



## Teachers' Perception Towards Women Leadership in Education in Malaysia

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to survey the perception of teachers towards headmistress' leadership and recognize the level of motivation among teachers in that particular school. This study is modelled in quantitative and descriptive manner which involves 20 randomly chosen teachers in a primary school in Batu Pahat district under a headmistress leadership. Questionnaire is used as an instrument to identify the work structure in women leadership, leader's compassion and teachers' level of motivation. In this study, descriptive analysis namely mode, min and percentage is used to study outcomes. The study outcome that on the whole, teachers' perception towards headmistress leadership in primary school in the district of Batu Pahat is positive and satisfactory. The min score for all respondents for all items in the questionnaire is 4.07. The value shows basically these respondents have positive and constructive perception towards leadership of a headmistress. Nevertheless, there is a significant association between teachers' motivation level and perception towards leadership of a headmistress. This verifies that the higher the teachers' perception towards leadership of a headmistress, the more elevated their level of motivation. This study supports the outcome pertaining general assumption that the leadership style of a headmistress indeed influences teachers' working motivation level.

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### Introduction

According to Mokri, Atan and Hashim (2012), Education is an aspect given much priority by a government including Malaysia in building an eminent country which is competitive globally. Therefore, the government is attempting to produce competent citizens with higher order thinking skill consistent with Vision 2020. Additionally, the constant evolution of school reform process leads to more complex leadership aspect.

While leadership, according to Hasan & Silong (2008), is closely related to an individual trying to influence a group or followers to achieve specific goals. This is supported by Md. Salleh, Ibrahim and Arifin, (2009) saying that a responsible leader must be alert towards any situational changes while ensuring any shift is fulfilling the target and is parallel to the goals set.

As a leader of learning in school, a headmaster must be well equipped with various skills pertaining curriculum and should be a role model to his subordinates. According to a study done by Flath (1989) on effective schools, he found that a headmaster is the main pillar in generating effectiveness of a school (Normah, 2006).

The present scenario in Malaysian teaching profession is that female teachers and female principals male teachers and male principals. Hence, appointment of principals should not only be based on gender, but be based on criteria like ability, seniority, experience and level of knowledge (Harvey dan Donaldson 2003).

### Statement of Problem

Leadership style of a headmaster is unpredictable as the latter has to deal with numerous authorities like Ministry of Education, State Education Department, District/Division Education Department, teachers, parents, students and local community in various situations. Thus, the leadership style of a headmaster is mainly determined by the authorities dealing with

him. Ramli and Abdul Hamid (2006), stated that women are presumed to experience hurdles, fail to solve problems and inefficient decision makers. Women too are presumed to need auxiliary support or unprepared to make any decision. Besides, women are considered unjust, oftenly misunderstood for making decisions based on emotion and sentiment. This shows that the aspect of leadership denotes the success and excellence of future generation. In Malaysian context of principal, every principal must be able to infer changes and apply particular leadership style to motivate teachers and staff towards the targeted changes. Realising the challenges faced by women leaders, researchers hope the outcomes of this study can be a beneficial guideline and reference to certain authorities to enhance the effectiveness of women leadership in Malaysia.

### Objective of the study

The objectives of this study :

1. To recognize the headmistress leadership style in a school organization.
2. To analyse motivation level among teachers in school with a headmistress.
3. To find out the effectiveness of different teachers' perceptions towards headmistress leadership.

### Significance of the study

Researchers believe that this study can help headmistress to elevate her self-distinctiveness and professionalism in order to gain undivided support from her school staff in future planning. This study is beneficial for a headmistress to determine the leadership style as anticipated by her subordinates.

Besides, researchers deduce the importance of this study as the outcome is advantageous especially to Batu Pahat District Education Department, Johor State Education Department and Ministry of Education of Malaysia for planning and constructing professional leadership training programmes to all headmasters so they can lead primary schools towards excellence. Moreover,

this study is imperative to future researchers to conduct more comprehensive study.

### Literature Studies

Effective leadership is fundamental to continuous school improvement (Mujis & Harris, 2007). Accordingly, the determination of the headteacher's leadership style is important to identify the most dominant leadership style. This caused trouble in a school are often associated with the leadership of the headmaster. Thus leadership style is clear, explicit and accepted by teachers will strengthen the position and influence of teachers in school management, (Hushin & Salleh). Even so, McNulty et al. (2005) pointed out that the principal task of the school is not limited to routine administrative tasks but they have to mobilize all of the resources and human capital under its administration, especially teachers so that they can contribute to the committed and effective service. Ubben et al. (2001) and Drake and Row (1999) once said that every activity that happens in the school is the responsibility of school principals and even the production of an effective, harmonious and brilliant arguably rooted in an effective principal leadership. In talking about women's leadership, women are also often considered to suffer setbacks, failed to solve the problems and inefficient decision-making. Women are also considered to need extra help or are not ready to make any decisions. In addition, women treated unfairly, often mistaken for allegedly making decisions based on emotion and sentiment, Ramli and Abdul Hamid (2006).

