

# Servant Leadership and Effective Changes Management in Schools

Izani Bin Ibrahim (PhD)<sup>1</sup>, Yahya Bin Don (PhD)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Teacher Education, Darulaman Campus, 06000Jitra, Kedah, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup>School of Education and Modern Language, Universiti Utara Malaysia

**Abstract:** *Effective leadership is one of the important indicators to determining the change management in school achievement. This study aimed to identify the influence of servant leadership on the change management in schools. This cross-sectional survey involved 342 secondary school teachers in the northern zone (Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak). The instrument included Servant Leadership Scale (SLS) and Change Facilitator Style Questionnaire (CFSQ). Results showed that servant leadership contributed to the change management in schools. Implications of this study is servant leadership contributed to the change management in schools. Thus, servant leadership should be applied and practiced by school leaders to improve the success of change management, thereby improving school performance .*

**Keywords:** servant leadership, change management, secondary school

## 1. Introduction

Every organization needs changes to improve efficiency and stay competitive in the challenges posed by globalization (Mar, 2016; Burnes, 2014). These changes occur impact of rapid technological and socio-economic development in recent decades , including the development of information technology, the trend towards a services-based economy and knowledge society (Khair, 2009 ). Accordingly, organizational conflicts and issues that arise when organizations need solutions desire to chang , which is the issue of strategies to change is to be achieved, the constraints that must be addressed, the behavior of organizational leadership, change management and organizational structure, planning, implementing changes and goals to be achieved (Burnes, 2004). To achieve success in change management, every organization needs effective leadership with strong soft skills competencies to move teachers are the front line in the effort to achieve excellence in education . Therefore, the school organization must have an effective leader so that changes can be implemented at the school level good governance.

If aspiration of the Ministry of Education to create superior schools to generate distinction and develop individual potential through quality education wish realized, then the responsibility of each school strives to improve performance, implement continuous improvement and managing change effectively in the face of rapid developments. In this case, the leadership of the principal at the school is very important to plan, implement and monitor every aspect of the changes implemented (Fullan, 2007). According to Fullan (2007), the principal is the manager and the core of the job changes in the school. As a manager at the school, the principal is the most important person who can influence the success of the school (Fullan, 2007; Hallinger, 2009). Leadership is determine the school move forward or reverse (Shahril, 2000) . What is clear, the changes made in order to improve the education system at all levels and its success has a close relationship with

organizational leadership ( Ghitulescu , 2013; Kotter, 2012; Lunenberg , 2010) .

### *Change and Leadership*

Leadership is an important requirement in the change management process to move the organization to create new ideas with innovative and creative for organizational excellence (Hargreaves et al., 2010 ; Kotter, 2012; Lunenberg, 2010). Without strong leadership , effective organizational change will not happen (Sidra et al., 2012). Servant leadership is person- centered leadership approach which leaders gives support to the subordinate to reach their full potential involving personal relationships with subordinates to understand and support their personal motivation ( Ehrhart, 2004; Liden et al., 2008) .

Kool and Dierendonck (2012) study of 135 employees of various companies in the Netherlands found that servant leadership contributes to organizational change management commitment. Melchar and Bosco (2010) in their study found that the practice of servant leadership in helping organizations adapt to change management for inculcating organizational excellence. Studies by Brummelhuis ( 2012 ) on the comparative effectiveness of servant leadership to the quality of communication and relationships with organizational change found that servant leadership greater contribution to the successful implementation of organizational changes over the communication quality .

Barbuto and Wheeler(2006 ) study found that the elements of servant leadership as altruism (selflessness) , emotional healing, wisdom, persuasion and organizational leadership skills to improve organizational effectiveness. Guenzi et al. (2007) stated that servant leadership has a significant relationship with job satisfaction and be able to motivate employees to perform additional efforts to increase the efficiency of the organization.

Changes management in this study refers to the application of behavioral science to decision-making, planning, implementation and evaluation phases of the process of

change, all focused on the management of disorders that are found in the performance change (Harrington et al., 2000). Change management is not focused on what will change, but how the solution will be implemented. The aim is to enhance the successful implementation of a project to address the human aspects of change (Herhenhoff, 2004).

