

You'll Never Walk Alone: Exploring How Ethical Leadership Practices Facilitates in Leveraging Teachers' Work Engagement During a Crisis

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Abstract

This small-scale study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore how ethical leadership practices among school leaders is facilitating in leveraging teachers' work engagement during a global crisis. In recent times, school leaders' support and practices in tackling global crisis predicaments are highly questioned. School leaders are to bear primary responsibilities to ensure the well-being of their workforce while they work from home. This study has decided to revisit and reestablish ethical leadership among school leaders limiting it to four dimensions – people orientation, ethical guidance, power sharing and fairness. A concern on how the four dimensions have impacted teachers work engagement – vigor and dedication, was investigated. A descriptive questionnaire was employed online. 63 teachers delineated the respondents' perception on the support received for their optimum work performance. The questionnaire included 18 items with a 4 scale Likert response and 4 open-ended questions pertaining to the practice of ethical leadership, work engagement, leader responsibility and teacher well-being during a global crisis. The respondents had an opportunity to share their perception of the school leaders' practices which had the potentials to support their work engagement while working from home. The findings indicate that exploring ethical leadership practices is significant in leading teachers to better work engagement while working from home especially during a crisis. The results can serve as a basis for school leaders to find alternative organizational leading measures when situated in a global crisis context that will facilitate teacher well-being before it was neglected at any cause.

Keywords: Ethical leadership, work engagement, school leaders support, teacher well-being, global crisis.

INTRODUCTION

Undeniable that the current global crisis has hit each one of us in various angles and perspectives. It is more than a year now and the educational arena is still struggling and findings ways to cope from teaching to learning (among teachers and students) to leading and managing (among school leaders). In a recent paper on a study in school management during a crisis, the paper started with "people miss people". After having read the paper by Beauchamp et.al (2021), the idea of expending the thought to a title beginning with "you'll never walk alone" came by. The thought of being supportive and caring towards how teachers are coping as well as maintaining their work performance with little stress but utmost concern about their work in mind, brought about the idea of embarking this small-scale study heading towards more studies soon addressing this issue. If support, motivation, and good leadership

principles were significant when teachers were working in a school, then there is a higher need or care and concern when teachers are working from home or away from school.

In Malaysia, principals lean towards administration of a school compared to teacher wellbeing or any other prominent human resource development (HRD) actions that promotes positive workplace behavior. Principals spend more time on administrative tasks and school management than taking time to serve the welfare of the teachers (Ngang and Tengku Ahmad, 2015). A more bureaucratic and less empowerment phenomena is taking place in the schools among the leaders and the teachers (Balakrishnan, 2005) which in return causes teachers to lose their sense of belonging, psychological empowerment, commitment, leader trust, organizational trust and enthusiasm towards their work as teacher or to teach. This is something that need to be attended to especially in recent times when teachers are expected to work from home due to a global crisis.

In a typical school context, the principal having known to be the manager of a school tends to focus more technical issues rather than human relation and well-being. School leaders seem to be allocating more time in administrative task than managing the people that help the most in running of a school. This is most of the time happening unconsciously whereby mainly teachers are being neglected of their positive work behaviors and motivation what more if teachers are suddenly expected to teach from home during a crisis.

Despite studies showing work disengagement due to lack of care towards teachers well-being and work place satisfaction (Abdul Ghani Kanesan Abdullah, Ling, and Peng, 2016) teachers are being pushed hard to meet national policy standards and the demands to build students with appropriate skills, high academic performance, behaviour and values. The pressure on the school leader is transferred on to the teachers. When a crisis or issue takes over or interrupts traditional teaching styles, regular school activities, the common system and management; principals are the first to be accountable for teacher work quality, sustainable actions and managing change. When the expectation increases, school leaders may start showing lack of interest in improving situations, caring for teachers, or making fair decisions.

The current COVID-19 pandemic crisis demanded a revisit and reestablishment of ethical leadership among school leaders as much as it did even before a crisis or much lesser challenges. This study investigated four dimensions of ethical leadership – people orientation, ethical guidance, power sharing and fairness. A concern on how the four dimensions have impacted teachers work engagement – vigor and dedication were investigated. This study took a deep interest into reinvestigating some key findings from Engelbrecht, Helne and Mahembe (2014) and Vikaraman (2018) relating ethical leadership and teacher work engagement between three states – Johor, Negeri Sembilan and Malacca (Southern Zone of Malaysia).

