

The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Health of Secondary School Teachers in Malaysia: School Culture as a Moderator

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the level of transformational leadership practices by school principals in the national secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. The four dimensions of transformational leadership studied were vision identification, modeling, goal acceptance and individual support. The study also looks at the level of organizational health as well as the relationship with the practice of transformational leadership by the national secondary school principals'. The respondents consisted of 226 teachers employed in 16 national secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. The data obtained was analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. Descriptive analysis and inferential analysis were used to analyze the influence of the relationship. The study found that school culture functions as a moderator in the relationship between the transformational leadership style of school principals' and the organizational health of the secondary school teachers' in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. In addition, school culture as a moderator in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational health is a new discovery in the field of leadership. This is because the organizational health of secondary schools has never been investigated by local researchers. Most previous studies have highlighted transformational leadership and school culture has a direct influence on school improvement.

Keywords: transformational leadership style, school culture, organizational health, job satisfaction, school principals

INTRODUCTION

There is great interest in educational leadership in the early part of the 21st century. This is because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and student outcomes. In many parts of the world, including both developed and developing countries, there is recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their students and learners. As the global economy gathers pace, more governments are realizing that their main assets are their people and that remaining or becoming, competitive depends increasingly on the development of a highly skilled workforce. This requires trained and committed teachers but they, in turn; need the leadership of highly effective principals with the support of other senior and middle managers [1].

Transformational Leadership moves individuals toward a level of commitment to achieve school goals by identifying and articulating a school vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing individualized support, providing intellectual stimulation, providing an appropriate model and having high performance expectations [2]. For this study, transformational leadership will mean the manner in which the school principal guide and encourage fellow staff to work,

communicate the schools' goal and empower them to achieve the schools' vision.

- The transformational leadership in this study measures one dimension as follows:

Vision identification: this factor relates to principal behaviors that are aimed at identifying new opportunities for staff members and developing, articulating and inspiring others with his or her vision for the future [2].

- The moderating variable, school culture in this study measures two dimensions as follows:

Collaborative leadership: describes the degree to which school leaders establish and maintain collaborative relationships with school staff. The leaders' value teacher's ideas, seek their input, engage them in decision-making and trust their professional judgments. Leaders support and reward risk-taking, innovation and sharing of ideas and practices [3].

- The dependent variable, organizational health in this study measures one dimension as follows:

Institutional integrity

As an institutional-level health indicator, institutional integrity was described by Hoy and Woolfolk [4] as the school's level of ability to protect faculty members from any outside forces. Institutional integrity was one of the two out of the seven health dimensions to actually predict general personal efficacy of teachers. Institutional integrity represented a major predictor of the faculty members' trust in the school principal. Hoy also discovered teachers to be more committed to schools with a high institutional integrity.

Although this model served the educational field for the past two decades, the current demands for educational reform have forced many school leaders to reevaluate and adapt their leadership style to meet current demands. Many educational leaders are beginning to embrace and put into practice a school model of transformational leadership. This leadership model is espoused by school leaders because it "aspires, more generally, to increase members' efforts on behalf of the organization, as well as to develop more skilled practice" [5]. There is compelling evidence that transformational leadership behaviors, significantly affect teachers' psychological states, such as, teaching efficacy, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment [6, 5]. Furthermore, a review of school leadership research reveals that school leaders who demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors have staffs who report higher levels of job satisfaction [7-9], which is consistent with Bass and Riggo's [6] claim.

Problem Statement

According to Zaidatol Akmaliah [10], the success of the school's organization and leadership style is correlated. Transformational leadership of school principals affects student achievement and teacher willingness to drive for quality education [11]. Abdul Shukor Abdullah [12] argued that the leadership style of school principals have a significant impact on teachers' job satisfaction and effectiveness of the school. Changes to the leadership style of school principals should not only focus on the technical aspects of the schools administration but emphasize on professional leadership and guidance rendered to the teachers and students at the school. Hence, principals are solely responsible for the professional improvement of teachers to a higher level and to ensure students excel academically [11]. Are the secondary school principals in Malaysia practicing transformational leadership in their management of school affairs? Also not much is known about the impact of transformational leadership style on the current situation at secondary schools in Malaysia. Creating conducive environment at schools for students to excel and teachers to perform professionally has placed more emphasis on the role of a principal. It is difficult to evaluate the attributes of principals at secondary schools who are committed to

the mission and vision of cultivating a positive school environment.

