EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES AND PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR IN MALAYSIA

Shahril @Charil Marzuki[1] & Yahya Don[2]

[1]Research Management Centre,
Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tg Malim, Malaysia
charil@fpe.upsi.edu.my

[2]College of Business, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Kedah

Abstract

This article aims to study the concept of emotional needs among primary schools leaders in Malaysia. This study involved 485 primary school leaders in the northern states like Kedah, Perlis, Perak and Penang. The emotional competency inventory (ECI-2) was used to measure four emotional competencies i.e. self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and business relations. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was used to measure transformational leadership in terms of exploring motivation, encouraging intellectual and considering individual. The *data collected were sorted and keyed in for analysis to examine the relationship between transformational leadership and emotional competencies. This article drew the line between the strengths and weaknesses found among schools leadership in their efforts to increase the transformational leadership. The test and data analysis showed that there were four emotional competencies significantly correlated with transformational leadership, yet self-awareness and relationship management was the important key of emotional competencies in elevating the level of transformational leadership among primary school teachers in Malaysia.*

Keywords: Emotional competencies, school leadership, Emotional intelligence, transformational leadership

Introduction

The needs for sustaining, maintaining and alleviating excellence in the Malaysian education institutions in order to be more effective and efficient has required for continuous change to happen in the education system. The on-going debate for change has become the main agenda and focus for everyone whom are involved either directly or indirectly. This is because the development and success of a nation depends largely on its education system and the types of scholars that are produced. Therefore, changes and the effectiveness of an education system had always been correlated with the leadership style and the quality of teachers in a school (Kantrowitz dan Wingert, 2000). In this matter, the on-going change demands leaders and teachers whom are adaptive and effective. In addition, they need to have a shared-vision that is to improve the quality of the school as a whole, the student's welfare and achievement and, on a bigger scale to enrich the education intensity in Malaysia.

Consequently, it falls on the responsibility of the leaders in the education field to ensure high merits in the Malaysian education institution in order to accomplish the National Vision which is the basis of The 9th Malaysia Plan. In order to achieve this vision, the Malaysia Prime Minister, Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has urged leaders in the public sectors to understand their customers needs, to analyze all complaints received and

being professional when performing their duties. He pointed out that the public sectors do not want/need leaders whom are fussy, power crazy and boastful like Little Napoleon. He stressed that the public sectors need leaders whom are kind, effective, efficient and sincere in performing their responsibilities to achieve the mission and vision of The 9th Malaysia Plan. Thus, Malaysia education leaders are accountable to make it a reality. The reason being is that the development and accomplishment of a country thrive largely on the types of leaders and students that is produced through its present education system (Wan Mohd Zahid Wan Nordin, 1993; Kantrowitz & Wingert, 2000).

In more recent research, Waters, Marzano, and McNulty (2003) have identified 21 specific leadership responsibilities that provide a concrete framework of responsibilities, practice, knowledge, strategies, tools, and resources that principals must accept in order to be effective school leaders. De Franco and Golden (2003) developed a set of standards that specify the knowledge and skills necessary for school administrators. These standards provide formulas that school leaders can use to improve their performance. Goleman (1998) contends that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on leadership performance in organizations. Outstanding leaders are adept at using their emotional intelligence in moving their organizations forwards (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Emotional intelligence may be an important factor in the realm of educational leadership. School leaders may have an additional tool to help them reach high levels of performance. This paper is intended to address that possibility.

Emotional Intelligence and Leadership

The role of emotions in the leadership process has been a neglected area of research as a result of the belief that emotions may interfere with effective behaviours (George, 2000). Traditional theories of leadership suggested that leaders must plan and think rationally without the influence of their emotions (George, 2000). Researchers have made reference to the notion that transformational or charismatic leaders "emotionally engage their followers" and "display emotions" in order to motivate their followers to adopt the goals and values of the organization (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Bass, 1998; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Furthermore, leaders form an emotional attachment with their followers that enhance the quality of their relationships and the effectiveness of the team and organization. Effective processing of emotional information may help leaders to deal with complex ambiguous information by directing their attention to the issues or threats that require immediate attention (George, 2000). Furthermore, Bass (1990) suggested that there is a social or emotional element inherent in transformational leadership.

