

The Relationship Between Headmaster Communication and School Performance Excellence in State of Johor

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Abstract

This study aims to look the relationship between headmaster communication and school performance excellence in State of Johor. Previous studies have proven communication is the best medium to convey information to others. It hoped that through good communication from headmaster can help improve school performance. To realize this study, 433 primary school teachers were involved. The purpose are to get feedbacks from the teacher's. Because teachers directly close with headmaster in school performance excellence. Google form is used to collect data. Meanwhile, the data were analyzed using two applications are Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Mode (SmartPLS). The findings of the study show there is a significant relationship between communication practiced by headmasters with school performance excellence. Therefore, suggested to be extend this study to all schools in Malaysia for see the accurate finding relationship between communication with school performance excellence.

Keywords: headmasters; communication; school performance excellence

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Introduction

In general, the greatness of a school is judged based on its performance. To ensure that all schools in Malaysia achieve high performance, the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE) provides a high-performing line of leadership (MOE, 2013). Because KPM is aware, school performance excellence starts from a great line of leadership. To produce great school leaders, the Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB) is responsible for providing guidance and training for prospective/school leaders. Guidance and training provided by IAB related to school management, research and external studies (Aminudin Baki Institute, 2019). The purpose

of IAB, is to equip school leaders with leadership knowledge and be able to address current issues in the right way (MOE, 2013). When all school leaders are high performing then excellence in school performance can be achieved easily.

To ensure that all schools in Malaysia excel, the MOE has introduced a manual to improve school performance known as the Malaysian Education Quality Standard Wave 2 (SKPMg2) (Ibrahim, 2017). SKPMg2 was introduced by the MOE in 2017 and evaluates five items (i) leadership; (ii) organizational management; (iii) curriculum, co-curriculum and student affairs; (iv) teaching and learning;

and (v) discipleship. Thus, school performance excellence can be achieved when school leaders are able to achieve the five things assessed in SKPMg2. In addition, in 2019, KPM has decided SKPMg2 as a yardstick for school performance excellence in Malaysia (KPM, 2019).

MOE is committed to improving school performance because it wants to bridge the gap between high-performing schools and low-performing schools (Sabri, 2017; Halimah & Dg Norizah, 2017; Hashim, 2014). In addition, the MOE intends to make Malaysia a global education hub in this century (Piaw, Shafinaz & Hussein, 2016; Nor Azni Abdul Aziz, 2015). Previous researchers have demonstrated that improved school performance is contributed by headmasters communication (Blasé & Blase, 2000; Brown et al., 2019; Suhaili, 2019; Martin, 2017; Bakar et al., 2015). Additionally, previous researchers have found that communication is the backbone and pulse of life (Hariyaty et al., 2017; Zafir, 2012). Through communication codes are socially constructed to convey information to each other (Martin, 2017). Next, communication is an important organizational management and political strategy to convey information to its followers (Jamaliah, 2005). Here shows that the role of communication is very important in an organization. Thus, it is not surprising that many researchers make communication-related studies (Meiners, 2019; Brown et al., 2019; Ngoma & Dithan, 2019; Lindsay, 2019; Suppiah et al., 2019; Mahbob et al., 2019; Ali & Sahin, 2016; Sulaiman, 2015; Reinout & Oostenveld, 2009; Akbas, 2008; Sahin, 2007; Zerfass & Huck, 2007; Dirim, 1997; Reyes & Hoyle, 1992; Book, 1977).

In this study, the researcher wanted to identify whether there is a significant relationship between head teacher communication with school performance excellence by using resource-based view theory (RBV) as a guide. Because RBV theory is often used in business-related studies and is rarely used in education-related studies.

2 Literature Review

This study involved two variables, school performance excellence as a dependent variable and communication as an independent variable.

2.1 School Performance Excellence

Today, all schools in Malaysia focus on performance excellence (Davis, 2019). This is

to realize the MOE's intention to make Malaysia an education hub in Southeast Asia. Committed to improving school performance, the MOE has prepared the Malaysian Education Blueprint (PPPM) 2013-2025 as a manual for the education system at this time.

