



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

APRIL 2019, VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2, 27 - 45

E-ISSN NO: 2289 – 4489

<https://doi.org/10.22452/mojem.vol7no2.2>

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN MALAYSIA: EXPLORING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON LEADING IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE ENVIRONMENT

Joseph M. Velarde & Muhammad Faizal A. Ghani (PhD)

ABSTRACT

International schools present a promising setting in the exploration of leadership in culturally diverse organisations. Due to heightened global interconnectivity, the increasing number of international schools in the Asia Pacific region leads to the ever-growing formation of multicultural learning environments. Aside from being one of the countries with the largest number of international school students in Southeast Asia, Malaysia offers a socio-culturally distinct venue for understanding the organisational dynamics of international schools in a heterogeneous society. Hence, this study primarily aims to present the perspectives of international school teachers on the practices and programmes employed by school leaders with respect to cultural diversity. Taking the viewpoints of school teachers, this case study focuses on how school leaders perform in the midst of the culturally diverse environment of an international school in Malaysia. Thirteen teachers from a prominent international school in Kuala Lumpur were purposefully selected to participate in semi-structured interview sessions. To substantiate the responses from the interviews, five teachers from the same school participated in a focus group discussion. The data from the individual interviews and focus group discussion were triangulated with observation field notes and document analysis. The collated data were thematically analysed using Atlas.ti. The emerging themes revolve around the following: leadership practices with respect to cultural diversity; programmes and policies promoting cultural awareness; and, leadership effects on the school community. Having students and teachers coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds, international schools pose both opportunities and challenges for leadership. Guided by the findings of this study, international school leaders and teachers may design their curriculum and initiate new co-curricular or organisational programmes promoting cultural diversity to benefit students and teachers. More than identifying leadership practices and institutionalised programmes in managing cultural differences, this study calls for further introspection and action to harness the potentials of leadership in promoting harmony in diversity for societal development.

Keywords: School Leadership, International Schools, Cultural Diversity, Education, Malaysia

Corresponding Author:
Faculty of Education, University of
Malaya, Malaysia.

E-mail: mdfaizal@um.edu.my



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

INTRODUCTION

The demand for international education is on the rise in the Asia-Pacific region. Brought about by the changing global economic landscape, international schools offer flexible academic programmes perceived to be advantageous in a competitive globalised environment (Bunnell, Fertig, & James, 2016; Roberts & Mancuso, 2014). Due to positive perception, the influx of local and foreign students creates a culturally diverse school community (Bailey, 2015). The increasing number of international schools in this region comes with the potential of unlocking a new setting to explore the dynamics of leadership in a highly diverse learning environment (James & Sheppard, 2014).

Over the past thirty years, literature on school leadership has emanated mostly from national K-12 schools (Hallinger & Chen, 2015; Leithwood & Sun, 2012). A meta-analysis of studies on educational leadership covers practices and styles of principals in schools following the national curriculum (Witziers, Bosker, & Krüger, 2003). Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) noted that principals in schools in the United States play an indirect role in driving student outcomes and have a direct impact on the school environment. In the United Kingdom, principals serve as the main drivers of school improvement based on students' achievement and the overall climate (Muijs et al., 2010; Pashiardis et al., 2011). Although studies in leadership are heavily inclined towards the public-school setting in the west, the exploration of international school leadership, particularly in the Southeast Asian region, is still at its infancy (Keller, 2015).

International schools remain an uncharted territory in educational research as a generally autonomous educational institution. An international school is best characterised as a private institution following an international curriculum (Hayden & Thompson, 2000). This autonomy has kept international schools away from close scrutiny by government regulatory bodies and from researchers reporting student outcomes and informing policy-making in education (Leggate & Thompson, 1997). In addition, the flexibility of international schools contributes to the complicated and ambiguous nature of these schools in general (Blandford & Shaw, 2001). While government-run schools follow uniform structures, syllabi, and assessment tools, international schools create their own systems following prescriptions from a private academic governing body (Brummitt & Keeling, 2013; Bunnell et al., 2016; James & Sheppard, 2014). Likewise, different countries have varied approaches in regulating and monitoring international schools depending on the degree of privatisation (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). Thus, this paper aims to bring to light the organisational dynamics of international schools in Malaysia to advance studies in this educational setting.

Whereas the past years have seen an increase in the number of international schools in Malaysia (Nasa & Pilay, 2017), studies on international schools and international school leadership in this country need to be explored further, especially in understanding the nature of cultural diversity. Despite certain ambiguities, the distinct and universal nature of international schools lies in the diversity of students, teachers, and administrators in terms of different cultural backgrounds, contributing to the growth of international schools. Furthermore, with a globally accepted curriculum, international schools cater to students regardless of race, nationality, and religion (Gellar, 2003). Early conceptions of international schools were intended for students from expatriate families who were usually in diplomatic service (Sylvester, 2003). However, as international schools become integrated into the social spectrum of their host countries like Malaysia, local families began moving their children from government schools to international schools in the hopes of getting a better education (Bailey, 2015). In effect, the mix of local and foreign students coming from different cultural backgrounds prompted schools to hire teaching staff from various parts of the world (Fertig & James, 2016; Odland & Ruzicka, 2009). More than bringing to the fore the nature of an international school setting in Malaysia, it is the primary intention of this study to search for leadership styles and practices that could serve as a medium to bridge differences towards a shared commonness in a culturally diverse learning community.

At the receiving end of school leadership's aim to achieve commonness, teachers play an integral role by offering first-hand accounts of the school dynamics (Blase, 1987; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Other than



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

performing their instructional duties, international school teachers also play various roles based on organisational expectations and as stipulated by the school leaders (Hayden, Rancic, & Thompson, 2000). Odland and Ruzicka (2009) reported the dependence of teachers on the prerogative of international school leaders in Egypt, Indonesia, Argentina, and Tanzania. Another study on school leadership in South Africa (Steyn, 2014) explains the direct relationship between school leaders and teachers in terms of curriculum planning, classroom instruction, and keeping a positive school climate. Therefore, this paper values the perspectives of international school teachers in the hope of understanding the way school leaders manage differences and perform leadership roles in the diverse setting of an international school.