Researchers have questioned for many years what predisposes certain individuals to adopt a transformational style of leadership, and what makes some leaders more effective than others (Barling et al., 2000; George, 2000). Several researchers have suggested that emotional intelligence may be a useful predictor of transformational leadership behaviors (Barling et al., 2000; George, 2000; Goleman, 1998). However, there have been few attempts to determine the emotional processes involved in effective transformational leadership behaviors' (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1995; Barling et al., 2000). The limited evidence suggests that emotional intelligence is positively associated with transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and contingent reward) (Barling et al., 2000).

A leader displays idealized influence when their action as a role model to followers through behaviors and personal accomplishments in order to earn the respect and admiration.Leaders who possess he ability to perceive their own emotions and the emotions of their followers

may be more effective at recognizing how their emotions can be used to earn the respect of their followers (Barling et al., 2000; George, 2000). Such a leader may utilize self-expression in order to accurately communicate, both verbally and nonverbally, the goals of the organization in order to earn the respect of followers (Shamir et al., 1993).

The leader's ability to accurately perceive, appraise, and express their own emotions and to perceive and appraise their follower's emotions may also result in the leader success• fully communicating and instilling an organizational vision in followers (George, 2000). In• dividuals with heightened levels of emotional expression will more accurately express their beliefs and values to their followers providing followers with a greater understanding and identification with the organization's mission (George, 2000; Wasielewski, 1985). Emotionally intelligent individuals tend to be aware of their own emotions and moods (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Research suggests that a leader with heightened self-awareness may be more effective at inspiring followers (Bass & Yammarino, 1989). Leaders who possess heightened levels of self-perception have been shown to be more effective leaders. When the leader accurately perceives his / her follower's emotions and responds appropriately, the followers may be more receptive (George, 2000).

Individuals with an ability to accurately express emotions may be more likely to communicate in an emotionally expressive manner (Mayer et al., 2000). An organizational vision communicated in an emotionally expressive manner, rather than a technical manner, may be more appealing to followers (Megerian & Sosik, 1996). Transformational leaders tend to arouse emotional responses in their followers in order to inspire them to believe in the organization 's cause or mission (Bass, 1985).

The ability to perceive and express emotions may be of particular importance when a leader engages in individualized consideration. Leaders who are sensitive to the needs of their followers and can accurately read their followers' emotions may be more likely to identify areas in which their followers may need development, thereby increasing the effective• ness of the group and organization (George, 2000). Emotionally intelligent individuals tend to be aware of their emotions and the impact that their emotions have on others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Leaders who are self-aware tend to possess heightened levels of interpersonal control (Sosik & Megerian, 1999) and may be more empathetic toward followers' needs (Sosik & Megerian, 1999). Individuals who can accurately read other people's emotions tend to be more effective at interpersonal interactions with co-workers (Mayer et al.,2000). Research suggests that leader emotional expression tends to have an impact on both follower affect and perceptions of leader effectiveness (Lewis, 2000). When CEOs displayed an active negative emotion (anger) as opposed to a passive negative emotion (sadness) of followers tended to have a higher level of nervousness and a lower level of relaxation (Lewis, 2000). Furthermore, leaders who engaged in a neutral emotional tone received higher leader effectiveness ratings from followers than those leaders who displayed anger or sadness (Lewis, 2000).

Methodology

This study measured the level of emotional competencies of 485 school leaders who were willing to participate from randomly selected primary school in northern states of Malaysia that are Kedah, Perlis, Penang and Perak. The emotional intelligence theory advanced by Boyatzisand Goleman (2000) was used to operationalize emotional competency, and transformational leadership theory by Bass and Avalio (1993) was used to operationalize the construct of Transformational Leadership.