In recent times, school leaders' support and practices in tackling global crisis predicaments are highly questioned. Research on the impact of ethical leadership on organizational performance during a global crisis like the COVID-19 since March 2020 in Malaysia is still limited compared to that which was done before. Compared to ethical leadership practices during a crisis, many other types of school leadership practices are constantly being debated and highlighted. According to Alma and Michelle (2020), in general there is little research done on how school leaders are responding to the pandemic. Initially it was digital access, students learning engagement from home, teacher interaction and family economic status influencing student learning, teacher teaching transitions from traditional to digital or synchronous to asynchronous. A lot of emphasis is given to roles played by school leaders during a crisis like managing change, distributive roles, being innovative, technologically, and digitally skillful but very little to less is focused on teacher well-being, teacher adaptation to sudden and constant change and grounding their roles to be responsible or create a positive work from home environment – these being some of the more serious issues that need to be discussed for teacher effective sustainable behaviors during a crisis. What are the school leaders taking into consideration when teacher well-being comes into the picture of determining teacher work engagement?

School leaders are to bear primary responsibilities to ensure the well-being of their workforce while they work from home. This statement was shared with the respondents of this study to hear their

say and heartfelt opinions based on their own experiences. Responses to the statement varied from having responsible and ethical leaders in school up to having disorganized and burdening teachers more than what should be considered sufficient. Based on the experiences and opinions shared, there is a significant need for a more in-depth investigation on the relationship between ethical leadership and organizational performance in terms of teachers work engagement in the context of working from home.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethical leadership theory is based on social learning theory, a combination of transformational leadership dimensions and transactional leadership. Brown and Trevino (2006) developed a reasoning component of social learning theory, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership that underpins the dimensions of ethical leadership. They put forward sixteen aspect recommendations to define the specific characteristics of ethical leadership (Brown & Trevino 2006). The sixteen recommendations are the result of a comprehensive literature and review in detail on ethical leadership in parallel with the components found in social learning theory, transformational leadership, and transactional leadership.

Kalshoven, Den Hartog, & Hoogh (2011) defined ethical leadership as the ability of a leader to exhibit moral, good behavior in accordance with the norms of daily life. Ethical leaders are also interpreted as leaders who prioritize the interests of subordinates and the interests of the organization through exemplary codes of conduct such as influencing followers and subordinate employees through certain ethical practices. In this study, ethical leadership is referred to as the ethical leadership of school leaders who can show good behavior, appropriate and morally correct, and prioritizes the interests of teachers and organizations, while teachers work from home during a global crisis. Previous studies have supported the practice of ethical leadership to influence teachers in various angles of employee outcomes (Zhu, May and Avolio, 2004), and work engagement (Chieh-Peng Lin, 2010; Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe, 2014).

These four dimensions show most concern and responsibilities towards teachers' well-being and welfare. The first dimension is people orientation which emphasizes the relationship between the principal and teachers through his or her two-way communication skills, building trust, showing care for teachers' welfare, and making fair decisions. Second is fairness whereby principals are fair-minded when handling issues pertaining to teachers work responsibilities, decision making, mistakes or problems, misunderstandings and providing the space. Third is power sharing whereby principals empower teachers to contribute in critical decision-making processes and freely seeks guidance from teachers, delegates challenging tasks equally and provides opportunity for all the teachers to plan their goals. Fourth is ethical guidance which encourages principals to explain work ethics and code of conducts expected at the school.

This study focusses on the recently explored theory related to work engagement by Schaufeli et. al (2004) examining the dimensions of vigor and dedication using the Job-Demands Resources (JD-R) model. Vigor refers to "one's readiness to devote effort in one's work, while exhibiting high levels of energy and, mostly, remaining resolute in the face of difficulty or failure". Dedication refers to "a strong involvement with one's work, encompassing feelings of enthusiasm, pride, challenge, significance and inspiration".

