The Practice of Spiritual Leadership among Principals of Secondary Schools

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the spiritual leadership level of secondary school leaders in Kelantan. A total of 130 respondents comprising secondary school teachers in Kelantan were involved in answering the questionnaire. The research instrument used to measure spiritual leadership is the Spiritual Leadership Survey highlighted by Fry (2003) which has the three main dimensions of Leader's Values, Attitudes and Behavior; the Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival and Organizational Outcomes. The data and information collected from the questionnaire were analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 24.0. Data analysis is carried out using the Descriptive Min Test. The findings show that the overall level of Spiritual Leadership practice is modest. The study also found that all three dimensions, Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behavior, Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival and Organizational Outcomes show a moderate level. However, for the Leader Values, Attitude and Behavior dimension, shows a slightly higher mean value than the other two dimensions. This study found that school leaders lacked the practice of spiritual leadership style in their leadership style. Some suggestions have also been proposed to further enhance the level of spiritual leadership of school leaders to ensure organizational commitment and productivity reach the levels outlined by stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education, State Education Department and the District Education Office.
Keywords: Spiritual Leadership, altruistic love, meaning / calling, membership, commitment

Introduction

Teachers are the corein the pursuit of the goal of the National Education Philosophy to produce individuals who are physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually balanced. Through the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013-2025, the desire to produce effective and high-quality teachers and school leaders has become one of the main agendas for the Ministry of Education. Effective leadership is a leadership that is able to bring change to the organization it leads to.

Spiritual leadership is a new pattern of leadership highlighted by Fry (2003). The concept of spiritual leadership emerges as a new paradigm in organizational development. Spiritual leadership is also believed to be the solution to the current crisis of leadership. According to SyamsulHadi HM (2012) a leader with a spiritual leadership trait will lead his organization based on religious ethics capable of shaping character, integrity and extraordinaryof role model. Leaders who practice the characteristics of spiritual leadership do not think about rank, position, power and wealth but instead place religious values as a guide in every action.

The purpose of this study was to study the level of spiritual leadership of secondary school principals in Kelantan. This study also explains the mean values of each dimension and the items that indicate the level of practice of spiritual leadership of principals. The results of this study can explain the extent to which secondary school principals in Kelantan have adopted a pattern of spiritual leadership. Some suggestions were also made to improve the level of spiritual leadership practice so that the attitude and behaviour of the leaders as well as the commitment and productivity of an organization increase.

Background

According to Imam al-Ghazali, education without focusing on core values (spiritual values) in the process of human development will result in individuals being imprisoned in the material world and unable to reach their full potential (Rohana, Kamarudzaman&Roziah, 2010). In Malaysia, the National Philosophy of Education (FPN) has been a key pillar of the national education system. This philosophy sets out the values and principles of life and belief that aim to produce knowledgeable individuals through a holistic and integrated way and to contribute as responsible and ethical citizens (Saedah, ShamsiahBanu, CheZarrina& Mohammed Sani, 2016). Although the FPN has been at the heart of our country's education for the past 30 years, in terms of the implementation of holistic education there is still a gap between FPN and the reality of its implementation in the national education system, especially in the spiritual aspects. Many of the social problems that are happening today, some of which started as a discipline problem at school. According to Saedah, ShamsiahBanu, CheZarrina& Mohammed Sani (2016), social issues are not only very worrying but have become a universal issue that has more serious consequences of unethical and immoral behaviour that also involve educated people,

such as corruption and broken trust between employees and executives. These issues raise questions about the principal's spiritual leadership pattern in schools.

Western education systems are also aware of this when they begin to recognize the importance of a school adopting spiritual values such as love or altruistic love that emphasize caring, care and respecting themselves and others. School without love and happiness will be missed (Malone & Fry, 2003). Principals need to involve the entire school community such as administrators, counselors, teachers and parents in the sharing of ideas to help achieve student achievement. Thus, the practice of spiritual leadership is seen as one of the efforts that should be adopted to create a school environment rich in altruistic love values to enhance motivation, commitment and productivity.

Definition of Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership is seen as the values, attitudes and behaviors of leaders who need to motivate themselves and others through the sense of calling, being valued and understood (membership) resulting in spiritual well-being. According to Tobroni (2005), spiritual values such as istiqomah, sincerity, jihad and good practice which are the basis of core belief, core values and organizational philosophy can play a role in guiding the organization community in determining vision, mission and organizational behavior. Therefore, this spiritual leadership aims to motivate and inspire workers through the creation of a vision and culture based on altruistic values to produce a workforce that has organizational commitment and productivity (Fry et al., 2005). An important factor to consider in improving work performance is organizational commitment. Organizational commitment is an attitude that reflects the employees' loyalty to the organization on a continuous basis, whereby members of the organization focus their attention on organizational success and continuous progress (ZainulArifin Noor, 2012).

