

## **FUTURISTIC LEADERSHIP PROFILE: A BEST PRACTICE OF MALAYSIA'S STATE RELIGIOUS SECONDARY SCHOOL**

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### **Abstract**

Leading and managing change in the field of education in the 21st century is often seen as a complex challenge, not only in terms of the change itself but also the knowledge, skills, and attitude of the principal as a school leader that is expressed in his leadership. This study was conducted to build a profile of the best leadership practices of the National Religious Secondary School principal. Qualitative research using the interview method was used to collect data. The study participants comprised two experts with more than 20 years of experience in the education field and were directly involved in managing the National Religious High School. The study's findings show that the study participants have a practical and

effective approach to be applied by school principals. Precisely, the best practice of principal leadership in the context of futuristic leadership consists of professional leadership, collaborative culture in the organization, development of leadership competencies, enrichment of school data, consensus among stakeholders, and acceptance of diversity.

Memimpin dan mengelola perubahan di bidang pendidikan pada abad ke-21 seringkali dipandang sebagai tantangan yang kompleks, tidak hanya dalam hal perubahan itu sendiri tetapi juga pengetahuan, keterampilan, dan sikap kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin sekolah yang dituangkan dalam karyanya. kepemimpinan. Kajian ini dilakukan untuk membangun profil praktik kepemimpinan terbaik kepala Sekolah Menengah Keagamaan Nasional. Penelitian kualitatif dengan metode wawancara digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Peserta penelitian terdiri dari dua orang ahli yang telah berpengalaman lebih dari 20 tahun di bidang pendidikan serta terjun langsung dalam pengelolaan SMA Negeri. Temuan studi menunjukkan bahwa peserta studi memiliki pendekatan yang praktis dan efektif untuk diterapkan oleh kepala sekolah. Secara khusus, praktik terbaik kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam konteks kepemimpinan futuristik terdiri dari kepemimpinan profesional, budaya kolaboratif dalam organisasi, pengembangan kompetensi kepemimpinan, pengayaan data sekolah, konsensus antar pemangku kepentingan, dan penerimaan keragaman.

**Keywords:** futuristic leadership, Malaysia's State Religious Secondary School, best practice

## **Introduction**

As a developing country, leaders should be concerned about any changes, especially concerning national policies. No exception is the field of education, which is always a very serious agenda to meet the country's needs and wishes. Among the changes that need to be dealt with efficiently and systematically is the change in the education agenda that involves the principal's role as a school leader. For example, the change in the implementation of the Education

Development Master Plan (2006-2010) to the Malaysian Education Development Plan implemented in 2013 until 2025.<sup>1</sup>

The principal's role in carrying out leadership activities in this school is crucial, especially in preparing human capital that can compete at the global level. However, being an educational leader today has become increasingly difficult and complex. Samsiah Si-Rajab stated that today's education leaders are constantly under pressure due to the pressure for change and the need for education that occurs continuously.<sup>2</sup> To what extent can principals or school leaders effectively carry out their leadership activities today? Traditional leadership styles, such as autocratic decision-making and one-way communication, are no longer practical in the world of education today. Rahayu Ahamad Bahtiar, Sham Ibrahim, Halijah Ariffin, Nor Hazimah Ismail, and Wan Mohd Khairul stated that traditional leadership is no longer suitable for educational leaders in schools.<sup>3</sup> However, research on futuristic principal leadership still needs to be implemented, especially in National Religious High Schools. While now, many parents choose SMKA as a place to continue their children's education at the secondary level. Researchers such as Bush et al.<sup>4</sup> ; Leithwood et al.<sup>5</sup> ; Muhammad

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<sup>1</sup> Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia (PPPM) 2013 - 2025 (Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>

<sup>2</sup> James Ang Jit Eng, Samsiah Si-Rajab, Ngen, L. S., Hon, C. S., Sim, Q. C., & Muhamad Sauki Razali, Kehendak Pendidikan Abad Ke-21. Panduan Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Abad Ke-21, 2017, 190.