An engaged worker, takes responsibility on doing his or her work effectively, selflessly works towards organisational aims, committed to the work, and finally feels satisfied with the work done despite the challenges. Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli (2006) pointed out that the spirit of being engaged in a work does not only benefit the self but those around the positive atmosphere too. The climate of positive work engagement is also being able to motivate the feeling of better working moods to others. Work engagement was referred to stability of the mind during work, intrinsic motivation, persistent towards tasks, mentally prepared for challenges, relationship with the work, appreciate

accomplishments and devoting time and energy to work. Work engagement impacts goes deeper into the worker and connects the mind, heart, and body to work on a mission or task.

Leader's care towards the welfare and well-being of teachers in schools are contributing factors in terms of work engagement, workplace behavior and work performance (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) are inter-related to building a sustainable work force that promotes a successful school. Teachers' continuous positivity, growing skills, job satisfaction, workplace commitment, good working values and inner motivation not only benefits in work performance but also plays significant roles in student performance. The same kind of concern, care and leading practices is needed when teachers are working from home. If the demand in effective teachers work performance and student's outcome is high, therefore leaders have high responsibilities towards teachers' well-being while they work from home too. Effective leadership practices influence employee performance and organisational success (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

Despite studies showing work disengagement due to lack of care towards teachers well-being and work place satisfaction (Abdul Ghani Kanesan Abdullah , Ling, and Peng , 2016) teachers are being pushed hard to meet national policy standards and the demands to build students with appropriate skills, high academic performance, behaviour and values. When a crisis or issue and problems take over regular school activities the common system and management, principals are the first to be accountable for the deterioration in teacher work quality and principals may start showing lack of interest in improving situations, caring for teachers, or making fair decisions.

A leader is now seen as someone who can role model values and demonstrate traits that can motivate another to equally achieve self-goals and organizational aims. A leader sets the path for the subordinates to venture to attain personal and organizational goals even at challenging moments (Sergiovanni, 2007, Trevino, Brown & Hartman, 2003; Engelbrecht et al., 2014). Much has been done in school leadership styles affecting teacher work efficiency and motivation in relation to transformational or instructional leadership. Hallinger (2003) added that these two leadership styles have been practiced as the most appropriate leading styles by principals for many years. Nevertheless, the research claims both leadership styles have evolved based on current school needs and global transformation.

Teaching from home during a crisis is definitely not the same as how teaching was done traditionally. School leaders cannot emulate the leadership practices utilized in times before the crisis hit or when situations were calm. Leading in disruptive times means being able to adapt to changes, make effective quick decisions, create new opportunities while walking through the disruption. School leaders on this journey are defined by their determination, their hope, and their unshakable belief that whatever happens, whatever the cost, whatever the scale of the challenge, they will continue to do everything in their power to safeguard student and teacher performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to examine the impact of practicing ethical leadership that assists and leverages teacher work engagement while working from home during a global crisis. This descriptive qualitative research aims at presenting empirical data and comprehensive reviews based on the six objectives below:

- a. What is the level of school leader's ethical leadership and the selected four dimensions – people orientation, fairness, power sharing and ethical guidance, as perceived by teachers while teachers work from home during a global crisis?
- b. What is the level of teacher's work engagement and the selected two dimensions – vigor and dedication as perceived by teachers while teachers work from home during a global crisis?
- c. What is the correlation between school leader's ethical leadership practices and teacher's work engagement in the school context while teachers work from home during a global crisis?

