
Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness of School Managers in Malaysia

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara kecerdasan emosi (EI), gaya kepemimpinan transformasi dan keberhasilan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah di Negara Malaysia. Penelitian menguji pengaruh konsep Goleman (1996) tentang EI dan kegiatan gaya kepimpinan transformasi Leithwood (1992) terhadap keberhasilan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah (Yukl, 2002). Data penelitian diperoleh dari angket sebanyak 1510 orang guru dan 151 orang kepala sekolah yang dipilih sebagai responden dari seluruh negeri di Utara Semenanjung Malaysia (Penang, Kedah, Perlis, dan Perak Utara). Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat hubungan yang positif antara EI dengan kegiatan gaya kepemimpinan transformasi dan keberhasilan kepimpinan di kalangan kepala sekolah. Selanjutnya EI juga diyakini mampu meningkatkan kepuasan kerja dan komitmen di kalangan guru. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa para kepala sekolah harus menggunakan EI dalam mengembangkan sumber daya manusia guru. Penelitian juga menyimpulkan agar EI digunakan sebagai alat kompetensi utama dalam menilai keberhasilan kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan profesionalisme guru.

Kata kunci: kecerdasan emosi, kepemimpinan transformasi, sumber daya manusia

Current Malaysian education has evolved due to globalization challenges, policies in meritocracy and teaching and learning Mathematics and Science in English, resulting in need for paradigm shift to a new mind set. Due to the complex organizational characteristics of schools today, however, principals are burdened with various work loads such as entertaining visitors and reading and answering letters. However, it is, evidently, not how well the principals technically adapt but actually how well they handle themselves and influence employees (teachers) using emotions as basis. These emotional, value-based aspects of leadership are believed to influence the achievements of groups and organizations. As Goleman (1999) argues, it is emotional intelligence (EI) rather than intelligence quotient (IQ) that predicts the likely of future personal achievements.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) has been identified as the critical element needed for effective leadership. Goleman (1998: 94) has said that the most effective leaders are alike in one crucial way; they all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence". Others have said, "by now, most executives have accepted

that emotional intelligence is as critical as IQ to individual's effectiveness" (Druskat & Wolff, 2001: 81). Thus, organizations have incorporated many of these emotional intelligence beliefs into their work systems and performance expectations through training as well as recruitment (Hamlin, 2003).

With the integration of principal's EI and effective leadership practices, it is hoped that effective schools will be realized. Unfortunately, the lack of research in EI in Malaysian schools context creates a gap between the understanding of EI, its effectiveness and school culture. The present study is an attempt to bridge this gap and aims at enhancing the leadership skills of school principals to face the ever-changing educational environment.

In 1990, Salovey and Mayer proposed the first framework of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence as conceptualized by these authors, include the verbal and non verbal appraisal and expression of emotion, the regulation of emotion in the self and others, and the utilization of emotional content in problem solving. In short, Emotional intelligence is described as involving abilities that

may be categorized into five domains: (a) self-awareness, (b) managing emotions, (c) motivating oneself, (d) empathy, and (e) handling relationships (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

The concepts of emotion and its management have recently been brought to the forefront of Human Resource Development (HRD) scholars through interests in emotion management and organizational functions (Fabian, 1999). In addition to evaluating emotional intelligence and its relationships to personality, several researchers were interested in the impact of emotional intelligence on leadership skills, management skills and development. Huy (1999) presented a multilevel theory of emotion and change, which focused on the attributes of emotional intelligence at the individual level. He stated that emotional intelligence facilitates one's ability for adaptation and change, which is helpful through the effort of organizational change. Another figure in the area of emotional intelligence and management is Langley (2000), who explored the idea that emotional intelligence is a useful concept in determining a manager's promotional readiness in global organizations. It was argued that a better understanding and assessment of these emotional intelligence attributes and abilities would provide the foundation for their further development and an opportunity to enhance their potential (Langley, 2000).

Leadership experiences and how they are related to social and emotional intelligence has also been explored (Kobe, Reiter-Palmon, & Rickers, 2001). Through these analyses, both social and emotional intelligence accounted for the variance in leadership experiences, but emotional intelligence did not add unique variance beyond that of social intelligence. In fact there was significant overlap between these two constructs. It was concluded that social intelligence appears to play a primary role in leadership (Kobe, Reiter-Palmon, & Rickers, 2001). This study found that both emotional and social intelligence were components of leadership experiences and supported the assertion of Salovey and Mayer (1993) that social intelligence is a broader construct that subsumes emotional intelligence. But, since 1993, Salovey and Mayer have refined their original trait pertaining to conceptualization of emotional intelligence. The broadening of this concept of emotional intelligence, to be more trait focused and to include many personality characteristics, that has not been put within a social intelligence umbrella (Kobe, Reiter-

Palmon, & Rickers, 2001), but has generated the following comment:

Virtually any link between personality and good school outcomes could be attributed to this broad conception of emotional intelligence.... the collection of character attributes now labeled as emotional intelligence was no longer one definable entity... (Mayer & Cobb, 2000: 170).