This paper sought to explore what assumptions can be made about the ratings of primary school leaders emotional competency and the effects on transformational leadership. The purpose of this paper was to identify which components, if any, of school leaders EC can be assumed to have the strengths and weakness in relation to developing transformational leadership behaviors. The areas of transformational leadership behavior being examined included: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration as measured by the Multifactor leadership Questionnaire (MLQ5x) (Bass & Avalio, 2000). This instrument is designed specifically to measure the leadership behaviors.

The four areas of school leadership emotional competency as measured by emotional competency inventory (ECI-2) (Boyatzis,2000) being examined were: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management.

The Result

Hierarchical regression models were used to test the relationship of the school leaders emotional competencies and the transformational leadership behavior. For each of the following analyses, intercept models were calculated using the overall transformational leadership scores as well as each subscale of transformational leadership as the outcome. For each intercept model, the various ECI-2 scores for each school leaders were entered as predicators. The outcomes of the original models, including all four predictors, are presented below by reduced models when appropriate. See Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Hierarchical Linear Model School Leaders EC Scores of Overall Transformational Leadership

Fixed Effect	Coefficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Self-awareness intercept of mean-all transformational leadership	.02908	.00919	3.161'
Self management intercept of mean-all	.00667	.00629	1.060
Social awareness intercept of mean-all	.00337	.00634	.0597
Relationship management of mean-all	.008525	.00827	1.030

Variance components random effects	Variance component	df	Chi-Square
Intercept	.03369	10	47.8011*

*$p<.05$", $p<.01$,••$p<.001$

Results from the initial analysis of the school leaders four EC subscales effect on overall transformational leadership indicates that self-awareness proved to be only significant predictor of variation the schools. The relationship of self awareness to school leadership behavior was positive, suggesting that as school leaders level of EC increased, the process of transformational leadership also increased.

The next model tests the relationship of school leaders EC scores to the MLQ5x

subscale of idealized influence (attribute and behavior). As shown in Table 1.2, self-awareness was a positive predictor of idealized influence, indicating as school leaders ability of self-awareness increases, the school leader transformational leadership process by idealized influence also increases.

Table 1.2: Hierarchical Model School Leaders EC Score for MLQSx Subscale Idealized Influence

Fixed Effect	Co-efficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Self-awareness intercept	.03390	.01286	2.641*
Self-management intercept	.01388	.00874	1.588
Social awareness intercept	.00295	.00661	.335
Relationship management	.00852	.00827	1.030

Variance components random effects	Variance component	df	Chi-square
Intercept	.03355	10	78.612*

*p<.05,**p<.01,***p<.001*

Table 1.3: Hierarchical Model School Leaders EC Score For MLQSx Subscale Inspirational Motivation

Fixed Effect	Coefficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Self awareness intercept	.0179	.00816	2.197
Self management intercept	.00650	.00563	1.153
Social awareness intercept	.00761	.00556	1.342
Relationship management	.01276	.00816	2.197

Variance components random effects	Variance component	df	Chi-square
Intercept	.02360	10	33.1864

*p<.05,**p<.01,***p<.001*

Table 1.3 presents the results of the hierarchical linear model examining the relationship of school leaders EC scores to the MLQ5x subscale for Inspirational Motivation. In the original model, none of the school leaders EC scores were significant predictors of inspirational motivation; however, self-awareness proved to be a near significant predictor of teamwork (p = .055). A reduced model examining only the effects of relationship management and self-awareness on inspirational motivation scores was then

viewed to see if a reduced model could predict the sub-category of inspirational motivation see Table 1.4.