At this point, no study has been done on transformational leadership behaviors' of the school principals in Malaysia although many studies have been conducted on other types of leadership. In order to assess the extent to which Malaysian secondary school principals provide transformational leadership, a survey of teachers' perceptions on their principals' transformational leadership behavior's will be carried out in the secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. This study hence was conducted to test the significant influence between principal's leadership styles and organizational health of secondary school teachers in Malaysia and the effects of school culture as a moderating variable.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the influence of transformational leadership and its relationship to organizational and school culture. In particular, the objectives of the study are:

- To investigate the influence of transformational leadership on school culture of secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
- To investigate the influence of transformational leadership on organizational health of secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
- To investigate the influence of school culture on organizational health of secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.
- To investigate the moderating influence of school culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational health of secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.

Research Hypotheses of the Study

Based on the research objectives, the research hypothesis was formed to test the validity. Research findings were tested at the level of $p < 0.05$. The following are the research hypotheses:

- HA1: There is a significant influence of transformational leadership on school culture of secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.*
- HA2: There is a significant influence of transformational leadership on organizational health of secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.*
- HA3: There is a significant influence of school culture on organizational health of secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.*

HA4: *There is a significant moderating influence of school culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational health of secondary schools in the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia.*

Significance of the Study

This study aims to benefit the school principals to identify approaches towards schools improvement and to create an atmosphere of well-being at work among teachers. It can motivate teachers to improve the teaching quality, especially in the classrooms. By doing so they will be able to produce students who will excel physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually in line with the national educational philosophy. This study will benefit the following parties:

- **Ministry of Education:** In recent years, the Malaysian education system has come under increased public scrutiny and debate, as parents' expectations rise and employers voice their concern regarding the system's ability to adequately prepare young Malaysians for the challenges of the 21st century [13].
- **Institut Aminuddin Baki:** This study will also be significant to IAB to focus on management and leadership development training for school principals. The main institution in the country responsible for the training of school principals

is IAB or in English, the National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership (NIEML) [14].

- **School Principals:** The data to be collected from this research will enable school principals to examine more closely the impact of their leadership style on the organizational health of their school. Based on the results of the questionnaire and data analysis, principals will be able to utilize the results to change and cultivate a healthier school culture.
- **Complement Existing Knowledge:** It is hoped that this study will complement existing literature regarding the influence of transformational leadership and organizational health of secondary schools in Malaysia. With increased literature and knowledge on school leadership behavior, prospective principals and all those involved in education may find the findings useful for identifying behaviors, beliefs and values that could advance the development of a school.

Research Framework

The research framework in this study is built upon the literature review. It is therefore theorized that each variable in transformational leadership style has an influence on organizational health of teachers. Figure 1 below depicts the research framework of this study:

