

# Give Me 30 Minutes and Accelerate Your Barrier to Measuring Charismatic Leadership!

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## Abstract

Charismatic leadership is an ideal leadership that is important in the administration of an organization led by a Principal or Headmaster. This study is important to overcome the challenges faced by the management and administration of organizations that require charismatic leaders. This can be influencing employees to perform work in the best conditions in order to achieve the organization's objectives. However, there are still some issues that have not been covered much and require suggestions for improvement in their implementation. So, this concept paper is purposely to cover these issues by focusing on solving issues with a charismatic leadership style. Five issues that are often faced by school leaders and suggests strategies to overcome these issues. The methodology used on this concept paper is through a general document review of 34 leadership articles for the last six years. The major findings towards issues highlighted are related to leaders prioritizing the implementation of administrative tasks rather than highlighting their function, bureaucratic red tape that occurs in the ministry, the ability of leaders to manage risk, low technology skills among leaders, and the implementation of less effective communication. In overcoming the issues that arise among leaders, this research paper suggests some strategies that can be considered, such as the effective practice of charismatic leadership, the implementation of change strategies by leaders, the improvement of information technology skills, and the full use of educational quality standards and the Performance Dialogue medium prepared by the Malaysia Ministry of Education. This paper has implications such as improving leadership training from stakeholders, developing the theory of charismatic leadership, and strengthening the leadership practices of Principals or Headmasters in schools. Further research can be carried out through further exploration of new dimensions of charismatic leadership and the construction of charismatic leadership training modules with local characteristics.

**Keywords:** Charismatic Leadership, Barrier, School Leaders, Issues, Strategies.

## Introduction

A school is a formal organization that provides education to individuals called students who will lead the country in the future. This coincides with the National Education Philosophy (FPK), which states that education in Malaysia is a continuous effort to produce balanced individuals in terms of physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual needs. These individuals

are expected to be able to contribute to the family, community, and country in the future. Education is a very important element for the progress of a country. In order to ensure that the quality of education continues to be improved, the ministry has launched a more robust plan, namely the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025. There are 11 shifts listed in this plan and one of them is related to school leadership, which is Shift #5 PPPM, aimed at "Ensuring High-Performance Leadership in Every School."

## **Literature Review**

### **Leadership**

Leadership is the driving force or "captain" of an organization in achieving the targeted direction. An organization or group will be successful with the performance of its administrators or, in other words, leaders. As such, a leader must have specific characteristics in order to lead a more effective and efficient work movement and be able to master some skills not only for the good of an organization but also for all its members and himself. Leadership is a process of influencing the activities of an organized group toward the achievement of goals. The success of a leader greatly depends on how power resources are used (Ibrahim and Abdul Wahab, 2012; Burns, 1978). Therefore, an effective leadership style is important to promote standards of excellence in the motivational and professional development of organizational members or teachers (Murgaya and Hamid, 2020).

Conger and Kanungo (2011) defined leadership as the art of empowering others. In addition to the knowledge possessed by leaders, leadership skills can also be improved over time (Bass, 1990). Meanwhile, Kutty (2020) defined leadership as an activity to influence a group of people to achieve certain goals. Leadership is a responsibility that must be managed to form a positive and productive organization (Abdul Hamid et al., 2021). Therefore, leadership is a process and behavior in which a leader takes certain actions to influence other individuals to work voluntarily and cooperate to achieve the objectives of the group or organization without regard for personal interests. Nevertheless, leadership must go through a series of strategic management processes, in addition to restructuring the organization based on the strategy that has been chosen. This action seeks to build a conducive organizational culture with the hope of achieving effective and efficient organizational targets.

The development of economic progress may also lead to changing leadership styles over time. In the 21st century, some popular leadership styles that have attracted past researchers include instructional leadership (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Jeffri, 2020; Amin and Hamzah, 2021), distributed leadership (Leithwood and Malloy, 2017; Jamil and Mohd Hamzah, 2021; Lai and Tai, 2021), transformational leadership (Leithwood et al., 2017; Rosnita, 2020; Palanisamy, 2020), identity leadership, and charismatic leadership (Dwapatesty et al., 2021; Neo et al., 2021, Murgaya and Hamid, 2020; Neo and Ling, 2017; Ajan et al., 2017). However, attention to the existing leader's charisma is more intuitive and vaguer than its measurement aspect. Therefore, the research focus on the type of charismatic leadership is useful because, other than the technical aspects of a leader, the leader's charisma is also a determinant of success in forming a more cohesive influence on followers. This is interesting to explore and discuss in detail, and the current focus on charismatic leadership is owing to all the dimensions expressed in this leadership as improvements on the previous leadership styles.