To ensure that schools always excel, KPM promises to place high -performing leaders in every school (KPM, 2013). Because the task of the school leader is very complex and cannot rely on instruction but is concerned with the changes produced according to the suitability of the school (Mutalib, 2019). In schools, leaders, teachers and students are resources that need to be mobilized to achieve school performance excellence (Javed & Hussain, 2020; Suntichai, 2013; Barratt & Oke, 2007; Rugtusanatham et al., 2003). According to Sophia (2016), teachers and students are very valuable resources. To mobilize available resources in schools, leaders need to be knowledgeable, always ready to face challenges, have mental and physical strength as well as be able to influence others to improve school performance (Pete & Stephen, 2021; Javed & Hussain, 2020; Ghazali, 2019). This is because, according to Hater and Bass (1988) school excellence is achieved as a result of the cooperation of leaders and followers.

Furthermore, to ensure schools excel, school leaders need to avoid toxic leadership attitudes (Kilic & Gunsels, 2019). This is because toxic leadership in organizations can contribute to decreased job performance, increased stress, absenteeism problems and quitting intentions among followers (Labrague, Nwafor & Tsaras, 2020). The toxic effects of leadership in organizations are very unhealthy as it can restrict followers' opportunities to increase professionalism and job performance. Aside from toxic leadership, the attitude of school leaders who like to compare school performance with other schools, is very unfavorable to the emotions of followers (Reed, 2004). But, Lia and Diding (2019), Indrawati (2013) and Adeyemi, Sidikat and Aremu (2008) found that comparisons of school performance with other schools done by school leaders had a good impact on school performance improvement. However, according to Pete and Stephen (2021) school performance comparison methods most quickly affect performance improvement. Only this method of comparing school performance, can put pressure on teachers because they have to meet

the work targets set by the headmasters (Maniam, 2020; Yen & Jerry, 2017). Sensitive to this method of performance comparison, MOE instructs headmasters to address any teacher-related problems as best they can because the improvement of school performance is largely contributed by teachers (Sandhy, 2019; Aryadita, 2019; Rohman, 2018).

Therefore, to ensure that all schools in Malaysia excel, school leaders should be guided by the five things assessed in SKPMg2 (KPM, 2019). Within the leadership standards the things that are assessed are how the head teacher plays a role as a leader, motivator and mentor. In the organizational management standard seven elements are assessed namely human resource management, asset management, financial management, educational resource management, school environment climate, unity management and strategic consensus. Meanwhile, in the curriculum management standards, co-curriculum and student affairs, assessment is done based on documentation, implementation, review and dissemination of activities that should be carried out according to the needs of the school. Next, in teaching standards and assessment facilitation is focused on teachers based on the role as planners; guards; mentor; motivators and evaluators in improving student mastery based on the objectives and stipulations set by the MOE. Furthermore, for the standard of student achievement, the item assessed is student achievement in academics; student development in the co-curriculum and student personality development. This shows that SKPMg2 evaluation is a holistic evaluation starting from inputs, processes and outputs to meet the requirements of the education system process (Mu'min, 2019; Syafaruddin & Irwan, 2005). Finally, starting in 2019, KPM has set school performance excellence to be determined based on SKPMg2 (KPM, 2019).

2.2 Communication

Communication is a medium of communication between an individual and another individual and should affect its recipients (Phayilah et al., 2018). According to Wahab and Abdullah, (2018) communication is also very important to connect the creature with its creator. Because communication involves a variety of mediums either verbally, non-verbally or involves the use of tools in conveying information to others to

generate feedback (Yoder, Hugenberg & Wallace, 1996; Sulaiman Masri, 1997; Dwyer, 2005; Brown, Paz-Aparicio, & Revilla, 2019). Communication is also a two-way interaction between the informant to the receiver and the receiver to the informant (Byrnes, 1975): Abrams, 1986; Frey, Botan, Friedman & Kreps, 1991; Hybels & Weaver, 1992; Yoder, Hugenberg & Wallace, 1996).