Fullan (2007) sees the process of change, with emphasis on three aspects of the individual as the executor of change, namely (i) the initial process leading to a decision to accept change, (ii) the implementation process by placing a conceptual change as a practice, and (iii) Coops process, ie if changes can be incorporated into the system and have become part of the system or vice versa, then the changes can be implemented or not. According to Park and Jeong (2013), the school change is on the process of change in individual and organizational also involves the process of improving morale, affective and intellectual factors for teachers to improve and understand their pedagogical practices. What is clear, the changes made in order to improve the education system at all levels and its success has close links with the school leadership (Ghitulescu, 2013).

In this study, the element of change management is based on the theory put forward by Hall and George (1988) as described in his writings titled *Development of a Framework and Measure for Assessing Principal Change Facilitator Style*. Theoretical framework presented by Hall and George (1988) seeks to explain the basic dimensions that distinguish the principal style as a facilitator of change. To measure the principal style in dealing with changes in the school, they have introduced the 'Change Facilitator Style Questionnaire' (CFSQ) containing three-dimensional, the dimensions of concern for others, organizational efficiency and strategies change.

#### **Concern to Others**

Every employee has the attitude and feelings about changes in organization and tasks they undertook. The workers also have personal needs that must be met. Principals should monitor, showing concern and trying to meet the needs of workers with different methods and approaches (Hall & George, 1988). For example, principals need to take the time to deal with other people's feelings or concentrate on listening and responding to the feelings of others. Attention must be given to the individual problems that occur every day, or focusing on the needs of all staff. Concerns specific to individual problems should be done if the problem will affect the overall performance.

#### **Organizational Skills**

Successful implementation of a change in the organization can be achieved with efficient resource management, improve efficiency and share the responsibility and power of the workers. To improve the efficiency of the organization, leaders should delegate staff to manage a suitable job according to their capacity (Fullan, 2007; Kouzes Posner, 2011). System organization, a clear job description, priority to perform its tasks better and no resources can be managed more effectively. In this dimension, the principal administration focused on creating an effective organization to create and implement procedures and systems support,

giving credence to the staff to build relationships relaxed, informal and delegate appropriate tasks to staff.

#### **Strategy Changes**

Change strategy aims to identify the various skill levels in long-term planning principals that have some relevance to the monthly, weekly and daily in school. There are principals who only focus on current activities only, and expect the actions undertaken in the present will contribute to achieving long-term goals of the organization. There are principals that very reflection of anything that they have put in and think how all the activities undertaken can be improved performance, while others focus centered on each event occurring, 'treat' every weakness in all actions taken from different perspectives with the approach previously.

#### **Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership is defined as the leadership philosophy that focuses on developing employees to their full potential shine towards implementing tasks more efficiently, community leadership, self-motivation and future leadership ability (Grieves, 2010). Greenleaf (1970) outlines the characteristics of servant leadership as follows: listening, empathy, treatment, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, leadership, commitment to developing others and building a community.

However, this study focuses on seven dimensions of servant leadership as proposed by Liden et al. (2008). In the study, Liden et al. focused on the seven dimensions of servant leadership is emotional healing, community development, prioritize subordinate, helping subordinates excellence and personal development, empower subordinates, conceptual and ethical skills.

## **2. Research Objectives**

The purpose of this paper is to identify the influence of servant leadership on the change management in schools. More specifically, the purpose of this study is to identify the aspects of servant leadership as a major contributor to the management of change in schools.

## **3. Methodology**

The study was conducted by survey method using a questionnaire to collect information required of teachers and principals in secondary schools northern zone (Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak).

Sample consisted of 342 secondary school teachers in the northern zone. Samples were selected by using random sampling technique. Only teachers who served two years and only taken into account as the sample for a period of two years is sufficient for a person to draw conclusions about the characteristics of the school to which he belongs (Sala, 2002).