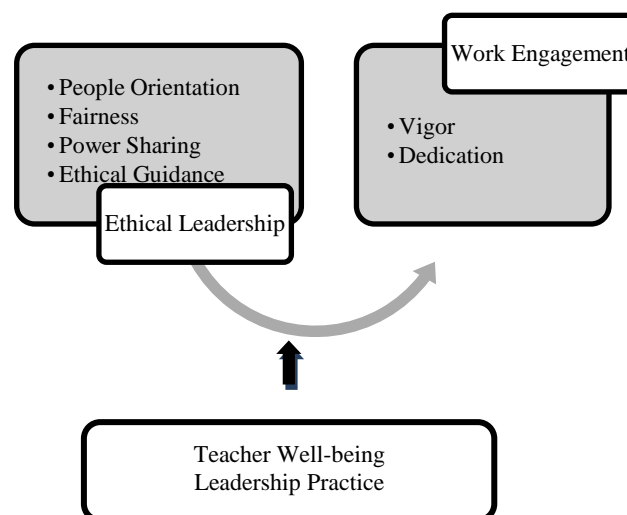
- d. What do teachers perceive about school leaders who are ethical, are able to facilitate in their work engagement while working from home?
- e. What type of school leader's leadership practice/s impact teacher's work engagement while working from home?
- f. What opinions did teachers have to share on the statement "School leaders are to bear primary responsibilities to ensure the well-being of their workforce while they work from home".

The sampling approach utilized was random sampling approach. The study targeted 50 teachers randomly from three states in Malaysia – Malacca, Johor and Negeri Sembilan. The study managed to collect 63 responses from secondary and primary school teachers. Participation in this study was voluntary. After the validation of the instruments, a few school teachers were contacted via e-mail and official social platform teacher groups to voluntarily participate in this study. This was also since teachers are all currently working from home and do not have the flexibility or safety to be met face to face distribute the questionnaire or conduct interviews. There the distribution of the survey form was solely done online/digitally. Schools that responded were given the survey URL to complete the questionnaire. Teachers who were interested to participate completed the questionnaire with the full understanding that they were doing this at their own free will. 63 teachers responded to the survey – 25 male and 38 female. The 63 teachers were from 3 different states in Malaysia – Johor - 20, Malacca - 22 and Negeri Sembilan - 21.

This study uses the descriptive qualitative approach to explore the seven research objectives. This approach enables a rich collection of data to gain deeper understanding of individual participants' opinions, perspectives and attitudes. The 18 quantitative items are individually analysed parallel to the qualitative responses to identify a relative relationship between the response shared by the sample. This method helped describe the behaviors discussed in a natural context without manipulation from the researcher. This also utilized data from previously conducted study (pre-conceived hypothesis) by the research on the same variables - Vikaraman et.al (2018).

Ethical leadership practices among principal acts as the independent variable and work engagement acts as the dependent variable. The dimensions of each variable are illustrated in the conceptual model below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework



Descriptive statistics such as mean (M) was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for Window Version 26.0 in the aim of answering the research questions 1,2 and 3 as stated in Table 1 below. The measurement scale used in this particular study is a 4-point Likert scale categorized into three groups:

Table 1: Mean Score Interpretation

| Mean Range | Score Interpretation |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1.00 to 1.99 | Low |
| 2.00 to 2.99 | Moderate |
| 3.00 and above | High |

This study interprets the coefficient, r value based on Cohen (1988) – Refer Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient Value Interpretation

| Correlation Coefficient (r) | Score Interpretation |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ±0.01 to ±0.29 | Low positive /Low negative |
| ±0.30 to ±0.49 | Moderate positive /Moderate negative |
| ±0.50 to ±1.00 | High positive /High negative |

This small scale study utilised an online questionnaires that were adapted from the original questionnaires and were previously used in a study Vikaraman et. al (2018). The instrument chosen was adapted and developed based on Ethical Leadership at Workplace (ELW) questionnaire from Kalshoven, Den Hartog & De Hoogh (2011). The ethical leadership behaviour dimensions selected for this study are people orientation, fairness, power sharing and ethical guidance measured by a total of 12 items. Ethical standards are codes of conducts for leaders in the public and private sectors that articulates the right and wrong doings or behavioural conducts. Work engagement describes the genuine and positive work-related well-being, and state of mind. For the Work Engagement (WE) questionnaire, the instrument chosen was adapted and adopted from Schaufeli & Bakker (2003). The WE questionnaire has 6 items categorized in two dimensions – vigor and dedication. To investigate on the experiences and perceptions while working from home, 4 open-ended questions pertaining to the practice of ethical leadership, work engagement, leader responsibility and teacher well-being during a global crisis was also incorporated to the research instrument.