Leadership is a process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives (Yukl, 2002). A wide diversity of approaches to leadership has been proposed, from analyzing what leaders are like, what they do, how they motivate their followers, how their styles interact with situational conditions and how they can make major changes in their organizations, are only a few examples (Yukl, 2002; Yukl & Van Fleet, 1992). A great deal of research has been conducted surrounding these many theories and has led to a better understanding of leadership. But understanding how and why leaders have (or fail to have) positive influences on their followers is still a compelling question for researchers (George, 2000). Feelings and moods have been shown to influence the judgments people make, attributions for success and failure and inductive or deductive reasoning. It is likely, that feelings play an important role in leadership. These emotion/mood capabilities have been addressed by emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence describes that ability to join emotions and reasoning, using emotions to facilitate reasoning and reasoning intelligently about them (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Several researchers have begun to evaluate this role of emotional intelligence and leadership. From subordinate ratings, a relationship between ability based emotional intelligence and leadership success was found. This ability based emotional intelligence appears to influence prediction of success through the perceptions of others. The relationships among emotional intelligence, personality, leadership and managerial effectiveness have been another area of study (Buford, 2001). A trait focused on perspective of emotional intelligence was used to assess the validity of emotional intelligence in predicting management performance and transformational leadership. Significant relationships and overlaps between emotional intelligence, all Big Five personality variables and self-reported transformational leadership and leadership effectiveness were found (Buford, 2001). Sosik

and Megerian (1999) also looked at trait based emotional intelligence of leaders and leaders' performance. They examined if the self-awareness of managers would moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence, transformational leadership behavior and managerial performance. Their results suggested that managers, who maintain self-awareness, possess more aspects of emotional intelligence and are rated as more effective by both superiors and subordinates than those who do not (Sosik & Megerian, 1999). These studies suggest that there is an interest in evaluating the role of emotional intelligence and leadership. Specifically, an area that has not been evaluated is the role of ability-based emotional intelligence and transformational leadership.

Method

There are three hypotheses formulated to explore and establish the relationships between EI and leadership.

- Ha 1: Emotional Intelligence correlates positively with leadership effectiveness
 - Ha 1a: Emotional Intelligence correlates positively with teachers' satisfaction and commitment
 - Ha 1b: Emotional Intelligence correlates positively with departmental performance
- Ha 2: Emotional Intelligence correlates positively with effective leadership practices
- Ha 3: Leadership practices correlate positively with leadership effectiveness.
 - Ha 3a: Leadership practices correlate positively with teachers' satisfaction and commitment
 - Ha 3b: Leadership practices correlate positively with school performance

This study was conducted using a correlational research design to explore the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness through testing. In order to test hypotheses, a questionnaire was used in the process of collecting data from respondent. About 1510 teachers and 151 principals of secondary school across the states of Northern Peninsula Malaysia (Penang, Kedah, Perlis and Northern Perak) participated in this study. In other word, a total of 10 teachers from each school participated in

evaluating their principals' leadership effectiveness and practices. The pre-requisite for respondents (teachers) in this study was, that the respondents must have at least one year of working relationship with the current principal.

The unit analysis in this study is the institutional level (school level), which is defined as aggregate mean representing each school. There are three sets of questionnaires used in this study. The 360-degree version of Workplace Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test (SUEIT) was used to measure workplace EI (Palmer & Stough, 2001). SUIET, which consists of 65 items measured on five-point Likert-type scale was answered by school principals. The SUIET provides a total EI scores as well as five dimensions; emotional recognition and expression; emotional direct cognition; understanding of emotions external; emotional management; and emotional control. While the 360-degree version of Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) of Kouzes and Posner (1990) was used to measure the principals' transformational leadership practices. The LPI consists of 30 items measured through the use of a five-point Likert-type scale. The third section of the questionnaire measures the leadership effectiveness in terms of school outcomes and teachers' developmental results, which was constructed by Yukl (2002). Leadership effectiveness is also measured using a five Likert-type scale. Both Leadership effectiveness and LPI were answered by teachers.