Previous researchers have also proven that through communication can produce understanding, attitude change and enjoyment (Akhtar et al., 2017). Comprehension in communication is that the receiver understands the message conveyed by the sender and fulfills the goal conveyed in turn producing feedback (Dwi Nurani, 2015; Abdullah, 2015; Jehwae, 2014; Hashim, 2013; Zafir, 2012). Then, through communication will influence the change of attitude of the receiver either after or during the process of information being conveyed (Dwi Nurani, 2015; Abdullah, 2015; Hashim, 2013). These attitude changes are influenced by the emotions and perceptions of receiver and presenters of information (Zafir, 2012). This is because everyone is free to choose the desired attitude change (Eve, 2013). After that, pleasure is present when good communication exists especially in the organization (Jehwae, 2014; Hashim, 2013). Because employees will feel fun and motivated to do the job when communication between leaders and followers is very good (Alaudin, 2004). According to Ang (2015) and Zafir (2012) through fun will foster trust, commitment and smoothness in the organization.

In conclusion, communication is very important in human life and organization. The findings of previous researchers prove that goals can be achieved and challenges can be repelled through communication whether involving oneself and the organization (Hasan, 2015; Akbas, 2008; Dirim, 1997).

2.3 Underpinning Theory

This study is based on the resource-based view (RBV) theory has been popularized by Penrose (1959). RBV theory is commonly used in strategic planning studies related to business management and performance (Rajennd, 2019; Nasuredin, 2016; Mustafa, 2014; Barney, 1991). Recently, this theory has begun to be applied in educational studies (Maisah et al., 2020; Richard & Paul, 2007). Because this

theory looks at how an organization can improve its performance through the resources it owns (Aryadita, 2019). In this theory, resources are classified into five: (1) valuable; (2) unique; (3) difficult to mobilize/influence; (4) imperfect sources; and (5) not easily replaceable (Suntichai, 2013; Barratt & Oke, 2007; Rugtusanatham et al., 2003).

According to Sophia (2016) students, teachers and headmasters are the existing resources that are in the school. Because the success of a school stems from existing resources initiated by headmasters (Azlin & Roselan, 2015). Thus, RBV theory was used in this study to see how headmasters mobilize available resources (teachers and students) to improve school performance. Furthermore, according to Sugiyono (2010) through this theory, a researcher can focus on the achievement of an organization through the resources owned and able to compete globally in achieving excellence in school performance.

3 Methodology

According to Bryman (2008) research design is a framework used by researchers to collect and analyze data. The selection of the right study design is important to ensure the success of a study even if there is no specific method to determine the best design (Borden & Abbot, 2011). The selection of an appropriate study design is crucial to ensure the quality of research results (Nasuredin, 2016). Further, Robson (2011) found that research design is to convert research questions to projects that involve component objectives, research questions, theories, methods and sampling strategies. While Creswell (2014) argues that study design is a proposal or plan for conducting research that involves the interaction of research strategies, research methods and research philosophy.

Moreover, there are three study designs that can be used in conducting research namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed method (Creswell, 2014; Neuman, 2014; Creswell, 2008). Quantitative research is used to describe the trends or tendencies of relationships between variables and is measured through numerical representation and analyzed using statistical techniques (Creswell, 2014; Neuman, 2014; Creswell, 2008). Whereas qualitative research is a type of study that focuses on the study of meanings, meanings and phenomena related to natural situations (Creswell, 2014;

Neuman, 2014; Mok, 2010; Creswell, 2008). Next, the mixed method is an approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods in one study (Creswell, 2014; Creswell, 2008).