Given the symbiotic relationship between school leaders and teachers (Fullan, 2009; Hoy, Miskel, & Tarter, 2013; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008), this study aims to bring into light the perspectives of teachers on international school leadership. Despite the proliferation of various models illustrating school leadership functions and effects, fewer studies have explored leadership practices in the setting of international schools, especially in Malaysia. In their systematic review of literature, Bush et al. (2018) presented instructional leadership, distributed leadership, and transformational leadership as prominent models studied in the general context of Malaysian schools. With respect to contextual leadership practices, Noman, Awang Hashim and Shaik Abdullah (2018) presented a case of a successful school leadership in a top performing government school in Malaysia, and they emphasised the need to contextualise leadership based on the environment and school functions. In the context of international schools, Javadi, Bush and Ng (2017) noted that despite the growing number of studies in middle leadership in international schools, the evidential base in Malaysia is still very limited. The continuous growth of international schools in this country presents opportunities in exploring the nature and effects of leadership in a culturally diverse academic organisation. Particularly with respect to cultural diversity, it would be of great interest to unravel how school leaders perform in an environment with a highly diverse set of beliefs from the point of view of teachers. Thus, discovering how leaders carry out academic and co-curricular programmes, which could benefit the school community without offending, discriminating against, or neglecting certain groups, adds value to the existing literature on school leadership effects and multicultural organisations in general.

To advance the aims of this study which is to present leadership in international schools, this paper explores the perceptions of teachers by addressing the following questions:

1. How do international school leaders lead in a culturally diverse environment?
2. What are the programmes and policies that school leaders implement with respect to cultural diversity?
3. To what extent does a leader's approach to cultural diversity affect the school community?

CONTEXTUAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Malaysia: The Irony of Diversity

Historically, Malaysia's colonial past paved the way for its current socio-cultural structure (Goh & Holden, 2009). Predominantly Islamic, Malaysia takes pride in its distinct multicultural society that celebrates traditions not only of the majority but also of the minority groups (Abdullah & Pedersen, 2009). The idea of celebrating customs from non-Islamic beliefs goes beyond the notion of tolerance as it is deeply rooted in the social ethos of Malaysians (Mandal, 2004). Although the ethnic lines drawn by the British during their colonisation of Malaya are still visible, a more harmonious co-habitation of people from the Malay, Chinese, and Indian races, as well as indigenous groups, now forms a unified Malaysia (Embong, 2004). Despite having Islam as the religion of the federation and of the Malay majority, festive celebrations of Buddhists, Hindus, and Christians are observed as public holidays (Abdullah & Pedersen, 2009; King, 1992).



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

Likewise, cultural acceptance permeates the Malaysian education system (Ibrahim, Muslim, & Buang, 2011; Jelas & Mohd Ali, 2014; Omar, Noh, Hamzah, & Majid, 2015). Though certain schools are categorised as *Religious-Islamic*, the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MOE, 2012) stipulates the national responsibility to provide education to all children regardless of their race and religion. Government schools provide a mother tongue approach in elementary schools designated as Chinese or Tamil schools while secondary schools are designed to cater to all races (Omar et al., 2015). Generally, parents have the right to choose between public or private institutions (Bakar, 2014). Looking for an English-medium school, parents prefer to send their children to international schools (Bailey, 2015).

International Schools: The Asia-Pacific Expansion

The growth of international schools in the Asia-Pacific region stems from parental demands for quality education (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). Originally intended for children of diplomats, international schools found a niche in the market (Bunnell, 2005) for local middle- and upper-class families opting for private schools offering better instruction and facilities (Hayden & Thompson, 2008). Since international schools follow a curriculum recognised in various parts of the world, parents look forward to better opportunities for their children outside of their country (Bailey, 2015).

Typically associated with a western kind of education, international schools in Hong Kong, China, South Korea, and Japan deviate from the traditional test-centric methods and adopt a more student-centred approach with English as the medium of instruction (Song, 2013; Straffon, 2003; Yamato & Bray, 2002). Similar to the findings in the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia (Bunnell et al., 2016), the rise in the demand for international schools in Malaysia is due to the fact that classes are offered in English, which parents believe could be an advantage for their children seeking to study in countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States (Pyvis & Chapman, 2007).

Aside from the medium of instruction, politics and economics have served as integral factors in the increasing number of international schools in Malaysia over the past five years. The government's quest to provide quality education for all citizens enabled the Malaysian Education Ministry to loosen its grip on the private education sector (Nasa & Pilay, 2017). With the easing of government regulations, international schools in Malaysia started to flourish, and competition paved the way to make international education accessible not only to foreign students, but also to local students as long as they have the financial capacity (Kitaev, 2007). In 2017, Malaysia registered the highest number of students in international schools in the Southeast Asian region with more than 71,000 students (The Star, 2017). The diverse environment of international schools in Malaysia can be defined by the differences within the student population according to race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship, and social class.

Leading in a Diverse Environment

In a highly diverse organisation, leadership takes the centre stage (Stringer, 2002). In a group composed of people from all walks of life, leadership serves as a binding agent that draws differences into a shared vision (Glanz, 2006; Leeman, 2003). As the conception of a leader deviates from the single-person narrative to a more collaborative idealisation (Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll, & Mackay, 2014; Spillane, 2006), the function of leadership is still anchored in the realisation of organisational goals (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). Though seemingly complicated, managing and leading in a globalised environment of international schools entail juggling the vision of the organisation, academic commitment, and the dynamics of the community (Blandford & Shaw, 2001; Keller, 2015).

Over the years, empirical studies on international school leadership have been gaining traction. Leadership roles identified in international schools in Hong Kong include administrative, academic, and pastoral responsibility (Jabal, 2006; Keung & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2013; Walker & Cheong, 2009). In the Near East and



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

South Asian regions, Mancuso, Roberts, and White (2010) reported how administrators in international schools affect teacher retention due to managerial and social factors. In relation to that, Lee, Hallinger, and Walker (2012) discovered challenges faced by international school leaders in the Asia Pacific region, which include: achieving coherence across programmes, managing expectations from parents, and managing the complex nature of the organisation. Since international school leaders deal with students, teachers, and parents with different socio-cultural beliefs, Keung and Rockinson-Szapkiw (2013) noted the importance of nurturing motivational traits and interpersonal capabilities through honing cultural intelligence. Furthermore, studies on international schools in Malaysia (Javadi et al., 2017; Velarde, 2017) indicate an inclination towards instructional and distributed styles of leadership.

