TIME MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP STYLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN, KUALA LUMPUR

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study examined time management by and the leadership style of school

principals. It examines whether there exists a true linear relationship between time

management and the leadership style of the school principals.

Time management by school principals was assessed using the Executive Time

Management Instrument (ETMI) which was developed by Distasio (1986). The ETMI

assesses time management in five scale categories, namely Work Environment, Self-

Management, Staff Supervision, Planning and Goals, and Communications. The

leadership style of the principals was determined by using the Least Preferred Co-

Worker (LPC) Scale, which was developed by Fiedler (1967). The LPC measures

leadership style on a continuum ranging from a task-motivated leadership style to a

relationship-motivated leadership style. The two instruments were translated into

Malay. This study yielded a Cronbach alpha value of .82 for the ETMI and a split-

half reliability coefficient of .53 for the LPC.

The subjects for this study were all 77 government school principals in Wilayah

Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur. The researcher received a 100% return rate on the ETMI.

One principal however, did not respond to the LPC.

The results of the study indicate that over 75% of the principals " very often" practise

most of the time management principles under the Work Environment and

Communications scale categories, and only some of the time management principles

under the Self-Management, Staff Supervision and Planning and Goals scale categories. More than 50 % of the principals seldom set a certain time each day for appointments, are " very often" unable to say "no" to excessive demands for their time, "very often" tend to procrastinate, and "very often" oversupervise their staff. Almost 50% of the principals "very often" do not delegate tasks.

The results also indicate that the majority of the principals (92.1%) practise a relationship-motivated style of leadership. The examination of the True or Population Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient suggests that there is no true linear relationship between leadership style and four scale categories of time management, namely, Work Environment, Staff Supervision, Planning and Goals, and Communications. However, there may be a weak true linear relationship between the time management scale category of Self-Management and the leadership style of the principals.

ملخص البحث

درس هذا البحث تدبير الوقت والنمط القيادي لدى مديري المدارس، و حاول أن يحدد إمكان وجود علاقة اطرادية حقيقية بين تدبير الوقت والنمط القيادي عند هؤلاء المديرين .

تمّ تقويم تدبير الوقت عند مديري المدارس باستخدام (أداة تدبير الوقت لدى التنفيذيين ETMI) التي طورها ديستاسيو عام (١٩٨٦). تفحص هذه الأداة تدبير الوقت في خمس فئات من المقاييس، هي بيئة العمل، والتدبير الذاتي، ومراقبة الموظفين، والتخطيط والهدف، والاتصالات . تمّ تحديد النمط القيادي للمديرين باستخدام مقياس (أدنى شريك عمل مفضل LPC) الذي طوره فيلدار عام (١٩٦٧) . وهو مقياس يقيس النمط القيادي على مدى متواصل بدءاً من النمط القيادي بحافز المهمة، إلى النمط القيادي بحافز العلاقة. وترجمت الأداتان إلى الملايوية. أنتجت هذه الدراسة قيمة ألفا كرونباش ٨٢ر. لأداة تدبير الوقت لدى التنفيذيين ، و معامل ثبات انشطار نصفي بمقدار ٥٣ر. لمقياس (أدنى شريك عمل مفضل).

كانت عينة هذه الدراسة جميع مديري المدارس الحكومية في ولاية العاصمة كوالالمبور، والبالغ عددهم سبعة وسبعين، وتلقى الباحث إجابة كاملة (بنسبة ١٠٠٪) على (أداة تدبير الوقت لدى التنفيذيين)، ولم يعط مدير واحد فقط إجابته على مقياس (أدنى شريك عمل مفضل).

أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن أكثر من سبعين في المائة ٧٥٪ من المديرين يطبقون "غالباً" معظم مبادئ تدبير الوقت في فئتي مقياس بيئة العمل و مقياس الاتصالات، و بعض مبادئ تدبير الوقت تحت فئات مقاييس التدبير الذاتي، و مراقبة الموظفين، والتخطيط والهدف. واتضح أن خمسين في المائة ٥٠٪ من المديرين الذين يندر أن يحددوا مواعيد يومية للمقابلات لا يتمكنـــون "غالباً" من رفــض (أي قــول "لا") المطالب الكثيرة لاستغلال أوقاتهم، ويميلون "غالبا" إلى المماطلة، ويجاوزون الحد "غالباً" في مراقبة الموظفين. كمـا اتضـح أن ما يقارب خمسين في المائة ٥٠٪ من المديرين لا يسندون المهام إلى غـيرهم "غالبا".