<sup>3</sup> Rahayu Ahamad Bahtiar, Sham Ibrahim, Halijah Ariffin, Nor Hazimah Ismail, & Wan Mohd Khairul Wan Isa. Matlamat dan agenda pendidikan dilestari dalam tempoh perintah kawalan pergerakan (PKP) Covid-19. *Jurnal Kepimpinan Pendidikan*, 2(1), 2020, 1-23.

<sup>4</sup> Bush, T., Suriani Abdul Hamid, Ng, A., & Kaparou, M. School leadership theories and the Malaysian education blueprint: Findings from systematic literature. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 2018.

<sup>5</sup> Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. Seven strong claims about successful school leadership revisited. *School Leadership and Management*, 40(1), 2019, 5-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077>

Faizal A. Ghani<sup>6</sup> and Shahril @ Charil Marzuki et al.<sup>7</sup> Have emphasized that the main factor in the development and progress of a school depends on the principal's leadership and the formation of a sustainable and stable culture.

Therefore, this study was carried out to build a profile of the best practices of futuristic leadership of principals for SMKA. The findings of this study can open the eyes of education stakeholders, especially among school principals, District Education Offices, State Education Departments, and then the Ministry of Education, regarding the importance of a leader or school principal with futuristic leadership.

Following the passage of time and the various pressures for change from outside and inside the school, school leaders or principals must be prepared to adapt to the changes. Principals and members of the organization need to be proactive to make a paradigm shift in thinking and action. Through the Malaysian Education Development Plan 2013-2025, the selection of high-performing principals is emphasized to lead and manage all educational activities in schools efficiently and effectively.<sup>8</sup> However, school principals still act only according to their instincts and do not think about the overall implications. This kind of issue and behavior indeed leads to improvement in leadership activities. Most worrisome, it will harm the implementation of an organizational agenda and allow the existence of different understandings among organizational members. Safiek Mokhlis states that the work behavior and understanding of organizational members are greatly

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<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Faizal A. Ghani. *Sekolah berkesan; Teori dan amalan*. (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Shahril Charil Marzuki, Norfizah Hayati Ahmad, & Muhammad Faizal A. Ghani. Analisis Pelan Induk Pembangunan Pendidikan 2006-2010 digubal berdasarkan pembangunan pendidikan Malaysia (2001-2010), RMK9 dan wawasan 2020: Isu dan pelaksanaannya. *Jurnal Internasional Manajemen Pendidikan*, 9, 2006-2010.

<sup>8</sup> Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia (PPPM) 2013 - 2025 (Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2010.08.007>

influenced by the thinking style and initial reaction expressed by a leader.<sup>9</sup>

As a continuation of the effort to produce more high-performing principals and head teachers, all prospective principals and head teachers are required to attend and pass the National Education Leader Professionalism Qualification Course (NPQEL). Not only that, school principals and leaders will be given various courses periodically throughout their tenure. Even so, some principals still need more exposure in terms of strategies and best practices for solving any issue in leadership. Principals and head teachers need the latest guidelines and best practices to solve problems that occur in their organizations.<sup>10</sup> However, studies on the futuristic leadership of principals still need more focus, especially in National Religious Schools, resulting in issues and problems in leadership becoming more challenging to solve. Abdullah Md Din supports the statement by stating that more studies need to be carried out in National Religious Secondary Schools and Religious Secondary Schools in Malaysia to improve the academic achievement and personality of students.<sup>11</sup>

This study aims to build a profile of the best practices of futuristic leadership of school principals. This best practice profile is specifically to help leaders implement school leadership activities more efficiently and effectively.