Conceptual Framework

In further presenting international school leadership, a conceptual framework has been designed to lay down the path for this research to understand leadership in the culturally diverse learning environment of international schools. Figure 1 visualises the framework, which encapsulates the context, setting, and concepts by which this study operates in exploring international school leadership practices with respect to cultural diversity.

On a general note, this framework places international school leadership in the context of 21st century Malaysia. As leadership styles vary according to context and setting (Bush, 2007), this study emphasises potentials of studying leadership and cultural diversity in Malaysia, as a predominantly Islamic yet multiracial and multicultural country in the Asia Pacific region. Likewise, the beginning of the 21st century has been characterised by the impact of globalisation leading to diversified societies (Modood & May, 2001). Further understanding of cultural diversity in an educational setting could inspire studies related to organisational dynamics and school leadership effects related to equality, harmony, and global citizenship (OECD, 2016).

Since there are various models to explain school leadership (Bush, 2003), this research is anchored in earlier studies on school leadership models used in multicultural schools (Hallinger, 2009; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Spillane, 2006). The general conception of leadership practices as a process of change entails a balanced use of organisational principles and management tools to achieve the goals of the school as a functional organisation (Bush, 2007). Needless to say, the autonomous nature of the systems and structures of international schools in this study plays a crucial role in exploring leadership practices in international schools. Hayden and Thompson (2008) noted that international school leadership cannot be generalised and should be put in context to deeply understand how school leaders work in this setting. Thus, the integration of the notion of leadership practices with the contextualisation of international school system and structures leads to the conception of international school leadership in this study.



Figure 1. *Conceptual framework of the study (Sources: Bush, 2007; Hayden & Thompson, 2008)*



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

Given the notion that international school leadership operates within the parameters of the organisational structure of international school with distinct leadership roles, there is a need to further investigate the nature and effects of international school leadership in a culturally diverse environment of Malaysian international schools. Therefore, this research intends to unravel the leadership practices, programmes, and policies employed by school leaders in an international school, as well as their effects on the school community. Guided by relevant research and the conceptual framework of this study, the following section discusses the procedures undertaken in meeting the objectives and addressing the research questions.

METHODOLOGY

In the quest to provide an in-depth exploration to present how international school leaders lead in a culturally diverse environment, this qualitative study utilises a phenomenological approach. Creswell (2012) notes that phenomenology highlights the uniqueness of the situation and posits the potentials of gathering new insights from individual experiences. Hence, this case study has been designed to bring out the perspectives of teachers from an international school in Malaysia to shed light on the leadership style and practices of leaders in a highly diverse environment.

Setting

The “case school” claims to be the largest International Baccalaureate (IB) World School not only in Malaysia but also in the Asia Pacific Region. With five campuses in the Malaysian peninsula, the “case school” has a population of roughly 3000 students and teachers coming from at least 50 countries. As an IB World School, the “case school” follows the IB curriculum, principles, and organisational structure for Primary Years, Middle Years, and Diploma Programme (IBO, 2014).

Population and Sampling

Purposive sampling provides a targeted picture of the phenomenon as it captures the perspectives of groups directly involved in the situation (Bryman, 2012). Of the five campuses of the “case school”, the Kuala Lumpur campus was selected since it has the largest population of students and teachers at 1,400 from 60 countries. Likewise, compared with the other campuses, the ratio of local to foreign students in the chosen campus is estimated to be at 1:3. As for the population of local students and teachers, there is a fair distribution among Malay, Chinese, and Indian races. In terms of social classes, the “case school” falls on the middle range of the scale in terms of school fees; students come from upper middle to upper class families and diplomats. In addition, the school provides scholarships particularly for Diploma students. Thus, this campus was deemed suitable for this study in terms of having a highly diverse environment.

With diversity at the centre of this study, the teachers invited to participate come from different ethnic groups and countries. In educational research, teachers are ideal sources of information especially when it comes to their perceptions on leadership due to the fact that they are directly and indirectly exposed to the actions of their school leaders (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Henceforth, only those teachers who had more than six months of experience in the school were asked to participate in the interviews. Likewise, teachers with more than 3 years of experience in the school were invited to join the focus group discussion. Race and nationality were considered purposefully as indicators of diversity in this study. Table 1 shows the demographic summary of the participants according to their nationality and years of affiliation with the international school.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

Table 1
Demographic summary of the respondents

	Individual Interview	Focus Group Discussion
Sample	13	5
Nationality (race)		
Malaysian	4	
Malaysian (Chinese)	1	1
Malaysian (Indian)	1	1
Filipino	2	
Chinese-China	2	2
South Korean	1	
American-USA	1	
Iranian	1	
Japanese		1
Period of affiliation with the school		
6-11 months	3	
1-2 years	3	
3-5 years	5	4
6-10 years	2	1

n=18

In getting the perspectives of the school teachers, this case study employed a qualitative approach using an interview protocol with semi-structured questions and a focus group discussion. In order to gather as much information regarding a particular issue and ensuring the anonymity of the respondents (Creswell, 2012), the researchers opted to include 13 open-ended questions. The interview protocol was checked by an expert in the field of educational leadership in order to ensure that all questions addressed the research objectives coherently. In addition, the words and the structure of the questions were evaluated by a language expert.

Aside from providing supplementary information to the individual interviews, the focus group discussion with selected teachers provided a holistic and multimodal exploration. Out of the 13 questions from the interview, six questions were used for further elaboration. This was determined through a process of external auditing (Morrow, 2005) with the help of a peer researcher and another expert in qualitative research to ensure the consistency of the questions and the dependability of the chosen questions in probing deeper into the issue. The succeeding subsections further elaborate on the manner by which the data were collected and analysed, as well as other qualitative approaches used for further triangulation.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting data, the interview protocol designed for this study was ensured to contain open-ended questions aligned with the research objectives seeking to explore leadership and cultural diversity in international schools. For the pilot study, three teachers from another international school in Malaysia participated in individual interviews. After validating and modifying the interview protocol, the purposefully selected participants were personally approached by the researchers, and they were given a brief introduction on the purpose of the study. Thirteen teachers gave their full consent to participate in the individual interview sessions.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

After a preliminary analysis and initial member checking of the responses, items that needed further clarification were used to construct six open-ended questions for a focus group discussion. A pilot testing with two school teachers was conducted prior to the discussion in order to check the flow of the questions and the timing of the discussion. With the permission of the school coordinator, the selected teachers gave their full consent in participating in the discussion. Five teachers participated in an audio-recorded discussion that lasted for 75 minutes.

