The Challenge of Entrepreneurial Leadership Secondary School Leader in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT. This study explores the need to develop an entrepreneurial leadership model for school leaders and identify the challenges faced in practising entrepreneurial leadership in management. A qualitative study design was used to meet the study's aims. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews with six respondents who were school leaders in Malaysia. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis, where the researcher gave codes to the selected research data to produce themes and research reports. The study findings have found three main challenges school leaders face in implementing entrepreneurial leadership: workload, the leader's knowledge of leadership and the acceptance of organizational members. This study also found several strategies for facing the challenges: effective two-way communication, knowledge sharing, guiding novice teachers (mentors), and support from all levels and facility facilities. The study's implications found that school leaders still need this entrepreneurial leadership model as a leadership guide towards school excellence even though there are challenges in applying the model.

Keywords: *Challenge; Entrepreneurial leadership; Leaders*

INTRODUCTION

Efficient and good leadership can increase the glory of an organization, whether in the public or private sector. Increased productivity and improved quality of education depend on leaders and productive organizational leadership. The leadership of a managed and disciplined leader in realizing the vision and mission set in improving the excellence of the following organizations. In addition, school leaders must always play a role in ensuring achievement at the school level to achieve the standards and goals that have been set in line with the transformation of the country's education, former Minister of Education who is now the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (2012). Therefore, more global and collective leadership behaviours began to be applied in governance, and the involvement of all organizational members was prioritized (Avilio et al., 2009; Harris, 2008).

However, school leaders still practice traditional leadership styles and do not understand the difference between leading and managing. It aligns with Stein (2013) and Lokman Mohd Tahir et al. (2008), who stated that leaders still do not understand the difference between leading and managing and still support the classic management model as the best model to manage schools. , this impacts school leaders who are more inclined to an autocratic leadership style and always refer to the bureaucratic model, which causes them to be unclear about their role as leaders in generating

teachers' commitment to the school (Lokman et al., 2008). Therefore, changes towards entrepreneurial leadership are necessary to form good and excellent organizational management. Entrepreneurial leadership is a new leadership style in school administration (Ghazali et al., 2019) and is characterized as authentic, charismatic and transformational (Thornberry, 2006). It agreed with the study of Siti Sabihah Ghazali (2017), which shows similarities between the leadership practices of school principals' leadership competencies by the Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB) and entrepreneurial leadership practices.

Entrepreneurial leadership has become an innovation or transformation of leadership towards improving a leader's leadership in managing an educational organization; it includes various activities, events and changes over time. This entrepreneurial leadership can be seen from two perspectives: leadership and entrepreneurship (Alger, 2005; Sri et al., 2011). However, leaders of educational organizations are likely to have various challenges in adapting entrepreneurial leadership in managing their organizations, and some consider entrepreneurship to be a management process in business. This is because the field of entrepreneurial leadership has not yet developed and does not have a clear definition to evaluate the elements and behaviours of entrepreneurial leaders (Leitch & Harrison, 2018; Leitch et al., 2013; Renko et al., 2015).

This is further reinforced when many researchers are researching the relationship between leadership and entrepreneurship and combining both concepts to form a new concept, "entrepreneurial leadership" (Ahmad & Ghani, 2013). Studies in the context of education focus more on the teacher's teaching leadership style, the field of teaching and learning of teachers on entrepreneurship subjects, rather than entrepreneurial leadership. For example, the study of Gul E. Okudan and Sarah E. Rzasa (2006) shows that the teaching style in entrepreneurship education through a coursework approach is the best for developing knowledge and skills in leadership, motivation, innovation, communication and teamwork. Abbas Sani Dahiru (2017) proved that all factors, namely entrepreneurial leadership, school culture, and effective schools, are significant and successful towards empowering teachers.

The changes in the leadership of leaders of educational organizations must go hand in hand with the transformation of education. It can further strengthen the leadership of educational organization leaders, where leaders act as role models for followers or employees under them. The relevance of entrepreneurial leadership in the world of Education in Malaysia cannot be ignored because it is a success in leadership and entrepreneurship (Claire M. Leitch and Thierry Volery, 2017; Siti et al., 2017). Therefore, this study aims to see the challenges leaders face in using this entrepreneurial leadership style. Implications from the findings of this study will be to know the challenges that will be faced by school leaders and how to overcome the challenges. Finally, the entrepreneurial leadership model can be used to manage school governance and further impact the school's excellence.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to answer the two stated objectives of the study, which are to explore the entrepreneurial leadership challenges faced by high school leaders and strategies to face the entrepreneurial leadership challenges.

