpy ride.

## SCHOOL EMPLOYEES AND ADMINISTRATORS' SELF DEVELOPMENT

Without proper training and ethical development, human resources will not be able to face challenges in the future. Through the selected programs that are devised for the development of the workforce, individual's talent will be fostered, that eventually creates great success. Fisher (1996) has proved that proper training and programs in the development of human resources will boost the organization's performance. Apart from these insights, the design of the training and programs, the assessment of necessity and stimulation bring great impact towards the schools' performance. Simultaneously, individual's talent would also be enhanced. These programs will benefit the schools in the long run. Thus, the funds that were set up in the staffs' training programs should be viewed as one of the ways in enhancing the performance of the educational institutions.

## LEARNING INSTITUTION

The achievement of the education institution can be measured from the programs; development and training that are carried out for its employees. Thus, learning institution offers various self-development programs in helping the employees to be an expert in their chosen field. This is because the formal education that they received in other learning institutions does not necessarily reveal their ability in the post that they are holding now (Livingston, 1971). Thus, true learning process occurs while they are working in the real office atmosphere (Revans, 1980).

Findings from previous studies have proved that organizations that can maintain their high performance are those that act as "learning institution" for their employees. Cohen (1980) suggested that the training and learning received while they are working would improve their knowledge, stimulate their ability and attitude and their sense of responsibility towards their organization.

Senge (1990) also suggested that learning is an on-going process that each individual in the organization has to participate in discovering his or her hidden talents

. In preparing for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, decision by embarking in the process of re-branding. Education institutions are now advised to have their own learning teams, particularly in terms of the ICT and communication in creating an informal learning process (Naisbitt, 1994).

## EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

In this new area, the principals and administration for the education institution in Malaysia share the same perspectives. Several aspects for both parties; namely programs, systematic administration, work force, quality control and consistency are now the core tasks in achieving the missions and visions of the organizations based on the Sistem Saraan Malaysia (SSM) under the Government Public Policy (Perintah Am Kerajaan). Under this scheme, the right administrator must be chosen based on his on-going high performance in his term of service.

In classifying the importance of ISO 9000, TQM or the KPI, Malaysian government and its ministries have listed several vital tenets in determining which organizations or public sectors that have excelled in their service. This is due to the fact that the ISO 9000 awards are only granted to those who managed to deliver their service within the specific standard or requirements.

Tutle & Romanowski (1985) have listed five criteria for the assessment of services. Output is productivity within the stipulated time with the minimum use of the resources. Next, by measuring the efficiency obtained from the output is another way of determining the educational institution's success of achieving their objectives. Thus, the rational use of resources in generating the output or performance must be compared. On the other hand, superior officers have to be able to acknowledge their subordinates who possess good work etiquette, high motivation, active employees and most of all proactive workers. All these factors are intertwined, as they will determine the success of an educational organization.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

In Malaysia, the management in most of the education institutions like schools are not vigilantly carried out according to the objectives prepared by the ministries, when school administrators are selected or appointed based on their seniority. Hence, these administrators are not fit enough and up to the challenges as they are reaching the retirement age.

The objectives of this study are to determine ways to achieve high performance towards the excellence of management in organization like schools by taken into consideration factors such as organizational effort of creating an innovative and creative environment, communications, organizational culture and climate, as well as the demographic factors which has an influence on the level of performance achievement of organization such as educational institutions.

study, it is hoped that the school principals could gain experience in their services. The management and customer services are affected since policies and issues are revolutionizing. This is due to the fact that assessment in educational institutions is done based on their achievement in their services, as there are other factors that determine their success. Staffs' morale, job satisfaction, commitment, accountability, efficiency, leadership skills, teamwork development, authoritarian, work culture and ethics should be taken into consideration.

## **RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

### **Dependent Variable**

Performance Achievement  
And Excellence Of Management  
In schools

### **Independent Variables**

- Demographic continuum of school staffs
- Personal and working experiences
- Leadership Quality of school principal
- Managerial Strategy
- Communication
- School organizational Culture

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A survey questionnaire was given to a total of 48 school principals and administrators from four randomly selected schools in Segamat District, State of Johore. (1 conforming secondary school, 1 residential secondary school, 1 normal secondary school, 1 secondary school sponsor by world bank) The questionnaires consist of Part 1 that include questions on the respondent's demographical data and Part 2 on the dependent and independent factors. Parametric statistical tests were used to analyze the data.