Trustworthiness and Triangulation

In a qualitative study, the validity and reliability of the instruments pertain to the extent to which measures were undertaken to ensure a credible, dependable, and replicable process and information. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) explain that the credibility of an individual interview rests on its confidentiality, which brings out a sense of confidence and honesty among the participants, enabling the researchers to probe deeply into the issues. However, a focus group discussion is a dependable approach in eliciting a variety of perspectives to bring out important issues related to the topic from participants who had relevant and shared experiences (Bryman, 2012). In this way, the researchers were able to get either supporting or opposing views for the questions during the discussion, which provided a deeper understanding not only of the issues posed by this study, but also the responses culled from the interviews.

Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (2000) claim that triangulation through employment of various means of data collection from different sources aids in increasing the trustworthiness of a social science research. The transcribed data from the interviews and the focus group discussion were triangulated with observation field notes and document analysis. For one week, the researchers observed the dynamics of the members of the school community in the staffroom, hallways, classrooms, multi-purpose halls, cafeteria, and pick-up/drop-off points. In ensuring the credibility of the observation (Cohen et al., 2011), the researchers took into consideration the focus of the observation based on the research objectives and his role as a covert complete observer so as not to influence the people observed. Apart from that, the “case school” provided the researchers with data on student enrolment, number of teachers, website, school publications, IB manuals, and the handbook for teachers and students, which provided a rich source of information for triangulation since they are in “the language and words of the participants” (Creswell, 2012, p. 223).

Data Analysis

Using thematic analysis with the help of Atlas.ti, the data from the individual interviews, focus group discussion, observation field notes, and documents yielded codes that were categorised to form themes. After a thorough external auditing, three themes emerged: leadership practices on cultural diversity; programmes and policies promoting cultural awareness; and effects of international school leadership. These themes will be reported and elaborated in the succeeding section.

FINDINGS

The teachers who participated in this study shared their experiences and thoughts on the nature and extent of leadership in a culturally diverse environment. Backed up by the documents on students’ enrolment and the personnel database, the teachers confirmed that the school’s community is composed of students and teachers from different countries, with no ethnic or religious group polarising the population. In addition, the teachers referred to a leadership team headed by the principal alongside the programme coordinators, subject heads of the department, and year-level leaders. Aside from academic leadership, the organisational chart of the school referred to administrators, specifically the chairman and the board of trustees, though this was not clearly mentioned by the teachers.



In the context of International Baccalaureate (IB), the teachers talked about the way the school leaders uphold the principles of IB education while staying aligned with institutional goals and keeping in touch with the stakeholders. Embedded in the school's mission and vision are the core principles of IB to develop international-minded students through a continuous curriculum using learner-centric approaches and concept-based instruction. Throughout the responses, the teachers referred to IB ideals in describing the practices of their school leaders.

As a result of a cyclical and thematic analysis, the following core themes were extracted from the collected data: a) leadership practices with respect to cultural diversity; b) programmes and policies promoting cultural awareness; and, c) leadership effects on the school community. In this process, the responses from the individual interviews and the transcription of the focus group discussion were organised according to various codes, which were then clustered to form themes in response to the research objectives and questions. In the process of triangulation, the data rendered from the observation field notes and document analysed were categorised to provide support and further elaboration on the identified themes. Hence, the succeeding subsections present the relevant findings organised according to the themes revolving around international school leadership and cultural diversity.

Leadership Practices with Respect to Cultural Diversity

In response to the first research question, the collated data rendered the perspectives of teachers in terms of how school leaders take the lead in a culturally diverse environment of international schools. Teachers pointed out that this starts with involving the school community by recognising the role of students, teachers, and parents. With regards to the description of roles, teachers are made aware of the integral part school leaders play in promoting or appreciating cultural diversity in their school. As one teacher explains:

"We are open-minded to perceiving different thoughts and ideas from students as they tend to view new content from their cultural lenses. Sometimes, some students find it difficult to adapt to their new school setting due to the differences in the way we do things here. For example, in a recent expedition to Vietnam, a student from Saudi Arabia was required to perform a dance to a group of students in an orphanage we visited. However, she hesitated and as teachers, we have to accommodate her personal beliefs and culture and help her to adapt into the new environment. Therefore, the roles of teachers are more into helping students understand other cultures and motivating them into accepting these as a part of their learning experiences" (I, T6, 130217).

In this culturally inclusive environment, promoting values such as open-mindedness, respect and acceptance emanates from simple actions and institutional practices. As an instructional operation, the actions of international school leaders affect the perceptions of the stakeholders through the enactment of the school's vision and values (Robinson, 2007). This implies the centrality and vitality of the verbalised mission and vision of the school, which serve as the foundation for the school leaders' philosophy and practices. In the "case school", it was reported that the principal and school leaders:

"...enact a campaign to promote equality and cultural sensitivity. Also, the school encourages the students to announce the importance of it during the assembly every Monday morning" (I, T2, 130217).

"...treat teachers and students from different cultures and countries in the same way. They find a way to communicate with teachers and students more often, listen to their real thinking, and get suggestions from them directly" (I, T8, 140217).

"...enforce discipline [and] develop camaraderie by reminding teachers to group students differently and by launching anti bullying campaign" (I, T13, 160217).



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

Considering the above-mentioned specific practices, it is the leaders' position as role models that transcend the values to the school community. A teacher remarked that school leaders serve as "role models who shouldn't force anything, but rather set a good example" (I, T1, 13/02/2017). Posner and Kouzes (2012) highlight the significance of modelling as an initial step for leaders to be effective in a heterogeneous environment. Hence, a combination of deeply rooted values and sincere actions may give an international school leader an advantage in this culturally diverse setting.

However, when it comes to addressing issues emanating from cultural differences like racism, favouritism, and bias, teachers observed that other school leaders, and not the principal, usually handle cases like these. One teacher stated that it is "difficult to ascertain as such issues are sensitive and settled behind closed doors" (I, T3, 130217).