## **Concepts and Highlights of Past Study**

### ***Leadership***

Leadership science researchers have defined the term leadership in various ways based on the focus of their studies. This

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<sup>9</sup> Safiek Mokhlis. Kepimpinan guru besar dalam pelaksanaan pendidikan abad ke-21: Satu kajian preliminari. *Malaysian Online Journal of Education*, 3(2), 11–21, 2019

<sup>10</sup> James Ang Jit Eng, Samsiah Si-Rajab, Ngen, L. S., Hon, C. S., Sim, Q. C., & Muhamad Sauki Razali. *Kehendak Pendidikan Abad Ke-21. Panduan Pelaksanaan Pendidikan Abad Ke-21*, 190, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Abdullah Md Din. *Mengarusperdanakan pendidikan Islam di Malaysia: Cabaran dan masa depan*, 2015.

situation results in the existence of various leadership purposes. Zaidatul Akmaliah Lope Pihie and Foo Say Fook define leadership as a social interaction between the leader and staff in which the leader influences the organization's members to achieve goals. Jamaliah Abdul Hamid and Norashimah Ismail, on the other hand, define leadership as the influence of a person who is allowed or accepted by his subordinates due to the existence of a position or understanding of the role and power of the leader in a system.

Mohamad Sahari Nordin sees leadership as setting the direction and developing the necessary strategies to achieve goals based on vision and mission. So it is reasonable that Rozita Ibrahim et al. stated that various variables or dimensions could be associated with the term leadership, such as the ability to provide support, take risks, be influential, build togetherness, goal orientation, and sensitivity to humanitarian factors. In terms of leadership in schools, Townsend argues that the role of school leaders involves a leadership style that is in line with the organizational culture to drive change in education. At the same time, school leaders need to think globally because the organization's members are from various backgrounds in life and education. Based on the definition and information provided, it can be concluded that leadership is directly related to influencing activities. Therefore, the influence of good leadership is essential in forming and developing educational organizations to create an efficient, effective, and competitive school institution.

### ***Leadership Best Practices***

The field of leadership is fundamental because it ensures that educational institutions can stand firm to develop the nation's human capital. Therefore, the leadership practices practiced by a principal or leader will influence the improvement or decline of a school's performance. A best practice is understood as a procedure introduced through research or experience that is proven to produce an optimal result. According to him, the best practice can be proposed as a suitable standard to be widely adopted. J. Whitehurst, on the other hand, thinks that the best practice of leadership is

integrating professional wisdom with empirical evidence in making decisions related to leadership. Therefore, the best practice of leadership needs to be shared to improve the competence of the education community and keep pace with the changing learning environment. Despite that, Leskiw and Singh stated that many school organizations had reported their success after adopting specific approaches, but based on the literature highlights, they did. It was found that the success stories needed to be shared comprehensively.

Therefore, the best practice for school leaders is essential to be shared and necessary for the implementation of studies from time to time to align with the changes in the world of education.

### ***Principal's Futuristic Leadership***

The school principal's Futuristic Leadership is the principal's ability to use and benefit from dimensions related to future leadership. Vidergor stated that futuristic leadership is a method and indication for a school principal as a decision-making process or action using future thinking skills. While Hong and Aziah Ismail explained that a futuristic leader or principal could develop knowledge and motivate himself and his organization members, formulate learning strategies and implement intervention programs. The ability and strength of a principal will be tested through his efforts in guiding school members to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In conclusion, the principal's futuristic leadership is able to improve school performance. It can be used as a guide and good practice in carrying out activities related to leadership among school principals.

### ***Past Studies***

Regarding school leadership, Safiek Mokhlis's study has found five themes that are the main factors of school leadership as contributors to student curriculum development, namely setting the direction of the school, appropriate leadership style, decision making, monitoring and supervision, and building teamwork. The study has involved outstanding school leaders who have extensive

experience in leading school organizations. In the meantime, the study of Omar Abdul Kareem has emphasized teamwork culture in organizations. With this, each member of the organization complements the other. In contrast, Syed Syahrul Zarizi's study has found that school leadership is the main factor contributing to a school's progress, static or backward performance. His study also proves that good leadership can create a favorable school climate, even in a school located outside the city.