In this study the researcher chose to use quantitative methods. The aim is to determine before and after results as well as confirm hypotheses by testing theories and at the same time be able to explain and predict the variables and phenomena being measured (Leedy, 2005). In addition, this study also uses the survey method by using google form to avoid face-to-face meetings to obtain effective and consistent research results. According to Cohen, Manion and Morisson (2011) use of google form because it is easy to manage and immediate respondent feedback is obtained without involving a long period of time. Meanwhile, the feedback received from the google form is self-administered by the researcher.

Futhermore, the advantages of quantitative methods focus on facilitating understanding of complex things or situations through scientific methods and are focused on the study of relationships and interactions between variables (Creswell, 2014; Mok, 2010). Through this approach the researcher will emphasize on the situation and control it through analysis of the data collected (Hisham, 2020; Fraenkel, 2007; Chua, 2006; Nana, 2005). Next, the data obtained will be analyzed to identify a phenomenon is accurate and statistically reliable through the representation of numerical forms (Zikmund et al., 2009).

Even, the selection of quantitative methods is to obtain answers based on problems statement, theory and variables measured through numerical representation and analyzed using statistical techniques (Neuman, 2014). Researchers also take from quantitative approaches can measure respondents' reactions and feedback accurately through distributed questionnaires (Hisham, 2020; Patton, 1990). From questionnaire instrument, researcher to make an interpretation of meaning based on the views, feelings and thoughts of the respondents based on the feedback received (Sekaran, 2005).

Meanwhile, for measure school performance, reseacher using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) instrument developed by Shartle in 1945 (Foong & Khairuddin, 2018) and validated by Stogdill (1969). This instrument describes the behavior of a leader in any organization or

group provided that followers can see the leader acting as a leader (Foong & Khairuddin, 2018; Hater & Bass, 1988). In fact, LBDQ is a widely used instrument to measure the behavior of organizational leaders whether in the business, service, defense and education sectors (Kumar, 2020; Ray, 2019; Kilic & Gunsul, 2019; Zaizul et. Al, 2019; Stogdill, 1969). In Malaysia, LBDQ instruments has been introduced by Rahimah (1981). Rahimah (1981) serves as a translator and modifies the instrument to measure the leadership of principals/headmasters in achieving school performance excellence. Subsequently, this instrument has been widely used by researchers in the country. Among them, Azman Hussin (1999) used this instrument to study the leadership style of principals in Technical Secondary Schools in Kelantan and Majid (2008) studied teachers' perceptions of headmaster leadership in four primary schools in Hulu Trengganu District. The LBDQ question was also modified by Yahaya et al. (2011) to measure the leadership factors of headmaster from the aspects of thinking culture, consensus, motivation and encouragement, curriculum leadership and leadership empowerment in schools in accordance with the Malaysian Education Quality Standards (SKPM) 2014 and now known as SKPMg2 after refinement (Ibrahim, 2017). In this study, the researcher performed a slight modification of the LBDQ question items modified by Yahaya et al. (2011) in accordance with the requirements of this study. In this study, the determination of school performance excellence was assessed based on teachers' perceptions. This is because teachers are people who work closely and know the leadership style of the headmaster in an effort to improve the school. Thus, teachers are highly qualified to make this assessment (Supramaniam, 2017; Iskandar, 2013; Rohani, 2012; Zaini, 2009).

What's more, the instrument used to measure communication was based on the Interpersonal Communication Skills Questionnaire question item developed by Sahin (2007). This instrument was developed to explore the extent to which school administrators have communication skills and how communication processes occur in schools as human-centered organizations (Hasan, 2015; Sahin, 2007). This instrument can be used to obtain the perceptions of teachers and school leaders on the communication skills of