In handling cases, the year-level leaders or the deputy principal conducts investigation and addresses the issue by talking to students and enforcing the necessary disciplinary measures. As a primary document, the "case school's" handbook contains a set of rules on bullying and racism, as well as the consequences for such actions. In addition, observation conducted in the classrooms revealed posters promoting cultural diversity and respect for others, and rules labelled as 'Essential Agreements' (O1, L5-7, 220217); however, one teacher shared an issue in implementing procedures:

"They didn't take certain action or proper action on it. Sometimes, they just promise to solve it or simple talk with students, but they cannot solve the problem from the roots" (I, T8, 140217).

When asked thoroughly about how school leaders respond to culturally related conflicts, the focus group affirms that procedures are in place and that school leaders inform the school community about the rules and consequences.

"If let's say there is somebody provoked in a negative way, then this falls under our disciplinary actions. We have a certain protocol to follow. For example, let's say a report came in saying somebody is cursing another student and that person is offended. Then, it becomes a discipline case where we have our own protocols and disciplinary team that will pick necessary actions. Finally, the management will decide what kind of action to be taken to address this kind of issue. From that point onwards, we bring it up at the assembly as a reminder for future issues" (FGD, T3: L125-134, 240217).

Other than these leadership practices, the international school teachers reported concrete programmes and policies that serve as a guide that leaders follow in leading a multicultural community.

Programmes and Policies Promoting Cultural Awareness

Collated data from the teachers, observation field notes, and school documents rendered various programmes and policies promoting cultural diversity. Other than satisfying the second main objective of this research by identifying school programs and policies with respect to cultural diversity, the data also revealed the thoughts and feelings of teachers regarding the implementation of certain programmes and policies in this setting.

The multi-ethnicity of the host country, Malaysia, provides a natural setting to promote cultural awareness. In an Islamic country where religious festivities are observed as national holidays (Abdullah & Pedersen, 2009), appreciation of different traditions comes in play especially in international schools. The "case school" celebrates the important holidays of Muslims, Chinese, Indians, and Christians, and teachers shared contrasting views regarding the importance of festive celebrations.

"Decorations can be seen set up at school and the events held during the evenings, creating an exciting vibe amongst the students. However, these programmes also create a toll on the teacher's



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

health and social life as it requires them to exert more effort and time in preparing for the event instead of resting or concentrating on their pending class tasks. There have been instances where these events have been the subject of prioritization over the well-being of the teachers" (*I, T4, 130217*).

As much as school leaders aspire to create a positive learning environment by holding festive celebrations, it is also the responsibility of the leaders to protect instructional time (Hallinger, 2009; Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). In this context of the "case school", the celebrations may seem as a superficial way of promoting cultural diversity, but it could be made more meaningful if school leaders and teachers use them as learning opportunities.

During the period of observation, the Christmas season had just ended, and Chinese Lunar New Year came after a few weeks. Some classrooms still had remnants of the Christmas celebrations, while the lobby and the main halls were already decorated with Chinese lanterns (*O3, L21-25, 240217*). In reference to the "case school's" documents, the past editions of the school magazine also featured articles on Islamic and Indian celebrations. Despite the reported toll on teachers, the focus group teachers remain optimistic with respect to the learning opportunities from celebrations.

"We always have a lot of different celebrations to appreciate and also to promote the diversity of culture. In the Mandarin department as an example, we have Chinese Mandarin and Malaysian Mandarin, which are quite different so sometimes we need to take both into consideration. We need to choose the proper practices when we have a celebration. We need to take into consideration how they celebrate New Year in Malaysia compared to China. This we also discuss with our students" (*FGD, T2: L73-78, 240217*).

Furthermore, as an IB certified school, school leaders need to integrate international-mindedness through curricular and co-curricular activities (IBO, 2014). Aside from noting that the "case school" follows an internationally recognised curriculum, the teachers explained more deeply how they promote cultural awareness in and out of their classrooms.

"We have many units from Reception to Grade 10 that have topics on cultural significance. These show that exposure towards others' cultures are important" (*I, T10, 140217*).

"I think this is part of the topic in certain subjects when they are taught to recognize the diversity of cultures both in local and global context. Teachers have the freedom to imbue the values of integration in their lesson plan whenever it is suitable for them to do so, such as encouraging collaborative activities in the classroom. For instance, I asked students to work on a project in a group for one semester. At the beginning, only three students work together because of the existing language barrier with the other two students. However, by the end of the semester, they are able to work more together with encouragement once they gain the understanding of what is fun for each other" (*I, T11, 150217*).

"In terms of Physical Education, we learn about the history of the sport and how another country has developed the sport. That's how we appreciate where the sport has advanced. Another one would be learning about athletes from different countries, sportsmanship and nationalism" (*FGD, T5: L45-49, 240217*).

Based on the documents, IBO (2014) clearly mandates the inclusion of global contexts in the curriculum. The programme coordinator and the subject heads of the department ensure these are planned into the units and implemented in the classroom and in out-of-school activities. Thus, it can be inferred that school leaders have an indirect role in inculcating culturally relevant topics and themes through the curriculum.



Leadership Effects on the School Community

In response to the final research question, the third theme identified based on the collected data looked into how the school leaders affect the school community. In this study, the teachers were asked about the effects of leadership on teachers and students. Strikingly, the teachers claimed that leadership practices in response to cultural diversity have no effect on their performance as a teacher. However, the effects on interaction tend to be positive.

“Genuine celebration of our diversity could enrich our working experience and enable creativity to flow in seamless communication. It also makes us think globally by creating a perception of brighter prospects with international exposure” (I, T11, 150217).

Despite the optimism in terms of teacher relationships, the issue of salary tends to bring out a conflict in achieving fairness. Based on the individual interviews, the teachers associate salary matters with leadership responsibilities. The teachers are well aware of the differences in the salary among teachers and they acknowledge the influence of school leaders in determining the salary grade of the teachers.

“The practice of equality amongst teachers is not evident as salaries vary depending on the race. Generally, Asians get lower compensation and are often looked over compared to their Western counterparts despite being more qualified academically” (I, T5, 130217).

“Leadership can affect the teachers in a bad way if the policies are implemented improperly. For example, even if we belong to the same programme, same department, the salary rates are different” (I, T8, 140217).