The details of the four schools in the Segamat District were also studied from secondary data. This is to determine the existing school's management practices.

## **RESULTS**

### Reliability of instruments

Cronbach Alpha statistic is found to be 0.809. Therefore the reliability of the questionnaire is acceptable.



Table 1. Summary of Respondents Characteristics

SUBJECT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTILE
1. POSITION HELD		
Head of Department	8	16.7
Administrative Staff	9	18.8
Employee	31	64.6
2. GENDER		
Male	13	27.1
Female	35	72.9
3. RACE		
Malay	32	66.7
Chinese	10	20.8
Indian	6	12.5
4. SERVICE		
Professional Group	43	89.6
Supporting Group	5	10.4
5. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION		
SPM/MCE/SPMV	2	4.2
STPM/HSC/Diploma	5	10.4
Bachelor	39	81.3
Master/ Doctorate	2	4.2

Table 1.1 above shows the position of the 48 respondents held from the four schools. Principals (16.7%), head department and senior administrative staff (18.8%) and teachers (64.6%)

Table 1.2 and 1.3 above shows 48 respondents from the four schools, they are 13 male (27.1%) and 35 female (72.9%). 32 Malay (66.7%), 10 Chinese (20.8%) and 6 Indian (12.5%)

Table 1.4 and 1.5 above shows the service categories and academic qualification of respondents from the four schools, service category has been divided into education managers and administrators holding tertiary qualification as in Table 1.5 shows there are 41 Bachelor and master or doctorate qualification holder categorize as professional group (85.5%) and the remaining 7 are supporting group (14.6%) according to the Malaysian public service categories.

#### Inferential Statistics and Discussion

There are six contributing variables namely Demographic continuum; Leadership Quality, Managerial Strategy, communication, school organizational Culture, Personal and working experiences that accounted for the successful performance achievement and excellence of management in the schools.

as suggested by Hackman, JR (1975) such as skill proficiency, autonomy and feedback will affect the satisfaction and performance of the individual staff that occupied the job in an organization. This could further enhance the performance achievement and excellence of management in the educational institutions.

Table 2: Summary of one-way ANOVA. Significant different between demographic continuum and schools

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.459	2	.729	17.337	.000
Within Groups	1.893	45	.042		
Total	3.352	47			

Note: Value of F Prob. = 0.000 which is smaller than  $\alpha$  Level of 0.05

Table 2 above shows there is a significant difference between the respondents demographic continuum and the surveyed schools in the district. Normally with the demographic composition in an organization of public nature, there are governmental circular to follow as guideline other than the schools own rules and regulations but then some form of human factors are involve. This will differentiate the outcome of achievements of one school to another.

As the demographic continuum of the school will leads to a more significant performance achievements and excellence in managing the school itself by the charismatic leader. Demographic composition of the school's staff is important determinant towards the successful and high performance achievement and excellent in managing the school because the principal and staff will try their very best to serve its clientele. The main function of schools as public organization in Malaysia is service oriented.

Table 3: Summary of one-way ANOVA. Significant different between work culture and schools

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.459	2	.729	17.337	.000
Within Groups	1.893	45	.042		
Total	3.352	47			

Note: Value of F Prob. = 0.000 which is smaller than  $\alpha$  Level of 0.05

Table 3 above shows there is a significant difference between the work culture practices by the staffs of the four schools in Segamat District. The significant difference between work culture and schools are due to the staffs working relationship, leadership style and the work condition. Since it is a public duty and to serve the general publics from all walk of life. Furthermore, there is considerable emphasis upon functional responsibilities, measurable, scientific method, reasoning and evidence. The modern organization has been widely characterized as design along the line of a machine (Morgan, 1997). So The staff of the survey schools would have to adhere to the instructions directly from the public service circular and General Order. Therefore if the relationship between the staff

work environment will be a favorable one. Sometime people focused organization because Ed Weymes (2005) argue that when an organization extends its focus to encompass society and the environment, members of the organization can be inspired to share the dream of the organization. So the significant difference maybe due to this perspective.

