A Conceptual Framework on The Role of Instructional Leadership and Teachers' Change Readiness in Education

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Abstract

The School-Based Assessment (SBA) is the recent educational reform being introduced to improve the quality of the education system to international standards. Leadership is essential to the success of any reform effort, according to previous findings. Principals must play a role in school organization as an instructional leader who has a positive effect on preparing teachers for the reform. This concept paper examines the critical role of principals' instructional leadership in preparing teachers to enact educational reform, specifically the SBA. There is an overview of possible improvements to the SBA. The concept of principals' instructional leadership as well as teachers' readiness for change will also be addressed. The final section of the paper will describe a literature review relating to the impact of principal instructional leadership on readiness for change to provide empirical evidence. This article is intended to add to the body of knowledge in the field of educational administration by adding literature on the role of instructional leadership in school preparation for change.

Keywords: School-Based Assessment (SBA), Instructional Leadership, Readiness for Change

1. Introduction

To achieve global excellence, many changes have taken place in educational field. This is due to the occurrence of globalization changes, liberalization, and the rapid development of information technology in the world. When these happen, education planners need to make some changes and improvements to address these challenges. Therefore, education should be prepared with the challenges of providing the younger generation with the ability to deal with the challenges of globalization, especially in terms of the competition of seeking knowledge. This is because education is the key factor that has become the basis for the realization of national aspirations [1].

In the efforts of the Ministry of Education (MOE) to improve the country's education system, the Interim Strategic Plan 2011-2020 was launched to perform some transformation of education in Malaysia. Of the 14 strategic initiatives outlined, School-Based Assessment (SBA) is a strategic thrust to improve the existing methods of student assessment that would improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. In addition, to further enhance the quality of the education system to international standards, the MOE has implemented the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) (2013-2025), in which the implementation of the SBA is among the main agenda for the present educational change.

2. Background

Change in the organization is important and necessary to successfully compete in a rapidly evolving world. Similarly, changing school organization aims to provide education to achieve the goal of effective school. The structure of the programme or practice to be changed must be something better than before. According to the Interim Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and the MEB (2013 to 2025), the implementation

of the SBA is a process of change in the MOE that would improve the existing methods of student assessment to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The implementation of SBA is in line with the country's transformation program to produce human capital that can compete at the global level [1].

In terms of the implementation of educational change, particularly the SBA at school, the principal as instructional leader is responsible for implementing a change or improvement to achieve successful change [2]. With the transformation of the education system that takes place to improve the quality of education, the school requires dynamic leadership to develop quality human capital either by the teachers, support staff and students. In fact, leadership is critical to the success of any change initiative [3] [4] [5] [6] [7] [8]. Principals must play a role as an instructional leader in implementing educational change to provide a school climate that is conducive for learning. According to [9], principal instructional leadership can enhance and improve teaching and learning in schools involving teachers, students, parents, school planning, school management, school facilities and cultural resources.

Earlier findings show that the role of leadership in the organization is very important during the implementation of change, especially in creating readiness for change [10] [11] [12] [13]. Effective leaders are indispensable to reduce the resistance to change and are required to influence his followers towards readiness for change [14] [15]. Similarly, in school organization, instructional leadership of principals is seen as a positive impact in preparing teachers for the reform [16] [17]. However, according to [18] and [19] managing change is never easy to be implemented by leaders and often fail to be implemented effectively as it could create various feelings either for or against the change. A crucial question is, will there be a similar situation that occurs in the organization of the school; in which the implementation of changes fails to be effectively implemented due to the failure of the instructional leadership of principals who fail to prepare and support teachers towards the desired changes, particularly in the implementation of the SBA system.

The concept of readiness for change can be equated with the concept of dilution (unfreezing) proposed by [20], which can be represented in the form of beliefs, attitudes, and intentions about the extent of changes required and whether there are advantages when implementing a change [21]. It is also the first phase occurring in a process of change. In the proses of change, the employee should be able to support the changes to be implemented [14]. However, based on early feedback on the implementation of SBA, the results of the study found that teachers are not ready to make such changes as they are yet to understand and master the process of implementation of the SBA fully [1]. Although the teachers were led by instructional principals as agents of change in schools, it is questionable why teachers are still found not to be prepared to implement changes in SBA system? Does the role of the principal as instructional leader in school have any impact on the aspect of readiness for change among teachers?

Therefore, the development of educational changes that occurs as of the SBA system is crucial for the instructional leader in the school organization to create aspects of readiness for change among teachers, in order that changes can be implemented effectively. In accordance with the MOE policy, the principal serves as instructional leader to implement improvements or innovations. Therefore, it is the duty of the principal as instructional leader in school to create readiness for change among teachers to ensure successful implementation of such.