Research design

The research design is a qualitative method to explore the challenges of entrepreneurial leadership among high school leaders. So, to achieve the objectives of this study, a survey study was conducted by conducting interviews with school leaders. This qualitative research survey method was chosen because it was designed to discover what can be learned about a phenomenon that interests the researcher (Othman Lebar, 2014). This method is supported by (Creswell, 2003), where

focused and open questions with instructions are used to expand the discussion and obtain the respondents' views and opinions.

Sampling

The study sample was six middle school leaders in the Central Zone. To further strengthen the study's findings, the study participants involved are leaders with knowledge and experience in the field of leadership, management and curriculum in secondary schools and more than five years of service experience. As stated by Faridah Juraime (2016), the recruitment of study participants is also done, taking into account specific considerations following the purpose of the study. This is in line with Cresswell (2008), who stated that the number of participants between four and ten is appropriate to be used as research participants in a qualitative study. Therefore, the study participants involved comprised six national high school leaders, including principals and senior assistants.

Data Collection Procedures

At this stage, the information was collected through previous research literature on the dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership of school leaders. The qualitative approach uses data collection methods that are described descriptively. At this stage, interviews are conducted individually with six leaders who have been selected. Before that, the researcher had obtained personal permission and permission from the individuals involved to ensure the smoothness of the study. After getting permission, an interview session was conducted individually via Google Meet to determine the leader's needs for forming this entrepreneurial leadership model.

Data analysis

At this stage, the data obtained is a qualitative analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured interview questions conducted on the respondents. This data will be analyzed using the thematic analysis method. The recorded interview results will be transcribed and coded for analysis (Weerawardena et al., 2006). This analysis was done to discover the challenges leaders face in adapting the dimensions of entrepreneurial leadership in organizational management.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The need to have an entrepreneurial leadership model among leaders is necessary and should not be taken lightly. However, some challenges need to be faced by school leaders in applying this entrepreneurial leadership model. The challenges in applying this entrepreneurial leadership model are stated below:

(a) *Duties*

Among the challenges this leader will face is the different scope of duties according to the position in a school organization. This is confirmed by the first respondent:

> "*When we become senior subject teachers, the challenges are different. When we become PK Koko, the challenges are different too. PK HEM is also different. It's like that, every time our position is a new position, the challenge is different, because our tasks are different.*" (F1R1:158-161)

In fact, changes in education also challenge leaders in instructing teachers to implement those changes. This is supported by the first study participants, namely:

> "*… when it's a challenge, there are those who can't follow the challenge. That's why some quit. What he means is that he doesn't want... there are those who transfer schools, ... there are also those who want to enter the Department... That's the way it is.*" (F1:R1: 173-175)

It was also agreed by the fourth study participant:

"… *the challenge I face is that I want to accustom teachers err... to use digital learning in PdPr.... That is, before, we are in class. Suddenly… google meet.*" (F1:R4: 155-157).

(b) Lack of Knowledge

As experienced school leaders, both participants stated that leaders should always be ready to gain knowledge. As a school leader, knowledge must also be available and always innovative and creative in technology development. In this modern age, knowledge related to entrepreneur leadership and technology is essential.

"*...as a leader, it can be said that it is also obligatory to improve ourselves in knowledge of types of leadership. Because now if we look at a lot of information that is channelled, or that is built by KPM, it's all at the fingertips...*"(F1:R4: 160-163).

The second participant also said the same thing about how necessary it is to be a leader to seize the opportunity to add to existing knowledge or try to find it yourself without needing to direct it.

"*...our leaders must seize this opportunity of information and if they are blocked, find a way to overcome it...*"(F1:R2: 158-161).

Participants informed that teachers also need to master knowledge related to this technology. This is because, during COVID-19, teaching methods have changed from face-to-face to online. Then, the teachers need to master much new knowledge to teach effectively through online teaching. Nevertheless, there are still teachers who cannot use this application well.