Servant leadership is measured by using a Servant Leadership Scale (SLS) developed by Liden et al. (2008) and instrument Change Facilitator Style Questionnaire (CFSQ) (Hall et al., 1988) was used to measure changes management in schools. Servant Leadership Scale (SLS)

consists of 28 items and 30 items contained of CFSQ. It is divided into four parts, Part A (7 items) to obtain background information on teachers ; Part B (30 items) to measure the change management; Section C (28 items) was designed to test the servant leadership and Part D (7 items) the background of principal.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 16. Descriptive statistics by using percentage, mean and standard deviation . Multiple regression analysis is used to identify the aspects of servant leadership as predictors of the change management in schools.

## 4. Findings

### *Influence of Servant Leadership On The Change Management in Schools*

Table 1 summarizes the results of multiple regression analysis used stepwise. R square is not statistically different from zero ( $R = 0.988$ ;  $F = 2314.017$ ;  $p < 0.05$  ). This finding suggests that servant leadership positively and significantly influenced changes management in school.

Based on Table 1, there are five dimensions of servant leadership that become predictors for changes management in schools, where the primary subordinate ( $t = 11.876$ ,  $p < 0.05$  ); ethical ( $t = 16.355$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); emotional healing ( $t = 19.075$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); develop community ( $t = 20.724$ ,  $p < 0.05$  ) and to authorize subordinates ( $t = 15.310$ ,  $p < 0.05$  ). The combination of predictor variables contributed 97.6 percent to the variance of changes management in school.

**Table 1:** A summary of the results of multiple regression analysis dimensions Servant Leadership On The Change Management

Predictors	B	Beta	t	P
Conceptual skills	0.018	0.022	1.939	0.053
Prioritize subordinate	0.146	0.184	11.876	0.000
Ethical	0.188	0.219	16.355	0.000
Emotional healing	0.223	0.277	19.075	0.000
Community development	0.187	0.215	20.724	0.000
Empower subordinates	0.215	0.249	15.310	0.000

$R = 0.988$

$R \text{ Square} = 0.976$

$\text{Adjusted } R \text{ Square} = 0.976$

$F = 2314.017$

$P = .000$

Table 1 shows the dimensions of community development is the most significant influence change management ( $B = .215$ ,  $t = 20.724$ ), followed by emotional healing ( $B = .277$ ,  $t = 19.075$  ), the next dimension of ethical ( $B = .219$ ,  $t = 16.355$ ), empower subordinates (  $B = .249$ ,  $t = 15.310$ ), prioritize subordinate ( $B = .184$ ,  $t = 11.876$ ) and finally conceptual skills ( $B = .022$ ,  $t = 1.939$ ).

## 5. Discussion

### *Servant Leadership Aspects To Predictors Change Management in Schools*

The results showed five dimensions of servant leadership has a significant influence on the change management in schools, where the prioritize subordinate, ethical, emotional

healing , community building and empowering subordinates. Predictor variables combined contribution of 97.6% to the variance of the change management in school. These findings are consistent with studies conducted by Jasvinder (2010), Laurie (2011), and Savage (2011). These findings are also in line with studies by Marjolein and Van Dierendonck (2012) who found that servant leadership contributed greatly to the commitment to change. Dimensions of community development is most significantly influenced by changes management in school. This dimension explains that leaders capable of developing a cohesive team to foster mutual commitment, effective communication and react to obstacles ( Barbutto & Wheeler, 2006). This means a very important leadership role in the success of the implementation of organizational changes and the characteristics of servant leadership should be brought to produce effective change .

However, these findings conflict with a study conducted by Gile (2012) who found no significant relation between changes management in organizational with aspects of servant leadership. Williams (2010 ) who conducted a study of the relationship of the leadership with organizational change found that servant leadership in small organizations are not profit-oriented have no contact with the effective management of organizational change.

### *Importance of Changes in Organization*

Historians necessarily prove that a civilization through several phases of change, and the process of assimilation and diversification (Abd. Ghafar, 2010). Strengths and weaknesses judged by the ability or inability to adjust to changing environments and at the same time not lose its identity and origin parameters. Scientists think this change is a natural process in which an organization should address the mechanism changes caused by external and internal factors brought about by the process of feedback and response through information and communication systems between humans and systems ( Joesoef , 2009).