Despite the negative reports on teacher salary, the teacher respondents were optimistic that leadership practices and programmes on cultural awareness have positive effects on students’ learning and behaviour.

“Since there are various practices, policies or programmes being held, they are more aware of the appropriate behaviour in school” (I, T2, 130217).

“Students are open to making new friends, accepting of each other’s differences and encouraging each other as they learn together” (I, T12, 150217).

Generally, the teachers believe that leadership promoting cultural awareness and celebrating diversity has a positive impact on the overall school climate. With respect to relationships between the stakeholders, the responses from the individual interviews and the focus group discussion push the idea that respect for individual differences results from the practices of school leaders and the proper implementation of programmes and policies. Furthermore, in five days of observing the common halls, the cafeteria, and assembly points, the researchers duly noted how students and teachers from different races and ethnicities interact naturally and harmoniously (O5, L9-13, 28/2/2017). The natural setting of international schools brings people from different cultures together and allows school leaders to employ strategies to sustain such dynamics and even to promote better opportunities to promote inclusiveness. Therefore, the findings of this study confirm the direct and indirect roles that international school leaders play in managing and leading a culturally diverse group of stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

In this harmonious interaction of people coming from diverse backgrounds, international school leaders can be seen as both primary and indirect instigators. The teachers generally referred to the principal and specifically to other school leaders (i.e. coordinator, head of the department, and level leader) for academic concerns and



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

pastoral care. Although the principal still remains the figurehead of the school, the nature of leadership in this setting shows signs of distribution. Contrary to the notion of delegation, Harris (2011) emphasises that the principal keeps the formal position, while the leadership responsibilities get to be shared with key members of the organisation through capacity building.

Aside from responsibilities, the idealised influence (Bass, 1997) of the principal allows values of respect and acceptance to be shared with the members of the school community (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000). With the modelling of the school leaders and teachers, the differences in religious beliefs and socio-cultural attitudes among the members of the school community led to cultural understanding. In the context of transformational leadership, school leaders who model values wield influence and build stronger relationships (Kouzes & Posner, 2005). Given the different attitudes and expectations, school leaders are expected to communicate organisational mission, vision, and values in order to nurture a stronger and unified community.

Leadership that fosters cultural awareness shapes the concept of respect and acceptance in a multicultural environment (Leeman, 2003). The teachers recognize the significance of school leaders who value open-mindedness and its effects on the mindset of the community. The transferability of cultural understanding among stakeholders constitutes the natural dynamics of an international school. Guided by institutionalized goals and values, the actions of the school leaders dictate the norms in a diverse environment that needs a certain degree of uniformity in order to perform basic instructional functions (Glanz, 2006; Hargreaves & Fink, 2004).

In addition to affecting the values and dynamics of the stakeholders, international school leaders manage the curriculum by encouraging open-mindedness towards others' cultures. Upheld by the school leaders through the teachers, the concept of international mindedness is deeply embedded in the principles of IB education and in a curriculum revolving around universally transferable concepts (IBO, 2014). In this learning environment, teachers go beyond subject-related topics and push students to make global connections. Integrating cultural aspects into the learning experience deepens students' understanding and could enable them to transfer their learning in the real world (Poonoosamy, 2016).

Despite the positive reception of teachers in terms of how school leaders promote cultural awareness, certain issues of ethnic differences still arise in this community. The teachers acknowledge the presence of discrimination, favouritism, and bias in the workplace and in the classroom. However, policies and protocols are set in place for school leaders to uphold and implement consistently. Reports on salary discrepancies tend to undermine genuine efforts of school leaders in promoting fairness in workplace. Though matters of salary fall under the responsibility of administrators and school owners (Fertig & James, 2016; James & Sheppard, 2014), the teachers' generalisation of school leadership makes this matter seem like it is the responsibility of the principal and the leadership team.

Other than dealing with a diverse group of people, the complexity of international school leadership stems from the ambiguous distribution of roles and responsibilities. Promoting cultural awareness does not only come under the wings of the principal, but of other members of the leadership team and even those from administrative positions, particularly the owners or the board members of the school. In the process of distributing leadership, roles must be defined by the school principal and should be clearly understood by the leaders (Harris, 2011; Spillane, 2006). However, in the case of international schools as a private institution, the authority of decision-making does not lie solely with the principal, but also with the board members or the school owners (Hayden & Thompson, 2008; Keller, 2015; Lee et al., 2012). Needless to say, the responses from the teachers clarified the role school leaders play in promoting and sustaining harmony in diversity.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The varying perspectives of the teachers in this case study paint a picture of international school leadership that focuses not only on cultural diversity and academic matters, but also on organisational concerns, particularly the general welfare of the students and teachers. From a theoretical standpoint, the responses from the teachers may serve as a starting point for reflection by international school leaders, especially on core values that should embody institutional goals and serve as a positive common ground in a culturally diverse environment. Primarily, the values of acceptance, respect, and trust resonate in the words of the teachers in this study, which support general ideals of effective school leadership (Glanz, 2006; Hallinger & Chen, 2015; Leithwood et al., 2008). Thus, international school leadership anchored in these values present a potential dimension in future studies on effective leadership in multicultural schools.

From a practical viewpoint, international schools may capitalise on the prospects of cultural diversity through sound academic and institutional programmes and policies. Given the autonomous nature of international schools (Hayden & Thompson, 2008), school leaders have the full authority to initiate academic and organisational changes. By considering the indirect influence of school leaders on student learning, international school leaders should work together with teachers in curriculum planning with the theme and values of cultural diversity in mind. Through contextual and conceptual curriculum and activities that highlight universal ideals and values, international school leaders can truly bring out learning opportunities. Furthermore, with regard to the aspect of building professional learning communities (PLC's) in international schools, this study adds a vital consideration in forming and sustaining PLC's with sincere leadership advocating the values of acceptance, respect, and trust. With the growing number of international schools in the region, the next step for development should focus on quality through leadership practices and organisational policies relying on the promotion of universal values.

CONCLUSION

With the growing number of international schools in the Asia-Pacific region, unravelling the potentials of international school leadership is only the beginning towards a better understanding of this distinct educational environment. As a naturally multicultural host country to international schools, Malaysia offers a unique perspective on the inculcation of respect, acceptance, and tolerance—values shared by the international schoolteachers. Though a single-site study is not enough to present a bigger picture of international school leadership, this study was able to deeply explore practices and programmes enabling a diverse group of people to thrive harmoniously in an academic environment. Thus, further studies involving different schools in another multicultural country and a larger sample size may provide a more extensive explanation and exploration of culturally responsive leadership in an international school setting.