(c) Acceptance of Organizational Members

The second challenge school leaders face is the staff's attitude or acceptance towards the leadership that is carried out. Sometimes, the changes implemented will get various reactions from the staff. This was agreed by the second and third respondents, namely:

"*When…. a leader tries to implement reforms and so on, there will be various aaa words that we don't like to hear …*" (F1R2:146-147). "*The most important challenge as a leader is acceptance, the acceptance of subordinates towards his style, his leadership style, towards his way, the way he conveys information.*" (F1:R3:158-160).

This too supported by the sixth respondent that is:
"*…dealing by someone who has a difficulty receive other people's opinion.*" (F1R6:91-92).

The study's findings also show that sometimes there is difficulty getting cooperation from teachers in successful school management. This is supported by:
"*…The school leader, especially number 1, must have a spirit that speaks volumes... a high level of spirit, right? Aaa... But if the leader is only enthusiastic, his subordinates are not enthusiastic, so I wonder (how) how to do it, right?*" (F1R4:146-148). "*… if only a few leaders are creative and innovative, our human filter is at a level that needs to be improved. So, we have to solve the problem of human resources first.*" (F1R5:99-101)

The difficulty in getting this cooperation is also caused by the negative views from the staff based on the impressions obtained from their community. A third study participant agreed this:

"*They try to read us and we know that there are positive and negative sides... The negative thing is that they try to find out which weaknesses... which aspects we are weak in and so that they can aaa take a chance…*" (F1:R3:168-172)

Discussion
In dealing with these leaders' entrepreneurial leadership challenges, the findings show three main challenges. However, this study states the strategy of leadership practice in facing the challenges of entrepreneurial leadership.

Burden Task

Several issues have been identified, such as different workloads, lack of improving current knowledge, not having a good leadership plan and lack of involvement from staff. To overcome the challenge, the leader has to create a team for a task or program. The task or program is needed to motivate the staff to become more effective and reliable to achieve the organization's objective. This is in line with Chen (2016) that the characteristics of a leader will provide important motivation to individuals and create a positive atmosphere for the leader's identity to lead through the process of building a leadership self-concept. Norazizah Che Mat (2018) stated that to produce a quality education, potential leaders must be given priority. Besides that, the leader should have a good relationship with the staff. Thus, leaders who can overcome the pressure of different workloads can give better leadership through their excellent behaviour in carrying out their routine duties towards curriculum, decision-making and bureaucracy.

Knowledge Leader

Leaders who know can provide guidance and instruction about organizational members to achieve the objectives that have been planned. Rojiehah (2009) stated that staff should see their leaders who are willing to help them achieve their goals. To gain knowledge, a leader has to attend workshops or training organized by external parties. Mary Shane Connelly et al. (2000) show that other attributes, including general and crystallized cognitive abilities, motivation, and personality, condition leader skills and knowledge. This is agreed by Norazizah Che Mat (2018), that for a wise leader to be an effective leader, basic skills such as intelligent thinking, creativity and wisdom are needed to lead a group or organization. Besides that, the leaders must also implement collaborative relationships between other schools or external parties.

Acceptance of Organizational Members

A change in leadership or leadership style often affects the acceptance of organizational members. These changes can affect the leadership of organizational leaders. Therefore, accepting organizational members is very important for better organizational leadership. Additionally, influential leaders are leaders who care about subordinates. So, to build a good relationship is to communicate with staff about the objective of an organization. This is important for the members of the organization to be ready for any changes that will be made to achieve the planned objectives. The leader is the best link in "adjustment, improvement and self-improvement" to various personalities and characters, including individuals who rarely contribute to a more collective involvement (Myatt, 2012). In addition, leaders need to be more creative in applying new leadership, such as entrepreneurial leadership in their leadership. Leaders must be good leadership models. This is important to convince the staff to perform the tasks given by the organization's leadership.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the findings of this study show three challenges leaders face in adapting entrepreneurial leadership. The challenges identified are the workload, the leader's knowledge of entrepreneurial leadership, and the organisational members' acceptance. However, the findings of this study show that these leaders can deal with the challenges by adapting entrepreneurial leadership.

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