The ability of an organization implement change through a paradigm shift is a guarantee to achieve organizational excellence (Myers et al., 2012). When the notion of organization is ready for change, organizational adaptation efforts certainly can be easily implemented. That this situation will determine one's behavior while on duty. Behaviors affect the organization members to accept change can be done through the organization 's leadership (Fullan, 2007; Jamil, 2011). Thus, the description of each dimension and issues related to change management is necessary to give a detailed explanation and understanding of the organization's leaders .

Forms of common changes in an organization is the change of the organizational structure, change ways of working, changes in technology and changes in organizational culture (Ab. Aziz, 2008; Fullan, 2007). Changes that occur almost always seen from the positive side and the manager will try to improve the effectiveness of organizations by adopting a new style of leadership .

The concept of school changes interpreted in a variety of contexts. For example , according to Kuhn (2012), changes



in school is the rebirth process is based on the school's vision, goals and clear direction in improving the management and efficient administration. Hall and Hord (2011) claims, change is a process of organizational maturity. While Hoppey and Mc Leskey (2013) describe the change as a guideline to achieve the organization's needs in creating a complex and efficient process in the organization. According to him, it is a change of mind. There are many studies that explain the processes of change and how the change is implemented effectively. Fullan (2007) sees the process of change, with emphasis on three aspects of the individual as the executor of change, namely (i) the initial process leading to a decision to accept change, (ii) the implementation process by placing a conceptual change as a practice, and (iii) coops process, ie if changes can be incorporated into the system and have become part of the system or vice versa, then the changes can be implemented or not. According to Park and Jeung (2013), the school is on the process of change in individual and organizational change and involves the process of improving morale, affective and intellectual factors for teachers to improve and understand their pedagogical practices. What is clear, the changes made in order to improve the education system at all levels and its success has close links with the school leadership (Fullan, 2007; Ghitulescu, 2013; Kotter, 2012).

#### **Leadership change**

Leadership change is the ability and skills to help organizations respond and adapt to the challenges of change (Clark, 2008). Leaders must have credibility and a great reputation, so that it is able to inspire and motivate subordinates. Leaders need to have skills in implementing change and influence subordinates to cooperate and support the change in order to achieve the goals set by the organization (Fullan, 2007).

Management of organizational change requires effective leadership; behavior such as the ability to motivate subordinates, communication skills and team building is found to be predictors for successful implementation of organizational change (Gilley et al., 2009; Lunenberg, 2010; Stantein et al., 2010; Yulk, 2008). Therefore, organizational leaders need to integrate with the soft skills of leadership to facilitate the process of change in the organization (Fullan, 2007; McShane & Von Glinow, 2010; Myers, 2012).

#### **Change and school development**

The implementation of organizational change strategy, creative and innovative is the most important in modern organizations. It is the idea of creating a structure or arrangement of parts that help improve performance.

Mechanisms for successful change often handled by building a model of strengthening organizational change and continuous learning (Lund, 2008; Lunenberg, 2010). However, Sorge and Wittelloostwijn (2004) argued that the changes implemented are often ineffective due to the failure of organizations to integrate leadership and effective communication strategies. Failure is not due to changes implemented by the weakness of vision and design changes, but by leaders who do not understand the complexities they face when implementing change (Fullan, 2007; Karp & Helgo, 2008). Accordingly, the leader must have

communication skills, soft skills and team building skills to bring success in the implementation of organizational change (Allen et al., 2007; Fullan, 2007; Myers et al., 2012). In the school system seems to be in a constant state of change, and the school also seemed unable to maintain the momentum of change (Fullan, 2007). Mentality that 'we do it that way, so why should change' significantly in education (Fullan, 2007; Lunenburg, 2010). School culture generally supports the status quo and reject changes (Jamelaa Bibi, 2013; Park & Jeung, 2013). Tshubwana (2006) states that when faced with change, teachers often turn to learn new behaviors. In essence, when a school receives a change, it's more pressure than if it resists change. Gallagher, Bagin and Moore (2005) showed that the rate of acceptance of new initiatives is also a variable to consider. They emphasize that the best innovation can fail if it is not implemented properly.