International schools provide a natural setting for the study of multiculturalism and leadership in a culturally diverse organisation. From the perspectives of teachers in this diverse learning environment, various practices were cited to present both the significance and shortcomings of leadership in promoting cultural awareness. The experiences shared by the teachers provide points for reflection for school leaders aiming to genuinely celebrate diversity through shared values. More importantly, as societies continually embrace multiculturalism in this era of globalization, academic institutions and training centres for leadership should integrate studies related to cultural competencies in their curriculum. As international schools continue to flourish and provide education for students from various walks of life, these schools offer an ideal venue in further exploring leadership practices and programmes promoting appreciation, respect, and tolerance in a culturally diverse learning environment for societal development.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, A., & Pedersen, P. B. (2009). *Understanding multicultural Malaysia: Delights, puzzles and irritations*. Petaling Jaya: Pearson.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to research in education*. CA: Wadsworth.
- Bailey, L. (2015). The experiences of host country nationals in international schools: A case-study from Malaysia. *Journal of Research in International Education, 14*(2), 85-97.
- Bakar, M. Z. B. A. (2014). Education policy and ethnic relations in Malaysia: The socio-economic perspectives. *Journal of Educational and Social Research, 4*(2), 138-142.
- Bass, B. M. (1997). Does the transactional–transformational leadership paradigm transcend organizational and national boundaries? *American psychologist, 52*(2), 130-139.
- Blandford, S., & Shaw, M. (2001). *Managing international schools*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Blase, J. J. (1987). Dimensions of effective school leadership: The teacher’s perspective. *American Educational Research Journal, 24*(4), 589-610.
- Brummitt, N., & Keeling, A. (2013). Charting the growth of international schools. In R. Pearce (Ed.), *International education schools: Moving beyond the first* (Vol. 40, pp. 25-36). London: Bloomsbury.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bunnell, T. (2005). Strategic marketing planning in international schools. *International Journal of Educational Management, 19*(1), 59-66.
- Bunnell, T., Fertig, M., & James, C. (2016). What is international about International Schools? An institutional legitimacy perspective. *Oxford Review of Education, 42*(4), 408-423.
- Bush, T. (2003). *Theories of Educational Leadership and Management*. London: Sage Publications.
- Bush, T. (2007). Educational leadership and management: Theory, policy and practice. *South African Journal of Education, 27*(3), 391-406.
- Bush, T., Abdul Hamid, S., Ng, A., & Kaparou, M. (2018). School leadership theories and the Malaysia education blueprint: Findings from a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Educational Management, 32*(7), 1245-1265.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). NY: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Embong, A. R. (2004). The culture and practice of pluralism in postcolonial Malaysia. In R. W. Hefner (Ed.), *The politics of multiculturalism: Pluralism and citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia* (pp. 59-85). Honolulu: Univ of Hawaii Press.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

- Fertig, M., & James, C. (2016). The leadership and management of international schools: Very complex matters. In M. Hayden & J. Thompson (Eds.), *International Schools: Current Issues and Future Prospects* (pp. 105-128). UK: Symposium Books Ltd.
- Fullan, M. (2009). Introduction to challenge of change: Purposeful action at work. In M. Fullan, *Challenge of change* (pp. 3-8). US: Corwin Press.
- Gellar, C. (2003). International education: A commitment to universal values. In M. Hayden, J. Thompson, & G. Walker (Eds.), *International education in practice: Dimensions for national and international schools* (pp. 30-35). London: Routledge.
- Glanz, J. (2006). *What every principal should know about cultural leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Goh, P. S., & Holden, P. (2009). Introduction: Postcoloniality, race, and multiculturalism. In P. S. Goh, M. Gabrielpillai, P. Holden, & G. C. Khoo (Eds.), *Race and multiculturalism in Malaysia and Singapore* (pp. 3-13). London: Routledge.
- Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 329-352.
- Hallinger, P. (2009). *Leadership for the 21st century schools: From instructional leadership to leadership for learning*. Paper presented at the Chair Professors Public Lecture Series, Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- Hallinger, P., & Chen, J. (2015). Review of research on educational leadership and management in Asia: A comparative analysis of research topics and methods, 1995–2012. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(1), 5-27.
- Hallinger, P., & Murphy, J. (1987). Assessing and developing principal instructional leadership. *Educational leadership*, 45(1), 54-61.
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2004). The seven principles of sustainable leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 61(7), 8-13.
- Harris, A. (2011). Distributed leadership: Implications for the role of the principal. *Journal of Management Development*, 31(1), 7-17.
- Hayden, M., Rancic, B., & Thompson, J. (2000). Being international: Student and teacher perceptions from international schools. *Oxford Review of Education*, 26(1), 107-123.
- Hayden, M., & Thompson, J. (2000). *International schools and international education: Improving teaching, management and quality*. London: Kogan Page Ltd.
- Hayden, M., & Thompson, J. J. (2008). *International schools: Growth and influence*. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- Hopkins, D., Stringfield, S., Harris, A., Stoll, L., & Mackay, T. (2014). School and system improvement: A narrative state-of-the-art review. *School effectiveness and school improvement*, 25(2), 257-281.
- Hoy, W., Miskel, C., & Tarter, C. J. (2013). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