Regarding leadership best practices, Rosnah Ishak and Muhammad Faizal A. Ghani have conducted a study to develop a list of best leadership practices for schools. Among the elements of leadership highlighted is the leader providing space and opportunities for learning, the leader as a model for the school community, the leader encouraging innovation, the leader giving appreciation and recognition, and last but not least, the leader developing the potential of the school community. In addition, the findings of Olmedo's study also show that school leaders need to develop the potential of organizational members and encourage organizations to be creative and innovative to become future leaders who remain relevant. Gurr and Drysdale, in their study, have emphasized that principals or school leaders need the best leadership practices to set an example in their leadership due to limited resources and time.

While the study of Saiful Adli Abd Rahim was carried out to design a futuristic leadership model for principals and succeeded in finding comprehensive principal leadership dimensions, the dimensions are professional leadership, collaborative culture, development of self-competence, conducive school environment, enrichment of school data, consensus among stakeholders and acceptance of diversity. The dimension of the study was built based on the analysis of several leadership models in a synthesis.

## **Methods**

### ***Research design***

Qualitative methods use expert interviews.



## **Sampling**

The selection of respondents for this study depends on the study's title, objectives, and questions and their willingness to participate in the planned interviews. A qualitative interview-based study like this requires data and information that has meaning and high reliability. Othman Lebar asserted that qualitative research in the form of interviews places great importance on the quality of respondents over quantity.<sup>12</sup> The selection of respondents must be based on their ability to provide opinions or information about the topic discussed and have deep experience related to the matter.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the purposive sampling method is more appropriate for this study. The sample consisted of experts with extensive experience in principal leadership.

The sample selection has also been made based on criteria such as a) serving more than five years in the field of leadership, b) having a background related to education at school, and c) participating in the study voluntarily. Based on the criteria set, the study participants can provide significant, true input that coincides with the researcher's context.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, two study participants have been identified to provide input for this study. Merriam and Tisdell stated that there is no stipulation regarding the number of participants for qualitative research as long as the participants involved can fulfill the objectives and answer the research questions.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Othman Lebar. *Penyelidikan kualitatif: Pengenalan kepada teori dan metode (2nd ed.)*. Penerbit Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 2018.

<sup>13</sup> Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., Nicholls, C. M., & Ormston, R. *Qualitative research practice*. Sage Publication Ltd, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Neuman, W. L. *Basics of Social Research; Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Pearson Education, Inc, 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. *Qualitative research; A guide to design and implementation (Fourth edition)*. Jossey-Bass, 2016.

### ***Instrument***

This study uses the interview method to obtain data. Interviews refer to question-and-answer activities between researchers and study participants to obtain data, information, perceptions, and opinions about an issue or phenomenon being studied. This interview method is significant to deepen the principal's leadership practices because not all information and data about it will be able to be explored if only through a set of questions or an ordinary interview. For this study, semi-structured interviews were used. The interviews are based on a question guide referring to the objective and the field being studied. Through this method, interviews can be developed in parallel with the information provided by the study participants and not deviate from the issues or problems discussed. Williamson stated that a semi-structured interview is an appropriate method because it allows the researcher to explore and explain a subject's domains and subdomains.<sup>16</sup> The researcher uses an interview protocol that is divided into three parts, namely:

1. Opening questions - Referring to the background, experience, and services of the study participants;
2. The main question - Focusing on the construction of the principal's leadership best practice profile based on futuristic leadership aspects; and
3. Closing - Appreciation, and thanks for contributing helpful information and input for this study.

Therefore, the study participants will be more open and calm to go through the interview process because it starts with a conversation about the participants themselves, followed by the leading research questions, and ends with a speech of appreciation.