Test for Hypothesis 1a

Hierarchical multiple regressions were used to test the hypothesis where school grade, school location and principals' gender were entered as control variables in block 1. While in block 2 all five factors of EI (ERE, UEE, RDC, and EC) were entered to check the predicting power in leadership effectiveness factors (teachers' satisfaction and commitment). The results of this analysis is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that only UEE and EC were found to be significantly predicting teachers' satisfaction and commitment, with R² value of 39 %. This results also means about 39 % the variance in teachers' satisfaction and commitment. Unfortunately, there is no relationship found between ERE, EDC, and EM pertinent with teachers' satisfaction and commitment

Table 1: Hierarchical Multiple regression Analysis: Test for Hypothesis 1a

Model	Variables	Beta	R ²	R ² Ch	F Ch
1	SG	.00	.01	.01	.33
	Gender	.01			
	LC	.07			
2	SG	-.04	.40	.39	21.21*
	Gender	.07			
	LC	.10			
	ERE	.02			
	UEE	.45*			
	EDC	.01			
	EM	.07			
	EC	.24*			

Note: ERE = Emotional Recognition and Expression, UEE = Understanding of Emotions External, EDC = Emotions Direct Cognition, EM = Emotional Control, SG= School Grade, Gender= Principals' Gender, LC = Location of the school
* significant at p<0.05

Test for Hypothesis 1b

Table 2 presents the results of hierarchical multiple regressions between EI and school performance where school grade, school location and principals' gender were entered as control variables in block 1. While in block 2 all five factors of EI (ERE, UEE, RDC, and EC) were entered to check the predicting power in school performance.

The result shows that only UEE was found to be significantly and positively related to school performance, with R² value of 37 % which means 37% of the variance in school performance. The R² in this model is 2 % lower than the R² in value in H1a. This implies that departmental performance is a weaker indicator of leadership effectiveness

than teachers' satisfaction and commitment. But no relationship was found between ERE, EDC, EM and school performance.

Test for Hypothesis 2

Table 3 presents the results of hierarchical multiple regressions between EI dimensions and LP where school grade, school location and principals' gender were entered as control variables in block 1. While in block 2 all five factors of EI (ERE, UEE, RDC, and EC) were entered to check the predicting power in LP.

The result shows that UEE and EC were found to be significantly and positively predicting effective

Table 2: Hierarchical Multiple regression Analysis: Test for Hypothesis 1b

Model	Variables	Beta	R ²	R ² Ch	F Ch
1	SG	.00	.01	.01	.33
	Gender	.03			
	LC	.05			
2	SG	-.07	.38	.37	18.91*
	Gender	.03			
	LC	.08			
	ERE	.02			
	UEE	.49*			
	EDC	.09			
	EM	.10			
	EC	.26*			

Note: ERE = Emotional Recognition and Expression, UEE = Understanding of Emotions External, EDC = Emotions Direct Cognition, EM = Emotional Control, SG= School Grade, Gender= Principals' Gender, LC = Location of the school
* significant at p<0.05

leadership practices. The results indicate that the combination of EI dimensions explains 35 % of the variance of leadership practices.

Test for Hypothesis 3a

Hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted between leadership practices and teachers' satisfaction and commitment. Table 4 below shows the results.

The result shows that LP significantly and positively predicts teachers' satisfaction and commitment with beta value of .70 and a total variance of 47% of teachers' satisfaction and commitment can be explained by LP in this model.

Test for Hypothesis 3b

Table 5 shows the results of hierarchical multiple regressions between leadership practices and departmental performance.

A significant relationship was found between leadership practice and departmental performance. A slightly lower of 3% R² was obtained for departmental as compared to teachers' satisfaction and commitment. In this case the model form Table 5 explains 44% of the variance in departmental performance.