Therefore, the instrument utilized for this study - Exploring How Ethical Leadership Practices Facilitates in Leveraging Teachers' Work Engagement During a Crisis, Consists Of 4 Sections:

Section A: Respondent's Demographic Profile

Section B: School Leader's Ethical Leadership at Work – People Orientation, Fairness, Power Sharing, Ethical Guidance

Section C: Teacher's Work Engagement Scale – Vigor and Dedication

Section D: Perception and Experience

1. Do you think that school leaders who are ethical will facilitate in your work engagement while working from home?

2. Does your school leader's leadership practices impact your work engagement while working from home?

3. What type of school leader's leadership practice/s impact your work engagement while working from home?

4. School leaders are to bear primary responsibilities to ensure the well-being of their workforce while they work from home. Share your opinion or any personal experience on this statement.

RESULTS FINDINGS

Respondent's Demographic Profile

Table 3 shows the total number of respondents as 63 whereby the total number of male teachers is 25 (39.7%) and female teachers 38 (60.3%). Based on this data, most of the respondents of this study are female teachers.

Table 3: Gender

| Demographic (Gender) | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Male | 25 | 39.7 |
| Female | 38 | 60.3 |
| Total | 63 | 100.0 |

Table 4 shows that this study involved teachers from primary and secondary school situated in three states in Malaysia - Negeri Sembilan, Malacca (Melaka) and Johor. All three states had almost equal number of respondents with Negeri Sembilan 21 teachers (33.3%), Malacca with 22 teachers (34.9%) and Johor with 20 teachers (31.7%).

Table 4: State

| State | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Negeri Sembilan | 21 | 33.3 |
| Melaka | 22 | 34.9 |
| Johor | 20 | 31.7 |
| Total | 63 | 100.0 |

Level of School Leader's Ethical Leadership – People Orientation, Fairness, Power Sharing, Ethical Guidance

Table 5 and 6 shows information about mean scores, standard deviations and levels for ethical leadership practices in Negeri Sembilan, Malacca and Johor and for all four dimensions of ethical leadership as perceived by teachers while working from home during a global crisis. The three states are able to represent the other states in Malaysia as the work descriptions of a school leader and teachers in Malaysia is standardized.

The overall level of ethical leadership practiced among school leaders as perceived by teachers while teachers are working from home is at high level (Mean = 3.1190, SD = 0.72706) as shown in Table 5. The highest ethical leadership dimension practiced by school leaders as perceived by teachers while teachers are working from home is ethical guidance (Mean = 3.2169, SD = 0.72131). This is followed by people orientation (Mean = 3.1111, SD = 0.81209), fairness (Mean = 3.0899, SD = 0.73618) and lastly power sharing (Mean = 3.0582, SD = 0.80887) as shown in Table 6.

Table 5: Level of Ethical Leadership

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Level |
|--------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Ethical Leadership | 63 | 3.1190 | .72706 | High |

Table 6: Level of Ethical Leadership Dimensions

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Level |
|--------------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| People Orientation | 63 | 3.1111 | .81209 | High |
| Fairness | 63 | 3.0899 | .73618 | High |
| Power Sharing | 63 | 3.0582 | .80887 | High |
| Ethical Guidance | 63 | 3.2169 | .72131 | High |

Level of Teacher’s Work Engagement – Vigor and Dedication

Table 7 and 8 presents the overall mean scores, standard deviations, and levels of teacher’s work engagement in Negeri Sembilan, Malacca and Johor as well as the two dimensions of work engagement as perceived by teachers while working from home during a global crisis.

The overall level of work engagement among teachers as perceived by teachers while teachers are working from home is at high level (Mean = 3.1111, SD = 0.60167) as shown in Table 7. Between the two dimensions, dedication was at high level (Mean = 3.3122, SD = 0.63323) and vigor was only at a moderate level with (Mean = 2.9101, SD = 0.68052) as shown in Table 8.

Table 7: Level of Work Engagement

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Level |
|-----------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Work Engagement | 63 | 3.1111 | .60167 | High |

Table 8: Level of Work Engagement Dimensions

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Level |
|------------|----------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Vigor | 63 | 2.9109 | .68052 | Moderate |
| Dedication | 63 | 3.3122 | .63323 | High |

Correlation Between School Leader’s Ethical Leadership Practices and Teacher’s Work Engagement While Teachers Work from Home During A Crisis.

