Factors of leadership skills of secondary school principals

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Abstract

A school principal requires a series of appropriate leadership skills to bring the school, staffs and students to a high level of achievement, and to maintain school effectiveness. This study was conducted to identify (1) level of leadership skill, and (2) factors of leadership skill of a group of Malaysian secondary school principals (n=152). Results indicate that years of service as a school principal and academic qualification were two significant factors of leadership skill. The factors predicted 24.9% of the overall leadership skill. However, there was no significant difference between the male and female principals on leadership skill. In terms of leadership domain, the principals possessed high instructional and cultural leadership skills and low educational management and organizational management leadership skills. The findings imply that school principals should be provided ample opportunities for self-professional development to improve the quality of their leadership skills.

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Keywords: Leadership skill, school principal, factor, years of service, academic qualification

1. Introduction

Leadership skill of school principals is often the key factor of difference between effective and ineffective schools (Blackburn, 2009). According to some scholars, school principals with good leadership skill encourage positive school climates, including high-quality of school culture; teaching and learning; assessment; academic and non-academic performance; two-way communication; accountability; teacher and student attitudes; and relationship among school, families and the broader community (Glantz, 2008; Chen, 2008; Hallinger, 2004).

Five domains of leadership skill that have been associated with effective school principals were instructional leadership, cultural leadership, strategic leadership, educational management leadership and organizational management leadership. For examples, some scholars have discussed about the significance roles of school principals as instructional leader (Blackburn, 2009; E-Lead, 2008; Alv & Robbins, 2005; Robbins & Alv, 2004; Portin, 2004; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Berlin, Kavanagh & Jensen, 1988), and some of them emphasized the important of principal cultural leadership for school effectiveness and student achievement (Blackburn, 2009; Glantz, 2008; Karakose, 2008; Hallinger, 2004; Lam, 2003; Zhang, 1994) while others focused on the significance of strategic leadership (Chen; 2003; Glanz, 2006; Chernow, 1985), educational management leadership (MBE

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