



## A Conceptual Paper for Educational Leadership Models in Malaysia

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Received: 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

Accepted: 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021

Published: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021

### ABSTRACT

Researchers are paying attention to leadership management in the field of education after the Ministry of Education placed high leadership in schools as a shift to improve the standard of Malaysia's education system in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025. Leadership is mentioned as a necessity for reforming educational institutions. It has the potential to influence teachers' performance and academic success of students. Transactional, transformational, and instructional leadership models were found out to be the most prominent types of leadership in Malaysian educational institutions. However, only few studies on leadership models and teachers' performance have been conducted, especially in the field of special education. Therefore, this study was developed with the aim of proposing a conceptual framework involving the instructional leadership model and teacher success in order to fill a void in the current literature, based on previous scholars' recommendations. The paper started by giving an overview of the three types of models that are widely used before forming the conceptual structure and seeking past studies concerning leadership models and teacher-related factors. Finally, the constructs of teachers' self-efficacy and job satisfaction were applied to the proposed framework, which is intended to introduce new perspectives into the field of special education leadership.

**Keywords:** leadership model, instructional leadership, teachers' self-efficacy, job satisfaction, teachers' performance.

### OPEN ACCESS

### INTRODUCTION

Every country in the world relies greatly on education. Education has always been a top priority for the Malaysian government because they believe that education is a continuous effort to improve future well-being. This can be proven with the highest amount of government allocation for education involving RM50.4 billion or 15.6 percent in 2021 budget. The large sums of money spending on education was intended to ensure that our educational system is of high quality and on par with that of the world's leading nations. Quality education requires quality management. If we want the country's educational growth to advance mankind, we should therefore master management skills (Dhal, 2021). The degree to which all involved parties' interests and desires are met determines the quality of education (Anttila, 2019). In other words, quality can be described as something which best meets and exceeds the customers' demands. While management is defined as an art of getting things done through people, efficiently (doing things right) and effectively (doing right things) (Muniapan, 2007).

Effective management education is required in Malaysian organizations to develop world-class leaders. Quality management, according to Quang Ngoc (2020), is a management that keeps things in a stable and evolving state by combining three practices that are carried out concurrently and continuously. Setting targets and expectations, evaluating the condition in consideration of the standards, and improving the standard scenario are the three practices in quality

management. Therefore, Malaysia's Ministry of Education has released the Malaysia Education Blue Print, which covers education planning from 2013 to 2025, in order to become one of the leading education countries. Eleven shifts are listed in the document to evolve our educational system; which one of the shifts is to ensure that every school has high-performing school leaders. This transition is focused on management efficiency in whether primary or secondary school in Malaysia. School leaders should be prepared and provided greater resources as a result of this change, which is proven to reflect student success indirectly (MOE, 2013). Managers in educational institutions can get a deeper understanding of why they do as they do in overseeing their organization by mastering about educational leadership models. Furthermore, understanding the models that they practice in organizing their institutions will enable them to rationalize and explain the decisions and actions that are taken. Leaders can determine whether and to what degree they ought to reassess and adjust their management style for the greater good of their institutions by reflecting on these models.

Unfortunately, despite the fact that leadership reflects teachers' job performance (Wahab et al., 2020; Achmad, 2017; Wenko, 2017), but its effect on job performance is barely investigated. More researches on instructional leadership model should be developed in the context of Asian countries to investigate how school leaders perform in various educational settings leadership of education (Medina et al., 2018). Therefore, as suggested by Nursohana & Mohd