Table 1.4: Reduced Hierarchical Model of Understanding Emotions and Managing Emotions Predicting MLQSx Subscale Inspirational Motivation

Fixed Effect	Coefficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Self-awareness intercept	.01966	.00771	2.548*
Relationship management	.01634	.05523	3.126**

Variance components random effects	Variance component	df	Chi-square
Intercept	.02397	12	40.24570**

*p<.05,**p<.01,***p<.001*

Self awareness and relationship management proved to be a significant predictor of inspirational motivation (p <.01).

Table 1.5 presents the results for the full model of the school leaders EC scores as predictors of the level of Intellectual Stimulation. The results indicate relationship management is a highly significant predictor of the sub-scale Intellectual stimulation (p = 0.009). The relationship is a positive, indicating that as a principal's ability to manage relationship increases the process of the intellectual stimulation. A reduced model examining just the effects of relationship management and self awareness was then run to determine if these combined factors of school leaders emotional competencies combined could predict intellectual stimulation.

Table 1.5: Hierarchical Model of School Leaders EC as Predic tors of MLQSx Subscale Intellectual Stimulation

Fixed effect	Coefficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Self-management	.00497	.00682	0.729
Self-awareness	.00035	.00687	0.521
Social awareness	.01178	.00895	1.316
Relationship management	.03289	.009945	3.308'**

Variance components random effect	Variance component	df	Chi-Square
Intercept	.1948	10	42.1144**

*p<.05,**p<.01,***p<.001*

Table 1.6: Reduced Hierarchical Model of Self Awareness and Relationship Management Predicting MLQSx Subscale Intellectual Stimulation

Fixed effect	Coefficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Relationship management intercept	.033466	.00969	3.979**
Self-awareness intercept	.00893	.00343	2.610*

Variance components random effect	Variance component	df	Chi-Square
Intercept	.03908	12	52.5998**

*p<.05, '*p< .01, *'*p<.001

In the reduced model, relationship management (p<.001) and self awareness *(p<.05)* proved to be a highly positive significant predictor of intellectual stimulation.

In the next model, the predictors of all the sub-scales of emotional competencies were run to see if any could predict the MLQSx subscale of lndividual consideration (Table 1.7).

Table l.7: Hierarchical Model of School Leaders EC Predictors of MLQSx Sub-Scale Individual Consideration

Fixed effect	Coefficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Self-awareness	0.03207	0.00863	3.717
Self-management intercept	.00173	.00593	.292
Social awareness intercept	.00131	.00597	.21.6952
Relationship management	.01318	.00778	1.695

Variance components random effects	Variance Component	df	Chi-Square
Intercept	.02799	10	37.4559**

*' p<.05, '*p<.01, '**p<.001

Self-awareness proved to be a positive significant predictor of individual consideration (p<.01).

Table 1.8 : Reduced Hierarchical Model of Self Awareness and Relationship Management Predicting MLQSx Subscale Individual Consideration

Fixed Effect	Coefficient	Standard error	T-ratio
Self-awareness intercept	.01877	.00520	3.604*
Self-management intercept	.00489	.00169	.2892*

Variance components random effects	Variance component	Df	Chi-square
Intercept	.00820	10	20.59193*

*' p<.05, '*p<.01, '**p<.001.*

Self-management and self-awareness proved to be a significant positive predictor of transformational leadership as combined with self-awareness. This can be interpreted as primary school leader perspective predicted a more positive transformational leadership as combined to school leadership level of self-awareness and self-management.

Discussions

The study revealed results, suggesting a positive relationship. The positive relationship between a school leader level of emotional competencies and transformational leadership indicates that the higher the school leader EC score in the ability to manage emotions, the higher process to the overall transformational leadership. This finding is consistent with the research related to emotional intelligence. For example, Lusch and Serkenci (1990) suggest that leaders with emotional self-control have the most flourishing businesses. Managers who controlled their own stress and were not affected by other's negativity made the most return. However, schools are much different than businesses, and the outcome is measured much differently than a return on an investment. A business' outcome can be measured by a profit margin. A business has many controls over the quality of the product. Conversely, schools educate and nurture children, who are much different than "products': and the academic gains or lack thereof have many contributing factors including family income, ethnicity, and mother's level of education.

