Relationship Between Distributed Leadership and Talent Management by Principal's in Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Principals are important personnel in determining the excellence of a school. Quality principals are needed to lead a school in order to raise the level of teachers' professionalism to ensure students' academic and personal excellence. For that reason, a principal's needs to have the knowledge, skills and good values that can influence and manage different teachers in the school. Therefore, this study was conducted to identify principals' distributed leadership and talent management level. In addition, this study is also aimed to analyse the relationship between distributed leadership and talent management by principals at the secondary schools in Malaysia. The measured dimensions of distributed leadership are model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage the heart. This study used survey method and questionnaire as a research instrument. A total of 395 teachers from several secondary schools in Malaysia were involved in this study. The study data were analysed using SPSS 23.0. The findings showed that principals' distributed leadership is at a moderately high level (mean = 4.19, SD = .585) while the principals talent management is at a moderately high level (mean = 4.12, SD = .567). The study also found that there is a significant positive relationship between distributed leadership and principals' talent management ($r = .859$, $p = .05$).
Keywords: Distributed Leadership, Talent Management, Secondary School, Principal

Introduction

The National Education Philosophy of Malaysia aims to produce quality human capital with excellent physical, emotional, spiritual and intellectual attributes. Teachers need to ensure that students who have completed at least eleven years of schooling — six years in primary school and five years in secondary school demonstrate these qualities. In the meantime, as pupils will end their schooling in the secondary school, what ever happened in the secondary school will help shape their future. In this light, it could be argued principals help the nation's developments as they are responsible for managing and ensuring that the resources available in schools are used optimally to produce outstanding students that could become the leaders of the next generation. In this light, the most important resource in every school has is the

teachers and the principal is responsible to ensure that these valuable assets are properly managed to achieve the aspiration of the education system.

Statement of Problem

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) recognizes that each citizen contributes to the country's future. Recently, MOE introduced a new national education policy known as the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 which aims to produce students with six aspirations in line with the national philosophy of education. These aspirations include knowledge, thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual skills, ethics and spirituality, as well as national identity. A school, as a complex organization, requires a manager who has the ability and credibility to practice effective management (Razak & Abdullah, 2003) and to achieve the goal of the PPPM, the MOE strives to ensure that each school is led by high performing leaders (MOE, 2013). This is because school leaders like principals, play an important role in driving school towards success (Buckner, 2011; Leithwood & Levin, 2010). Therefore, high-quality leaders must have a leadership style that is highly respected by all of their subordinates, especially the teachers.

Education today faces a variety of challenges, and this requires principals to adapt their leadership style to meet the current demands of education. Principals can no longer manage their schools as 'one man show', but, rather, they need to exercise a shared responsibility that engages certain activities and interactions based on the people involved and the context of the situation (Camburn, Rowan, & Taylor, 2004; Spillane, 2006). Therefore, principals need to look for alternatives like distributed leadership which encourages shared leadership. Distributed leadership can contribute to school improvement and student achievement (Chen, 2007) and could provide teachers with the opportunity to enhance their abilities and capabilities to prepare for future leadership roles (KPM, 2013).

Due to the importance of establishing a successful school, the MOE needs to focus on identifying and developing the talent of teachers in schools to enhance their quality and meet the current educational demands (Lewis, 2015). For that purpose, teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and positive values which are needed in current education to improve student achievement (Klenowski & Lunt, 2008). Previous studies have found that a major factor influencing student achievement is teacher effectiveness, in other words, the quality that a teacher has (Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigor, 2014). To ensure that quality teachers are produced in every school, principals need to manage teachers' talents by identifying talented teachers and providing training to improve teachers' teaching effectiveness and to improve students' achievement (Odden, 2015).

As principals' leadership style influences teachers, there is need for principals to manage teachers', talent to produce quality teachers. Hence, this study aims to examine the implementation of distributed leadership practices among principals in schools. In addition, this study analyses the relationship between distributed leadership and talent management by principals in secondary schools in Malaysia.

Literature Review
Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership is defined as a leadership phenomenon where leadership tasks are not performed by an individual but shared within an organisation (Storey, 2004; Yulk, 2002). The term distributed leadership was adopted in 1951 by Gibb in the book entitled 'Dynamics of Participative Group' which states that a maximum effort should be shown by not only leader, but of a shared leadership role for the growth and development of organizational members. The term was later expanded in the 1990s by Richard Almore through an understanding of the new concept of distributed leadership, which refers to delegating tasks and responsibilities among organizational members.

