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Exploring the influence of student leadership on self-resilience for national secondary school students in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Students are the backbone to future leadership and the catalyst for the success of a country. Hence, student leadership with high self-resilience should be shaped and built as early as possible. Student leaders with low self-resilience will portray negative feelings and not able to play a full role. To identify student leadership practices and their relationship with national secondary school students' resilience in the eastern zone states of Malaysia, this quantitative survey study used questionnaires adapted from the inventory of student leadership practices (S-LPI) to measure the dimensions of student leadership on 394 students selected through cluster random sampling while a self-resilience questionnaire was used to measure students' level of self-resilience. Using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 26 for descriptive data and partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM 3) for inferential statistics, the results showed that the dimensions of inspire a shared vision, challenge a processes and enable to act were dimensions of student leadership practices that had significantly affected self-resilience while student leadership practices with flexible, orderly self-resilience and prioritizing social relationships in organizations were factors for shaping future leaders.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 has outlined the leadership skills in the Six Student Aspirations specifically to be developed for all students [1]. It is acknowledged by the Malaysian Ministry of Education that leadership skills are important and as part of the students' nature. However, most leadership skills development program was done in a slightly laissez-faire way, without properly identifying and nurturing students 'leadership potential' [2]. Previous study found that the concept of student leadership differs from mainstream leadership in organizations or companies which focuses less on student leadership [3]. In fact, the context of leadership research based on organizational leadership does not apply to student leadership [4].

Further, according to previous study there are issues related to models in student leadership that only focus more on competence that is, "doing" and not personal qualities that is "being" a leader [5]. Even in school, students are usually seen as followers rather than leaders [6]. Thus, the role of students as catalysts and major curriculum changes in schools is not well illustrated [7]. The serious attention should be given to the importance of mastery and measurement of student leadership [8] because that school organizations are seen not to train students to develop student leadership identities. In addition, the education system at present

emphasizes more on the academic performance which causes the formation of perfect human beings to lag [9]. The impact is that students fail to demonstrate leadership skills when they are in the real working world [10]. This clearly indicates that the cognitive readiness of student leaders needs to be considered as a construct in the development of student leadership [4].

In the environment of the national secondary school education system in Malaysia, student leadership is usually observed when students actively participate in student bodies or co-curricular activities in school [6]. In fact, a leadership skills acquired by students are limited such as when they are involved with a program or entrusted with any form of task [9]. This explains that the school environment is less likely to create an atmosphere of leadership skills building. Students today need to be given space and opportunities for them to develop their leadership talents [11]. In the previous study, the role of students is viewed narrowly, the students themselves are afraid to change and expect an environment-led curriculum [7]. Further, the school environment is not conducive; the teaching and learning approaches and co-curricular activities do not make students' leadership attitudes to stand out [12]. Schools that are less focused on student leadership development are often seen as schools that do not have a clear vision and planning on the leadership development of students [13].

Similarly, the construction of an adolescent leadership model related to educational and social contexts that are more context-sensitive and responsive to various learning environments and adolescent populations [4]. This is because student leadership requires resilience in response to stress control and adaptive ability [14]. There is an issue highlight that leaders with low psychological resilience will have negative feelings, are unable to play a full role such as not focusing on tasks, avoiding or turning away from tasks [15]. Findings from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2019, around 0.5 million Malaysians face depression. The NHMS 2019 statistical data report also states that mental health disorders are experienced by 2.3 % of the people in this country, namely teenagers aged 16 and above. The impact of emotional psychosocial instability eventually triggered the idea of hurting and suicide [16], pinching and depression [17]. Therefore, there is a need for future studies that can focus on the assertion of action in implementing high resilience leadership practices [18]. Based on the problems discussed, it is appropriate to carry out a further study to explore the truth of student leadership practices that are determinants of self-resilience among secondary school students in Malaysia.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Sample

A sample of 394 students was taken from a population of 304, 450 students in 398 national secondary schools in the Eastern Zone of Malaysia. Student populations were selected based on the sampling tables [19], [20]. The respondents of the study were students involved in co-curricular activities in national secondary schools and were randomly selected independently to answer the questionnaire. Based on participants' distribution, 116 students are male (29.44%), while 278 students are female (70.56%).