Table 9 shows the correlation between school leader’s ethical leadership practice and teacher work engagement was investigated using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. There was a high positive correlation between ethical leadership and work engagement ($r=0.570$, $n=63$, $p<0.01$) while teachers work from home during a crisis. There is a statistically significant correlation between respondent’s perception on the level of ethical leadership practice in their school leaders and their level of work engagement whereby the Sig. 2- tailed level is .000. Which means, when ethical leadership practices increase, the level of work engagement also increases. In other words, ethical leadership practices highly influence teacher’s work engagement while working from home during a global crisis.

Table 9: Correlations

| | | Ethical Leadership | Work Engagement |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Ethical Leadership | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .570** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 63 | 63 |
| Work Engagement | Pearson Correlation | .570** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 63 | 63 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Teacher’s Perception on Does Ethical School Leaders Facilitate in Teacher’s Work Engagement While Working from Home

The 63 respondents shared their perception when asked “Do you think that school leaders who are ethical will facilitate in your work engagement while working from home?”. 55 teachers (87.3%) agreed, and 8 teachers (12.7%) disagreed that ethical school leaders facilitate in teacher’s work engagement while working from home. The study found that, based on what is practiced by school leaders currently that the dimension ethical guidance was highest. However, when asked what teacher’s expected from their school leaders, teachers wanted their school leaders to be more fair and people oriented.

School Leader's Leadership Practices That Impact Teacher’s Work Engagement While Working from Home

A descriptive qualitative analysis was done using the four ethical leadership dimensions as themes comparing the qualitative response by the 63 teachers. The list of ethical leadership (EL) practices expected by the teachers from their respective school leaders is shown accordingly based on the four dimensions of ethical leadership in Table 10.

Table 10: Ethical Leadership (EL) Practices Expected by The Teachers

| Dimensions/Items/Mean/SD | Expected EL Practices |
|--|--|
| People Orientation (Mean = 3.1111, SD = 0.81209) 1. <i>My principal listens to what teachers have to say.</i> 2. <i>My principal has the best interest of teachers’ welfare in mind.</i> 3. <i>My principal discusses work ethics and professional values with teachers.</i> | Flexible and understanding Understanding and tolerate Democratic leadership Always give positive comments Always give a helping hand. My principal is always alert with the staff well-being. One who trusts us a caring leader gives positive impact. Caring, Responsible and understanding leaders, Always alert with teachers’ welfare. Strongly advice not to come to workplace to ensure we are safe at home. Positive advice and encouragement Walk the talk. |
| Fairness (Mean = 3.0899, SD = 0.73618) | The support given and the concerns shown make me feel a lot better. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 4. <i>My principal takes himself/herself accountable for problems over which I have no control.</i> | A school leader should understand the issues and troubles faced so that they would not have a wrong understanding of what is happening. |
| 5. <i>My principal is responsible in help solving issues that are not my fault.</i> | Gives you the trust to do what is best. |
| 6. <i>My principal gives teachers their space and freedom.</i> | Give me space to choose my own way of conducting lesson despite following the strict timetable |
| Power Sharing (Mean = 3.0582, SD = 0.80887) | Willing to accept ideas from others. |
| 7. <i>My principal allows teachers to contribute to critical decision making.</i> | Discussing and sharing ideas with teachers |
| 8. <i>My principal delegates challenging responsibilities to teachers.</i> | Unnecessary meetings is avoided |
| 9. <i>My principal permits teachers to play a key role in setting their own work performance goals.</i> | When I am given the autonomy and trust to do things as I have planned |
| Ethical Guidance (Mean = 3.2169, SD = 0.72131) | Their empathy, understanding, give and take policy, tolerance, communication skills |
| 10. <i>My principal clearly explains ethical conducts at work place.</i> | My leader is very flexible together to ensure that the work being done in good manner |
| 11. <i>My principal ensures that teachers practice integrity.</i> | Guidance provided from time to time |
| 12. <i>My principal clarifies the likely consequences of possible unethical behaviour by teachers.</i> | Strongly advice not to come to workplace to ensure we are safe at home. |
| | Positive advice and encouragement |

Teacher's opinion on the statement "School leaders are to bear primary responsibilities to ensure the well-being of their workforce while they work from home".