The distributed leadership style refers to the mobility of power from learners to their subordinate, rather than passing the leadership among the members (Harris, 2003). Shared leadership, collective leadership, and distributed leadership are used interchangeably, while team leadership is often seen as a slightly different stream of research (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). In terms of power dynamics, this concept still places principals at the forefront of school planning and management (Lashway, 2003), and it is important to identify those involved in this process by identifying organizational members and understanding how organizations operate and they can succeed in creating effective teams and by ensuring a balanced expertise among members (Kamm & Nurrick, 1993). Conger and Pearce (2003) argued that leadership is a dynamic process that involves interactive influences among organizational members aimed at achieving common goals. Harris (2008) showed that distributed leadership could enhance positive motivation and cultivate positive work culture among teachers and school support staff. The leadership role given to teachers has helped to improve school achievement as reflected through students' achievement.

In this study, the concept of distributed leadership is defined based on Kouzes and Posner's (1995) theory of effective leadership. The theory encompasses five dimensions, which are, model the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage to the heart.

Several studies on distributed leadership have been conducted in Malaysia. Among them is a study by Wahab et al., (2013) that analyzed the relationship of headmasters' distributed leadership practice and teachers' motivation in national schools in Port Klang, the study found that the level of distributed leadership among the headmasters is high while the teacher's motivation level is at a moderate level. Moreover, the findings of the study found a weak relationship ($r = 0.28$, $p < 0.005$) for distributed leadership and teachers' motivation.

Another study related to distributed leadership has looked at the effect of distributed leadership on work pressure in technical and vocational schools by Rabindarang et al. (2014). The study found that distributed leadership is at a moderately high level while the level of work pressure in technical and vocational schools is moderate. In addition, this study also found that distributed leadership can reduce work pressure of teachers in schools.

Halim & Ahmad (2015) study found that the principals' distributed leadership in secondary schools is at a moderately high level and has a positive correlation with teachers' effectiveness. In addition, distributed leadership factors and contextual factors contribute to

36% to the effectiveness of secondary school teachers. However, the study did not look at the relationship between distributed leadership and talent management.

Talent Management
Scholars have defined various interpretations of talent management and it has become a debate and discussion among human resource management. However, they have yet to find the consensus on concepts and terms that are appropriate to explain talent management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Various terms have been used interchangeably with talent management, including talent management, talent strategy, succession planning and human resource planning. In fact, each of these terms have different meanings and referred to different aspects of management.

In general, talent management is a practice related to development strategy, identifying talent gaps, succession planning, recruiting, selecting, educating, motivating and retaining talented employees with a variety of initiatives (Ringo at. et., 2010). Talent management refers to how leadership is adopted to ensure that organizations operate more efficiently and competitively (Fredrick & Craign, 2004).

Talent management is an organizational process to identify employees with the potential to play a role in the future (Beheshtifar et al., 2012), recruiting and nurturing potential individuals to fill key roles in school leadership. Talent management is a school leadership process of identifying, managing and developing educators for short and long term gains. James A. Cannon (2011) identified a few things that school leaders should consider when designing talent management:
1. develop strategies to meet the current and future needs of school
2. establish a process for assessing efficiency - needed and available
3. develop development tools and processes to provide a customized approach depending on the needs of educators
4. identify ways to find and retain those who are important to success
5. develop an appropriate approach to address those who no longer meet the needs of the school
6. measure the impact of this strategy so that policy can be constantly updated and refined to deliver high performance, now and in the coming year

Succession planning involves preparing the senior team, developing an internally talented team to take on future leadership and providing leaders with the necessary skills in the future (Hills, 2009). It involves two aspects, identifying critical positions and the best way to meet future needs as well as developing optimal and effective internal and external recruitment strategies for the school (James A. Cannon, 2011). Talent management also focuses on how organizations plan to replace existing leaders and how organizations ensure that potential leaders perform their duties effectively after taking over the leadership (Lengnick-hall & Andrade, 2008).

Talent management is essential to identify the needs of every educator. School leaders need to understand that each teacher has his or her own potential, talents and inclination, and subsequently, identify, retain and nurture educators (James A. Cannon, 2011) based on their talent and potential to continuously perform competitively in doing their job.

There are limited studies on talent management conducted in Malaysia. Among these studies is Shamsudin (2016) who conducted a study in High Performance Schools and found that there is a high practice of talent management by principals. In addition, Abidin et. al. (2017) conducted a study in Selangor Religious National Secondary School (SMKA) also found that talent management practices are at a moderately high level.

The Purpose of The Study

The purpose of this study is to identify the practice of distributed leadership and talent management by principals in secondary school. In addition, the study is also intended to analyze the relationship between distributed leadership and talent management by principals. The dimensions of distributed leadership are model the way, inspiring a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage to the heart. Other aspects of talent management include identifying talent, reviewing performance and conducting talent development activities.

Research Methodology

This study is a quantitative study. This study adopted the cross-sectional survey design and questionnaire was used as the research instrument. The aim is to study the level of distributed leadership and to analyze the relationship between distributed leadership and talent management by the secondary school principals based on the respondents' answers to the questionnaire.

