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The Influence of the Leadership in Technical and Vocational Education

ABSTRACT: Leadership in general is a process to influences the human activities, which has connection with what they need to do to achieve the organisation's objectives. Meanwhile, leadership research has taken different perspectives: leader traits, behaviours, and the influences of situational characteristics on leader effectiveness, for example, have all been studied. This study was performed to obtain the relationship between the elements of leadership among administrators at the polytechnic in Malaysia. A total of 102 administrators who have been involved in this study. Data were collected using a set of instruments to measure the elements of leadership. Data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 21. The findings of the analysis of structural equation indicates that Strategic Thinking, Vision and Mission, Rewards, Personality, and Innovative Thinking have had significantly high correlation between each other. The findings show also that the elements of Strategic Thinking and Rewards influenced in developing the Vision and Mission of the TVE (Technical and Vocational Education). In addition, the Personality has also a significant relationship with the elements of Rewards and Innovative Thinking. As a leader in TVE institutions, it is necessary for the leaders to practice the effective leadership style as well as the realization of education and training systems in line with industry requirements and the current market.

KEY WORD: Technical and vocational education, structural equation modelling, strategic thinking, vision and mission, rewards, personality, and innovative thinking.

RINGKASAN: "Pengaruh Kepimpinan dalam Pendidikan Teknik dan Vokasional". Kepimpinan secara amnya adalah satu proses untuk mempengaruhi kegiatan manusia, yang mempunyai kaitan dengan apa yang mereka perlu lakukan untuk mencapai matlamat organisasi. Sementara itu, penyelidikan kepimpinan telah mengambil perspektif yang berbeza: ciri-ciri pemimpin, tingkah-laku, dan pengaruh ciri-ciri situasi pada keberkesanan mengenai pemimpin, sebagai contoh, semuanya telah dikaji. Kajian ini dilaksanakan untuk mendapatkan hubungan di antara elemen-elemen kepimpinan dalam kalangan pentadbir di politeknik Malaysia. Sejumlah 102 orang pentadbir telah terlibat dalam kajian ini. Data telah dikumpulkan menggunakan satu set instrumen untuk mengukur elemen kepimpinan tersebut. Data telah dianalisis menggunakan perisian SPSS 21. Hasil analisis persamaan struktur menunjukkan bahawa Pemikiran Strategik, Visi dan Misi, Ganjaran, Personaliti, dan Pemikiran Inovatif mempunyai korelasi signifikan yang tinggi antara satu sama lain. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa unsur Pemikiran Strategik dan Ganjaran mempengaruhi dalam membangunkan Visi dan Misi PTV (Pendidikan Teknik dan Vokasional). Di samping itu, Personaliti juga mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan unsur Ganjaran dan Pemikiran Inovatif. Sebagai pemimpin dalam institusi PTV, adalah perlu bagi para pemimpin untuk mengamalkan gaya kepimpinan yang berkesan dan juga merealisasikan sistem pendidikan dan latihan selaras dengan keperluan industri dan pasaran semasa.

KATA KUNCI: Pendidikan teknikal dan vokasional, persamaan permodelan struktural, pemikiran strategik, visi dan misi, ganjaran, personaliti, dan pemikiran inovatif.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization to make it more cohesive and coherent (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011). Leaders carry out this process by applying their leadership attributes, such as belief, norms, values, ethics, character, knowledge, and skills.

Leadership, in general, is a process to influence human activities which have a connection with what they need to do to achieve the organization's objectives. Leadership also can be defined as building the team strength among employee (De Vries, Bakker-Pieper & Oostenveld, 2010). This statement has been supported by S.K. Brigance (2011), who stated that to achieve a leader's ambition, consideration to encourage the spirit, and generate willingness among followers or employee is a must.

S.G. Marshall (2012) also define leadership as an individual skill to influence the followers to face the problem and provide solution. Following is one of the quotations about leadership from various sources: "Leading is influencing, guiding direction, course, action, opinion [...]" (Bennis & Nanus, 1985).

Leadership research has taken different perspectives: leader traits, behaviors, and the influences of situational characteristics on leader effectiveness, for example, have all been studied. In the past 20 years, transformational and charismatic leadership approaches have gained in popularity (Thompson, 2010).

The context of the higher education leadership mantle is dynamic, complex, and multidimensional (Lapointe & Davis, 2012). The elusiveness of the leadership notion has enticed researchers to interpret, capture, and analyse the essence of leadership in higher education from different perspectives. Globally, research suggest clear trends of the issues facing the current TVE (Technical and Vocational Education) sector.