This item received 55 mixed responses whereby some teachers agreed to the statement, some disagreed. There were many mixed shared experiences in response to this statement that supports teachers' individual stand to leaders being responsible to ensure the well-being of their workforce while teachers work from home.

Selected responses

I agree with the statement given above. School leaders are expected to be flexible in keeping up with the changing guidelines and circumstances during the COVID-19 crisis. They are also needed to make complex decisions that were not made before. Not only did they have to co-ordinate measures to maintain learning continuity during the lock down, but they are also responsible for ensuring a safer learning environment when schools are allowed to reopen.

My principal never ever bother about the facilities owned by teachers to do the pdpr. Seems more to be an autocratic leader.

My principal is always alert with the staff well-being.

They are paid for that. they should think. Teachers need freedom give their opinions too. teacher can help too. instead of controlling, they should listen, discuss and tolerate and give ideas.

Yes. School leaders should be aware of this virus and take responsibility to avoid spreading covid virus. They should not ask teachers to come school, especially in group.

Too many activities. No rest at all

Leaders should avoid making general statements, if there is any issue, deal directly with the concerned person.

When they bear primary responsibilities, they will be able to ensure the work plan being run smoothly according to the plan that required.

Teachers need to be reassured that they are important.

School leaders should give opinions, ways to control certain situation, motivate and support teachers.

Listen, share and blast on any matters arise with colleagues or superiors. Work as a team not individual...

Good leaders will produce good subordinates. They learn from them, and the sense of trust displayed by the leaders will empower their subordinates' way of working. Just my 2 cents.

Instructions and messages must be ensured not to dilute and be thickened in which will burden teachers further.

Constant reminder to take care our self during this pandemic.

The principal herself making call to inform anything important.

Need free time to work.

Strongly advice not to come to workplace to ensure we are safe at home.

Leaders got instructions from PPD and JPN. All the workload and instructions need to follow.

Pressure mountings on teacher.

They ought to know our whereabouts so that if anything happen they are answerable for it.

Nope. That type of school leader is very rare found on this day.

Focus should be given on curriculum only instead of 'koku'

They have to aware of teacher's well-being.

No at all. Principal always ask to do extra work because teachers not working 8 hours every day!!
Guidance provided from time to time.

Focus should be prioritised on PDPR lessons instead of numerous extra-curricular activities that burdens students, parents and teachers.

Make an effort to motivate parents n students.

Leaders' understanding of teachers' limitations is very crucial.

Yes, they are. Because they need to be ensured everything according to SOP and need to be aware of current changes

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed at examining the impact of practicing ethical leadership that assists and leverages teacher work engagement while working from home during a global crisis. In conclusion, the findings indicate that exploring on ethical leadership practices is significant in leading teachers to better work engagement while working from home especially during a crisis. Based on the three states investigated for this study, the ethical leadership level was concluded high (Mean = 3.1190, SD = 0.72706) as perceived by teachers, who are currently working from home due to a global crisis – the COVID 19 pandemic. Similarly, the teachers' work engagement level too was high (Mean = 3.1111, SD = 0.60167). This current study also found that, empirically based on what is practiced by school leaders currently that the dimension ethical guidance was highest between the four dimensions tested. However, when asked what teacher's expected from their school leaders, teachers wanted their school leaders to be more fair and people oriented.

In Nigeria, Shamaki (2015) shared that leadership style and effective leadership practices in schools do affect teachers job productivity and job overall performance. Teachers also preferred leaders who followed ethical conducts, had democratic leading styles. This applies in the case where both school leaders and teachers are working from home too. Several research show the impact of ethical leadership on employee work outcomes such as work engagement (Chieh-Peng Lin, 2010; Engelbrecht, Heine and Mahembe , 2014). This is supported by this study, when it was found that the correlation between both variables is strong at $r=0.570$. Thus, concluding that when and where ethical leadership is effectively practiced by school leaders, the work engagement among teachers is high.