The study used the purposive sampling method, which is a process of sampling from any individual in the population that met the study respondents' criteria. The population in this study is the secondary school teachers in Malaysia. The sample of this study involves 395 teachers from secondary schools in Malaysia.

For the data analysis, this study used descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the levels of distributed leadership practices of principals and talent management levels. Descriptive analysis based on the frequency, mean score, standard deviation and percentage used to obtain data for this study. These descriptive statistics were used to explain the frequency of mean and percentage for all data in the instrument. The inferential analysis, specifically, Pearson Correlation analysis, was used to obtain the correlation coefficient (r) to examine the relationship between distributed leadership style and talent management.

Table 1.
Mean Score Interpretation

Scale Range	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.50	Low
1.51 – 2.49	Moderately Low
2.50 – 3.49	Moderate
3.50 – 4.49	Moderately High
4.50 – 5.00	High

Findings

Respondents' Profile

The study involves 395 respondents from secondary school teachers in Malaysia, which consist of 107 (27.10%) male teachers and 288 (72.90%) female teachers. Respondents of this study involved teachers from Fully Residential Schools (SBP) and National Secondary Schools (SMK). In terms of their education level, 3 (0.80%) have a PhD, 52 (13.20%) have a Master's Degree and 340 (86.10%) teachers have a Bachelor degree. Whereas, in terms of teaching experience, 39 (9.90%) teachers have less than 5 years teaching experience, 74 (18.70%) teachers have been teaching for 6 - 10 year, 73 (18.50%) teachers have been teaching for 11 – 15 years, 80 (20.30%) have been teaching for 16 - 20 years and 129 (32.70%) have been teaching for more than 20 years.

Table 2:
Respondent's Profile

Demography	Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	107	27.10
	Female	288	72.90
Academic	PhD	3	0.80
	Master Degree	52	13.20
	Bachelor Degree	340	86.10
Experience	Less than 5 years	39	9.90
	6 – 10 years	74	18.70
	11 – 15 years	73	18.50
	16 – 20 years	80	20.30
	More than 20 years	129	32.70

Distributed Leadership of Principals

The results in Table 3 show that the overall distributed leadership level of the principals is at a moderately high level (M = 4.19, SD = .585). There is little differences between the level of distributed leadership among principals in SBP (M = 4.21, SD = .499) and SMK (M = 4.19, SD = .620), but both are still at a moderate level. The dimension with the highest mean is 'model the way' and 'inspire a share vision' with 4.23. Meanwhile, the lowest dimension is 'enable others to act' with 4.14. However, all dimensions are at a moderately high level.

Table 3:
Distributed Leadership of the Principals

Dimension	Total Mean Score	SBP	SMK
Model the ways	4.23	4.25	4.22
Inspire a shared vision	4.23	4.25	4.22
Challenge the process	4.15	4.17	4.05
Enable others to act	4.14	4.15	4.14
Encourage to the heart	4.20	4.20	4.20
Overall	4.19	4.21	4.19

Talent Management by the Principals

The results in Table 4 indicate that talent management by the principals as a whole, is at a high level (M = 4.12, SD = .567) The analysis found that talent management by SBP principals was higher with a mean score of 4.15 compared to the mean of SMK score of 4.10. In terms of talent management by the principals, 'carrying out talent development activities' recorded a high mean score of 4.15, second is 'identifying talent' with mean score 4.11 and while 'reviewing performance' aspect with the mean score of 4.10.

Table 4:
Talent Management by the Principals

Dimension	Total Mean Score	SBP	SMK
Identifying talent	4.11	4.16	4.08
Reviewing performance	4.10	4.15	4.08
Carrying out talent development activities	4.15	4.14	4.15
Overall	4.12	4.15	4.10

The Relationship between Distributed Leadership and Talent Management

The third objective of the study is to analyse the relationship between distributed leadership and talent management by principals in secondary schools. Table 5 illustrates the relationship between distributed leadership and talent management by principals. The analysis shows that there is a significant positive relationship between distributed leadership and talent management ($r = 0.859$; $p = 0.005$). In this regard, according to Chua (2013), the correlation coefficient of .00 indicates that there is no correlation, .01 to .30 indicates a very weak correlation, .31 to .50 indicates weak correlation, .51 to .70 indicates moderate correlation, .71 to .90 indicates strong correlation, and lastly, the correlation of .91 to 1.00 is very strong. This shows that there is a strong relationship between distributed leadership and talent management.

Table 5:
Correlations between Distributed Leadership and Talent Management by Principals

		Distributed	Talent
Distributed leadership	Pearson Correlation	1	.859[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	395	395
Talent management	Pearson Correlation	.859[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	395	395

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion

The results of the descriptive analysis show that the principals' distributed leadership is at a moderately high level. The results of this study are in line with studies conducted by as Rabindarang et. al. (2014), Halim & Ahmad (2015) and Wahab et al. (2013), which found that

distributed leadership among principals and teachers is at a moderately high level. Although this study was carried out in a different location and involved different samples, the results are very similar with the previous studies.