Results

Results from this research reveal that understanding and controlling external emotions correlate positively with teachers' satisfaction and commitment and effective leadership practices. In other words, if a school principal has the ability to identify emotions in others, to understand the causes and consequences of different emotions and at the same time is able to control his or her strong emotions, the teachers' will feel more satisfied and committed. Besides that the results also have demonstrated that effective

Table 3: Hierarchical Multiple regression Analysis: Test for Hypothesis 2

Model	Variables	Beta	R ²	R ² Ch	F Ch
1	SG	.12	.01	.01	.46
	Gender	.04			
	LC	.02			
2	SG	.11	.36	.35	16.95*
	Gender	.03			
	LC	.00			
	ERE	-.07			
	UEE	.59*			
	EDC	.07			
	EM	.06			
	EC	.11			

Note: ERE = Emotional Recognition and Expression, UEE = Understanding of Emotions External, EDC = Emotions Direct Cognition, EM = Emotional Control, SG= School Grade, Gender= Principals' Gender, LC = Location of the school
* significant at p<0.05

Table 4: Hierarchical Multiple regression Analysis: Test for Hypothesis 3a

Model	Variables	Beta	R ²	R ² Ch	F Ch
1	SG	.00	.01	.01	.90
	Gender	.01			
	LC	.07			
2	SG	.00	.48	.47	33.11*
	Gender	.03			
	LC	.04			
	LP	.70*			

Note: SG= School Grade, Gender= Principals' Gender, LC = Location of the school, LP = Leadership Practices
* significant at p<0.05

Table 5: Hierarchical Multiple regression Analysis: Test for Hypothesis 3b

Model	Variables	Beta	R ²	R ² Ch	F Ch
1	SG	.13	.01	.01	.87
	Gender	-.04			
	LC	.02			
2	SG	.13	.45	.44	36.13*
	Gender	.02			
	LC	.05			
	LP	.65*			

Note: SG= School Grade, Gender= Principals' Gender, LC = Location of the school,
LP = Leadership Practices
* significant at $p < 0.05$

leadership practices have predictive power over leadership effectiveness. These confirm the causal chain of effects as proposed by Yukl (2002) where managers with high EI competency possess effective leadership practices would eventually increase employees' satisfaction and commitment.

Research results also demonstrate that understanding external emotion correlates positively with departmental performance. This outcome shows that if a school principal has the ability to identify emotions in others, to understand the causes and consequences of different emotions at work, and express through a number of different channels of the body such as body movements, vocal tones, facial expressions or combinations of them, their departmental performance would improve (Elfenbein & Ambady, 2002). The emotional intelligent skills of controlling one's own emotions and perceiving others are required for today's employees to work more effectively in group or team. The skills of persuasion, listening, patience, restraint, and offering sympathy are essential to work in harmony with others and navigating one's career. Building on Goleman's (1995; 1998) work and referring to him as the guru of emotional intelligence, the need for high emotional intelligence of salespeople is applied (Sexton, 2001)

The findings also confirm that effective leadership practices could explain a very significant variance in teachers' satisfaction and commitment as well as departmental performance. It should be noted that leadership practices could explain a higher percentage of variance in teachers' satisfaction and commitment as compared to departmental performance as proposed by Kouzes and Posner (1990). Though this study's results cannot be broadly generalized, they are still important to consider for today's practitioners.

It appears that many of the benefits espoused regarding emotional intelligence to an individual's leadership success and effectiveness need to be noted as Goleman (1995; 2000) has claimed that the key to leaders' effectiveness and success in an organization is their emotional intelligence.

How leaders can be more effective is a core issue to the field of HRD. This study is intended to address the gap in providing more informed link between the theory and practice of the relationship between leadership effectiveness and emotional intelligence existing and enhancing leadership skills of school principals in Malaysia. The results of this study indicate that emotional intelligence has been an aide to leadership development, and leadership effectiveness. In addition, EI is a learnable behavior (Goleman, 1999). Human Resource Managers should try to include it in their training programs for the new as well as established principals and employees.

Due to the incorporation of emotional intelligence concepts into practice, and as yet, limited amount of empirical research in the area of emotional intelligence such as to develop a more closely aligned definition of emotional intelligence, the construct of emotional intelligence is a unique measure. Another recommendation for future research is to explore the concept of emotional intelligence from a qualitative perspective. It may be that emotional intelligence is difficult to measure in the quantitative perspective and a better understanding may be gained through looking at this differently. The nuances around individuals' behavior and approach to others could be explored through a qualitative lens and would contribute additional knowledge in this body of emotional intelligence work.

The topic of emotional intelligence has generated a great deal of interest in the community of practitioners and a divergence of perspectives in the research community. A better understanding of this construct from a multitude of perspectives, along with tools to effectively measure it, will contribute significantly to this phenomenon of emotional intelligence and further clarify whether or not it provides a unique contribution to our understanding of individuals and to the field of HRD.

Conclusion

This study provides considerable insight into using EI as a predictor of effective leadership. It is hoped that the knowledge gained may assist educational management and Human Resource Practitioners in recruitment and training programs, especially the school principal leadership training at the Institute of Aminuddin Baki, Malaysia.

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