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TIME MANAGEMENT, EMPOWERMENT AND EXCELLENCE IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT OF BENTONG, PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR

by

R.BASKRAN RAMAN NAIR

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

MAY 1998

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"Like existence, time is one."

Vaisesika Sastras of Kanada

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A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study identifies the patterns of time management and empowerment as perceived by the middle managers in selected secondary schools. It also explores the differences in the patterns of time management and empowerment in premier, suburban and rural secondary schools in the district of Bentong. The respondents comprised twenty middle managers from four selected schools. The results indicate that time management and empowerment did exist in the selected secondary schools. In addition, there are differences in the pattern of practices of these two variables between premier, suburban and rural schools. The middle managers in the premier schools concentrate more on the organising and leading aspects of time management in addition to the leading and controlling aspects of empowerment, while their counterparts in the rural school concentrated more on planning. In comparison, the respondents in the suburban schools are moderate in their practices of time management and empowerment. These findings indicate a possible link between time management, empowerment and excellence in schools, especially in secondary schools.

ملخص البحث

تستهدف هذه الدراسة تقصي أنماط إدارة الوقت وتفويض السلطة كما يراهما المدراء المتوسطون فى مدارس ثانوية مختارة. كما تحاول أيضا استكشاف أوجه الاختلاف فى أنماط إدارة الوقت وتفويض السلطة بين مدارس ثانوية من الدرجة الأولى (متفوقة) ومدارس ضواحى المدينة و مدارس ريفية ثانوية (أقل تفوقا) فى منطقة بنتونج - ولاية بهانج.

أجاب عن الاستبانة عشرون من المدراء المتوسطين فى المدارس الأربع المختارة، وقد أشارت نتائج الدراسة إلى أن إدارة الوقت وتفويض السلطة ظاهرتان موجودتان فى المدارس الثانوية المختارة، يضاف إلى ذلك أنه قد وجدت أوجه اختلاف عند ممارسة هذين المتغيرين بين المدارس المتفوقة ومدارس ضواحى المدينة والمدارس الريفية. ففى المدارس المتفوقة يركز المدراء المتوسطون على نواحى القيادة والضبط عند ممارسة إدارة الوقت وتفويض السلطة، بينما يركز نظراؤهم فى المدارس الريفية على ناحية التخطيط. ووجد أن المجيبين من مدارس ضواحى المدينة معتدلون في ممارستهم لإدارة الوقت وتفويض السلطة.

ولقد أشارت هذه النتائج إلى أنه من الممكن أن تكون هناك صلة بين إدارة الوقت وتفويض السلطة والتفوق فى المدارس ولا سيما المدارس الثانوية.

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. Mohamad Sahari Nordin
Supervisor

Date: 10/6/98

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.

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Date: 10/6/98

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

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

Date: 10.6.98

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.

Name: R.Baskran a/l Raman Nair

Signature: _____ Date: 9/8/98

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Dedicated to:

My beloved father, the late Mr. Raman Nair

My beloved mother, the late Mrs. Letchumy Raman Nair

and

My beloved wife, Mrs. Mageswary Baskran

My beloved princesses, Vinieshah Nair and Rinieshah Nair

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Time management is one of the key concepts in managing an organisation. It has become a subject that needs attention in the management of educational institutions. Another subject that also needs to be highlighted is empowerment. It has been proven to go beyond delegation (a component of empowerment) in accomplishing missions and visions (Clutterbuck and Kernaghan, 1994:18).

Time management is defined as making the best use of time by managing distractions based on self-management for the present and future. If a person especially a manager can act as defined, then that particular person can be considered as practising time management. Based on the practises in schools, head teachers, subject co-ordinators or middle managers, teachers and other members of the schools community who make the best use of time by managing distractions are considered good time managers.

Empowerment means trusting employees through collaborative work, and by teaching them to be self-sufficient in order for the organisation to prosper. That statement relates empowerment to the feeling of togetherness between superiors and subordinates in building up team spirit in organisations. In schools, empowerment is practised when head teachers entrust their subordinates with certain responsibilities,

and at the same time the head teachers guide those subordinates to complete the responsibilities in the best way required by the school.