This study also found that the dimension of 'modelling the way' and 'inspiring shared a vision' recorded the highest mean score. This shows that a successful principal must possess superior personal qualities that can be exemplified by the teachers. This is because principals with such qualities will become a role model to their subordinates, resulting in respect, trust and loyalty (Ekaningsih, 2014). In this regard, a principal's good behaviour is always followed by teachers and staff in the school. In addition, a good principal will set good examples to others (Spendlove, 2007; Mansor & Hamzah, 2015). A principal should cultivate a friendly, caring organization that makes teachers feel included (Scott, 2014) to ensure teachers can work towards achieving the school goals. Thus, principals should be able to influence their followers to implement ideas in an ethical manner in order to assess, understand the needs of teachers in schools (Greenfield, 2010).

The study found that the principals have a moderately high level of talent management, with the score of 3.98. This result is line with a study conducted by Shamsudin (2016) in fully residential and high performing schools in Malaysia, as well as by Abidin et. al. (2017) who studied talent management of SMKA principals in the state of Selangor. The findings of this study proved that talent management benefits organizations as a whole. Scholars have found that effective talent management can have a positive impact on the organization overall performance (Kehinde, 2012). This is because effective talent management can develop future leaders among the employees to achieve sustainability and support the educational institution priorities (Riccio, 2010) since the employees understands the organization better than outsiders. Moreover, through talent management it is also possible to produce individuals or employees with criteria that meet the needs of the industry or the organization (Downe, 2012). This is due to the fact that the workers produced are proficient in communication, information technology, and customer management.

Downe's (2012) showed that talent management can enhance employees' motivation, produce better quality work and encourage group work to help solve deeply ingrained problems. Rodriguez and Escobar (2010) found that the best way to create a high competitiveness in an organization is through talent management strategies. Therefore, talent management strategies should be in line with corporate strategies and corporate culture to ensure they could deliver something positive to the organization. It was concluded that there are various ways to develop talent management activities depending on the organization develop them. Another study by Wheelock (2010) found that work quality is directly related to talent management and this element is important to develop the future leaders of an organization. To achieve this goal, it is believed that education and experience are the most important criteria that future leaders must have.

Talent management will help identify and cultivate teachers' leadership talent, as well as their talent in personal and organizational management through programmes and activities implemented by a school. This will help develop future leaders who are willing and capable to take the responsibility of managing the school in the future. This is in line with MOE's

aspirations as stated in the fifth Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM 2013-2025) which seeks to ensure high-quality leaders are placed in every school.

The findings show that there is a significant positive relationship between distributed leadership and talent management. In this regard, principals play an important role in producing effective management in schools as their behaviours affect teachers in school. This can be seen in the distributed leadership dimension where setting an example is the dimension with the highest mean score (4.29). This shows that teachers consider principals as role model and use them as their example when performing the task given. This finding is consistent with the roles and responsibilities played by school principals.

In addition, this finding proves that principals who have successfully applied distributed leadership in schools are able to manage their school staff's talents, especially teachers. This is also acknowledged by Louis et al., (2010) who stated that principals are responsible in providing individual support and consideration, offering intellectual stimulation and demonstrating values and best practices in shaping and developing employees within their organizations. Therefore, principals and leaders in schools need to fully understand the inherent dimensions in distributed leadership so that they utilize them to improve the management of teachers' talent in schools.

One of the four major roles of great leaders is to inspire others, including other leaders (Leithwood et. al., 2008). A leader's ability lies not only in his skills and knowledge but also in his undeniable role. The activities and programmes developed by the school can provide a platform for teachers to gain experience and improve their leadership talents. High distributed leadership also enables principals to effectively manage teachers' talent so that these talents can be polished and they too, can become successful leaders in the future.

Conclusion
On the whole, the findings showed that there is a significant positive relationship (strong correlation) between distributed leadership and talent management by principals. In the addition, the level of principals' distributed leadership, according to the dimensions of model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and encourage to the heart, is moderately high. Similarly, the level of talent management, such as identifying talent, reviewing performance and conducting talent development activities, is moderately high.

This study's findings are in line with the MOE's aspiration to ensure that high performing principals and teachers are placed in schools, as stated in the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013-2025. In addition, the findings of this study can also provide additional information to the MOE on the level of distributed leadership and talent management of school principals to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Ministry of Higher Education are achieved. As this study is a quantitative study, the researchers recommend that future studies are conducted qualitatively to look at the challenges and concerns faced by principals in practicing distributed leadership and implementing talent management effectively.

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