2.2. Instrument

There were three sections of the questionnaire used in this study. Part A was the respondent information; part B was the student leadership practices inventory (S-LPI) which consisted of 30 items of student leadership practice measurement questionnaire [21]; and part C was the resilience quotient quantity measurement with a total of 32 questionnaire items [22]. The dimensions of student leadership and self-resilience as well as the value of the overall Cronbach alpha coefficient ranged from .70 to .96. Therefore, the alpha value for this study was acceptable because it met the minimum level of .70 for Cronbach's alpha [23].

2.3. Data analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 26 for descriptive data while inferential statistics used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM 3). The measurement phase model and the structural model were the first two stages the data had to go through [24]. The measurement step of the model typically involves investigating the item's validity and reliability as well as each dimension included in the instrument. High validity will influence the study's finding; thus, this section is essential. The relationship between significant student self-resilience and student leadership dimensions was then determined using the structural phase.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Internal consistency, construct reliability and convergent validity

Table 1 shows how internal consistency constructs, outer loading, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) in assessment of measurement model. The values of external loading all

items were between 0.709 and 0.846. Meanwhile, the composite reliability for each construct in the student leadership and self -resilience model was: model the way (0.889), inspire a share vision (0.899), challenge a process (0.888), enable to act (0.833), encourage the heart (0.873) and self -resilience (0.937) which were found to be above 0.7; AVE is reported to be greater than 0.5. Thus, this suggests the model of this study achieves the required internal consistency [24]. Meanwhile, the AVE value that must be adhered to is above 0.50, while the CR value in turn must exceed the value of 0.60 [25].

Table 1. Internal consistency, construct reliability, and convergent validity

Construct	Indicator	Outer loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Convergent validity (AVE>0.5)
Challenge a process (KPCP)	CP_1	0.791	.834	0.888	0.664	Yes
	CP_2	0.815				
	CP_3	0.846				
	CP_6	0.807				
Encourage the heart (KPEH)	EH_2	0.810	.865	0.873	0.631	Yes
	EH_3	0.766				
	EH_4	0.822				
	EH_5	0.779				
Enable to act (KPEO)	EO_1	0.784	.831	0.833	0.624	Yes
	EO_4	0.803				
	EO_5	0.782				
Model the way (KPMT)	MT_2	0.838	.700	0.889	0.668	Yes
	MT_4	0.806				
	MT_5	0.817				
	MT_6	0.807				
Inspire a share vision (KPVS)	VS_1	0.724	.805	0.899	0.597	Yes
	VS_2	0.782				
	VS_3	0.776				
	VS_4	0.753				
	VS_5	0.767				
	VS_6	0.829				
Resilience	DM_2	0.735	.925	0.937	0.573	Yes
	DM_4	0.751				
	F_2	0.717				
	KD_2	0.740				
	KD_3	0.777				
	KD_4	0.725				
	O_2	0.793				
	P_1	0.709				
	P_3	0.805				
	VP_3	0.754				
	VP_4	0.816				

3.2. Discriminant validity

The validity of the discrimination was analyzed based on the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) criteria as shown in Table 2. The overall value of the correlation between each construct is less than 1.00. This indicates that all constructions are different from each other [24].

Table 2. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)

	KPCP	KPEH	KPEO	KPMT	KPVS	RESILIENCE
KPCP						
KPEH	0.902					
KPEO	0.947	0.997				
KPMT	0.919	0.965	0.973			
KPVS	0.955	0.964	0.939	0.904		
RESILIENCE	0.813	0.746	0.779	0.706	0.791	

3.3. Structural model

Structural model measurements were performed through a bootstrapping procedure with a total subsample of 5,000 and a two-tailed test at a significance level of 0.05 [24]. Collinearity assessment was performed first before testing the significance of the crossing coefficients to bypass the problem of collinearity between the constructs tested. The results of collinearity analysis found that the value of variance inflation factor (VIF) is less than 5.0 [24]. This clearly indicates that no collinearity problems occurred in the tested models as shown in Table 3 and Figure 1.

