

Educational Leadership and Management

Hairuddin Ali
Azam Othman
Johdi Salleh

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HAIRUDDIN ALI



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CHAPTER 7

The Relationship between Strategic Leadership and Followership Styles of Malaysian National Primary School (NPS) Heads

Hairuddin bin Mohd. Ali

Institute of Education

International Islamic University Malaysia

1.0 Introduction

School improvement programme (SIP) refers to a systematic approach that improves the quality of schools. As long as the international research field of school improvement is concerned, Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994), Stoll and Fink (1996) and Harris (1999) emphasized that the characteristics of improving schools have been widely documented and disputed. The successive studies have clearly shown that purposeful leadership, teacher collaboration and central focus upon learning outcomes are the factors that support positive school change (Fullan, 1993). There are however, relatively few detailed studies of successful SIP in action and even fewer studies of the same nature.

2.0 Overview of SIP for NPS in Malaysia

As in June 2005, there were 5,761 (accommodated approximately 2.4 million pupils) National Primary Schools (NPS) in Malaysia. As a NPS, each individual school supposedly successful in attracting various races and ethnics in Malaysia, however this attempt was far from what has been targeted. Hence, the government's goals to employ the NPS as a platform for the national unity effort will obviously a failure if some effective measures are not introduced. As the government still believes in NPS unity platform strategy, MOEM's Educational Development Master Plan (2006-2010) clearly identifies the SIP as its core or focus. The said plan is one of the several plans (from other ministries) that align with the Ninth Malaysia Development Plan (2006-2010).

As early as 2005, MOEM had selected 350 NPS for the SIP. First, 350 school heads (principals) concerned were given five days SIP training at IAB in the middle of 2005. Next, within duration of two months they needed to prepare their school's strategic plan (2006-2010). At the beginning of 2006, all 350 schools were supposedly to manage and fully implement of their strategic plan as well as practicing the strategic leadership skills. Thus, this is the best time for MOEM to embark on a quality monitoring for Strategic Leadership Style of NPS Heads particularly those who are involve with SIP. The main objective of SIP is to enable the Malaysian educational system to nurture and produce strong, excellent and high performing schools particularly among the NPS.

3.0 Objectives of the Study