Spiritual leadership emphasizes the practice of religious values in the organization being led. According to Anita Rahmawaty (2016), in Islam the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad was regarded as having the best spiritual leadership traits capable of developing the most ideal and successful leadership with its main attributes namely *siddiq* (integrity), trust (belief), *tabligh* (conveys that touches human relationships) and *fathonah* (wise). In the context of education, this leadership requires principals to set up two situations in the school, which is to create a shared vision of the teachers and they feel the responsibility to fulfill that vision by innovating. The second situation is that school principals need to make altruistic love between school leaders and teachers a school culture.

Spiritual Leadership Theory

In this study, Fry's Theory of Spiritual Leadership (2003, 2005) was used to explain the practice of spiritual leadership among principals in Kelantan's secondary schools. Fry (2003) has developed a Spiritual Leadership Survey instrument that contains three main dimensions: 1) Leadership values, attitudes and behaviours; 2) the Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival; and 3) Organizational outcomes. The three main dimensions of the model were further subdivided into seven subdimensions that included 36 items.

Dimension 1: Leadership values, attitudes and behaviours have three subdimensions: 1) vision; 2) hope / faith and 3) altruistic love. School leaders are responsible for shaping the school's vision, explaining the direction of the school organization and explaining the role of each teacher in fulfilling that vision.

Dimension 2: Follower needs for spiritual survival dimension is divided into two subdimensions: 1) meaning / calling; and 2) membership. This dimension shows that spiritual leadership does not override the importance of employees in moving an organization. In order to be successful, school leaders need to create an environment that helps teachers feel good about their work and feels that the work they do is very important for students and schools. School leaders also need to appreciate and respect the work of teachers in bringing success to the school.

Dimension 3: Organizationaloutcomes consists of two subdimensions: 1) organizational commitment and 2) productivity. This dimension looks at employee loyalty and commitment to their organization. School leaders need to create school situations that make teachers feel they are a part of their families. In addition, this dimension also emphasizes efficiency in producing productivity for the success of an organization.

Methodology

This study was conducted quantitatively using a cross-sectional survey design to measure organizational members' perceptions of their leaders. The study involved 130 respondents from the national secondary school teachers in Kelantan who were selected to answer the questionnaire distributed. This study uses questionnaire instruments as a measurement tool. The spiritual leadership questionnaire was adapted from Fry (2003) which contained three dimensions and seven subdivisions involving 36 items. The three dimensions

of spiritual leadership variables are leader values, attitudes and behaviours; the follower needs for spiritual survival and the organizational outcomes. In this study, data were analysed using Statistical Package of Social Science Program (SPSS) version 24. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive methods to determine the level of spiritual leadership practice of secondary schools in Kelantan.

Findings

This section discusses the level of spiritual leadership among principals of secondary schools in the state of Kelantan. According to Table 1, the mean classification of the studied variables can be determined.

Table 1: Classification of Min

Classification of Min	Interpretation
1.00 – 1.99	Very Low
2.00 – 2.99	Low
3.00 – 3.99	Moderate
4.00 – 4.99	High
5.00	Very High

(Source: Ary, Jacobs &Razavieh, 2002)

Principal Practice of Spiritual Leadership

Table 2: Min Scale Analysis and Standard deviation of Spiritual Leadership Levels Principal

	N	Min	Standard deviation	Level
Spiritual Leadership	130	3.7494	.37591	Moderate

Table 2 shows that the level of spiritual leadership of secondary school principals in Kelantan as a whole is moderate, with a mean value of 3.74.

Level of Practice for Spiritual Leadership by Dimension

Table3: Analysis of Min Score and Standard Deviation Levels of Spiritual LeadershipPrincipal byDimension

	N	Min	Standard Deviation	Level
Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behavior	130	3.9047	.43053	Moderate
Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	3.7735	.46406	Moderate
Organizational Outcomes	130	3.5010	3.5166	Moderate

Based on Table 3, the mean value of the principal dimension, attitude and behaviour was 3.90 indicating a moderate level. For the follower needs for spiritual survival dimension, the mean value was 3.77 and the mean commitment and productivity dimension was 3.50 which indicated a moderate level. Out of these three dimensions, leader values, attitudes and behaviours are dimensions that show higher mean values than the other two dimensions. This shows that school principals pay more attention to the values, attitudes and behaviours of leaders in managing their administration.

Level of Practice of Spiritual Leadership by Item

Table 4: Min of Spiritual Leadership in Secondary School, Kelantan

Item	dimensi	N	Min	Tahap
Leader understand and committed to organization's vision.	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.29	High
My workgroup has a vision statement that brings out the best in school leader	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.22	High
The organization's vision inspires the best performance of school leader.	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.19	High
School leader have faith in the organization's vision.	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.16	High
The organization's vision is clear and compelling.	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.25	High
The school leader made me trust the organization he led	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.88	Moderate
School leader has willing to "do whatever it takes" to insure that it accomplishes its mission	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.08	High
School leader persevere and exert extra effort to help the organization succeed because they have faith in what it stands for.	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.12	High
I always do my best in my work because I have faith in my organization and its leaders	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.10	High
I set challenging goals for my work because I have faith in my organization and want us to succeed	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.02	High
School leaderdemonstrate their faith in the organization and its mission	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.07	High
School leader make every effort to ensure organizational success	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	4.04	High
School leaderreally cares about its people	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.70	Moderate
School leader is kind and considerate toward its workers.	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.37	Moderate
School leader take care of their workers	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.29	Moderate
School leader in my organization "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.50	Moderate
School leader is trustworthy and loyal to its employees	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.37	Moderate
School leaderdoes not punish honest mistakes	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.55	Moderate
The school leader in my organization are honest and without false pride	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.48	Moderate
The school leader in my organization have the courage to stand up for his people	Leadership Values, Attitudes and Behaviour	130	3.33	Moderate
The work I do is very important to me	Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	4.08	High
My job activities are personally meaningful to me	Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	4.06	High
The work I do is meaningful to me	Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	4.08	High
The work I do makes a difference in people's	Follower Needs for			