- International Baccalaureate Organization, IBO. (2014). *MYP: From principles into practice*. UK: IBO.
- Ibrahim, R., Muslim, N., & Buang, A. H. (2011). Multiculturalism and higher education in Malaysia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, 1003-1009.
- Jabal, E. (2006). Learning from Hong Kong alumni: Lessons for school leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 9(1), 21-44.
- James, C., & Sheppard, P. (2014). The governing of international schools: The implications of ownership and profit motive. *School Leadership & Management*, 34(1), 2-20.
- Javadi, V., Bush, T., & Ng, A. (2017). Middle leadership in international schools: evidence from Malaysia. *School Leadership & Management*, 37(5), 476-499.
- Jelas, Z. M., & Mohd Ali, M. (2014). Inclusive education in Malaysia: Policy and practice. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(10), 991-1003.
- Keller, D. (2015). Leadership of international schools: Understanding and managing dualities. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 43(6), 900-917.
- Keung, E. K., & Rockinson-Szapkiw, A. J. (2013). The relationship between transformational leadership and cultural intelligence: A study of international school leaders. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(6), 836-854.
- King, V. T. (1992). Tourism and culture in Malaysia. *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, 20(1), 1-17.
- Kitaev, I. (2007). Education for all and private education in developing and transitional countries. In P. Srivastava & G. Walford (Eds.), *Private schooling in less economically developed countries: Asian African perspectives* (pp. 89-109). UK: Symposium.
- Kouzes, J. M., & Posner, B. Z. (2005). Leading in cynical times. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 14(4), 357-364.
- Lee, M., Hallinger, P., & Walker, A. (2012). Leadership challenges in international schools in the Asia Pacific region: Evidence from programme implementation of the International Baccalaureate. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 15(3), 289-310.
- Leeman, Y. (2003). School leadership for intercultural education. *Intercultural Education*, 14(1), 31-45.
- Leggate, P., & Thompson, J. (1997). The management of development planning in international schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 11(6), 268-273.
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(1), 27-42.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2000). The effects of transformational leadership on organizational conditions and student engagement with school. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 112-129.
- Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (2006). Transformational school leadership for large-scale reform: Effects on students, teachers, and their classroom practices. *School effectiveness and school improvement*, 17(2), 201-227.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

- Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012). The nature and effects of transformational school leadership a meta-analytic review of unpublished research. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(3), 387-423.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (2000). The only generalization is: There is no generalization. In R. Gomm, M. Hammersley, & P. Foster (Eds.), *Case study method: Key issues, key texts* (pp. 27-44). London: Sage Publications.
- Malaysia has most students in international schools in SEA. (2017, March 10). *The Star*. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2017/03/10/malaysia-has-most-students-enrolled-in-international-schools-in-region/>
- Mancuso, S. V., Roberts, L., & White, G. P. (2010). Teacher retention in international schools: The key role of school leadership. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 9(3), 306-323.
- Mandal, S. K. (2004). Boundaries and beyond whither the cultural bases of political community in Malaysia? In R. W. Hefner (Ed.), *The politics of multiculturalism: Pluralism and citizenship in Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia* (pp. 141-164). Honolulu: Univ of Hawaii Press.
- Modood, T., & May, S. (2001). Multiculturalism and education in Britain: An internally contested debate. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 35(3), 305-317.
- Ministry of Education, MOE. (2012). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025*. Retrieved from <http://www.moe.gov.my/userfiles/file/PPP/Preliminary-Blueprint-Eng.pdf>
- Morrow, S. L. (2005). Quality and trustworthiness in qualitative research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 250-260.
- Muijs, D., Ainscow, M., Dyson, A., Raffo, C., Goldrick, S., Kerr, K., Lennie, C., & Miles, S. (2010). Leading under pressure: Leadership for social inclusion. *School Leadership and Management*, 30(2), 143-157.
- Nasa, A., & Pilay, S. (2017, April 23). International Schools: Why their numbers are growing. *The Star*. Retrieved from <http://www.nst.com.my/news/exclusive/2017/04/233140/international-schools-why-their-numbers-are-growing>
- Noman, M., Awang Hashim, R., & Shaik Abdullah, S. (2018). Contextual leadership practices: The case of a successful school principal in Malaysia. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(3), 474-490.
- Odland, G., & Ruzicka, M. (2009). An investigation into teacher turnover in international schools. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 8(1), 5-29.
- OECD. (2016). *Trends Shaping Education 2016*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Omar, N., Noh, M. A. C., Hamzah, M. I., & Majid, L. A. (2015). Multicultural education practice in Malaysia. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, 1941-1948.
- Pashiardis, P., Brauckmann, S., Sammons, P., Gu, Q., Day, C., & Ko, J. (2011). Exploring the impact of school leadership on pupil outcomes: Results from a study of academically improved and effective schools in England. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 25(1), 83-101.



MALAYSIAN ONLINE JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MOJEM)

- Poonoosamy, M. (2016). Aspirations and tensions in developing international mindedness: case study of two students in an IB school in an Indian Ocean Island Nation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 36(4), 583-598.
- Posner, B. Z., & Kouzes, J. M. (2012). *The leadership challenge: How to make extraordinary things happen in organizations*. US: Jossey-Bass.
- Pyvis, D., & Chapman, A. (2007). Why university students choose an international education: A case study in Malaysia. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 27(2), 235-246.
- Roberts, L., & Mancuso, S. V. (2014). What kind of international school leaders are in demand around the world? A test of differences by region and stability over time. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 13(2), 91-105.
- Robinson, V. (2007). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: Making sense of the evidence. Retrieved from https://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference_2007/5/
- Sebastian, J., & Allensworth, E. (2012). The influence of principal leadership on classroom instruction and student learning: A study of mediated pathways to learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(4), 626-663.
- Song, J. J. (2013). For whom the bell tolls: globalisation, social class and South Korea's international schools. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 11(1), 136-159.
- Spillane, J. P. (2006). *Distributed leadership*. CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Steyn, G. M. (2014). Exploring successful principalship in South Africa: A case study. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 49(3), 347-361.
- Straffon, D. (2003). Assessing the intercultural sensitivity of high school students attending an international school. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27(4), 487-501.
- Stringer, R. (2002). *Leading and Organizational Climate: The Cloud Chamber Effect*. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc.
- Sylvester, B. (2003). The 'first' international school. In M. Hayden, J. Thompson, & G. Walker (Eds.), *International education in practice: Dimensions for national and international schools* (pp. 15-27). London: Routledge.
- Velarde, J. (2017). Instructional Leadership Practices in International Schools in Malaysia: A Case Study. *International Online Journal of Educational Leadership*, 1(1), 90-117.
- Walker, A., & Cheong, C. Y. (2009). Leading international primary schools: An integrative agenda for building understanding. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 37(1), 43-59.
- Witziers, B., Bosker, R. J., & Krüger, M. L. (2003). Educational leadership and student achievement: The elusive search for an association. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 39(3), 398-425.
- Yamato, Y., & Bray, M. (2002). Education and socio-political change: The continued growth and evolution of the international schools sector in Hong Kong. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 3(1), 24-36.