### **Charismatic Leadership**

Charismatic leadership is leadership in which the characteristic of charisma possessed by a leader can distinguish him from other leaders, especially in terms of implications for inspiring,

accepting, and supporting subordinates. The dynamic nature of charismatic leaders' communication can directly alter reputational outcomes and the extent of the impact of crisis management responsibilities on organizational reputation (Jamal & Bakar, 2022). Awamleh (2022) reported that charismatic leaders have an effective role in facing resistance and persuading employees about the benefits of change to the employees and the company.

Meanwhile, Yukl (2006) had a different view of which a charismatic leadership style has a very strong impact on subordinates. Accordingly, research by Yukl supported the idea that followers can relate to the skills of a charismatic leader if they constantly observe the leader's behavior. This statement is in line with Murgaya and A. Hamid (2020) who stated that the practice of charismatic leadership constitutes a leadership style that can influence organizational members to be more effective in performing daily tasks in order to bring extraordinary effects on themselves, subordinates, and the organization as a whole.

### **Related Policies**

#### **Educational Management and Leadership Training Policy**

The Ministry of Education (MOE) Malaysia through the 5th shift in PPPM 2013-2025 ensures that educational organizations have high-performing leaders who are persistent in their goals to improve student outcomes in terms of academic and non-academic (Ministry of Education Malaysia [MOE], 2013). The Educational Management and Leadership Training Policy has been formulated based on the decree of the 5th shift in PPPM 2013-2025, which is to ensure high-performing leadership in every school. This policy also aims to ensure that education managers and leaders in divisions, state education departments (SED), district education offices (DEO), and schools receive continuous training to improve competence, knowledge, and professionalism in educational management toward a world-class education system. For this purpose, the Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB) has been mandated to develop the capabilities of educational managers and leaders at all levels of MOE, besides developing the competence of Intermediate Leaders and training groups of future leaders (successors). Among the functions carried out by the IAB for these responsibilities include training, assessment, consultation, research, publication, and leadership-related think tanks (KPM, 2017a).

#### **School Improvement Partners**

School Improvement Partners (SIPartners+) and School Improvement Specialist Coaches (SISC+) are positions created at DEO to make the District Transformation Program successful under PPPM 2013-2025 (MOE, 2017b). SIPartners+ serves as a guide for principals and headmasters in leadership and management to improve the competence of school leaders via professional development support for principals and headmasters in low-performing schools. Among the roles and responsibilities of SIPartners+ are to guide school leaders, implement interventions to improve the quality of school leaders' leadership, and serve as a consulting expert in school leadership development. Aspects of SIPartners+ guidance include areas of school leadership competence, education policy, and approved programs, including school leaders' quality improvement based on the Malaysian Education Quality Standard (SKPM). In addition, SIPartners+ must also contribute to the Professional Learning Community (PLC) as well as writing related to areas of expertise and best practice sharing.

This review provides a significant opportunity to advance our knowledge of charismatic leadership based on critical discussions on the issues raised in the Malaysian school context. Therefore, this review makes a major contribution to research on the charismatic leadership

body of knowledge by expanding the systematic review of charismatic leadership research by focusing on recent issues. Besides the important opportunity to enhance understanding by reviewing the systematic recent papers on charismatic leadership according to the specific trends, this review also offers some important insights into the focus group of students, teachers, and administrators through ideas on how to empower charismatic leadership.

This review has a high need in theoretical development such that a systematic literature review can arrange the trends of charismatic leadership effectively, thus helping others to spark effective problem-solving ideas in charismatic leadership. Besides, this review also provides a better understanding of the issues related to the school context; thus, it is important to investigate charismatic leadership due to the high need to empower future leaders to be charismatic rather than relying on their knowledge. Moreover, it is also important to know about the growth of charismatic leadership by reviewing the knowledge development because this will indirectly impact society by developing future youth leaders and redesigning the thinking for the Nation. Hence, this information is important for the Ministry of Education's (MOE) intervention through the development of the charismatic leadership training module.