Effendi (2020), new study must pay attention to the real needs of special education management and administration, particularly with the implementation of zero reject policy. The zero-rejection policy, which enables children with special needs to attend school for at least three months regardless of their disabilities, was implemented in 2019, posing a number of obstacles for special education educators. Learner erratic behaviour, job overload, insufficient learning opportunities, unpleasant working conditions, and self-doubt are all major challenges for special educators. (Amalina & Azita, 2016; Downing, 2017; Norazmi, Zaid & Rasid, 2020; Hester, Bridges & Rollins, 2020). With this challenging situation, it's difficult for the special educators to perform their job particularly if they did not get the support from the school leaders. Mosbiran et al. (2020) also revealed that only seven studies were published in Malaysia regarding special education leadership from 2011 to 2020. Due to these complexities, Mosbiran et al.(2020) indicated that future studies should focus on special education-related constructs such as teacher job satisfaction. Therefore, this paper aims:

1. to offer an overview of three educational leadership models that currently use in Malaysia;
2. to identify recent studies on the instructional leadership model and variables involving teachers in the Malaysian context;
3. to propose a new conceptual framework that includes instructional leadership and teacher performance, as well as two additional constructs; self-efficacy and job satisfaction.

To date, study involves the combination of instructional leadership, self-efficacy, job satisfaction and educators' performance has never been studied in Malaysia. Based on a limited existing literature and research, this study would contribute to the field's expertise and address a literature gap. Finally, a brief conclusion will be raised on the significance of applying this conceptual construct in the field of special education.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational leadership in school can be described as a process of control based on clear principles and beliefs that leads to a school vision. According to Chainani (2019), leaders articulate the goal in attempt to acquire staff and stakeholder devotion to the ideal of a brighter future for the school, its pupils, and stakeholders. A capable principal with strong leadership skills has a significant influence on others, especially teachers. Good and supportive leadership will influence the teachers to serve better (Tai & Omar, 2016). There have been numerous strong evidences from previous studies that leadership management style has an impact on teachers; such as teachers' performance (Wahab et al., 2020; Achmad, 2017; Wenno, 2017), teachers' self-efficacy (Thien et al., 2021; Thien, Lim & Adams, 2021; Musa et al., 2021; Jalapang & Raman, 2020; Baharuzaini et al. 2017; Liu & Bellibas, 2017; Shafinaz, Chua & Leong, 2016), commitment (Thien, Lim & Adams, 2021; Othman, 2020; Yusuf & Wahab, 2019), competency (Ismail et al., 2020; Narad, Dolizyi & Lakhanpal, 2020; Ismail et al., 2018; Wenno, 2017; Paturusi, 2017), development (Abdullah et al., 2020; Abas & Basri, 2019) and their job satisfaction (Veraya, 2020; Nurlaili & Abdullah, 2018; Ghavifekr, 2017; Ismail, 2017; Schwartz, 2017; Arokiasamy et al., 2016; Anantha, 2016). Leadership management will impact students' achievement too (Naz & Rashid, 2021; Azar & Adnan, 2020; Hassan, Ahmad & Boon,

2018; Nor, 2017; Baharuzaini et al., 2017). As a result, leadership would have an effect on overall school performance as well (Abubakar, Inuwa & Hamma, 2018; Arokiasamy et al., 2017; Lim & Jamal, 2016).

There are several typical models that had been implemented at school institutions level in Malaysia; transformational, transactional and instructional leadership management model based on previous researches done. Most models include the element of vision, which means the institution's leader has a goal to accomplish in the future. In this literature review, three typical models that applied in Malaysia school institutions and their features will be discussed in this literature review.

### *The Transformational Model*

Transformational leadership is a process that involved interaction between leaders and members in the organizations to enhance the level of motivation and morale in working together. Through the transforming process, the objective of leaders and organization members have been converged; that it is fair to anticipate harmonious relationships and agreement that leads to agreed-upon decisions. The central goal of the transformational leadership model is to promote institutional capability growth and increase personal commitment to the organization (Veraya, 2020). Increased commitments and capabilities are expected to result in increased initiative and efficiency among organization members (Saidova, 2018). These leaders are more concerned about their followers' desires and motivations, and they strive to help them achieve their full potential. It has the potential to involve all stakeholders in the pursuit of educational goals when it operates well (Banu et al., 2019).