3. Definition Of Terms

A. School Based Assessment (SBA)

School-Based Assessment (SBA) refers to the implementation of educational change. It is a form of holistic assessment undertaken in schools to assess the academic and non-academic aspects. This assessment has been fully implemented to cover all subjects for every student in Form One in 2012. There are four components of SBA namely the Centre Assessment, Classroom Assessment, Psychometric Assessment and Evaluation of Physical Activity, Sport and Co-curricular.

B. Principal Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership refers to principal leadership practices directly related to the enhancement and improvement of teaching and learning in schools [22] [23]. There are three dimensions of instructional leadership that will be studied including determining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme, and creating a learning climate of the school. This study will use the definition given by [24] as follows:

1. Determining the school's mission

The role of principals is to involve all parties understand by sharing the vision and the purpose of implementing the activities of the school and classroom, including SBA. There are two functions in this dimension, namely to frame school goals and to deliver the goals of the school.

2. Managing the instructional program

The role of principals includes managing the curriculum as well as teaching and learning programs in schools, including SBA system. There are three functions in this dimension, which are coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluate instruction, as well as monitoring students' progress.

3. Creating a learning climate of the school

The principal's role also includes affecting the improvement of teaching and learning in schools, including SBA system. There are five functions in this dimension which are time control, providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for learning, promoting professional development, and maintaining visibility.

C. Change Readiness of Teachers

Teachers' readiness for change refers to the beliefs, attitudes and intentions that are positive, whereby teachers are willing to implement changes to achieve a predetermined goal. As [25] states that there are four dimensions in terms of readiness for change and there are the compatibility changes, management support, change efficacy and benefits for themselves.

4. Changes In School-Based Assessment (Sba)

The MOE has introduced a new system of SBA to replace the existing examination system and is part of the Education Transformation Programme. SBA is an effort by the MOE to develop human capital that is holistic in nature to focus on the mastery of knowledge, intellectual capital, and the adoption of a progressive culture of values, ethics, and morality. These objectives are in the Education Development Master Plan, the National Integrity Plan, and the National Mission. SBA was implemented in 2011 for primary schools and 2012 for secondary schools. SBA is a holistic assessment that evaluates in terms of cognitive (intellectual), affective (emotional and spiritual) and psychomotor (physical), in accordance with the National Philosophy of Education. With a more flexible and appropriate system, SBA is seen as the catalyst to reform the education system of the country where the assessment has changed the direction of decentralization.

SBA has long been introduced in developed countries like the United States of America, New Zealand, Finland, Hong Kong, and Australia. Approach to assessing the basic skills and knowledge will be used instead of comparing students to other students. The proposed learning method is more flexible, and schools can plan to use deemed appropriate approaches to promote students' learning. In addition, this system concurs a more holistic assessment of assessing student performance than the old system of assessment in which it is made based on an examination only. By observation, the implementation of the SBA is more comprehensive in terms of evaluation.

SBA is intended to assess academic and non-academic capabilities, through the implementation of formative and summative assessments, with autonomy given to teachers. It is used to retrieve more information to create value and decide about what to do for the students in their learning [26]. It is not to compare the performance of students, but to report the performance of students in the learning progress with reference to the standard charter. In contrast to the situation before, to obtain information about students' learning, teachers are using the measurement system by means of an instrument.

Teachers are also given the freedom to work with the assessment, based on students' readiness and development. Therefore, this can help teachers and students, to review the latter's strengths and weaknesses, ensuring that teaching and learning takes place. This process will be implemented through evidence-based processes and products. In addition, SBA is expected to solve the nation's education system which has been exam-oriented that also causes fewer students to be involved in extra-curricular activities.

Therefore, to ensure the success of the implementation of the SBA in schools, there are some changes that need to be made and, this requires leaders and school staff to be ready to face the changes.

5. Instructional Leadership Concept

The concept of instructional leadership has been studied widespread in the 1980s and 1990s [2]. As the effect of education changes, the principal as instructional leaders in schools will encourage teachers to achieve school academic objectives, try to be committed at work, and more willing to exert effort in implementing school changes. In the same line, the instructional leader is also a major factor for the successful of school change and

school achievement [28] [29]. The practice of instructional leadership is said to have given a good impression in the implementation of changes in schools.

According to [24], instructional leadership behavior of principal refers to holding responsibility with the purpose of advancing and enhancing both the teaching and learning processes in schools involving teachers, pupils, parents, school design, maintenance of schools, ease of sources and school culture. They also reiterate that instructional leadership refers to the three-dimensions of the key activities namely determining the mission of the school, taking care of the teaching program, and realizing the learning climate of the school.