administrators in schools (Hasan, 2015). This instrument contains thirty-three questions and is divided into four factors with emphatic listening, effectiveness, feedback giving and reassurance (Ali, Sahin, Sonmez & Yilmaz, 2016; Hasan, 2015; Sahin, 2007). The factor of emphatic listening refers to the ability of a leader to win the heart and try to meet the needs of others (Sayers, Bingaman, Graham, & Wheeler, 1993). While the effectiveness factor to measure the ability of leaders to manipulate the views, attitudes and behaviors of employees (Nelson & Quick, 1995). Next, the feedback giving factor refers to the ability of leaders to respond to messages received (Hasan, 2015). The last factor is reassurance refers to the ability of leaders to accept the opinions and weaknesses of others and always research the facts accepted before decisions are made in a healthy way (Davis, 2019b; Hasan, 2015). Previous researchers acknowledged that these four factors were found to contribute to the effectiveness of leaders' interpersonal skills. Because the communication skills possessed by leaders can be used in dealing with and facing challenges to achieve success in the organization (Hasan, 2015; Akbas, 2008; Dirim, 1997). However, the researcher has made some modifications of the question items according to the suitability of this study. But in this study, the original question items were modified according to the appropriateness in this study.

So that, in this study teachers were answer a questionnaire according to the extent to which they agreed to each statement using a five-point likert scale format (Jamieson, 2007). Likert scale 1 represents strongly disagree, 2 represents disagree, 3 represents disagree, 4 represents agree and 5 represents strongly agree.

4 Results and Findings

This study was conducted in the State of Johor. Primary school teachers as the respondents of the study to evaluate the effectiveness of communication of headmasters to contribute school performance excellence. Selection of teachers as respondents because they are closest with headmasters to improve school performance.

Then, this study involved 433 primary school teachers in the state of Johor. Demographic data were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

(SPSS) version 25. Table 1 show profile respondents.

Table1: Profile Respondents

| Bil. | Items | Frequency | Percentage |
|------|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Gender | | |
| | Male | 94 | 21.7 |
| | Female | 339 | 78.3 |
| 2. | Age | | |
| | 20-29 years | 47 | 10.9 |
| | 30-39 years | 150 | 34.6 |
| | 40-49 years | 169 | 39.0 |
| | More than 50 years | 67 | 15.5 |
| 3. | Services | | |
| | 1-10 years | 142 | 32.8 |
| | 11-20 years | 164 | 37.9 |
| | More than 21 years | 127 | 29.3 |
| 4 | Education level | | |
| | Certificate/Diploma | 29 | 6.7 |
| | Degree | 378 | 87.3 |
| | Master | 26 | 6.0 |

The respondents of the study consisted of 21.7 percent male teachers and 78.3 percent female teachers. These findings show that the study respondents were dominated by female teachers with a surplus of 56.6 percent compared to male teachers. These findings, supporting past findings that the teaching field is dominated by female teachers are true (Nor, 2017; Khairuddin & Danielle 2017; Halimah & Norizah, 2017; Karmani, 2016; Shantini et al., 2015).

Furthermore, the majority of study respondents were aged 40-49 years which is 169 people, while the number of teachers aged 20-29 years is the least involved in this study which is 47 people. These findings show similarities with the findings of Nor (2017) that teachers under the age of 30 are the least involved as study respondents. It was found that the majority of respondents have served between 11 to 20 years, which is 37.9 percent. While the respondents who have a service period of 1 to 10 years is 32.8 percent and only 127 respondents with 29.3 percent have served 21 years and above. This finding is in line with the findings of Karmani (2016) showing senior teachers are less involved as study respondents.

In addition, the majority of study respondents have a Bachelor's Degree which is 87.3 percent. The number of teachers who have a certificate/diploma is equivalent to 6.7 percent. Meanwhile, the number of teachers

who have a master's degree is only 6.0 percent. These findings are in line with the requirements of PPPM 2013-2025 which requires teachers to increase their level of education to the undergraduate level (MOE, 2013).