Table 4: Summary of one-way ANOVA. Significant different between Leadership quality and schools

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.423	3	1.141	4.736	.006
Within Groups	10.600	44	.241		
Total	14.023	47			

Note: Value of F Prob. = 0.006 which is smaller than  $\alpha$  Level of 0.05

Table 4 above shows there is a significant difference between the leadership quality practices by the principals of the four schools in Segamat District. The significant difference between leadership quality and the schools occurred probably due to the manager's ability and skill to manage its staffs. The good quality of manager would have a good rapport between the manager and staff who work in those particular schools. Good communication and public relations too contribute to the good working environment of schools. Any directives pass down to the subordinate will be taken easily among the subordinates. With the proper delegation technique use by the education manager, all tasks would have easily accomplished. Certainly if the organization is manage by a charismatic leadership, such quality will be a value added factor to the successful accomplishment of organizational tasks.

Table 5: Summary of one-way ANOVA. Significant different between management strategy and schools.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	7.516	3	2.505	6.689	.001
Within Groups	16.479	44	.375		
Total	23.995	47			

Note: Value of F Prob. = 0.001 which is smaller than  $\alpha$  Level of 0.05

Table 5 above shows there is a significant difference between the management strategies use by the principal of the four schools in Segamat District. The significant difference between management strategy and the four schools probably are due to the principals' ability and skill to use the strategies to convince the staff to the maximum capacity to serve the general publics in the district. Each principal would have used his or her own strategy to accomplish organizational task. They're the role of ideas from principal respectively. As Glenn Rothberg (2004) suggest that ideas contribute to the achievement of high performance, excellence, and competitive advantage in management and organization. To intervene and to facilitate these favorable outcomes, managers need to be aware of how ideas are affected by mindsets they use and what is actually happening to ideas in their workplaces.

nificant different between personal factors, working experiences

	Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8.752	3	2.917	8.739	.000
Within Groups	14.688	44	.334		
Total	23.439	47			

Note: Value of F Prob. = 0.001 which is smaller than  $\alpha$  Level of 0.05

Table 6 above shows there is a significant difference between personal factors and working experiences of the principals in the four schools. The significant difference occurred probably due to the seniority of the principals with working and managerial experiences throughout his or her managerial career could manage the organization well and serve the general publics. And this will top the performance achievement and excellent in management of those schools.

### Conclusion and recommendations

The way an educational organization is run and its atmosphere do influence its performance. Thus, the educational organization's performance and the school administrators especially the school principals are significantly associated to each other. Administrators need to have positive thoughts and attitude towards new management skills in order to achieve success. Moreover, by doing all these, the educational organization will be more prepared in embracing the challenges.

Total performance for an education organization is greatly needed and it has to be balanced in facing the holistic challenges. Hence, the management that succeeded in achieving high quality performance will groom their organizations comprehensively and well trained in every aspect.

As far as the Malaysian educational organizations and school leadership's quality, their managerial and administrative perspectives are concern. Each will governed its own ways and process of managing to achieve excellent in their performance but so long as it is a public organization and all public administrators and managers has to adhere to the Public Service Department's directive. It is easier to achieve performance achievement towards excellent in managing schools by introduction of a process approach as suggested by Judith Ann Chapman (2001) because processes are the key to organizational effectiveness and they link stakeholder and markets to organizational goal. Managers contribute by adding value to organizational processes and Bartlett and Ghoshal (1997) says the focus of managerial work have exposed the more proactive and creative aspects of managerial roles, all managers at all levels create opportunities and stretch the organization at its boundaries in the committed sense for the full hearted service to their stakeholder. In addition to achieve the excellent in the wholesome performance achievement, the TQM and KPI in education has to practice and evaluate. However, we in the eastern countries have religious value as guidance and that is another value- added to enhance the effectiveness of managerial effort in school principals and their leadership quality holistically.

The sample size for the survey is small. However, it will be increase in the future study.

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