The definition of instructional leadership has been developed further and is defined as a process of influence in which the principal knows the school direction, motivating staff and coordinating strategies for schools and classrooms, with the aim of improving teaching and learning [30]. In addition, instructional leadership also refers to the dynamic state and positive learning environment to achieve the teaching and learning excellence [31]. The principal of the school as an instructional leader and administrator is required to manage resources wisely and to improve the qualities of teaching and learning. This is also supported by [32] who stated that one of the important roles played by the instructional leader is to provide allocation of resources and reference materials for teachers in schools.

6. Readiness For Change

Readiness for change is defined as a comprehensive attitude that is influenced simultaneously by the content (what changed), process (how the changes are implemented), context (a condition in which the change occurs), and individual (individual factors related) involved in a change [7]. According to [21], teachers' willingness to change the beliefs, attitudes, and intentions are positive teachers who are willing to implement changes in order to achieve a predetermined goal. When someone shows support for behavior changes due to valuation of thinking that prompted this action, it is interpreted as a person is willing to change [21] [33] [34] [35]. According to [36] one of the important factors that affect the successful implementation of change is the availability of change readiness. Availability is defined as the extent to which those involved whether individuals and groups are ready, eager, and able to implement a change. In fact, according to a study by [37], individual willingness to change is a key success factor for the organization which will only change if the members of the organization are ready to implement the changes. Thus, the readiness for change is one of the most important constructs for the first step in the change process as it evaluates a person's reactions to change, and it reflects whether they support the change. If this is done well, employees will be more motivated and committed to support and implement change effectively. However, if it is ignored, there will be obstacles that hinder the success of the planned changes.

In a review of a study conducted by [25], readiness has been defined by various definitions. According to [38], readiness has been defined as willingness to try new things and change in terms of the ability of social, technological, and organizational systems. Willingness can be described as voluntary, motivated, and intended for members of the organization during a process of change. Meanwhile [33] [25] and [39] have been expanding the definitions of readiness that include members of the organization having the relevance of trust, support, and value change. The findings of the study review conducted by [5] has the definition agreed upon by researchers such as [21] [40] and [37]. The readiness for change is reflected in the beliefs, feelings, and intentions of the organization that the proposed changes are required, and that the organization is able to implement the change successfully.

The basic theory of readiness for change begins with a preliminary review of the relevant reduced resistance to changes that have been conducted by Coch and French in 1948. However, [25] refuted the opinion because they said that the study by Coch and French is centered on the concept of reducing the resistance to change rather than on the concept of readiness to change. Basically, the concept of readiness for change was associated with a three-level theory of [20] having stated that in the process of change, there are three levels namely of dilution (unfreeze), change (freeze) and refreezing (refreeze). Based on this concept, previous researchers have attempted to develop a set of actions that can be taken by the agents of change to reduce the resistance and move the organization toward the desired change [25].

The concept of three-level theory by [20] is also supported by the statement which is to ensure successful implementation of change. It involves the issue of leaders as change agents who can 'dilute' the current situation and this also means how readiness for change can be improved within an organization is critical to the process of change [41]. This is because according to [21], if there are obstacles in the process of change, it will cause changes that will not be implemented effectively. Therefore, they have suggested that the willingness to change is a move to prevent resistance. One of the steps in their model is to provide assessment. For leaders to plan and implement organizational change effectively, they need to be able to assess the key issues for behavioral responses that will drive change [42]. This step is to determine how much employees are ready before changes

are implemented. This assessment allows leaders to identify problems that might exist about change initiatives. If the gap was observed and no action was taken to fix it, resistance would be expected. Therefore, the change resistance should be reduced so that readiness for change can be created and change will be successfully implemented [25].

According to [19], factors such as low motivation and poor communication of information will resist change, thus failing information to reach can even cause resistance to change to occur. Thus, leaders are encouraged to involve their subordinates in the decision-making process of change, build self-confidence of employees, accept constructive criticism, be transparent, and distribute information changes clearly to all employees, so that they are in a state that is ready to implement the changes.

When leaders involve their subordinates in the process of change, this will also ensure the readiness of the organization's members, so that they (1) feel that it is appropriate that changes are implemented (where appropriate), (2) believe leaders support change (management support), (3) feel they are able to make a successful change (change efficacy), and (4) believe change itself is to benefit (beneficial to themselves) [21] [34] [25]. When the level of readiness for change is high, members of the organization are more likely to initiate change, work harder, exhibit greater persistence, have high commitment, and demonstrate cooperative behavior better. Therefore, it will result in a more effective implementation of change [43].

7. The Impact Of Instructional Leadership On Readiness For Change

In a study by [44], she found that creating a learning climate of the school is the highest predictor variables and accounted for 59.2 % of the attitude towards change (ß = 0.420, R2 = 0592, t = 11.0064 and p = 0.000) among secondary school principals in the state of Pahang; from the perspective of principals and teachers. Overall, all dimensions of instructional leadership are important and affect the attitude of changes in the school. Therefore, principals as instructional leaders must exercise leadership to ensure a positive attitude towards change that will be created by the teachers and this will lead to success in creating changes conducted in schools.