lives	Spiritual Survival	130	3.98	High
I feel my organization understands my concerns	Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	3.58	Moderate
I feel my organization appreciates me, and my work	Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	3.48	Moderate
I feel highly regarded by my leadership	Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	3.52	Moderate
I feel I am valued as a person in my job	Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	3.52	Moderate
Saya rasa pemimpin sekolah menunjukkan penghormatan kepada saya dan kerja saya	Follower Needs for Spiritual Survival	130	3.38	Moderate
I do not feel like "part of the family" in this organization	Organizational Outcomes	130	2.41	Low
I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with this organization	Organizational Outcomes	130	3.65	Moderate
I talk up this organization to my friends as a great place to work for.	Organizational Outcomes	130	3.52	Moderate
I really feel as if my organization's problems are my own	Organizational Outcomes	130	3.56	Moderate
Everyone is busy in my department; there is little idle time	Organizational Outcomes	130	3.52	Moderate
In my department, work quality is a high priority for all workers	Organizational Outcomes	130	3.81	Moderate
In my department, everyone gives his/her best efforts	Organizational Outcomes	130	3.82	Moderate

Discussion and Suggestions
Discussion of the Implications of Theoretical Studies

The findings of this study shows that spiritual leadership in secondary schools in Kelantan is at a moderate level with a mean value of 3.74. Several studies have been conducted that shows the importance of spiritual values in an organization (SyamsulHadi HM, 2012; Tobroni, 2015; Anita Rahmawaty, 2016). Spiritual values in leadership can motivate and inspire employees to develop their organizational vision and culture as well as increase their commitment to the organization that ultimately affects job satisfaction and employee's performance (Anita Rahmawaty, 2016). This means that spiritual practice in teacher leadership can help increase the motivation and performance of teachers at school. Leaders who exhibit behaviors consistent with the vision, mission and goals of the school, safeguard the welfare of teachers, respect and respect for teachers will produce successful teachers who are committed, willing to work and willing to sacrifice for the benefit of students and schools. Prioritizing others also affects organizational commitment and internal and external productivity at all levels of the organization (Malone & Fry, 2003). Therefore, the practice of spiritual leadership needs to be enhanced within the principals to ensure the success and excellence of the school.

Further studies have shown that there are only minor differences between the three dimensions of spiritual leadership. Dimensions of values, attitudes and behaviours of leaders show a higher mean reading value of 3.90 than the other two dimensions. Whereas the employee's spiritual needs dimension shows a descriptive mean value of 3.77 and the Organizational Success dimension reads its mean value of 3.50. These differences indicate that school principals are more concerned with one dimension - the values, attitudes and behaviours of leaders in their spiritual leadership practices. The third lowest dimension of mean value readings also shows that teachers' commitment is modest because school principals practice spiritual leadership at a moderate level. The study also found that the attitude of the principals who were less concerned with the welfare and spiritual needs of teachers led to teacher motivation and commitment. This finding is likely to affect the performance of teachers in schools that will ultimately affect student achievement in particular and in general. The extent to which leaders behave in schools will be monitored and evaluated by teachers. The findings of Ari Cahyono (2012), supported this study by highlighting the role of leaders in influencing the performance of their employees compared to other factors such as organizational motivation and culture. Therefore, principals need to further the practice of these three dimensions of spiritual leadership.

Suggestions for Improving Practice and Implications

As a result of the research conducted, some improvements in the system and principals 'leadership practices need to be implemented to further enhance their level of leadership as spiritual leaders that can influence teachers' motivation and commitment to improve school performance. The findings of this study also contribute to the wealth of knowledge, especially to school leadership practitioners and education policy makers in Malaysia. In this regard, the school-oriented dimensions of school leaders and teachers should be taken into account as important elements in designing leadership programs and organizational management in schools.

The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), the State Education Department (JPN) and the District Education Office (PPD) need to give principals exposure to new dimensions of millennial leadership such as spiritual leadership to enhance their professionalism. Professional courses and training need to involve principals so that they have the option to adopt a leadership style and style that suits their school climate and the human resources they lead.

Suggestions for Advanced Study

This study only emphasizes the practice of spiritual leadership without examining other aspects. Therefore, further studies can be conducted to look at the spiritual leadership practices of school leaders from a broader range of angles. Among the studies that can be conducted by future researchers is to examine the level of practice of spiritual leadership by principals, by gender, age and experience as a principal.

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