### *The Transactional Model*

Transactional leadership is a type of leadership that is focused on an exchange of a valuable resource between leaders and teachers. Exchange is an established political strategy for members of organizations especially teachers. Teachers are motivated with leaders' promises, praises and rewards as an exchange in transactional leadership model (Sirin, Aydir & Bilir, 2018; Saidova, 2018). The transaction can provide advantages for all stakeholders to the deal. Leaders have jurisdiction because they are the official leaders of their organizations. However, in order to ensure the school's successful management, the leaders need teachers' cooperation. The major limitation of such a process is that it does not engage staff beyond the immediate gains arising from the transaction. Transactional leadership is short-term in nature, with leaders focusing solely on the organization members' current needs (Sirin, Aydir & Bilir, 2018).

### *The Instructional Model*

Instructional leadership differs from the other educational leadership models because it focuses on the direction of influence, rather than its nature and source. Instructional model can be defined as clear planning behavior of the headmaster or principal who have the massive influence in guiding teachers and students to improve teaching and learning process to achieve school academic vision (Naz & Rashid, 2021; Lim & Jamal, 2016). Instructional leaders who are actively involved in teachers' development by planning, coordinating and evaluating the process of teaching and learning (T&L) in school (Hassan, Ahmad & Boon, 2018). Hallinger's Instructional Leadership Model (2011) introduced three dimensions which are:

- i. defining school goal;
- ii. managing instructional program;
- iii. promoting school climate.

Among these three models, the instructional leadership management model seems to be the most appropriate for the nature of the teaching and learning process. As from the words "instructional" that came from "instructions" or in school context, we usually use "teaching", this type of leadership management model seems to be well-suited to the educational setting. Through the instructional leadership, we can ensure that the teaching and learning process will be improved and give impact to students' development. Despite the fact that this leadership model is over decades, it is still getting attention from researchers (Gumus et al., 2016). It shows that instructional leadership is one of the most trusted models in guiding schools to the right direction and by bringing a leader to increase the level of teachers' teaching and learning, as well as students' academic achievement (Naz & Rashid, 2021). Ismail et al. (2018) emphasized that school leaders are recommended to adopt instructional leadership in their practices to improve teachers' functional competency. Instructional leadership should be implemented to enhance teachers' self-efficacy as suggested by Baharin et al. (2017). It is also recommended by Saiful (2016) for school that wanted to improve the students, teachers and school performance as he found out that principals in high academic achievement school practice this leadership management model. Thus, instructional leadership model was chosen for this study because it could help school leaders in creating a positive school atmosphere, which has been one of the teachers' main challenges, as revealed in the problem statement.

### METHODOLOGY

The first step in creating a conceptual structure was to look at similar articles and see if there were any connections between instructional leadership and teacher success. During this phase, related papers were found using search engines including Semantic Scholar (<https://www.semanticscholar.org/>), Science Direct (<http://www.sciencedirect.com/>), Google Scholar (<https://scholar.google.com/>), Sage Publications (<https://journals.sagepub.com/>) and Research Gate (<https://www.researchgate.net/>). Keywords, such as 'instructional leadership', 'teachers' and 'Malaysia' were used in this process. As a result of these efforts, 5774 publications were identified; however, only 5765 remained after the second stage of the screening process. Then, we carefully selected articles focusing on the impact of instructional leadership on Malaysian teachers. The key sources for establishing the context of teacher performance were identified with eighteen papers, while the remaining articles included supporting materials for the current study (Table 1). The study's scope is the aspects of school teachers that are affected by instructional leadership model. The identified relationships allowed us to recommend four constructs; instructional leadership, teachers' self-efficacy, teachers' job satisfaction and teachers' performance. These recommendations are thought to be relevant for Malaysia's special education needs.