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<sup>16</sup> Williamson, K., Given, L. M., & Scifleet, P. *Qualitative data analysis. In Research Methods: Information, Systems, and Contexts: Second Edition* (pp. 453–476). Elsevier Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-08-102220-7.00019-4>, 2018

### **Data analysis**

The interviews were recorded in advance using a voice recorder so that no information was left out. Using a voice recorder is more appropriate and efficient than using a notebook.<sup>17</sup> Recording the interview will also allow the researcher to listen again and focus on the questions and answers given by the study participants. This method can increase the validity and reliability of the data obtained. After that, the interview was transcribed into full-text form. Next, this study uses thematic analysis to identify the themes contained in the transcripts that have been made. According to Williamson, this method of analysis is widely used by qualitative researchers such as ethnographers to analyze interviews.<sup>18</sup> Thematic analysis was carried out as suggested by Braun and Clarke, which involved six steps, namely a) familiarizing oneself with the data, b) generating codes, c) generating initial themes, d) examining themes, e) naming themes, and f) producing research reports.<sup>19</sup> According to Braun and Clarke again, this analysis is the best method because it is flexible and can explain more deeply about the subject studied systematically.

### **Result and Discussion**

The thematic analysis method was used to build themes based on the objectives of this study. Braun and Clarke stated that thematic analysis is a method to identify, analyze and report themes built from the data collected as a result of the research conducted. The identified themes have been categorized into six domains that refer to the profile of the principal's leadership best practices in the context of futuristic leadership: professional leadership, collaborative culture, development of self-competence, enriching

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<sup>17</sup> Safiek Mokhlis. Kepimpinan guru besar dalam pelaksanaan pendidikan abad ke-21: Satu kajian preliminari. *Malaysian Online Journal of Education*, 3(2), 11–21, 2019.

<sup>18</sup> Williamson, K., Given, L. M., & Scifleet, P. *Qualitative data analysis. In Research Methods: Information, Systems, and Contexts: Second Edition...*, 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Braun, V., & Clarke, V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. In *Qualitative research in psychology: Vol. 3:2* (pp. 77–101), 2006.

school data, conducive school environment, understanding and acceptance among stakeholders diversity.

### ***Professional Principal Leadership***

Professional leadership can be seen through the behavior and practices of a principal in terms of ability, experience, and wisdom to carry out his responsibilities efficiently and effectively.<sup>20</sup> Principals who are professional in their leadership are not only ready to face leadership challenges but also need to develop leadership in education.<sup>21</sup>

Based on the interviews, both experts stated that professional principals must cultivate research in their organizations. According to P1, school members need to conduct research to continue the activities carried out at school. This is explained in the following interview excerpt:

When the teacher teaches in class, he will come up with an intervention. However, they cannot show this thing off as long as they keep it like that. With the culture of action research, they are also encouraged to write related articles or journals. (P1: 123-126)

P2 stated that through the study, the principal would be able to implement appropriate actions and consider future expectations. It is stated as follows:

So any action from the superiors, or even the principal himself... must be in place. Also, take into account the long term. For the future... look at his effectiveness and suitability. Therefore it is said that in this futuristic we need to do research. (P2: 155-158)

P2 also stated that a leader who wants quality leadership and does not deviate from the proper direction must emulate the leadership of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. It refers to his quote as follows:

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<sup>20</sup> Saiful Adli Abd Rahim, Hamid, H. S. A., Norhanida Samsudin, & Muhammad Faizal A. Ghani. School leader's futuristic leadership model: A directed analysis of content. Atlantis Press, 400(Icream 2019), 172-176, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Nick Petrie. Future trends in leadership development. Center for Creative Leadership, 82(1), 82-84, 2014.