### **Leadership Issues and Solution Strategies Based on Charismatic Leadership Characteristics**

Research on educational leadership has proven that leadership plays an important role in ensuring that a school succeeds and achieves high performance. In fact, past studies have shown an indirect relationship between leadership and student achievement, which is also influenced by other factors such as the involvement of teachers and staff, school culture, student involvement in school, involvement of parents, community, as well as district and state education (Leithwood et al., 2017). A school administrator is responsible for all school activities (Raffi et al., 2017); thus, leadership determines the direction of student success at school and the teaching quality. Figure 1 outlines the issues in administrative leadership, which lead to the need for a solution strategy based on charismatic leadership characteristics.

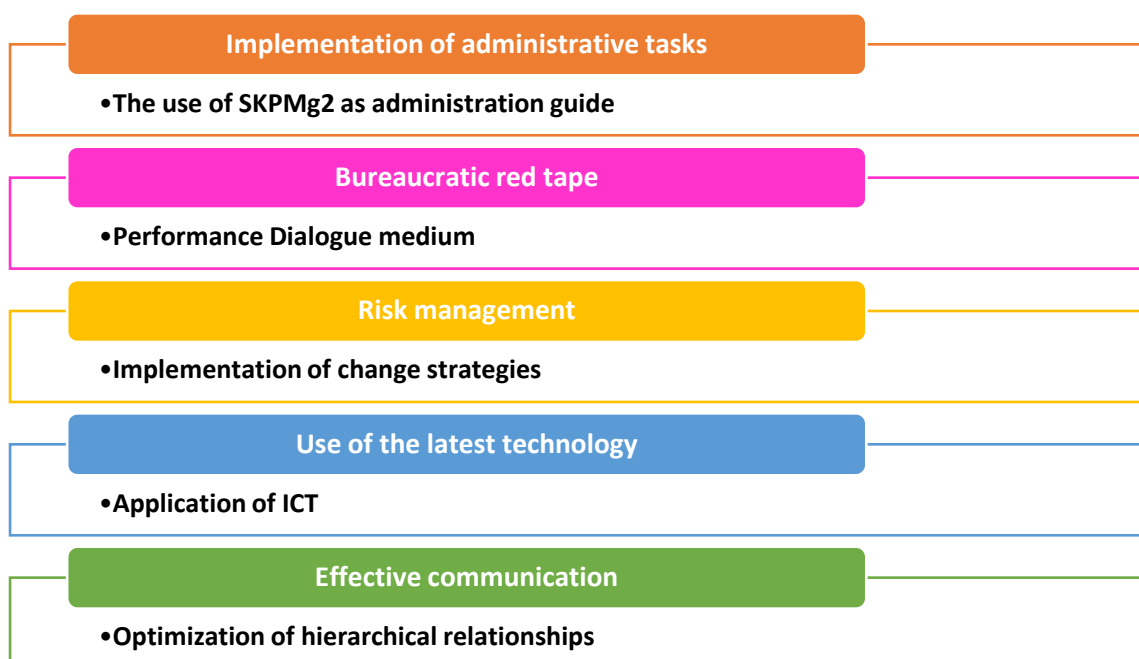


Figure 1. Administrator Leadership Issues and Solution Strategies Based on Charismatic Leadership Characteristics

**First Issue: Implementation of Administrative Tasks**

Abdullah et al (2019) eloquently stated that school leadership lacks effective curriculum leaders and good role models for teachers. According to the MOE (2013), based on several international studies on school leadership, an excellent principal or headmaster who focuses on instructional leadership instead of administrative leadership can increase student success by 20 percent. Furthermore, as evidenced in the 2008 Annual Report of the Board of Inspectors and Quality Assurance, the quality of instructional leadership of the principals and headmasters of 51 schools throughout Malaysia was at a moderate level (67.79%).

Findings from the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2009) reported that school leaders in Malaysia tend to lean more towards administrative instead of instructional leadership. Undoubtedly, the duties of principals and headmasters are related to administrative management because they need to ensure that all matters related to the file system and others can be carried out effectively. In addition, their duties also involve the management of the school's environment and physical facilities, human resource development, and external relations management (Raffi et al., 2017). Hence, if this issue prolongs and is not addressed, one of the adverse impacts is that the administrative board is likely to neglect their essential leadership duties, which will adversely impact the image of the principal's leadership.