Because of the broad notion of gender differences that stand out, we often hear that systemic gender inequality is associated with differences in the skills and attributes of women and men. (Browne, 1999; Goldberg, 1993). Gender inequality is easy to make but difficult to support with empirical evidence. In fact, some studies have found that women and men share many more similarities than differences, both in cognitive function (Spelke, 2005) and personality traits (Hyde, 2005). Consequently, explicit leadership style of a headmaster is crucial to determine most dominant leadership style. This is due to arising problems in school are oftenly associated with the leadership style of the headmaster. Therefore, a transparent, explicit and accepted leadership style facilitates to strengthen her position and influence in school administration. (Hushin & Salleh)

Women leaders now face the challenge of resistance to organizational excellence. Therefore, the researchers studied the levels of leadership style capable highlighted by women leaders in their school situation.

### Methodology / Design of the Study

The design of this study is using survey method based on questionnaire. The questionnaire used is prepared to gain information from respondents on different teachers' perception towards the leadership style of a headmistress. The lean variable is teachers' perception towards headmaster leadership style. The population of this study are trained and permanent teachers teaching in a primary school in the district of Batu Pahat with a headmistress. These schools are randomly chosen from grade A school due to bigger number of teachers as compared to grade B school or school with lesser students (SKM).

Sampling technique is using random sampling because sample population is non-homogeneous and this technique reduces error (Mohd. Majid Konting, 1990).

### Findings

Questionnaires were distributed to 20 teachers who work under the leadership of women teachers. A total of 26 respondents answered the question asked and guided instructions.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents according to the mode and the mean follow-dimensional structure of the task item in Women's Leadership Style**

No.	Choice Matter Items	Mod	Min
1.	She asks all teachers to follow all the rules and conditions of work that has been set.	4	4.25
2.	She explains what is expected of teachers.	4	4.15
3.	She ensures that all teachers perform tasks successfully.	4	4.4
4.	She makes sure that teachers sign the attendance book.	5	4.55
5.	She makes sure that the teachers come and go right at the time appointed	4	4.4
6.	She performs observations in the classroom.	5	4.6
7.	She does teaching in the classroom.	5	4.6
8.	She keeps a book of observations on training students	5	4.6
<b>Average</b>			35.5/8 = <b>4.44</b>

1 = totally disagree

2 = disagree

3 = less agree

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

The table above shows the distribution of respondents by mode and the mean of the items of B, the structural dimension to women's leadership style job performance. Earned an average of 4.44, indicating that all respondents agreed with the item. Similarly, the modes available for each question, the average indicated they agreed and strongly agree with item B of this section.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of respondents according to the mode and the mean by the item consideration in women's leadership style**

No.	Choice Matter Items	Mode	Mean
1.	She is approachable and friendly to all teachers.	4	4.23
2.	She is ready to make changes when necessary.	4	3.90
3.	She is responsible for all actions of all.	4	4.20
4.	She obtains the consent of the teachers in advance before continuing important things.	4	3.65
5.	She jokes with teachers.	4	4.40
6.	She explains his actions.	4	4.20
7.	She understands the problems of the teachers under their jurisdiction.	3	3.50
8.	She does not give priority to family life of teachers.	3	3.50
<b>Average</b>			31.55/8 = <b>3.94</b>

The table above shows the distribution of respondents by mode and the mean of the items of C, the item considerate. Earned an average of 3.94, indicating respondents are in a situation quite agree and disagree. All respondents agreed with the items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 but did not agree or do not agree to item 7, and 8. This shows that on average, women leaders at schools being observed lack an understanding of the problem and do not give priority to family life of teachers.

The table above shows the distribution of respondents by mode and the mean of the items of D, level of teachers' motivation. Earned an average of 3.87, indicating respondents are in a situation quite agree and disagree. All respondents agreed with the items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 but disagreed on items 9 and 10. This shows that on average, the teachers at the school had worked with full spirit and worked hard not only required by the headmistress alone.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents according to the mode and the mean of the level of teachers' motivation.**

No.	Choice Matter Items	Mode	Min
1.	I take pride in a job as a teacher.	5	4.60
2.	I believe that if I worked hard, I would achieve the goal of my life.	5	4.80
3.	I am optimistic about my work as a teacher.	5	4.53
4.	I am satisfied as to complete the important work that requires more effort.	5	4.75
5.	I can perform well if there is competition.	5	4.45
6.	I like working under my headmistress now.	4	3.95
7.	I prefer to do a job that I am confident and happy than do something difficult and challenging work.	3	3.70
8.	I can not work well if they are in a stressful situation.	4	3.75
9.	I worked for had.	3	2.20
10.	I work hard just if required by the headmistress only.	1	1.95
<b>Average</b>			38.68/10= <b>3.87</b>

### Discussion

This perception of the leadership of women teachers in primary schools Batu Pahat District found to be quite satisfactory and structural orientation are more likely to work than understanding and motivation. However, several other scientific studies have also got the same findings on male and female principals (Gan Pei Ling, 2003). Therefore, the assumption that there is a difference in the leadership styles of women may not be accurate. Based on studies conducted, as a whole, mean scores for respondents of all items in the questionnaire was 4:07. This value indicates that in general the respondents have positive perceptions and teachers agree that the leadership style of women was accepted by the respondent, whether the item-dimensional structure of the task in the leadership styles of women, items for the understanding and motivation of teachers.

### Summary

This research has identified the perceptions of headmistress in primary schools in Batu Pahat towards the leadership style of headmistress, and level of teachers' motivation towards their career. The findings confirm the leadership of women teachers was good and satisfying, but there are certain aspect that can be steadfast that can be strengthened so that teacher leadership style of women is more brilliant future.

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