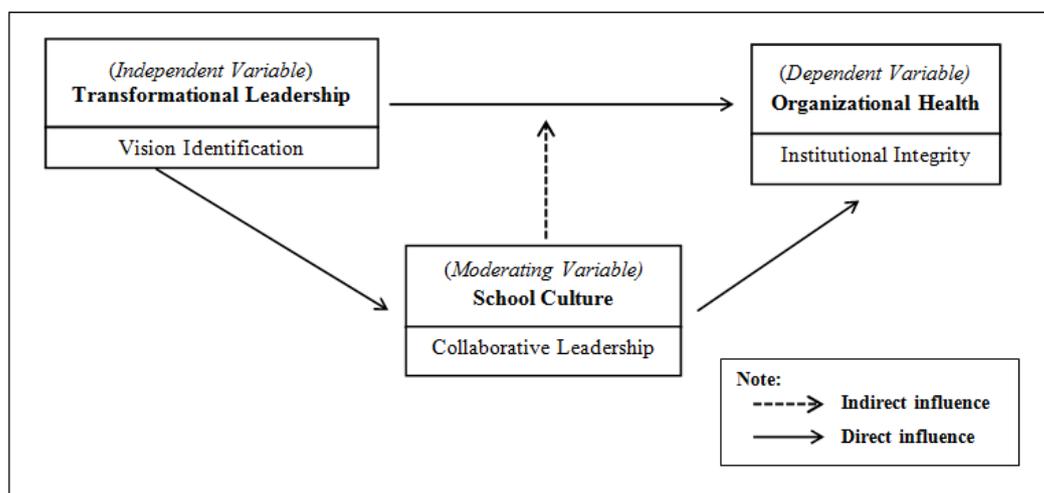


Fig-1: The Research Framework

Research Methodology

Research Design and Population Sampling

According to Uma Sekaran [15], descriptive study is undertaken when the characteristics or the phenomena to be tapped in a situation are known to exist and one wants to be able to describe them better by offering a profile of factors. It is suggested by Spunt [16] that surveys with diverse type of questioning are a more convenient way of gathering information. Hence, this study chose this type of survey method as opposed

to in-depth interviews or focus groups. Self-administered surveys are more convenient and less expensive to administer, eliminates interviewer bias, gives respondents privacy and results can be analyzed more quickly. In this study a self-administered questionnaire consisting of four sections were used: Section A contains Teacher Demographic Information, Section B contains Principal Leadership Questionnaire (PLQ), Section C contains the School Culture Survey Questionnaire (SCS) and finally Section D consists of

the Organizational Health Index for Secondary School Questionnaire (OHI-S).

In this study, the targeted population was teachers from national secondary schools from the state of Pulau Pinang, Malaysia. A cover letter informed the participants that the aim of this research was to examine attitudes about work and leadership style and that they were to return the completed questionnaires in sealed envelopes within three to five days. Participants were encouraged to respond as accurately and honestly as possible, and they were assured that their participation would be kept confidential, anonymous and used strictly for academic research purposes only. A total of 295 structured questionnaires were distributed to teachers from 16 schools around Pulau Pinang. The respondents were randomly selected by means of systematic random sampling, whereby 100 percent of the respondents were secondary school teachers.

A total of 246 questionnaires were received and out of this, 20 sets of the questionnaires were considered unusable because over 25 percent of the question in Part 1 Section A of the questionnaire were not answered [5]. It was assumed that the respondents were either unwilling to cooperate or not serious with the survey. Therefore, only 226 usable sets of received

questionnaires were used for the data analysis indicating a response rate of 76 percent.

Data were analyzed using SPSS v. 20 for Windows PC and is reported in percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation. Descriptive statistics were used to obtain the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The inferential statistics of Multiple Regression Analysis and Moderated Multiple Regression Analysis is used to identify if there is an influence between schools principals' transformational leadership with secondary school teacher's organizational health and the influence of the moderating variable.

Findings
Testing the Influence of Transformational Leadership on School Culture

The first hypothesis (HA1) about the influence of transformational leadership on school culture is tested using multiple regression analysis. The more detailed picture of the relationship between transformational leadership and school culture at construct and factor levels were revealed by the findings of regression analyses. Table 1 summarizes the regression results of the regression analysis at the construct level.