**First Strategy: The Full Use of SKPMg2 as an Administration Guide**

The Malaysian Education Quality Standard Wave 2 (SKPMg2) is a standard instrument that evaluates the administration and delivery of education in schools. This instrument was produced as an effort to improve the quality of education in educational institutions in order to achieve the specified standards. In addition to being the main instrument of the Board of Inspectors in carrying out inspections, it also serves as a reference for SED and DEO officers in the monitoring, supervision, and guidance processes in schools (MOE, 2017a).

SKPMg2 is an administration tool that can be used as a school administration guide (MOE, 2017c). Typically, SKPMg2 consists of five standards, and the first two standards are specific to school leaders as a guide to leadership and organizational management. Standard 1 provides guidance to principals and headmasters (PGB) on the implementation of leadership from the aspects of i) PGB as a Leader, ii) PGB as a Guide, and iii) PGB as a Motivator. In addition, the characteristics outlined in each of these aspects consider all the characteristics of all leadership types. Meanwhile, Standard 2 provides guidance to PGB to implement organizational management, which covers aspects such as i) Human Resource Management, ii) Asset Management, iii) Financial Management, iv) Educational Resource Management, v) Climate, vi) Unity Management, and vii) Strategic Agreement.

Therefore, the full use of SKPMg2 can help school leaders carry out their duties and constantly improve their efficiency. The reason is that, in addition to being used as an administration guide, school leaders must also fill in the scores through MOE's National Key Result Areas (NKRA) Portal. Additionally, the full use of this document also helps leaders identify the improvement actions to be implemented. This is proven by the excellence of administration and achievement involving a school that received the Principal and Headmaster's New Offer award because the leaders of this school fully used the SKPM as an administration guide, which has integrity in the score rating implementation (Hafizah, 2015).

**Second Issue: Bureaucratic Red Tape**

The school system is basically tied to various parties. Based on the MOE organizational chart, the school is the end point of the transfer process of instructions or assignments. Therefore, school leaders will be bound by the existing bureaucratic process. According to Syed Ali et al. (2017), the implementation of the principals' and headmasters' responsibilities requires them to move and work in a large framework that involves various bureaucratic red tape.

Any decisions and actions of school administrators must be made through the channels set by the superiors, and this becomes an obstacle for them to act more promptly and effectively. For example, the implementation of school programs must first be notified and approved by DEO; thus, any late approval from DEO may cause other issues to arise, especially those involving documents to be audited, such as the Local Order. If this issue is not addressed, then administrators will not be able to make important and urgent decisions in a quick manner.

**Second Strategy: Performance Dialogue Medium in the State Education Department**

In order to deal with the issues of the implementation of administrative tasks and bureaucratic red tape, school leaders must have the courage to use the Performance Dialogue medium implemented at SED to express any thoughtful opinion on the overall progress of school operations at all levels. This communication must start at the lower level of the ministry so that all issues related to operations can be discussed and a consensus can be reached prior to expressing the issues at the highest level. Senin (2018) suggested that the bottom-up approach is implemented to enable the ministry to help according to the actual issue. In addition, two-way communication will take place effectively in the ministry and the policies being formulated will also be in line with the solutions that should be implemented.

With regard to the role of the charismatic leadership of administrators in the formation of school culture, Ozgenel (2020) stated that effective organizational culture is typically created by leaders, and leaders consequently build cultures that support the vision. In the study by Ozgenel (2020), there were four dimensions for determining teachers' perceptions of school culture, namely support culture, success culture, bureaucratic culture, and mission culture. The findings showed that the school principal's charismatic leadership style had a significant and positive influence on all the cultural aspects studied, except bureaucratic culture.

**Third Issue: Risk Management**

Today's volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) world requires leaders to always be prepared, sensitive to change, and dynamic in management and leadership. According to Kutty (2020), VUCA is currently the center of all kinds of hindrances, which can appear in various forms. Thus, any change and planning require the agility aspect, which means that every role of educational leaders must change according to the current needs, namely the millennium era. Traditional leadership is also no longer appropriate nowadays, especially when dealing with the coronavirus disease crisis (COVID-19). Gurr and Drysdale (2020) stated that leaders need to prepare themselves in all aspects when faced with a changing world to adapt to any situation. Therefore, all leaders must master multi-skills and have spiritual characteristics.