There are findings that reiterated that instructional leaders who are not keen to implement changes in school, the teachers are not getting the support and guidance to ensure the goals are achieved for educational change. Therefore, teachers are not willing to implement the desired changes with enthusiasm. [45] conducted a study of teachers' perceptions on SBA system, and it can be summarized that since principals do not have in-depth skills or knowledge of the changes, it is impossible to make change effectively when implemented in school. It is therefore a critical role to be held by principals as instructional leaders in schools because they are the agents of change that should stimulate it and not prevent the change from happening. In conclusion, when instructional leader supports and shows interest in change, teachers will also be ready to support and implement change successfully.

According to [46] there was a need for instructional leadership to be practiced by principal in school as educational reform occurs in Indonesia. Following this reform, school principals are required to act as agents of change as change will occur in terms of pedagogy, teaching methods and learning to improve the academic quality of the school. Due to the high expectations placed by the Indonesian education system, the role of the principal as instructional leader has become crucial [47]. This review also stated that instructional leadership of principals gives impact on the reform that has taken place and on the improvement of schools. They also found that there were three main problems in the reform process that occurs, and they are skills shortage or less ready in the administration, the feelings that changes made are not necessary, as well as poor quality of teaching. They have also concluded that an effective instructional principal will influence the level of motivation, commitment, and trust upon teachers to do their jobs. Hence the principal must increase their knowledge and skills to be a reference to the teachers, in order that the latter see the principal as role model in carrying out the changes. This in turn will increase the level of motivation, commitment, and faith of teachers when they are on duty. Therefore, when the levels of motivation, commitment and trust of teachers are increased, this will also contribute to the readiness of teachers in implementing any changes in the school.

This review also noted that [48] found the instructional role of principal is very crucial in creating a culture of change and in leading the school to implement the changes. When the behavior of principal supports the change, this will make the school willing to support the change and the community will feel the importance of the actual change. Teachers should have an active role in the push for reform. This includes principals as instructional leaders must build and deliver the school's academic goals that require the teachers to be more creative and innovative, in order that the latter feel the importance of change and strive to improve the quality of teaching.

Furthermore, there are studies by [49], where the aim was to investigate the relationship between principal instructional leadership practices and their attitudes towards change based on cognitive, affective, and behavioral approaches. This study used mixed methodology in which the quantitative data were gathered through the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and the Inventory of Attitudes Towards Change. The study was conducted on a total of 123 principals and teachers in the state of Pahang. Besides, the qualitative data were collected by conducting interviews with the respondents. The results found were that the practice of instructional leadership of principals in the state of Pahang was at a high level for all dimensions of the study. The mean value for the dimension defining the goal of the school is 3.98, the dimension of managing the instructional program is 3.75, the dimension of encouraging learning environment is 3.71 and the final dimension of creating environment-friendly school is 3.90. In addition, their study also found that principals have positive attitude towards change. There is also a strong relationship between instructional leadership practices of principals and their attitudes towards change. Therefore, it can be summarized that to implement change in schools, principals must implement instructional leadership practices that will in turn churn positive attitude towards change and this will bring about excellence to the school. This is in line with the study conducted by [29] who state that the instructional leaders can improve the performance of teachers, students, and schools in the era of the education system transformation.

Effective leaders are more likely to provide support to alter the fundamental values, beliefs, and attitudes of employees so that the latter are ready to accept and understand the change initiative [50]. According to [21], leader who acts as an agent of change will be more successful in providing staff the support to implement change. In addition, attitude or practice of leaders is also an important factor in the process of creating readiness for change of the employees [5] [50]. In a study conducted by [50] who studied the impact of leadership on the readiness for change in an energy organization located in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; found that leadership has a positive and significant relationship with willingness to change ($\beta = 0444$, $p < 0.001$). Transformational leader, being charismatic and having vision is essential to drive the organization towards effective change. According to their discussion, [51] state that workers in Malaysia have respect for cultural leaders and those who are older than them. Thus, it is likely that the employee will abide by the direction of a leader and be better prepared to deal with whatever changes that occur. Therefore, it is very important for leaders to understand the impact of leadership on workers, because the first thing to be created in the implementation process of change is the aspect of readiness for change [50].

8.   Conclusion

For the successful implementation of change in education and ensuring readiness for change in the SBA, the role of instructional leaders is very important. The behavior of the principals has a relationship with some aspects of his position, the demands and expectations of leadership, relationships with staff and others as well as the principal interaction with the natural qualities of the school organization. Accordingly, a principal should be smart to play a role as instructional leaders effectively, to create an environment that is conducive to enhance teachers' readiness for change. With this readiness, teachers can create changes, so that every effort of change will be successfully implemented.

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