

Educational Leadership and Management

Hairuddin Ali
Azam Othman
Johdi Salleh

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HAIRUDDIN ALI



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CHAPTER 1

Innovative Leadership: A New Perspective on Change Management in Malaysian Educational Institutions.

Azam bin Othman

Institute of Education

International Islamic University Malaysia

Introduction

Educational leaders today are faced with many challenges. Besides managing the organisation, he or she has to juggle with various issues like discipline, staff, finance, parents and other menial tasks. Leithwood and Day (2007) found out that leaders must equip themselves with the right tools and skills in order to manage educational institutions nowadays. If we compare the environment of any education institution 20 years ago and educational institutions that we know today, we can observe that there are many kinds of changes and differences. Educational institutions are not what they were before and leaders must realize that in order to face the challenges, they must face it head on and take the challenge. With these changes, come substantial responsibilities and new roles for educational institutions and its leaders. New skills are created and need to be taught and learned. This is when the role of leaders is crucial in that he or she will be the catalyst for change towards the students, the staff and the organization as a whole.

Therefore, when an individual is promoted to be educational administrators, he or she is expected to manage the educational institution well. He or she is also expected to lead the academic staff in the curriculum and technical aspects of the teaching and learning (Bowring-Carr, 1997). It is a general knowledge that an educational administrator must be experienced in managing the educational institutions. With years of experience, the tacit knowledge that he has gathered when he was a senior teacher helps in making decisions. Here we have a classic example of a normal progression of running of an educational institution. Nevertheless, we hear about schools that go out of bound and exceed the boundaries. Here we see that innovative leaders apply innovations in the running of the educational institutions. Bulloch (1990) argued that the success of the educational institution depends on leaders' extra skills. One of these extra skills is the ability to innovate.

Gerstein (1987) defined innovation as creating or exploiting new needs or using technology to change the rules of the game. This is achieved through:

1. Addressing new customer group
2. Addressing new sets of needs or previously unfulfilled needs
3. Utilizing new technology to:
 - Satisfy needs that could not be satisfied before
 - Dramatically change the economics of the business.

He further draws the distinction between technology and innovation. He argued that innovation is a social process arising from the delivery of increased value to