Table 3. Collinearity assessment of variance inflation factor

	KPCP	KPEH	KPEO	KPMT	KPVS	RESILIENCE
KPCP						3.605
KPEH						3.841
KPEO						2.870
KPMT						3.591
KPVS						4.348
RESILIENCE						

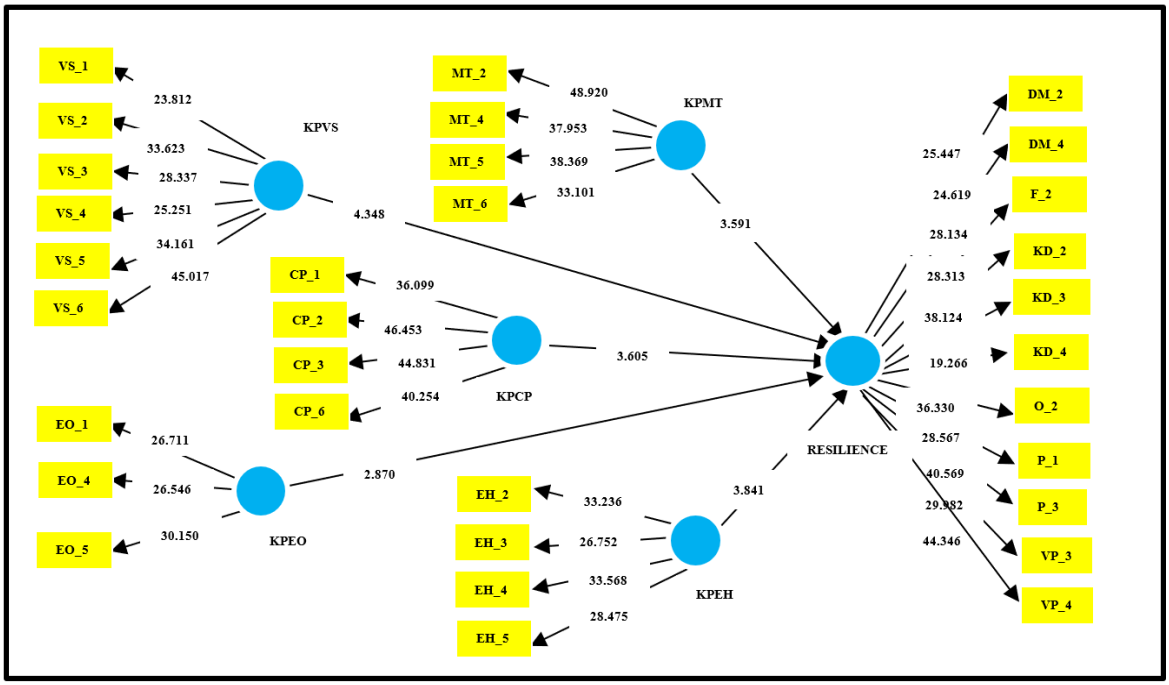


Figure 1. The structural model of this study

The result of the structural model relationship is presented in Table 4. Student leadership practices that were found to have a significant influence on self-resilience among national secondary school students were inspire a share vision construct (β=0.313, p<0.05), challenge a process construct (β=0.334, p<0.05) enable to act construct (β=0.124, p<0.05). However, model the way construct (β=0.025, p>0.05) and encourage the heart construct (β=0.076 p>0.05) had no significant influence on students' self-resilience.

Table 4. Structural model assessment results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Original sample β	Standard deviation	t-values	p-values	Result
H1	KPMT->RESILIENCE	-0.025	0.079	0.370	0.711	Not significant
H2	KPVS->RESILIENCE	0.313	0.079	3.975	0.000	Significant
H3	KPCP->RESILIENCE	0.334	0.079	4.222	0.000	Significant
H4	KPEO->RESILIENCE	0.124	0.058	2.149	0.032	Significant
H5	KPEH->RESILIENCE	0.076	0.069	1.106	0.269	Not significant

4. DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to identify the influence of the dimensions of student leadership practices on the resilience of national secondary school students in Malaysia. The results of SEM PLS analysis found that there were three constructs of student leadership practices that achieved model matching to student self-resilience. Hypotheses H2, H3, and H4 i.e., inspire a share vision, challenge a processes, and enable to act constructs have a significant influence on students' self-resilience (β=0.313, p<0.05), (β=0.334, p<0.05) and (β=0.124, p<0.05). The findings of this study are in line with a previous study in current student leadership development in educational institutions [26]. This explains that students who practice trigger shared visions, build challenging processes and trigger action in groups have flexible, organized self-

resilience and prioritize social relationships in the organization [27]. The finding of this study is consistent with the previous study that students show the importance of the relationship of resilience to students' perceptions of leadership [28]. Similarly, the findings of a previous study stated that student leadership has a significant relationship with self-resilience [29]. However, the results of previous study also found no significant relationship between student leadership and self-resilience [30], [31]. In addition, the study also found no significant relationship between student leadership and self-resilience [32].

Nevertheless, a previous study stressed that leaders with the practice of triggering a shared vision play an important role in realizing high organizational performance [33]. This is because organizations that have varying performance with many specific risks require self-resilience related to the type of leadership practiced by leaders. This concluded that resilient leaders are better able to build challenging and inspiring processes to spark a shared vision to strengthen their leadership capabilities [26]. This is because leaders who have self-resilience are more highly committed to purpose, seek meaning or purpose in life, have priorities, clarity of purpose and direction in life. In fact, the leaders are seen to help the school community because they have self-resilience, be adaptive and have self-balance during crises and see events as opportunities to challenge themselves [34].

According to a study, resilience is a problem that emerges in students as a skill that is easily formed [27]. This concept of resilience demonstrates the potential to positively influence leadership development in accurately preparing students for engagement with the workforce as well as increasingly diverse social change upon graduation. It shows that positive student leadership has an influence on student resilience. Another study found that students highly value student leadership and consider it as a means to increase self-belonging in school, committed to work harder in achieving goals, so that voices are better heard in school, acquire lifelong skills, enjoy better relationships in school, and enjoy a better self-concept [35].

Based on gender demographic factors, the findings showed that all dimensions of student leadership were found to differ significantly in gender mean scores for model the way, inspire a share vision, challenge a processes, enable to act and encourage the heart among male respondents compared to female respondents ($t=-2.988$; $p<0.05$), ($t=-2.680$; $p<0.05$), ($t=-4.119$; $p<0.05$), ($t=-3.827$; $p<0.05$), and ($t=-3.279$; $p<0.05$). This explains that female students have higher mean scores than male students in all dimensions of student leadership. These findings are supported by the study who found that female student leadership was higher than male student leadership [36]. However, the results of this study were found to contradict the findings previous study who found no significant differences between gender aspects of student leadership [37]. However previous studies have also found that there was a significant difference between male and female student leaders, it was found that the level of leadership of male students was higher than female student leaders [38]. In fact, these practices are appropriate, relevant and there was no difference in gap between female or male students because they will show similar performance in their leadership practices [39].

5. CONCLUSION

The most crucial finding in this study is that the practices of student leadership among secondary school student is high as a whole. Student participation in school leadership is an important element in secondary education in Malaysia. Students feel valued as individuals who have the potential to develop the future generation and the country towards success, as emphasized in the National Education Philosophy which is an education at school helps build a comprehensive and integrated individual that includes leadership skills. Understanding the definition of student leadership and the shared nature possessed by student leaders is one of the factors in striving towards a successful nation. Therefore, it is important to develop students' leadership and leadership identity' or sense of self-ability to lead, while in school to become future leaders. Therefore, it is important to understand the type of leadership style exhibited by student school leaders in Malaysia. This is because through the development of training and leadership programs will help increase the knowledge of student leaders about the leadership framework and personal abilities as leaders in the organization. This is because as leaders, students need to respond to each situation with appropriate flexibility and be responsive to change with a variety of perspectives. Meanwhile, leadership development programs require learning activities that take place in real-life situations and focus on increasing student's self-confidence and resilience as leaders.

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