Due to the differences between businesses and schools, emotional self-control may be interpreted differently in the different contexts. In schools, a more personalized approach to leadership may be required. This personalization may include displaying emotions, expressing passions, openly, asking for help when needed, and letting the staff members see vulnerability, which differs from the ability to "manage" emotions. The positive relationship between self-awareness and idealized influence (attribute and behavior) and inspirational motivation indicates that the higher the school leader levels of managing emotions, the higher process of the transformational leadership in the areas of idealized influence and inspirational motivation.The school leader ability to manage emotions may interpret the school leader as capable, charismatic, in control, and requiring teamwork-type assistance.

The results also revealed a positive relationship between EC and transformational leadership. The higher the school leaders EC scores in relationship management, the high•er the sub-area scores of inspirational motivation. This fits well with previous research. John and Taylor's (1999) research revealed that in order to increase teachers' motivations, school

leaders needed strong relationships with teachers. Having the ability to understand teachers' emotions, as measured by the ECI-2, would seem to benefit relationship and cause teachers to want to function more as part of the team. Relationship management is an integral component of a school leaders daily job since they interacts with, manages, and leads people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.

The school leaders' ability of the self-management correspond to a stronger transformational leadership in the sub-area of individual consideration. This ability would naturally seem to be an important part in a strong school leadership because it would help build strong relationships between the school leader and teachers. For example, perceiving how a teacher is reacting to constructive advice related to classroom practices would help a school leader know how to proceed in helping the teacher. The ability to accurately perceive others' emotions is clearly part of a principal's daily routine. As mentioned previously, the perceiving emotions portion of the ECI-2 was rated as having good construct validity (Pusey, 2000), thus adding more credibility to perceiving emotions as accurately predicting school leadership.

Although the results of this study, showing the positive relationships between EC and school leadership behavior, this study support that emotional intelligence deserves some notice in preparing leaders in schools. EC training and sustain application is one answer for principals, especially in this era of high accountability. Mayer (2001) stresses the importance of practicing and applying EC skills in the workplace. He suggests that it is much more difficult for adults to learn these skills, but it is possible with continuous dedication. Principals can benefit from knowing that EC is an ability that can be strengthened to help them in their craft. Colleges can look at additional ways to include relationship skills, EC, and school culture in their school leadership preparatory program.

Conclusion

The body of research that related to school leadership providing a basis for qualities needed for the school leaders of the primary school in Malaysia. In an effort to meet the increased demands of society, the school leadership is perhaps one of the most difficult management positions in corporate and academic areas. To lead effectively in this role, numerous qualities are needed, including emotional competencies skills. To meet the demands put forth by National Planning For Education in Malaysia Year 2006 - 2010, demands of the business community, needs of the students, demands of the staff, community, the school leadership requires a unique set of personal relationship skills, including emotional competencies skills.

References

Ashforth, B. & Humphrey, R. (1995). Emotion in the workplace: a reappraisal. *Human Relations,* 48, 97-12

Bass, B. M. (1985). *Leadership and performance beyond expectations.* New York: Free Press.

Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. *Organizational Dynamics, 18,* 19-31.

Bass, B. M. (1997). Does the transactional-transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? *American Psychologist, 52,* 130-139.

Bass, B. M. (1998). *Transformational leadership: Industry, military and educational impact.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bass, B. M. & Avolio, B. J. (1990). The implications of transactional and transformational leadership for

individual, team, and organizational development. *Research in Organizational Change and Development, 4,* 231-272.

Bass, B. M. & Avolio, B. J. (1993). *Transformational leadership: A response to critiques.* In M. M. Chemers & R. Ayman (Eds.), Leadership Theory and Research: Perspectives and Directions. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 49-80

Bass, B. M. & Avolio, B. J. (1994). *Improving organizational effectiveness through transformational leadership.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bass, B.,& Avolio, B. (2000). MLQ: *Multifactor leadership questionnaire, 2nd edition,* Technical Report. Redwood City, CA: Mind Garden

Barling, J. Slater, F. & Kelloway, E. K. (2000). Transformational leadership and emotional intelligence: An exploratory study. *The Leadership and Organizational Development Journal,* 21, 157-161.