**Table 1:** Articles selected in formulating the basis of conceptual framework

Author (s) and year of publication	Constructs	Respondents
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Naz & Rashid (2021)	Instructional leadership, teachers' motivation and students' achievement	Mainstream secondary school educators
Thien et al. (2021)	Instructional leadership, teacher professional learning, teachers' trust in the principal and self-efficacy	Mainstream primary and secondary school educators
Thien, Lim & Adams (2021)	Instructional leadership, teachers' self-efficacy and commitment	Mainstream primary and secondary school educators
Othman (2020)	Instructional leadership and teachers' commitment	Mainstream primary school educators
Jalapang & Raman (2020)	Instructional leadership, principal efficacy, school climate & teacher efficacy	Mainstream primary school educators
Wahab et al. (2020)	Instructional leadership and teachers' performance	Mainstream primary school educators
Abdullah et al. (2020)	Instructional leadership, teacher development and instructional coaching	School leaders
Hui & Singh (2020)	Instructional leadership and learning organization	Mainstream primary school educators
Musa et al. (2020)	Instructional leadership, transformational leadership, teachers' self-efficacy and trust	Mainstream primary school educators
Ismail et al. (2020)	Instructional leadership and teachers' functional competency	Mainstream primary school educators
Abas & Basri (2019)	Instructional leadership, teacher development and instructional coaching	Mainstream secondary school educators
Hassan, Ahmad & Boon (2019)	Instructional leadership and learning organization	Mainstream educators
Yusof & Wahab (2019)	Instructional leadership and teachers' commitment	Mainstream secondary school educators
Ismail et al. (2018)	Instructional leadership and teachers' functional competency	Mainstream primary and secondary school educators
Mannan (2017)	Instructional leadership, teacher commitment and professional community	Mainstream secondary school educators
Ghavifekr (2017)	Instructional leadership and teachers' satisfaction	Mainstream secondary school educators

Baharin et al. (2016)	Instructional leadership Mainstream and teachers' self-primary educators efficacy
Rodzi & Mansor (2016)	Instructional leadership Mainstream and professional learning secondary school educators

## Research Design

Researcher discovered that a number of researches concerning instructional leadership in primary and secondary schools in Malaysia have been conducted since 2016 based on secondary data collection. This study utilizes one independent variable, two mediators and one dependent variable as shown in Figure 1.

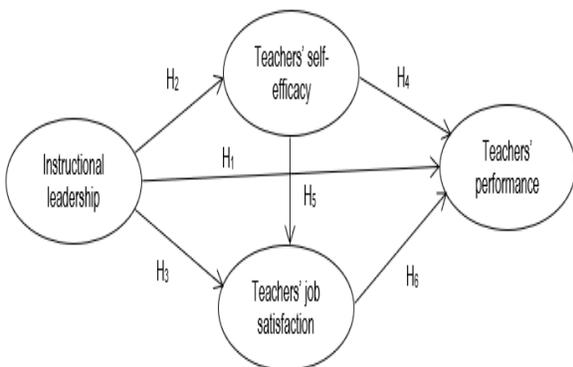


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

The research questions are as follows:

1. Does instructional leadership impacts teachers' performance?
2. Does instructional leadership impact teachers' self-efficacy?
3. Does instructional leadership impact teachers' job satisfaction?
4. Does teachers' self-efficacy impact teachers' performance?
5. Does teachers' self-efficacy impact teachers' job satisfaction?
6. Does teachers' job satisfaction impact teachers' performance?

## CONCLUSION

The instructional leadership management model seems reliable to fit the nature of management in school institution that was the focus of this study. Educational leadership is critical to the achievement of a diverse set of educational goals. If the institution's primary goal is for students to succeed, instructional leadership seems to be a viable choice. Based on previous scholars' recommendations, this study has proposed a conceptual framework that focuses on special educators and instructional leadership. Currently, it appears to be relevant to the present situation in Malaysia, especially in the field of special education. This research aims to deter special education teachers from leaving the field by providing them with the adequate support from school administration.

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