Likewise, work culture has evidently changed during the movement control order (MCO) period, where working from home has become the norm and the new normal, even of late. Such a situation requires school administrators to efficiently perform tasks in a remote

manner, and this also includes the availability of appropriate facilities and equipment, time management, and the integrity of each individual. Therefore, in the MCO situation, the spiritual maturity of the leader is very important so that resilience and drastic action can imply the true characteristics of a charismatic leader. As such, if this issue is not addressed and prolonged in the long run, then the level of its impact will be more serious, especially since there is no specific preparation that can be made by the institution based on the findings of the risk.

### **Third Strategy: Implementation of Change Strategies**

Creativity and innovation are necessary in dealing with the current situation in order to provide solutions to new phenomena. Besides responding to the emotions or feelings, personal attitudes, concerns, and needs of the members of the organization, leaders who care about others must also monitor and directly engage in change management. In addition, leaders also need to focus on organizational efficiency by facilitating organizational work through responsibility and power sharing instead of doing everything themselves. Similarly, in implementing change strategies, the principal's approach and leadership practices are subject to factors that exist inside and outside the school (Pollock et al., 2017). This goal will ultimately be able to influence the organizational climate, which includes the practices of the members of the organization and implementation strategies, and affect the success of the organization.

Additionally, the ability of school leaders to face VUCA must also be implemented with vision, understanding, clarity, and agility (V.U.C.A) in particular. According to former Senior Minister of Education, Dr Maszlee Malik, in his speech during the launch of the International Conference on Educational Leadership and Management (ICELAM) 2019 at IAB, Genting Highlands, it is important for educators to first set their minds (vision), include their own abilities (understanding), and prepare themselves (clarity) for an ever-changing environment (agility). Therefore, school leaders must make every effort to overcome existing obstacles and ensure that the school is managed in an optimal manner for student learning.

Awamleh (2022) stated that the selection of a charismatic leadership style in dealing with organizational change and overcoming employee resistance to change can be considered an effective decision to maintain the sustainability and success of the company. Based on a review of the same situation, charismatic leadership among organizational leaders in an educational institution is at a high level and encouraging, which is the key to the success of organizational vision and mission (Murgaya and A. Hamid, 2020; Ozgenel, 2020; Neo and Ling, 2017).

### **Fourth Issue: Use of the Latest Technology**

Organizational administration has changed along with the development of information and communication technology (ICT). The development of ICT has forced organizational changes either in processes, workflows, and responsibilities. In other words, ICT development has influenced changes in the work environment and led to a new paradigm in education, in line with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4.0). Technology has also made lives change 360 degrees. As a result, the use of social media as a means of communication is inevitable (Harari, 2018). According to Abdul Hamid et al (2021), school leaders are the main driving factors in the positive integration of ICT into schools. Therefore, school leaders as heads of organizations not only need to understand the capabilities of modern technology for personal use but also act as technology leaders who can foster a school culture in order to explore new methods in management as well as teaching and facilitation (PdPc) in schools (Apsorn et al., 2019).

This development presents a challenge to school leaders, especially those who are relatively old. Although various changes using ICT have occurred in school administration, not all school leaders in Malaysia are proficient in ICT integration due to the lack of training related to the elements of technology leadership in the courses attended (Abdul Hamid et al., 2021). For instance, Gallego-Arrufat et al. (2017) in their study found that headmasters did not have the necessary ICT competence to manage the school organization through a technology-based learning environment. Besides, the preparation of online teaching plans also requires school leaders to review the document virtually. Based on the Home Teaching and Learning Inspection (PdPR) in the 2021 National Subject Inspection Report, teachers at schools are still asked to print the document for review by school administrators (Board of Inspectors, 2021).

Subsequently, various other things that took place during the MCO were also found to lack the direct monitoring of school leaders, which has a direct impact on student performance, especially in terms of the implementation of teaching and learning (PdP) by teachers and the review of online learning materials. Moreover, school leaders simply obtain information from the data filled in by teachers to be sent to the DEO. Findings reported by the Board of Inspectors (2021) also showed that only a handful of school leaders agreed with PdP being implemented online even though it is actually easier to implement than face-to-face implementation.

The findings of the study by the Education Policy Planning and Research Division (BPPDP) have clearly supported the findings of the Board of Inspectors 2021. The majority of the administrators (90.70%) stated that the school provided a specific schedule for teachers to implement PdPR, while a small number of administrators (9.30%) did not provide it (BPPDP, 2021). In conclusion, this supports the findings by Gallego-Arrufat et al (2017) and provides strong evidence about the competence of the application of ICT among school leaders in order to focus on the management of their organization. If this issue is not addressed, actions or decisions will be inefficient because technology is useful to provide comprehensive data.