Excellence means 'quality'. Although the word 'quality' looks very subjective, it essentially means being well above average or surpassing mediocrity. Excellence is a quality much required in education as indicated by the Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister in his keynote address at the launching of the national-level Teachers' Day celebration on May 17,1997 where he urged teachers to "strive for job excellence" (New Straits Times, p. 1).

Time management, empowerment and excellence have their bases in Islam where they are specially and repeatedly mentioned in the Al-Quran and *hadith*. A clear indication of this is that many of the surahs are named after time. For example, *Surah Al-Asr* refers to afternoon, *Surah Al-Dhoha'* refers to late morning, *Surah Al-Fajr* refers to morning and *Surah Al-Lail* refers to night. In each of the verses, there are statements that explicitly connote the importance of proper utilisation of time, which can lead man to the path of success and excellence.

Statement of the Problem

Despite all the attention that has been paid to time management, empowerment and excellence, very few studies have been conducted on these three concepts, especially time management and empowerment. In education, the lack of research in these areas

is evident where a very limited number of studies have been attempted to investigate the patterns of these three concepts in schools.

Previous studies have frequently elaborated on time management but not many significant studies have attempted to establish the relationship between time management and excellence. The same goes for empowerment and excellence. For this research, the researcher feels that there should be some attempt to study the connection between time management and excellence, and empowerment and excellence. This connection is emphasised by the former Malaysian Director General of Education, Wan Mohd. Zahid Mohd. Nordin in his book 'Wawasan Pendidikan Malaysia: Agenda Pengisian' (1993) where he discussed time management, empowerment and excellence in relation to the teaching profession.

Based on all the reasons mentioned above, the researcher intends to specifically study the patterns of these three variables among the fundamental management personnel of the educational system, the middle managers.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to identify the patterns of time management and empowerment in selected secondary schools. The secondary purpose is to compare excellent and non-excellent schools in terms of time management and empowerment based on the perceptions of school middle managers. The results of the survey will be used to differentiate time management and empowerment practices between the

schools using the excellence index suggested by the Bentong District Education Officer.

Research Questions

What is the perception of school middle managers concerning:

1. Managing their time during working hours.
    a. How do they plan their management responsibilities?
    b. How do they organise their management responsibilities?
    c. How do they lead their management circle?
2. Empowerment during working hours.
    a. How do they plan their management responsibilities?
    b. How do they lead their management circle?
    c. How do they control their management circle?
3. Do middle managers in excellent and non-excellent schools employ time management and empowerment strategies differently?

Significance of the Study

Time management and excellence are not new phenomena in the field of education. Man had started practising them a long time ago. Empowerment is a new term although its component, delegation has been widely used since the inception of educational institutions (Clutterbuck and Kernaghan, 1994).

This study is conducted to identify the linkage between time management and excellence, and empowerment and excellence in the education especially in schools. Not much have been studied in this area of knowledge especially by educators. For this purpose, the researcher hopes to establish the knowledge about time management and excellence, and empowerment and excellence in relation to education.

The findings will also assist the Malaysian Ministry of Education officials in understanding these patterns in planning and implement programmes in schools. The officials will be able to identify the role of these three concepts in enhancing the schools' environment in Malaysia. In addition, principals and middle managers in schools can utilise the findings in developing training programmes for their staffs.

Finally, the findings of this study is timely as our nation is all geared towards 'Vision 2020'. It is the researcher's hope that the findings of the study will provide additional input in achieving the goals of Vision 2020, and thus support the momentum of our nation towards greater achievements.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definitions are used:

Time management is defined as how the middle managers in secondary schools manage their time during working hours as reported by them. It reflects the allocation of time by the middle managers for the tasks they are responsible for in

schools. This is to be examined by looking into their responses towards management of time on planning, organising and leading in their respective schools.

Empowerment portrays the sharing of responsibilities and authorities between the middle managers, their subordinates and superiors as reported by the respondents. This is to be examined by looking at the middle managers' responses towards planning, leading and controlling in their respective schools.