تفيد النتائج أيضاً أن معظم المديرين ٩٢,١٪ يطبقون النمط القيـادي بحافز العلاقة. ويبدو لنا من النظر في معامل ارتباط بيرسون أنـه لا توجـد علاقـة اطرادية حقيقية بين النمط القيـادي وفئات المقاييس الأربـع لتدبير الوقت، والتي هي بيئة العمل، ومراقبة الموظفين، والتخطيط والهـدف، والاتصـالات . ولكنه قد توجد علاقـة اطرادية حقيقيـة ضعيفـة بـين فئـة التدبير الذاتي في مقياس تدبير الوقت والنمط القيادي للمديرين .
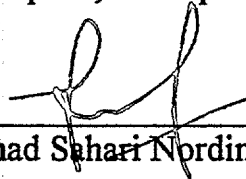
APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Education.

_____

Dr. Ratnawati Mohd-Asraf
Supervisor

Date: 9/3/98

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Education.

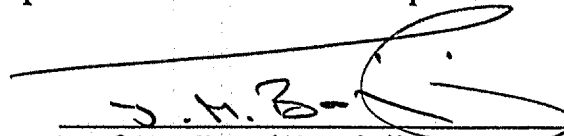_____

Dr. Mohamad Sahari Nordin
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This thesis was submitted to the Department of Education and is accepted as partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education.

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This thesis was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education.

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Prof. Dr. Jamal Barzinji
Acting Dean, Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences

Date: 17.3.98

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

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Signature .... Date .... 6/3/1998 ....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The school principal has been viewed as an engineer keeping the school's machinery working through symbolic, facilitative, or political strategies (Deal 1987, cited in Rallis 1990:200). In other words, the principal makes an important difference in the life of a school. As Blumberg & Greenfield (1986:3) remark, "Even by doing nothing the principal affects the life of the school, if for no other reason than that by doing nothing he or she creates a fragmented system in which people work and survive as best they can." Therefore the principal is the key figure in the school. Furthermore, the 21st century will witness broad social, economic, political and technological changes which will influence, in very powerful ways, the direction of change in education. This will inevitably have implications for the principal. Accounting for these new trends in education, Caldwell & Spink (1992:10) note:

> Leaders at the school level will require the capacity to manage
> within a centrally determined framework, something which to a
> degree has always been the case except that more recent
> developments involve adaptation to a changing set of priorities
> and a more demanding set of accountability requirements.

According to Caldwell & Spink, a capacity for leadership emerges as the central requirement for schools and school systems as events unfold in the 1990s. They say:

> This leadership must be more transformational than
> transactional, with the former implying a capacity to engage
> others in a commitment to change, while the latter is more
> concerned with maintaining an assurance of a secure place of
> work for a commitment to get the job done.
> (Caldwell & Spink 1992:19)

The success of a school depends mainly upon the ability of the principal in performing his role. He has to see that the functions of the school are satisfactorily carried out.

A good principal delegates his authority appropriately to his subordinate staff and leaves them with maximum permissible freedom so that they will be encouraged to use their own initiative in carrying out their duties (Kamaruddin 1989:22).

With respect to an effective organisational leader, the principal must be skilled in bureaucratic processes, time scheduling, effective meeting techniques, room allocations, and transportation, in order to organise and maintain an efficient school enterprise (Dublin 1991:2). Teachers feel a greater sense of accomplishment when they perceive that administrators support their 'teaching time' and avoid scheduling unnecessary meetings and conferences. Of course, community members are also appreciative of schools that are well managed as there is greater probability for student success. However, few question the need for better school leadership. Indeed, "better schools seem to require better leaders: Improve the leaders and they will lead their schools to better performance" (Donaldson Jr. & Marnik 1995:ix). In this light, Sergiovanni (1991:22) cited a study that reveals that successful school principals use time differently than do their more ordinary counterparts. Thus, one aspect of becoming a better leader is to improve on time management.