Education leaders, parents, teachers and students must cooperate and work as part of a successful movement strategies change (Fullan, 2007). This is so because of all the stakeholders in the organization claimed that the changes implemented will be easier and more effective impact (McShane & Von Glinow, 2010). Needs to focus on improving the quality of teaching means that there is a need to create greater access to programs of high quality for best practices (Senge, 2000). Furthermore, the mechanism for successful change in the form of policies and programs influence should be seen as an opportunity that affect the quality of education in many positive ways.

## **6. Conclusion**

Overall, the findings demonstrate that servant leadership plays an important role in improving the effectiveness of change management in schools. Therefore, school leaders in Malaysia should be given adequate exposure and training to improve their servant leadership in order to implement more effective management of change in schools. To achieve the transformation agenda of education, aspects of servant leadership and organizational change management should be given due attention.

## **References**

- [1] Abas Awang dan Balasandran A. Ramiah. (2002). Peranan pengetua dan guru besar dalam menentukan kecemerlangan akademik pelajar. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pengurusan dan Kepimpinan Pendidikan ke-11*. Institut Aminuddin Baki (Cawangan Utara). Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.
- [2] Azlin Norhaini. (2006). *Amalan bidang pengetua: satu kajian kes*. Tesis PhD. tidak diterbitkan. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- [3] Barbuto, I. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management*, 31(3), 300 – 326
- [4] Barsade & Gibson. (2007). Why does affect matter in organizations? *Academy of Management Perspectives*, February, pp. 36-59.
- [5] Bass & Riggio, 2006. *Transformational Leadership (2nd ed.,)*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ.
- [6] Blanchard, K. H. (2004). *Customer Mania! Ready*