Referring to the word of God, which means "Truly in the person of the apostle that is the ideal of leadership". If we want to follow good, quality leadership... we must follow the prophet. Prophet with his qualities of siddiq, trust, tabligh, and fathonah. So if the principals can follow this...inshaAllah it will not run off track. (P2: 55-58)

### ***Self Competence Development***

The principal's role as the highest leader in the school certainly requires diverse skills and wisdom. The intended skills are not only in terms of managing and administering office-related matters but also in terms of teacher management, student academics, and so on. Based on P1's experience, the academic supervision activities carried out by a skilled principal have an excellent effect on the teacher. Therefore the principal's skills need to be improved. He explained it as follows:

Principals at SMKA and SMA are also involved in observation activities. Not just like before. It has to be done in phases...before, during, and after. We have a program that we call SLINS school leadership instructional supervision. So, these people have been trained to observe and guide the teachers. (P1: 150-154)

P1 and P2 have the same view that principals should attend courses or training appropriate to current and recent needs. Besides that, the principal also needs to have his initiative to get involved in the appropriate course. Their statement is as follows:

So we hope that the principal will develop his knowledge. Whether you study with the teachers, he is like an ICT teacher...it's more about your own wishes. This is ICT, even for me. When I return to the course but don't apply, I really forget. (P1: 186-189)

I rarely see people who want to go to emotional management training. Maybe they think they are ok...there is nothing wrong with him. But when we look at his attitude... he should follow attitude or emotion management training. (P2: 197-200)

### ***Collaborative Culture***

Collaborative activities are not limited to any position or rank in the educational organization. Especially regarding matters related to the construction and implementation of the vision and mission of a school. P<sub>1</sub> explains it as follows:

All schools, regardless of where they are, usually put the Organization's Strategic Plan at the front. Let me tell you what we want to achieve by 2025? So indirectly, they have to have this thing. Indirectly makes school members think ahead. (P<sub>1</sub>: 115-118)

P<sub>1</sub> also suggested that collaborative activities should be made a culture in every school. It aims to enable useful information or leadership practices to be immediately shared and utilized by many parties. The quote is as follows:

...these principals are always provided with information, information and the latest methods in school administration. As a futuristic leader, it is necessary to make sharing or collaboration a culture. For example, we ask for the school's best practices to be shared here. Ready for more competitions up to the state level. (P<sub>1</sub>: 167-171)

Meanwhile, P<sub>2</sub> has emphasized that the school principal needs to research and discuss with teachers and staff to identify problems in the school and try to solve them together. His explanation is as follows:

When I was appointed as the principal here, I first looked at the big problems in this school. I moved here before during the MCO...so the teachers and staff did not come to school. After we were able to operate again in about a month and 12 days, I called all the teachers and staff. We discussed what your problem is in this school...let me know. (P<sub>2</sub>: 69-73)

### ***Enriching School Data***

The ability of a principal or school leader to make predictions about the performance of his organization in the future refers to a futuristic leader. Lee and Louis stated that plans and frameworks made to plan schools are significant to obtain accurate data and give

meaning to the organization.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, P1 thinks that data should always be updated and easily accessible. He expressed it in the following quote:

Regarding data, we at PPD Kuala Selangor...we have S Pendik. That is a deposit like big data. There are also schools. For example, when we go to school, he just gives us a QR code, when we scan it, we get everything. I think that futuristic is more like that. (P1: 139-142)

Likewise with P2 which is very important to the existence of up-to-date data and can be used as evidence of achievement. Especially to plan the curriculum implementation strategy for the future. This statement is expressed by P2 as follows:

...data on teacher management, curriculum management, and school equipment. All that I ask is to be updated constantly. Now, when entering Skpmsg2, monitored under the Nazir congregation, everyone must have that evidence or proof. Can't just chat with saliva...(P2: 183-186)

### *Consensus Among Stakeholders*

Based on the views of P1 and P2, each has stated that stakeholders can also impact school performance. Hoy and Miskel have stated that stakeholders closely relate to school achievement and performance.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, stakeholder agreement is an essential element of the principal's leadership. Among the interview excerpts identified discussing this matter are as follows:

Another futuristic leader is also characteristic. They always empower the stakeholders or the community. This is very clearly the case. For example, the schools here always get excellent cooperation from local leaders or NGOs. So we really ask every school to find

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<sup>22</sup> Lee, M., & Louis, K. S. Mapping a strong school culture and linking it to sustainable school improvement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 81, 84-96, 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2019.02.001>

<sup>23</sup> Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G. Educational administration: Theory, research and practice. In Mc Graw Hill (Vol. 9, Issue 11), 2012. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230810849862>

space and opportunities. He is like this, we do have a more academic network... because we have UITM, UniSel...(P1: 128-133)

While P2 also explained the involvement of school alumni in helping school management for students' success.