Background Of The Study

The job of the principal is very challenging and demanding. The principal, being the chief executive of the school, has a complex and diverse role to perform. Roland (1980, as cited in Sergiovanni 1991: 22) describes the principal as being "ultimately responsible for almost everything that happens in school and out". Dinham et al. (1995:36), after reviewing the studies of O'Demsey (1976) and Willis (1980) concludes that past studies tend to reveal that:

the principal's role is complex, ambiguous, and that he or she must attempt to cope with long days punctuated with numerous interruptions, many short-term interpersonal contacts, not always of his or her instigation, many issues at various stages of resolution being juggled conveniently, and a general perception that he or she arrives late, leaves early, and wanders around the school in between time.

Dinham et al. (1995) assert that more recently, the principal's role has blurred into that of a change agent, financial planner, marketer, and entrepreneur. Burns (1991:44) shares a similar view with Roland, who says, " The principal is expected to be all things to all people and the demands on his time and energy become so exhausting that they drain the enthusiasm and creativity that could make good principals excellent ones."

In Malaysia, the principals of secondary schools are not only educational administrators but are also leaders of the community (Kamaruddin 1989:22). They have to interpret the objectives of their schools in relation to the objectives of the national system of education, and the needs of Malaysian society as a whole. This means that principals, besides administering their schools, have to deal with matters pertaining to the community.

In a rapidly developing society, the role of principals is becoming more complex. Although their role is increasing in complexity and in diversity, principals are faced with limited resources, especially time. Sergiovanni (1991:15) says, "Principals typically work in an environment characterised by limited resources, and this too becomes an important consideration. Time is limited. "

Kamaruddin (1989:29) notes that the amount of time principals in Malaysia today spend on the various aspects of their administrative task varies according to such

factors as the size of the schools, the specific problems of the schools, the ability of the principals, the general ability of their staff, and several other factors. According to Kamaruddin, the number of principals in Malaysia who organise their working time is very few. The only time allocation which most principals do is for their teaching; but for other tasks they have no fixed periods.

In view of the limited time available to perform the complex role, it is important that a principal manages his time well so that he achieves maximum returns on his efforts. Without good time management, he may spend too much time in routine executive and clerical work, and consequently, spend too little time in supervising and attending to development of policy and dealing with the community. Moreover, he may also be unable to play the role of instructional leader. As Burns (1991:44) says, "Most principals rank time as the number one factor that prevents them from being the instructional leader they would like to be." Without time to reflect, or a focus on instructional leadership, and a direct working involvement with staff or focus on research utilisation, there is little input into a generation and articulation of a vision that characterises more alternatively organised schools (Rosenblum et al, 1994:105). Since the principal is the manager of the school system, then it is crucial to note his or her use of time. Since the principal is the chief executive of a school, the way he or she uses time is a form of administrative attention, which communicates meanings to others in the school system. Rees (1991:31) says, " one view of the manager's job is that the only real resource is time. There appear to be numerous variations in the ways in which managers either use their time effectively or squander it."
Dublin (1991:2) emphasises that the principal must be skilled in time scheduling in order to be an effective organisational leader. According to Robbins & Coulter

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(1996:319), managers who use their time effectively know what activities they want to accomplish, the best order to do the activities, and when they want to complete those activities.

This study thus addresses the importance of time management of principals in executing effectively their complex and diverse role. The researcher is of the view that a first step towards a successful school system is to have a principal who manages his time well. The principal's efficient utilisation of time affects students' achievement, teachers' performance, and overall productivity (Dublin, 1991:2).

A number of authors have discussed the importance of leadership style with regard to time management. According to Distasio (1986), Mackenzie (1972), LeBoeuf (1979), Webber (1980) and Lakein (1973), agree that the effective time manager is effective at, among others, planning, delegating, and decision making. Also, Rees (1991:93) says, "when speed is of the essence, and critical information and expertise are vested in one person, authoritarian leadership may be appropriate and acceptable. When the conditions are reversed, a more democratic style of leadership is likely to prove more effective." Thus this study is aimed at examining the possible relationship between time management and leadership style of school principals.