Among the 4 dimensions of ethical leadership, the present study identified ethical guidance at the highest level practiced by school leaders even while teachers were working from home. Brown & Mitchell (2010) interpret ethical guidance as an aspect of moral management and ethical leadership behaviors using their management powers and leadership positions to encourage and promote compliance with ethical standards and ethical behavior in the workplace. In this research, ethical guidance refers to the approach of school leaders explaining the guidelines and codes of integrity that teachers need to adhere to especially while working from home. Ethical guidance in this study also refers to the guidance of school heads explaining the effects and consequences of a violation of the code of integrity through discussion with teachers. This is also a form of showing concern towards teachers well-being and welfare. Giving clear working instructions and systematic procedures avoids disorientation among teachers and a standardized work rule. Teachers too will not be confused or stressed out at having to work from home and juggling their daily home chores.

Among the two dimensions – dedication and vigor used to measure teacher work engagement level; the dimension dedication showed the highest mean score. Teachers in the Southern Region secondary schools of Malaysia perceived themselves to be highly dedicated teachers when they worked from home. Dedication was measured by looking at how much teachers found their work to be meaningful, whether teachers were enthusiastic about their work, if the job inspired them, were they proud of their work and if they found their work to be challenging. Kuntsi (2014) conceptualized dedication at work as something more than just being deeply involved in the work one is engaged with. Dedication is seen as a psychological impact that develops emotional attachment towards the work being assigned. Dedication can be observed when one starts feeling proud of the work, when the work is finally felt meaningful and finds the job challenging no matter what the work is.

According to the findings of the study, the respondents also stated that during the period of working from home, school leaders always consider the views of teachers in making decisions. In addition, thoughtful views will also be considered in taking a decision in school administration. Respondents also stated that school leaders provide freedom of speech by adhering to democratic leadership styles. In addition, there are also principals who give their teachers the opportunity to give their views and open space for open discussions even when they could not meet face to face during a crisis like – COVID 19. Furthermore, there are some school leaders who are always sensitive to the welfare of teachers and are so confident in the credibility of a teacher. While some teachers also gave

the view that some principals are always sensitive to the safety of teachers and give advice to comply with SOPs as civil servants. This approves that school leaders are aware of their primary responsibilities to care for their work force wellbeing by being democratic and ethical in handling such a challenging ongoing situation while working from home.

Alma and Michelle (2020) proposed school leaders to be more “context responsive” meaning being more responsible towards a shift that demands having a clear vision, developing others, managing people and building capacity. Self-care and consideration must be the main priority and prime concern for all school leaders. Leading a school through the changes and challenges that accompany COVID19 and post COVID19 will require school leaders who put their own health and wellbeing first, so that they will be able to help others. Increasingly, school leaders are managing the emotional responses of others to this crisis including anxiety, frustration loss, and anger. Consequently, self-care must be a priority for those leading schools at all levels. School principals need to understand the problems or constraints faced by teachers as well while performing their duties.

The results from this small scale descriptive qualitative study can serve as a basis for school leaders to find alternative organizational leading measures when situated in a global crisis context that will facilitate teacher well-being and welfare before it was neglected at any cause. The findings are the voices of the teachers’ themselves and school leaders should take heed in not allowing teachers to be alone in battling this global crisis. Sudden changes in the system may lead to ignoring long term considerations (Bush, 2021) that may impact teacher continuous development. “Renewing school vision and recreating the sense of community characteristic of successful organisations, will be essential when education returns to ‘normal’” Bush (2021). Thornton (2021) identifies several implications for future crisis leadership practice including: preparing, attending to wellbeing, communicating effectively, leading collaboratively, and taking opportunities. Looking at current challenges – teacher burnout, demotivation, passionless and high teacher job demands especially during a crisis hit is becoming the crucial issues pertaining to teacher well-being.

In accordance with the issues faced by teacher, teachers also expect a degree of concern and care towards their well-being while they have to work from home during a crisis. As school leaders who act as catalyst to change, exploring new frameworks, distributing power, collaboration, becoming digitally competent, focus on people and practice fairness.

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