Like before, during pkp...we got a report from PK HEM that some of our students under 40 cannot afford to buy mobile phones. 5 siblings share 1 handphone. It is unfortunate. So what to do? I am asking alumni for help to buy a handphone. So, we got an alumni contribution of RM9000 at that time. (P2: 134-137)

### ***Diversity Acceptance***

The school organization consists of various individuals with different backgrounds and experiences. Of course, it challenges the principal and school leaders to lead them to achieve the school's goals as an effective school. P1 has a prominent view on this through the following statement:

An example is a generation the principal who accepts the new teacher posting DG 41... the gap between the teacher and the principal is too far. Gotta accept it. Have to realize... which generation principal, the teacher is generation Z. Have to accept... (P1: 199-201)

Today's principal will discuss this first. So, this is a good thing to avoid conflict. When there is no conflict, diversity can be well accepted. The immersion program will make the principal accept diversity in the school. (P1: 204-207)

P2 also discussed the influence of diversity in this organization. According to him, a situation like this needs to be utilized as best as possible because it can have a huge impact on the school principal's leadership. He explained as follows:

We as principals, have to listen first. Yes...yes...listen first and live it. We accept the diversity that exists. We can't show ego even as old people. It will not solve the problem. Can't...listen first. He just gave a suggestion. Because they have their own strengths and weaknesses. (P2: 222-225)



The analysis results found that both experts have almost the same view and complement each other. Based on knowledge and experience, they have emphasized that the principal's futuristic leadership is able to improve school performance through the application of items contained in futuristic leadership.

As an agent of change, educational institutions led by a principal are undoubtedly faced with various challenges. Moreover, dealing with changes towards industrial revolution 4.0 is very complex and difficult to predict.<sup>24</sup> Principals certainly play a critical role, which is to plan the changes that occur so they can be faced with complete readiness, including guaranteeing the effectiveness of their leadership towards teachers, students, and all school members. The findings of this study show that the best practice of principal leadership should be shared and disseminated widely for the good of the education community.

A professional principal is identified as someone who cultivates study in their leadership. At the same time, the principal also adheres to the religious foundation and has examples to follow, such as the leadership of the prophet Muhammad s.a.w. P1 and P2 suggest that school principals play a role as a motivator for teachers to carry out the study. P2 states that the principal can implement actions and make decisions accurately and appropriately for the long term through the study. According to him, school principals need to be good leaders and listeners who, in turn, provide solutions to the problems faced by teachers and school staff.

The development of self-competence is seen as an essential matter in school principals' leadership. Based on the interview, P1 and P2 gave explanations from different angles. P1 further explains the principal's competency development from aspects of curriculum management such as supervision. He also stated that ICT skills also need to be improved because the ability to manage ICT involves academic and social media management. In comparison, P2 is more

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<sup>24</sup> Zafir Khan Mohamed Abdul, & Mohd Nazmy Abd Latif. Mengurus modal insan dalam industri 4.0 ke arah kecemerlangan negara. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 16(6), 2019, 1-13.

about the principal's skills to manage one's emotions. According to Suhaili Jaya and Piaw, high leader or principal competence can directly improve organizational performance. Therefore this aspect also needs to be emphasized by education leaders at all levels.<sup>25</sup>

From the aspect of collaborative culture, this study has shown that teachers and school staff are not only followers at school. They also need to be involved as members in planning, developing, and implementing the school's vision and mission. It aims to provide a sense of responsibility and togetherness in realizing the school's vision and mission. P<sub>1</sub> explained that the collaborative role could happen within the school organization. It also needs to happen between an organization and another organization. For example, they are sharing best practices among school principals. In this way, more principals can gain leadership knowledge directly. Wan Noor Adzmin Mohd Sabri and Suria Baba believe that this kind of collaborative practice is necessary and accepted by most school principals.<sup>26</sup>