4.1 The Relationship of Communication with School Performance Excellence

The objective of this study to identify the relationship of communication with school performance excellence was answered using PLS-SEM software. Based on the data analysis, the composite reliability (CR) value for the communication construct is 0.982 and the school performance excellence is 0.987. The CR value for this study is above than 0.90. This indicates, the reliability of each item is high. According to Jan-Michael Becker et al. (2019) CR values above 0.95 have high reliability because the values between 0 to 1 (Hair et al., 2014). Meanwhile, the average variance extracted (AVE) value for communication is 0.654 and school performance excellence is 0.652. These findings, indicate the AVE values for both constructs reach the level of discriminatory validity because they exceed the value of 0.5 from the square value of the outer loading indicator (Hair et al., 2017). Next, discriminant validity (DV) testing is performed for difference validity which refers to the extent to which indicators in a construct with construct differ from other construct indicators assessed

through correlations in a model (Hair et al., 2017). After cross loading testing, Fornell-Larcker and HTMT were performed showing DV was successfully achieved. In addition to strengthening the accuracy of DV is refer to the confidence interval (CI) reading value which is an additional assessment to the HTMT method. In this study, the CI values for the relationship of communication with school performance excellence were 0.083 (lower) and 0.365 (upper). Thus, at this stage DV was successfully achieved because the CI reading values for lower (2.5%) and upper (97.5%) were less than 1 (Norazwa et al., 2021).

In the second stage of PLS-SEM, the collinearity value obtained is 3.107. This indicates that the VIF value is between $0.2 < VIF < 5.0$ and indicates that there is no collinearity issue in this study (Hair et al, 2017).

Next, based on the bootstrapping calculation, the path coefficient value (β) is used to see the relationship between communication and school performance excellence. In this study, the determination of a significant relationship or vice versa, using rules of thumb $t1.96$ value and $p < 0.05$ value (Norazwa et al., 2021). Table 2 shows that the value of β communication (KOM) on school performance excellence (KPS) is 0.226, the value of t is 3.080 and the value of p is 0.002. The findings show that the values of t and p meet the requirements of the rules of thumb of this study $t > 1.96$ and the values of $p < 0.05$. These findings prove that communication (KOM) has a significant relationship with school performance excellence (KPS) until the hypothesis of this study is accepted.

Table 2: Significant Test Finding

| Relationship | Path coefficient (β) | T value | P Value | Result |
|--------------|------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|
| KOM -> KPS | 0.226 | 3.080 | 0.002 | Accepted |

Furthermore, the findings show that the value of R^2 for KPS is 0.677. This shows 67.7 per cent of the change in KPS is explained by KOM. This means that 32.3 percent of the KPS variance is explained by other factors are not the focus of this study. While the value of f^2 indicates that KOM gives a weak influence (0.051) in producing R^2 for KPS. Then through the blindfolding method found the value of Q^2 for KPS is 0.435. The value of Q^2 was taken based on the value of crossvalidated redundancy construct as suggested by Norazwa et al, (2021). According to Norazwa et al, (2021) the Q^2 value obtained should be greater than zero for an endogenous construct to indicate that the model prediction is relevant.

In conclusion, through first and second stage testing PLS-SEM shows communication variables and school performance excellence can form a model because it has sufficient predictive relevance for endogenous constructs.

5 Conclusion

Finally, the results of this study show, primary school teachers in the State of Johor acknowledge and realize the communication practiced by headmasters has a relationship with school performance excellence. The findings of this study are in line with the

findings of Ibrahim et al, (2015) and Sharifah (2006). Researcher have expected the results of this study because according to Hashim (2013) through communication will lead to understanding, attitude change and excitement. The findings of this study also prove the findings of previous researchers are true, communication is a very effective medium to convey information to followers (Ali & Sahin, 2016; Czech & Forward, 2010; Sahin, 2007).

In addition, the strength of communication relationships and school performance excellence certainly starts from headmasters wisely using appropriate communication in conveying information to teachers and students for school success (Azlin & Roselan, 2015). These findings prove the strength of school resources is headmasters. Because headmasters can mobilize teachers and students to achieve school success. The findings of this study prove that good communication between teachers and headmasters can ensure that schools continue to excel. So, findings of this study are in line with a study in Turkey (Ali Sabanchi & Ahmet Sahin, 2016). Hopefully, the findings of this study can be used as a guide for headmasters to do strategic planning to improve school performance excellence.

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