Boyatzis, R. E. (2001). Developing Emotional Intelligence. In C. Cherniss, R. Boyatzis & M.Elias (Eds.), *Developments in Emotional Intelligence.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 121-154.

Ciarrochi, J. V., Chan, A. Y., & Caputi, P. (2000). A critical evaluation of the emotional intelligence construct. *Personality and Individual Differences,* 28, 539-561.

Day, A. L. & Carroll, S. (2002). *Examination of an ability-based measure of emotional intelligence.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Defranco, J. A. & Golden, N. L. (2003). *Educational leadership improvement tool: A research based assessment, evaluation, &improvement tool for school administrators.* Eugene,OR: Eugene School District.

George, J. (2000). Emotions and leadership: The role of emotional intelligence. *Human Relations,* 53, 1027-1055

Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence.* New York: Bantam.

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R., & McKee, A. (2002). *Primal leadership: Learning to lead with emotional intelligence.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

!sen, A. M., Daubman, K. A., & Nowicki, G. P. (1987). Positive affect facilitates creative problem solving. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52,* 1122-1131.

John, M. C. & Taylor, J. W (1999). Leadership style, school climate, and institutional commitment of teachers. Paper based on M.C. John's doctoral dissertation. Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies

Kantrowitz, B., & Wingert, P. (2000). Curing senioritis. *Newsweek,* 136(24), 60-61.

Lush, R. F., & Serpkenci, R. (1990). Personal differences, job tension, job outcome and store performance: A study of retail managers. *Journal of Marketing.*

Lewis, K. M. (2000). When leaders display emotion: how followers respond to negative emotional expression of male and female leaders. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 21,* 221-234.

Mayer, J. D. (2001). A field guide to emotional intelligence. In J. Ciarrochi, J.P Forgas & J. D. Mayer (Eds.) *Emotional intelligence in everyday life,* 3-24. Philadelphia: Psychology Press

Mayer, J. D. & Salovey, P. (1997). What is emotional intelligence. In P. Salovey, & D. Sluyter, *Emotional Development and Emotional Intelligence: Educational Implications* New York: Basicbooks, Inc, 3-34.

Mayer, J. D., Caruso, D.R., & Salovey, P.R. (2000). Emotional intelligence meets traditional standards for an intelligence. *Intelligence,* 27, 267-298.

Megerian, L. E. & Sosik, J. J. (1996). An affair of the heart: Emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 3,* 31-48.

Pusey, F. (2000). *Emotional intelligence and success in workplace: Relationship to job performance.* Guildhall, University London.

Shamir, B., House, R. & Arthur, M. (1993). The motivational effects of charismatic leadership: A self-concept based theory. *Organizational Science, 4,* 1-17.

Sosik, J. J. & Dworakivsky, A. C. (1998). Self-concept based aspects of the charismatic leader: More than meets the eye. *Leadership Quarterly,* 9, 503-526.

Warech, M.A. &Smither, J. W. (1998). Self-monitoringand 360-degree ratings. *Leadership Quarterly,* 9, 449-473.

Wasielewski, P. L. (1985). The emotional basis of charisma. *Symbolic Interaction, 8,* 207-222.

Wan Mohd Zahid Wan Nordin (1993). *Vision of Malaysian Education: Application of the agenda.* Kuala Lumpur: Nurin Enterprise

Waters, J. T., Marzano, R. J., & McNul!}', B. A. (2003). *Balanced Leadership: What 30 years research tells us about the effect of leadership on student achievement.* Aurora, CO: Mid-continent reseach for education and learning, fromhttp://www.mcrel.org.