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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS
AND HEADTEACHERS' LEADERSHIP STYLES IN SRK, SJK (C)
AND SJK (T) SCHOOLS IN TELUK INTAN**

BY

RAJATHILAGAM KRISHNAN

**A PROJECT PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
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ABSTRACT

The primary purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between school effectiveness (limited to the UPSR results) and headteachers' leadership styles in SRK, SJK (C) and SJK (T) Schools in Teluk Intan, Perak. This study involved a total of 199 teachers from fourteen primary schools in Teluk Intan, Perak. The fourteen schools comprised five SK schools, four SJK (C) schools and five SJK (T) schools. The data collected were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 9.0. The study provided evidence that there is a relationship between school effectiveness and the Consideration dimension rather than the Initiating Structure in headteacher leadership style in the three different types of schools. Moreover, the study also showed that there was statistically significant evidence that the Consideration dimension could explain the variance in school effectiveness rather than the Initiating Structure dimension.

APPROVAL PAGE

TITLE OF PROJECT PAPER: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND HEADTEACHERS' LEADERSHIP STYLES IN SRK, SJK (C) AND SJK (T) SCHOOLS IN TELUK INTAN.

NAME OF AUTHOR : RAJATHILAGAM KRISHNAN

The undersigned certify that the above candidate has fulfilled the conditions of project paper prepared in partial fulfillment for the degree of master of management.

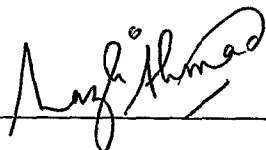
SUPERVISOR

Signature : 


Name : Mr. Yusof Ismail

Date : 30th November 1999.

ENDORSED BY:



Dr. Nik Nazli Nik Ahmad
Head,
Master of Management Program
Date: 30th November 1999



Dr. Obiyathulla Ismath Bacha
Executive Director,
IIUM Management Centre
Date: 30th November 1999.

DECLARATION

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

Date: 30th November 1999.

Signature:.....

Name : RAJATHILAGAM KRISHNAN

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DEDICATION

This project paper is specially dedicated to my parents, my wife C.Kamaladevi and my sons R.Riseban, R.Thuyeelan and R.Kavilen

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Every year, when the primary school assessment test (UPSR), the Lower Secondary Assessment Examination (PMR), the Malaysian School Certificate Examination (SPM) and the Higher School Certificate Examination (STPM) results are announced, the main interest of everyone is which schools scored 100 percent passes or have produced the highest number of straight as and grade one students. In recent years, even the minister of education has taken a personal interest by going to the best performing schools to congratulate the schools personally and makes the official announcements of the results of the major examinations.

Parents are also into this fray of selecting premier schools in the hope that their children would excel in the examinations. Thus it comes as no surprise when one reads of parents clamouring for these premier schools to enrol their children year in and year out. With the ministry of education giving special attention and the media publicising the much-hyped achievements of these schools has resulted in the society placing considerable importance on excellent academic performance. A couple of decades ago, neither the ministry of education nor the parents placed much emphasis on how many A1s or A2s students are able score as compared to the present society.

Many are of the opinion that the background of the child is a more deciding factor in determining its education success rather than the school. However, research and studies in the subject of school effectiveness have suggested that schools do make a difference to the progress of individual pupils.

In the mid-70s, researchers implied that schools made no difference to pupils' overall achievement. It was the social background, particularly the social class of the child, which was believed to be the all-important determinant of the child's educational outcome. These implications were concluded in response to the perceived failure of certain education programmes such as Operation Headstart in the United States.

This negative view was challenged through school effectiveness research in the late '70s and early '80s (Mortimore and Reynolds, 1991). The research demonstrated that schools do make a difference to the progress of individual pupils.

Nevertheless, these views should not be interpreted as to suggest that home background is unimportant but that the progress of children (especially) from a working class background may be greater in an effective school than the progress of middle class children in a less effective school. School effectiveness research characterised that the key factors of a better education system were those who teach and those who manage the schools (Reynolds, 1991).

Willms and Cuttance (1985) carried out a similar study in Scotland that showed that there was a wide variety in schooling outcomes between schools further consolidated these findings. The results were achieved even after controlling for family background characteristics and pupil ability prior to entering secondary schools. In this study the academic attainment in public examinations was taken as the criterion of school effectiveness. In the most effective schools, the average pupil scored five or more '0' grade passes (A-C). In the worst schools, a similar pupil left with only one or two '0'

grade passes. Through this finding Willms and Cuttance further substantiated the extent of pupils' achievement variation between the most and least effective schools.

Rosenblum (1979) states that in many ways the school's headteacher is the most important and influential individual in any school. S/He is the person responsible for all activities that occur in and around the school building. It is the Headteacher's leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. S/He is the main link between the community and the school. The way s/he performs in this capacity largely determines the attitudes of parents and students about the school. If a school is vibrant, innovative, child-centred place, if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching, if students are performing to the best of their abilities, one can always point to the Headteacher's leadership as the key to success.