Excellence refers to being the best based on a *priori* consideration set by the Bentong District Education Officer. It encompasses the attainment of high quality results in all activities involving the school as a whole as perceived by the authority mentioned previously. In this study, excellent and non-excellent schools were determined by the Bentong District Education Officer based on curriculum results, co-curriculum results, infrastructure development and awards earned.

Middle manager is defined as the head of department in a secondary school in Malaysia. Middle managers include the school vice principals, the counsellor, the discipline master, the resource centre co-ordinator, the sports secretary, the examination co-ordinator and the subject co-ordinators (the 'Panitia' heads). These are the people responsible for the execution of daily school activities. The principal is the chief administrator for all middle managers.

Secondary school refers to a school which enrols students from the level of pre-secondary classes up to the level of form six. The ages of the students range from thirteen to twenty years old.

Suburban school refers to any school which is located on the outskirts of Bentong. The radius of its distance from town is 2 km at the minimum and 5 km at the maximum.

Rural school refers to any school under the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA) scheme. The radius of the distance from a rural school to town is 15 km at the minimum.

Premier school refers to the best school in the District of Bentong, Pahang Darul Makmur as determined by the Bentong District Education Officer.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the process of literature search, it became apparent to the researcher that there is a lack of writings on the patterns of the two major variables under study, time management and empowerment. In the existing literature, these variables were discussed either individually, or in relationship to other variables such as excellence. While the literature on the patterns of time management and empowerment is lacking, other works indicate a need to examine how these two variables operate in the school setting. Such works include writings on empowering education by Shor (1992), delegation and team time management by Douglass and Douglass (1992), and teachers' feeling for power by Thandi (1977).

In this chapter, the discussions of major concepts are divided into several major headings: time management, empowerment, excellence, time management, empowerment and excellence from religious perspectives, determinants of school excellence, and conclusion.

Time Management

The importance of time management as it now prevails in Western societies was conceived a long time ago. Boone and Kurtz (1987) quoted Napoleon Bonaparte as saying, "You may ask me for anything except time" (p. 104). Bonaparte's statement

gives an indication that even in the seventeenth century, people were having problems in managing time.

Bonaparte's utterance has given rise to an expression very commonly used in the context of modern time, 'I have got no time.' God has given man twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, thirty days a month and three hundred and sixty five days a year. Every time frame has been set. Therefore it depends on each individual to maximise the usage of time. Maximum usage of time requires effective time management.

The researcher conceptualised time management as making the best use of time by managing distractions based on self-management for the present and the future. This conceptualisation leads to the use of time in the most productive manner. Based on the given definition, time management is perceived to be the key element in management. There are four key concepts embedded within this definition that need to be clarified. The first concept is 'making the best use of time', the second is 'managing distractions', the third is 'self-management', and finally, the concept of 'present and future'.

Making the Best Use of Time

Scott (1992) coined the first definition in a concise notion of time management. He wrote that "time management is making the best use of the time you have effectively" (pp. 9 - 10), which means using the time one has in the best way possible. In order to

be able to use time effectively, one must be able to determine the amount of time spent on each task. This will enhance a proper utilisation of time.

Scott's idea is related to Boyd's (1984) who wrote, "I don't know where the time goes? The first step in effectively managing time is to answer that question" (p. 250). Therefore, basically knowing how time is spent may enable managers to keep track of their activities, a strategy that can gradually develop into a better management of time. In the educational scenario, especially in school, middle managers who know how their time is used are in a better position to control the usage of their time.

Supportive arguments for the notion of effective use of time can be found in the writing of Hicks and Gullett (1981). In their book entitled 'Management', they emphasised the importance of time management by managers by stating that "an effective manager must attempt to use the time that is available in the most productive manner" (p. 13). The belief is managers who are productive in the usage of time are considered effective, thus making it clear that time management is the core of effective management. In the school scenario, the middle managers who produce most within the time frame they have are considered effective.

McFarland (1979), in agreement with Hicks and Gullett (1981), contended that, "an essential ingredient of time management is an analysis of the basic kinds of demands on one's time" (p. 154). The implication of McFarland's (1979) contention is