Statement Of The Problem

During this era when the principal is experiencing the greater pressures of managing the school, attending special courses, dealing with special interest groups, and a variety of other pressures, time has become an increasingly scarce commodity. To suggest that principals find additional time to meet present and new job demands is

not reasonable. If principals are to keep up with the demands of their position, it will be necessary to develop better skills in the management of their time.

In addition, studies in the behavioural sciences have indicated the importance of the leadership style of principals as it relates to executive skills such as planning, delegating, and decision making. The current demands on the leadership of the school justify the examination of the possible relationships, which may exist between time management and the leadership style of the school principal.

Purpose Of The Study

The purpose of this study is to measure quantitatively the management of time by school principals in Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur. It also examines the leadership style practised by the principals and the possible relationship between the time management of school principals and their leadership style.

The Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do school principals in Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur manage their time as gauged by the Executive Time Management Instrument (ETMI)? Specifically:

   a) What is the percentage of principals who responded "very often" for each time management statement on the ETMI?

   b) How often do principals practise time management principles under each of the following time management category scales:

     i)   Work Environment;

     ii)   Self-Management;

     iii)   Staff Supervision;

     iv)   Planning and Goals;

     v)   Communications?

2. What proportion of the school principals in Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur practise the task-motivated style of leadership, what proportion practise the relationship-motivated style of leadership, and what proportion fall under the "socio-independent group" as measured by the Least-Preferred Co-Worker Scale ?

3. Is there any correlation between the time management and leadership style of school principals in Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur ?

Significance Of The Study

The demands placed upon the school principals have changed over the recent years. School principals are experiencing greater pressures in managing schools, attending courses and departmental meetings, in dealing with special interest groups, discipline problems, and from a host of other sources. As a result, school principals are forced to evaluate how their time is spent to get the most out of their time.

To date, it appears that little has been done to examine the time management of school principals in Malaysia. Siti Fatimah (1993) looked into the relationship between time management and stress among school principals in Kedah and Perlis whilst Tan (1995) carried out a study on the relationship between time management and leadership styles of school administrators in the District of Kuala Muda/Yan Kedah.

The results of this study would add to the existing literature on time management and leadership style of school principals in Malaysia. This study should also be of value to school principals in Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur and the State Education Department of Federal Territory Kuala Lumpur.

Delimitations Of The Study

i.   The findings of the study describe how school principals in Wilayah Persekutuan of Kuala Lumpur manage their time; it will not be generalised to school principals in other situations.

ii.   Since this study involves the gathering of a population of scores, and is thus a descriptive study, no statistical generalisation can be (Brewer, 1988) nor will be made.

Conceptual And Operational Definitions Of Terms

The following operational definitions are used in this study:

Instrument: A device or procedure for systematically collecting information, which includes tests, questionnaires, rating scales, checklists, and observation forms (Wallen & Fraenkel, 1991). In this study, the researcher uses the term instrument to refer to the Executive Time Management Instrument (ETMI) and the Least Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) Scale.

Principal: This refers to a secondary school principal. In this study, principals refer to secondary school principals in Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur.

Time management: The way the principal manages himself/herself in performing his/her administrative tasks within the official working hours. In this study, the time

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management of school principal is measured using the Executive Time Management Instrument (ETMI).

Leadership styles: By leadership style or personality style Fiedler means " a transsituational mode of relating and interacting with others" (1973, as cited in Hanson, 1985:194). In this study, the leadership style of school principal is measured using the Least Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) Scale.

Task-motivated Leadership style: The leadership style of a leader who "obtains satisfaction from accomplishing objectives in an effective and efficient manner" (Hanson, 1985:195). In this study, a person who practises the task-motivated leadership style is one who scores 63 or less, as measured on the LPC scale.

Relationship-motivated Leadership style: The leadership style of a leader who "strives to maintain good interpersonal relationships with his or her subordinates" (Hanson, 1985:195). In this study, a person who practises the relationship-motivated leadership style is one who scores 73 or above, as measured on the LPC scale.

Socio-independent: A term used to describe a group of people who tend to be less concerned with the attitudes and opinions of others and less involved with either their superiors or their subordinates or the way in which their personality impinges on others (Bass, Fiedler, & Krueger, 1964; Fiedler, 1967 as cited in Fiedler & Garcia, 1987). In this study, a person who falls under the "socio-independent" group is one who scores between 64 and 72, as measured on the LPC scale.