Emphasis has also been given to the data aspect. Both experts have the same view that data enrichment is a perfect strategy for making plans and decisions. PPD, JPN, and KPM indeed emphasize data management. However, the data available at school needs to be further enriched. This is actually for the benefit and good of the school itself. Principals must have the initiative and be innovative in collecting and preparing data. Not just to meet the wishes of top management. P<sub>2</sub> also gave the same view when he stated that the principal needs to collect and prepare data before being asked by his superiors to do so.

This study has also discussed the importance of consensus among stakeholders. As a top leader, P<sub>1</sub> has suggested that the

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<sup>25</sup> Suhaili Jaya, & Piaw, C. Y. Tahap kompetensi dan hubungan bimbingan rakan peningkatan sekolah terhadap kompetensi kepimpinan pemimpin sekolah di Negeri Sarawak. *Jurnal Kepimpinan Pendidikan*, 6(2), 2019, 16–43.

<sup>26</sup> Wan Noor Adzmin Mohd Sabri, & Suria Baba. (2017). Amalan kepimpinan kolaboratif dalam kalangan pemimpin instruksional di sekolah rendah. *Jurnal Kepimpinan Pendidikan*, 4(3), 2017, 53–64. [http://umrefjournal.um.edu.my/filebank/published\\_article/6255/Template\\_4.pdf](http://umrefjournal.um.edu.my/filebank/published_article/6255/Template_4.pdf)

school, especially the principal, establish cooperative relationships with external parties such as local authorities, parents, the community, and related NGOs. Not only that, but academic networks also need to be built, for example, with Higher Education Institutes such as universities and colleges. Besides that, the involvement and cooperation of alumni, as said by P2, also benefits the school. The support that school alumni can give is not only financial but also in terms of sharing views and experiences to be used as a source of inspiration for students and the school. With this, the school organization will be firmer and smoother in terms of management and administration.

Another thing that is no less important to the principal's leadership is the acceptance of diversity. Based on the interviews with P1 and P2, various issues in the school organization can be addressed when diversity is accepted. Among them is the issue of generational differences, different opinions and beliefs, and the existence of conflict among school members. The principal needs to accept that the members under his leadership consist of various generations. In addition, their views and experiences are also different from each other. Therefore, the principal needs to be wise and accept diversity to be a source of strength for the school. P2 also stated that the principal first needs to be a good listener. After understanding and appreciating what was presented, the principal should suggest an improvement. Indeed, each of the organization's members has its advantages and disadvantages. Here the school principal needs to accept the diversity and lead the school organization as a big family.

## **Conclusion**

From the research, a futuristic principal must have exceptional strength in leading the school. Those strengths are:

1. Become a professional;
  - a. Cultivating research in the organization

- b. Take action taking into account future expectations
- c. Emulating the leadership of the prophet Muhammad
2. Develop self-competence;
  - a. Improve efficiency in terms of academic management and leadership
  - b. Identify the skills that a principal must have
3. Cultivating collaborative;
  - a. Build the vision and mission of the organization together.
  - b. Identify problems and solve them together.
  - c. Share best practices.
4. Enrich data;
  - a. Data should constantly be updated and easily accessible.
  - b. The existence of data is evidence of the work of the school staff.
  - c. Creating consensus among stakeholders;
  - d. The agreement between the stakeholders and the principal contributes to the effectiveness of the principal's leadership in the school.
  - e. Accepting the diversity that exists in the organization.
  - f. Acceptance of diversity that exists can avoid conflict
  - g. By accepting diversity, school principals can identify each strength and weakness.

Thus, the findings of this study will guide principals, PPD, JPN and KPM to be used as a profile of the best practices of principal school leadership.

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