Table-1: The Influence of Transformational Leadership on School Culture

Independent Variable (Transformational Leadership)	Dependent Variable (School Culture)
	1 (β)
Vision Identification	.136*
R	.790
R ²	.624
Adjusted R ²	.621
F-statistics	226.87
Durbin-Watson	1.44

*Significant at $p < .05$ 1= Collaborative Leadership

The data indicate that the transformational leadership style accounts for 62 percent of the variance in collaborative leadership (adjusted R^2 0.621). The F test statistics for the adjusted R^2 is 226.89 and the associated p -value is .000. It indicates that $p < .05$; therefore, a statistically significant relationship exists between collaborative leadership and the transformational leadership style at the 95.0 percent confidence level. The vision identification variable has positive effect on the collaborative leadership ($\beta = 0.136$) variable and this is statistically significant at the 95.0 percent confidence level because the t test statistics

for the Beta is 18.43 and the associated p -value (.000) is less than .05. The result confirms the alternative hypothesis of transformational leadership as having a positive influence on school culture and is accepted. Thus, the hypothesis HA1 is supported.

The second hypothesis (HA2) about the influence of transformational leadership on organizational health is tested using multiple regression analysis. Table 2 summarizes the regression results of the regression analysis at the construct level.

Table-2: The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Health

	Dependent Variable (Organizational Health)
Variable	1 (β)
Independent Variable (Transformational Leadership)	
Vision Identification	.157*
R	.616
R ²	.379
Adjusted R ²	.375
F-statistics	83.53
Durbin-Watson	1.72

*Significant at $p < .05$ 1= Institutional Integrity

The regression results depicted from Table 2 indicates that the transformational leadership style accounts for 37 percent of the variance in career adaptability (adjusted R^2 0.375). The F test statistics for the adjusted R^2 is 83.53 and the associated p-value is .000. It indicates that $p < .05$; therefore, a statistically significant relationship exists between institutional integrity and the transformational leadership style at the 95.0 percent confidence level. The vision identification has a positive effect on institutional integrity ($\beta = 0.157$) variable and this is statistically significant at the 95.0 percent confidence level because the t test statistics

for the Beta is 3.4 and the associated p-value (.001) is less than .05. The result confirms the alternative hypothesis of transformational leadership as having a positive influence on organizational health and is accepted. Thus, the hypothesis HA2 is supported.

The third hypothesis (HA3) about the influence of school culture on organizational health is tested using multiple regression analysis. Table 3 summarizes the regression results of the regression analysis at the construct level.

Table-3: The Influence of School Culture on Organizational Health

	Dependent Variable (Organizational Health)
Variable	1 (β)
Independent Variable (School Culture) Collaborative Leadership	.212*
R	.561
R ²	.315
Adjusted R ²	.309
F-statistics	52.34
Durbin-Watson	1.70

*Significant at $p < .05$ 1= Institutional Integrity

The regression results depicted from Table 4.18 indicates that the school culture accounts for 31 percent of the variance in career adaptability (adjusted R^2 0.309). The F test statistics for the adjusted R^2 is 52.34 and the associated p-value is .000. It indicates that $p < .05$; therefore, a statistically significant relationship exists between career adaptability and school culture at the 95.0 percent confidence level. The variable collaborative leadership has a positive effect on institutional integrity ($\beta = 0.212$) variable and this is statistically significant at the 95.0 percent confidence level because the t test statistics for the Beta is 5.81 and the associated p-value (.000) is less than .05. The result

confirms the alternative hypothesis of school culture as having a positive influence on organizational health and is accepted. Thus, the hypothesis HA3 is supported.

Testing the Moderating Influence of School Culture on the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Health

Hypothesis HA4 addressed the moderating influence of school culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational health. The role of school culture variables as a moderator variable will be identified from the significance of the interaction coefficient between the interaction terms

(transformational leadership x school culture). A positive and significant coefficient indicates that school culture moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational health outcomes. Higher relative scores on school culture will

increase the magnitude of the effect between transformational leadership and organizational health outcomes. Results of the MMR analysis for the interaction effect between transformational leadership and school culture are shown in Table 4.