- to Serve. New Jersey: Harper Collins Business.
- [7] Brummelhuis, L. T. (2012). *The Relationship Between Servant Leadership, Quality of Communication, Change Readiness and Successful Change*. Unpublished Maser Thesis. University of Groningen.
  - [8] Burnes, B. (2014). *Managing change* (6th ed.). Trans-Atlantic Publication. Pearson Ed-limited
  - [9] Ehrhart, M. G. (2004). Leadership and procedural justice climate as antecedents of unit-level organizational citizenship behaviour. *Personnel Psychology, Vol.57 (1)*, 61-94
  - [10] Erin Marie, E. (2012). Principals' servant leadership and teachers' job satisfaction. *Dissertation Abstract International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 73 (5-8)*, pp 3080
  - [11] Farmer, S. W. (2010). Servant leadership and demographic factor. *Dissertation Abstract International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences, Vol. 71 (2-A)*, pp 691
  - [12] Fuchs, S. & Edwards, M. R. (2012). Predicting pro-change behaviour: the role of perceived organizational justice and organizational identification. *Human Resources Management Journal, Vol. 22, No.1*, 39-59.
  - [13] Fullan, M. (2007). *The New Meaning of Educational Change*. New York: Teacher College Press
  - [14] Ghitulescu, B. E. (2013). Making change happen: The impact of work context on adaptive and proactive behaviours. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 49(2)*, pp 206 - 245
  - [15] Greenleaf, R. K. (1970). *The Servant as Leader*. Indianapolis, ST: The Robert K. Greenleaf Centre.
  - [16] Gries, J. (2010). *Organizational Change: Themes & Issues*. New York: Oxford University Press.
  - [17] Hall, G. E. & George, A. G. (1988). *Development of a framework and measure for assessing principal change facilitator style*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New Orleans, LA, April 5-9.
  - [18] Hallinger, P. (2009). Leadership for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools: From instructional leadership to leadership for learning. In *Proceeding 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Conference on Educational Leadership and Management*. Institut Aminuddin Baki: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia.
  - [19] Hargreaves, A., Lieberman, A., Fullan, M. & Hopkins, D. (2010). *Second International Handbook of Educational Change*. London: Kluwer Academic Publisher.
  - [20] Harrington, H. J., Conner, D. R. & Horney, N. L. (2000). *Project Change Management: Applying Change Management to Improve Projects*. Mc Graw-Hill.
  - [21] Herkenhoff, L. (2004). Culturally tuned emotional intelligence: an effective change management tool? *Strategic Change. March-April 2004. 13: 73-81*
  - [22] Jamela Bibi Abdullah & Jainabee Md Kasim. (2013). Sikap terhadap perubahan dalam kalangan pengetua sekolah negeri Pahang dalam *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pengurusan dan Kepimpinan Pendidikan Ke-20, 2013*, Institut Aminuddin Baki, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia.
  - [23] Joesoef, S. (2009). School leadership challenges towards learning for 21<sup>st</sup> century dalam *Proceeding 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Conference on Educational Leadership and Management* (hlm. 9-18). Institut Aminuddin Baki: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.
  - [24] Khair Mohamad Yusuf (2009). Technology-abled innovations for future educational leaders, administrations and managers dalam *Proceeding 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Conference on Educational Leadership and Management* (hlm 29-37). Institut Aminuddin Baki: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia.
  - [25] Kool, M. & Dierendonck, D. V. (2012). Servant leadership and commitment to change, the mediating role of justice and optimism. *Journal of Organizational Change Management. Vol. 25, No. 3*, 422-433
  - [26] Kotter, J.P. & Cohen, D. S. (2012). *The hearts of change : Real-life stories of how people change their organizations*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
  - [27] Mar, A (2016). 10 Types of organizational change. [www.management.simplicable.com/management/now](http://www.management.simplicable.com/management/now)
  - [28] Melchar, D. E., & Bosco, S. M. (2010). Achieving A high organization performance through servant leadership. *The Journal of Business Inquiry. Vol.9,1*, pp 74-88
  - [29] Metwally, D. (2012). Leadership and managing change: Does gender make a real difference in Egypt? *The Business Review, Cambridge, Vol.19 (2)*, 101-114
  - [30] Naimatullah, S. & Syed Ghulam, S. S. (2010). Relationship between employee readiness for organizational change, supervisor and peer relations and demography. *Journal of Enterprise Information Management, Vol 23, No. 5*, pp. 640-652.
  - [31] Norsidah Mohd Noordin. (2008). *Relationship between emotional intelligence, leadership behaviour and organizational commitment with organizational readiness for change in Malaysian Institute of Higher Learning*. Tesis Phd. yang tidak diterbitkan. Universiti Putra Malaysia.
  - [32] Park, J.H. & Jeung, D.W. (2013). School reforms, principal leadership and teacher resistance: Evidence from Korea. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education, Vol. 33, n 1*, p 34 – 53.
  - [33] Rusmini Ku Ahmad. (2006). *Hubungan Antara Kepimpinan, Komitmen Guru, Kompetensi Guru, Amalan-amalan Terbaik dan Keberkesanan Sekolah*. Tesis Phd yang tidak diterbitkan. Universiti Utara Malaysia.
  - [34] Russell, R. F., & Stone, A. G. (2002). A review of servant leadership attributes: Developing a practical model. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal, 23*: 145-157.
  - [35] Sala, F., (2002). *Emotional Competency Inventory (ECI): Technical Manual*. HayGroup, McClelland Centre for Research and Innovation.
  - [36] Shahril Marzuki. (2000). Kepimpinan pengajaran di kalangan pengetua. *Jurnal Institut Pengetua, Universiti Malaya 1 (1)*: 7-17
  - [37] Sidra, A., Zuhair, M. F., Noman, S., & Sajid, A. (2012). Role of leadership in change management process. *Abasyn Journal of Social Sciences, Vol.5, no.2*, p 111-124
  - [38] Yahya bin Don. (2009). *Korelasi dan pengaruh kompetensi emosi terhadap kepimpinan sekolah: Perbandingan antara sekolah berkesan dengan sekolah kurang berkesan*. Tesis Phd yang tidak diterbitkan. Universiti Malaya.