Consequently, the Headteacher's role is now acknowledged as the major contributing constituent in a school's success (Rutter, 1979). The headteacher's competence, experience and capabilities contributed in promoting a healthy school climate and positive ethos. This has resulted in increasing the feeling of involvement and commitment among school staff and thereby increasing pupil achievement.

At the local level, a study initiated by the Education Ministry of Malaysia (1982) further reiterated that the headteacher is largely responsible for setting the tone and the standard of educational achievement in the school. Thus the perception of the headteacher being a mere administrator who ensures the smooth functioning of the

school no longer holds water. The headteacher's role demands more than these basic functions but now encompasses motivating, guiding, directing and leading teachers and students in increasing school effectiveness.

1.1 Background to the study

As far as the Malaysian society is concerned, school effectiveness is equated to the academic performances of its student population in the many major examinations like UPSR, PMR, SPM and the STPM. Nothing matters more than the excellent achievement of the students in the academic curriculum. Tests and examinations are perceived to be the most important aspects of the Malaysian education system. Thus, both headteachers and teachers strive industriously to ensure that the schools' objectives are attained as stated in the curricular. The national academic curricula is aimed at providing the necessary knowledge to encourage the overall development of the student intellectually, spiritually and physically as has been spelled out in the National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan).

Various researchers in the field of education have established that there is a relationship between students' academic achievement and the leadership styles of the headteachers (Mangieri and Arnn, 1985; Purkey and Smith, 1985). Headteachers do not have the right to hire or fire the teaching staff nor possess the authority to develop a curricular of their own to cater for the needs of their individual schools. However, the option to influence and motivate their teachers to perform well by providing the right kind of leadership to create the right ethos to provide a conducive environment

for the students' learning, development and excellent performance in examinations is within the headteacher's means.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In accordance to the National Education Philosophy (1988) and in meeting the challenges of the nation's Vision 2020, the Education of Ministry of Malaysia has formulated a curriculum for an elite education system to complement the nation's aspirations. Consequently, it is of utmost importance that such a system is implemented right from the formative years of the pupils at the primary school level.

However, there is a glaring disparity in the academic performances of the three major types of primary schools at the UPSR examination. Headteachers are appointed to these schools through uniform criteria of selection and qualification. Yet past performances in the UPSR examination by pupils from the National Schools (SK), National Type Chinese Schools [SJK (Cina)] and the National Type Tamil Schools [SJK (Tamil)] show a difference. The difference in academic achievement among the primary schools could cause concern that there are differences in the leadership styles and behaviours of the headteachers and eventually affects the academic performances of the pupils in the schools.

In view of this doubt, the researcher has chosen to study the leadership styles of headteachers in the three major national and national type schools and whether it contributes to the differences in academic performances in these schools.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the leadership behaviour of primary school headteachers as perceived by their teachers. The secondary purpose of this study is to investigate the disparity in academic performances of pupils and determine the relationship, if any, between the headteachers leadership behaviour and school effectiveness in these schools. Furthermore, the study proposes to investigate whether there is a difference of leadership behaviours in the three major types of schools in Malaysia.

1.4 Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive their headteacher's leadership behaviour as measured by the Leader Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ)?
2. Is there a difference in leadership behaviour among headteachers in the three major types of schools in the town of Teluk Intan, Perak?
3. Can the Initiating Structure and Consideration dimensions in headteacher leadership styles significantly explain the variance in school effectiveness.

This study also seeks to test the following hypotheses:

H1: School effectiveness (UPSR results) is not significantly related to headteachers who are high on the Initiating Structure dimension.

H2: School effectiveness (UPSR result) is not significantly related to headteachers who are high on the Consideration dimension.

H3: Initiating Structure and Consideration dimensions in headteacher leadership styles can not significantly explain the variance in school effectiveness.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study proposes to provide valuable information into the leadership styles portrayed by headteachers in the three major types of primary schools in Malaysia. The limited research in investigating the relationship of headteachers' leadership styles and students' academic achievement among the three major types of primary schools headteachers has prompted the researcher to indulge in this study.

The findings should prove useful to the Ministry of Education and the Teacher Education Division (Bahagian Pendidikan Guru) in improving and upgrading leadership-training programmes in Malaysia. In addition, the findings will provide an insight into the existence of weaknesses, if any, of leadership styles among headteachers in the three major types of primary schools in Malaysia.