Table-4: Test Statistics for Moderated Relationship (Transformational Leadership and Institutional Integrity) for Collaborative Leadership

Dependent Variable (Organizational Health)			
Variable	Step 1 (β)	Step 2 (β)	Step 3 (β)
Independent Variable (School Culture) Vision Identification	.092*	.075	-.165*
Moderating Variable (School Culture) Collaborative Leadership		.131*	.120*
Interaction Terms Vision Identification*Collaborative Leadership			-.245*
R ²	.366	.373	.523
Adjusted R ²	.363	.368	.517
R ² Change	.366	.006	.150
Sig. F Change	.000	.008	.000

* Significant at $p < .05$

The results of the MMR analysis for the interaction effect between transformational leadership and school culture suggests that the exploratory power of the model increases because of the inclusion of the interaction term. As shown in Table 4, an additional 15 percent of variance ($\Delta R^2 = 0.150$, $p < .05$) in institutional

integrity was explained by the inclusion of the interaction term. Thus, the results indicate the evidence that collaborative leadership moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and institutional integrity.

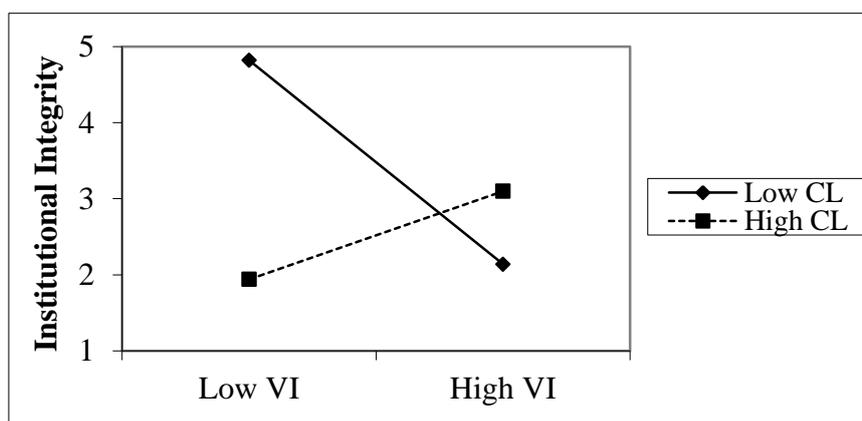


Fig-2: Results of Moderator Analysis: Influence of Collaborative leadership

To interpret the effect of the interaction term of collaborative leadership (CL), simple regression equations were produced where the influence of collaborative leadership on the relationship between vision identification (VI) and institutional integrity was revealed. The simple regression equations, detailed in Figure 2 indicated a significant ($p < 0.05$) negative regression of institutional integrity on vision

identification at the level of collaborative leadership interaction. Examination of the interaction plot (Figure 2) showed an enhancing effect that if vision identification increased, collaborative leadership decreased. In other words, institutional integrity lowers the effects of vision identification on collaborative leadership. If the degree to which the principal's behavior is aimed at identifying new opportunities for

his/her teachers and inspiring them to work towards school mission, the teachers engage less in constructive dialogue that furthers the vision of the school. The results confirm the alternative hypothesis of collaborative leadership having a moderating influence on the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational health and are accepted. Thus, the hypothesis HA4 is supported.

CONCLUSION

The results indicate that collaborative leadership moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational health. According to Gruenert [3], “collaborative leadership refers to the ways in which leaders within the school create and foster collaborative relationships with faculty and staff” (p.131). School leaders completely value ideas of the teachers, seek input, engage staff in decision-making and trust the professional judgement of the staff. In addition, collaborative leaders empower teachers to make their own decisions and encourage them to be innovators as well as risk-takers [3]. The current body of literature [2, 17-21] suggested that vision identification is an action taken by school leaders to improve academic success. In this study, the findings reveal a negative significant influence of vision identification which indicates the principal failed to identify new opportunities for the teachers. The principal is perceived as someone who have not created a vision for the school that will move the school in a positive direction; failed to articulate the school’s vision to the staff and also been lacking in inspiration to achieve school goals. The findings of this study is not congruent with the study by Leithwood *et al.* [20] whereby the teachers and principals work together to make school decisions, ensuring student success.

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