#### **Fourth Strategy: Application of Information and Communication Technology**

Changes in management and administration have increased the use of various ICT applications such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Skype, Google Meet, video conferencing, and many more. School leaders can improve their competence in the use of ICT by implementing a technology leadership model based on the National Educational Technology Standard-Administrator (NETS-A), which is a technology standard in education focusing on school leaders by giving an overview of their role to support the PdPc process in schools (Abdul Hamid et al., 2021).

Thannimalai and Raman (2018) stated that technology leadership can be enhanced among school leaders through a series of professional development programs. School leaders who participate in ICT-related professional development programs have higher competence as technology leaders than those who do not participate in such programs. Thus, school leaders are encouraged to use Public Sector E-Learning (EPSA) for their continuous professional development. Besides, as emphasized by the MOE (2017a), the continuous professionalism development program aims to develop the professional potential and competence of Education Service Officers (PPP) in order to be able to carry out the role and responsibility of delivering services in a more effective and continuous manner. In this regard, organizational management is not only able to continue through ICT applications but also saves money and time.

**Fifth Issue: Effective Communication**

Communication is the basis that coordinates the activities of all functions in an organization. With the existence of communication channels in the organization, each individual or group can not only interact, understand, and exchange information with each other but also create continuous cooperation among staff. Accordingly, the efficiency of an organization is closely related to how well communication channels can be provided and implemented within it.

When the Movement Control Order (MCO) came into effect during the COVID-19 pandemic, the typical face-to-face communication between leaders and members of the organization changed to online communication, which has now increased dramatically. Nowadays, new skills are required so that online communication can be fully accepted in a new culture, leading to the need for the digitalization of society. In reviewing communication, Yusof and Kenny (2020) found that principals deemed communication skills a challenge in conveying information and advice. Thus, as a result of the lack of communication, the message being delivered may not be able to be channeled effectively between the two parties and the inability to deliver the message will cause leadership failure. If this issue is not overcome or is prolonged in the long run, the institution will not be able to foster communication and relationship in a synergistic manner between the various layers of employees in the institution.

**Fifth Strategy: Optimization of Hierarchical Relationships**

Communication is an important aspect of charismatic leadership. According to Jamal and Bakar (2022), charismatic leadership communication is a unique set of leader behaviors that is geared toward optimizing hierarchical relationships. Based on a case study by Awamleh (2022), charismatic leaders must use a coherent set of communications to bring about organizational change and control subordinates. As proposed by Jamal and Bakar (2022), in dealing with a crisis, a leader should first communicate with internal stakeholders using interpersonal aspects, verbally and non-verbally, to strengthen the organization's reputation.

Motivation is also one of the important elements in charismatic leadership, as it is a person's drive or power to perform dynamic actions. Motivation is not only implemented in the form of persuasion or invitation (communication) but also in the form of reward. Giving rewards to teachers and students with achievements may encourage higher enthusiasm and achievements (Dwapatesty et al., 2021; Murgaya and Hamid, 2020; Bibie and Ling, 2017; Ajan et al., 2017). Additionally, Ajan et al (2017) emphasized the unity between the ulama (Islamic scholars) and teachers such that the leadership of ulama is believed to be able to manage and motivate teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

**Conclusion**

This conceptual paper has highlighted issues such as the (a) implementation of administrative tasks, (b) bureaucratic red tape, (c) risk management, (d) use of the latest technology, and (e) effective communication among school administrators. The main idea in each strategy outlined is believed to contribute to the MOE, especially IAB, whose main function is to provide leadership training to MOE officials in order to help produce successful potential leaders. In addition, the training module for potential school leaders through the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL) course can be updated, and the preparation of leadership training programs that are relevant and in line with the current situation can also strengthen the development of professionalism among leaders and further improve the quality of national education. Moreover, the Ministry of Education Malaysia

(MOE) can perform future studies through further exploration of new dimensions of charismatic leadership as well as the construction of charismatic leadership training modules with local characteristics. Consequently, the exploration of new dimensions will provide a different view of charismatic leadership, which may have different characteristics according to the culture of a country and organization. In essence, the charismatic leadership training module has the potential to help highlight the charisma of future leaders. Indeed, we already have many knowledgeable leaders, but can we produce charismatic leaders in the future? The choice is in our hands.

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