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

- (a) The leadership behaviour of primary school headteachers influence teachers' performances in their duties.
- (b) All Malaysian primary schools are expected to follow the same policy, rules, regulations and guidelines as set by the Education Ministry of Malaysia since they are directly under the supervision of the Ministry.
- (c) The setting in all the three major types of primary schools in Malaysia is the same.
- (d) The instrument adapted for use in this study measure what the study proposes to measure and is equally valid to the Malaysian scene as it is to the western culture.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

This study will be limited to identifying teachers' perception of headteachers leadership behaviours, and school effectiveness. The study will also be limited to the headteachers currently serving in the three major types of primary schools in the town of Teluk Intan, Perak. A proposed maximum number of 20 teachers or less, depending on the teacher population of the schools concerned, will be limited to partake in answering the LBDQ. These teachers should have served a minimum of one year under the headteachers in this study. Therefore, the findings and conclusions derived

from this study are valid for the population studied. No attempt is made to generalize the findings of this investigation to other areas.

1.8 Definition of Terms

Headteachers – refers to all school heads of both sexes who are selected and confirmed by the Education Ministry of Malaysia and are in the position of administering the schools.

Perception – refers to a continuous process of integration of present and past sensory impressions (Good, 1973).

Leadership Behaviour – refers to the leader's ability and readiness to inspire, guide or manage his/her subordinates (Good, 1973).

School Effectiveness – limited to the students' academic performances in the major examinations like UPSR, PMR, SPM and STPM in Malaysia.

Three major types of primary schools – refers to all National Schools (SK), National Type Chinese Schools [SJK (Cina)] and National Type Tamil Schools [SJK (Tamil)]. The mediums of instruction in these schools are the National Language, Mandarin and Tamil Language respectively.

Initiating Structure – refers to leadership behaviours associated with organizing and defining the work itself, the work relationships and goals (bass, 1981). A leader with

initiated structure is one who assigns people to particular tasks, expects workers to follow standard and emphasizes meeting datelines.

Consideration – refers to leaders who show mutual trust, warmth, friendship and concern for its subordinates (Bass, 1981).

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study consists of five chapters. Chapter One presents the general introduction to the study. Chapter Two provides a review of the related literature pertaining to the study. It deals with literature on leadership theories, behaviours and styles, students' academic achievements or school effectiveness and literature on the relationships between them. Particular attention has been given to studies that have been carried out in the educational field both locally and overseas.

Chapter Three centres around the methodology employed in the study, the selection of samples, data collection and data analysis. Chapter Four presents the information collected and results derived from the investigation along with the discussion of the results and their interpretation. Chapter Five focuses on a summary of the study and conclusions and implications of the study as well as recommendations for further research. The study concludes with a bibliography and appendices.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

'A decade of research has given us some important information about the process of change in school; all findings seem to indicate that without the principal's (Headteacher's) active support and endorsement, almost any effort by outsiders will fail' (Wyant, 1980).

2.1 Definition of Leadership

The role of the Headteacher is viewed as vital in ensuring the success, excellence and effectiveness of a school. S/He is the leader and manager of the school, who could navigate the school to attain success as an effective school. A leader is one who is perceived to possess the power to motivate his/her subordinates and guides them (Davis, 1987) by undertaking the task of directing and co-ordinating relevant group activities (Fiedler, 1967) in attaining goal achievement. Shartle (1951) described a leader as one who exercises more important acts of influence than any other members in a particular group or organisation.

Greenberg & Baron (1997) define leadership as the process whereby one individual influences other group members toward the attainment of defined group or organisational goals. This is in concurrence with Tead's (1935) definition of leadership as the activity of influencing people to co-operate and Stogdill's (1950) definition that leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an organised group in its efforts toward goals setting and achievement of goals.

2.2 Research Studies on the Role of Headteachers

'In many ways the school headteacher is the most important and influential individual in any school. S/He is the person responsible for all activities that occur in and around the school building. It is the headteacher's leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for learning, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. S/He is the main link between the community and the school. The way s/he performs in this capacity largely determines the attitudes of parents and students about the school. If a school is vibrant, innovative, child-centred place, if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching, if students are performing to the best of their abilities, one can always point to the headteacher's leadership as the key to success' (Rosenblum, 1979).

The headteacher's role is now acknowledged as the major contributing constituent in a school's success (Rutter, 1979). The headteacher's competence, experience and capabilities contributed in promoting a healthy school climate and positive ethos. This has resulted in increasing the feeling of involvement and commitment among school staff and thereby increasing pupil achievement. An effective headteacher is visualised as a decisive, hard-working individual who kept close contact with people and who acted as an informer centre (Hemphill, 1972). S/He recognises the unique styles and needs of the teachers and helps them to achieve their own performance goals (Edmonds, 1979), which would result in increasing teacher morale and performance and thereby increasing student achievement (Gross & Herriot, 1965).

At the local level, a study initiated by the Education Ministry of Malaysia (1982) further reiterated that the headteacher is largely responsible for setting the tone and the standard of educational achievement in the school.