E. Hanushek, L. Woessmann & L. Zhang (2011) suggest two clear trends in vocational education, ongoing demands for the credibility of leadership, and the development of partnerships to take the responsibility of investment. The term leadership means

different things to different people. Although no ultimate definition of leadership exists (Thompson, 2012); the majority of definitions of leadership reflect some basic elements, including "group", "influences", and "goal" (Ashbaugh, 2013).

Initially, establishment of the TVE system, it is more likely to the technical skills and knowledge alone. But nowadays, TVE is not only emphasizing on technical skills and knowledge, but also in producing people who have personality and also future leaders in various fields. Leadership is not only given to certain people, but it is owned by everyone. Leadership characteristics in a person that can be formed if a person wants to be a leader.

John Baldoni (2012) said that "leadership development is everyone's responsibility". John Baldoni also said that the first step in the formation of a leader is to foster a sense of responsibility for a given task in the work environment and he believes that every human being has the strength to carry out their respective responsibilities. He added, the leadership style can give a boost to the followers. John Baldoni also stressed that leadership is how we prepare ourselves and the organization for the future (Baldoni, 2012).

Based on the definition above, leadership is a phenomenon of leaders with good personality and attitude to share a vision in an organization that requires the process of influencing follower. Effective leadership come with a good vision and consider meeting the follower's needs.

The relationship between the constructs was tested on a large sample of leaders in polytechnics by using the SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) technique. This statistical technique enabled us to estimate the relative contribution of the variable involved and to study the nature of their interactions. SEM makes it possible to test whether theoretically plausible constructs provide a good fit to the data.

LEADERSHIP PROCESSES

First, Communication. Among the processes, communication is especially important. Regular use of systematic communications is essential to building productive working relationships between

the principal and staff and among teachers. Also, as instructional leadership assumes greater importance for principals, this change in role behavior must be communicated and reinforced regularly in interactions with staff and parents.

Communication must be integrally connected with each of the leadership functions, and overall school communications should clearly reflect the importance of instruction. Given the preference among principals for live, face to face communication, it seems most important that principals make the best use of routine events, e.g. faculty meetings, supervisory conferences, student assemblies, PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) events, to communicate the school's mission and their own priorities related to curriculum and instruction. In addition, instructional leaders create opportunities, in which they can communicate the substantive information related to the various leadership functions, e.g. visits to classrooms, faculty retreats, task force, or grade/department meetings (Sani Ibrahim, 2013).

Second, Conflict Management. The development of a strong goal consensus and a common language within the school regarding curriculum and instruction increases the probability that the conflict will be produced channeled in the organization. Recognizing the varying concerns of different groups of teachers and parents is the first step principals must take in developing a school mission, a coordinated curriculum, or a school-wide reward structure.

Conflict is a predictable consequence of the process of building a more effective school since the movement towards a common set of assumptions of what the school should be doing and how that might occur may result in a slight reduction in individual teacher autonomy. Thus, the ability to manage conflict so that group consistency is improved and school norms develop which support the ability of school-wide goals are critical for principals interested in instructional improvement (Sani Ibrahim, 2013).

Third, Group Process and Decision Making. The effective schools findings, taken as a whole, suggest that instructional effectiveness

is greater when teachers teach within the context of common work structure, i.e. common goals, a coordinated curriculum, and a school-wide discipline system. Many of the leadership functions discussed earlier involve the development of school-wide policies, which make it easier to provide effective instruction in classrooms.

For example, school policies regarding student behavior and absenteeism, scheduling, public address announcements, and time allocated to instruction in various subject areas require greater consensus than is typically found in schools. In order to bring about such a change without encroaching on the ability of teachers to maximize their creativity in classroom instruction, special attention should be paid to developing collaborative organizational decision making processes (Sani Ibrahim, 2013).

Strong leadership does not require principals to make all decisions, nor does collegiality require that all decisions be made by the group. The role of the teachers and principal in the decision-making process should, however, be clearly specified before the process begins. Likewise the orientation of the groups should be toward completion of a task, not maintenance of group relations. Principals should promote a feeling of freedom of group members to make contributions and suggestions and of rough equality of participation with each other. Principals should also make certain that group processes lead to some real or symbolic conclusion (Sani Ibrahim, 2013).

Fourth, Change Process. Organizational conditions in schools that discourage change need to be clearly understood. Major changes in instruction and curriculum, also, are more likely to be successfully implemented if they are based on collegiality and collaboration rather than solely on line authority. Thus, significant input from teachers, students, and parents is recommended in the development of the school mission and goals. Likewise, teacher involvement in the definition of the content of the school's curricular objectives and materials is a necessary step in the change process if principal expects effective implementation of instructional and curricular innovations (Sani Ibrahim, 2013).

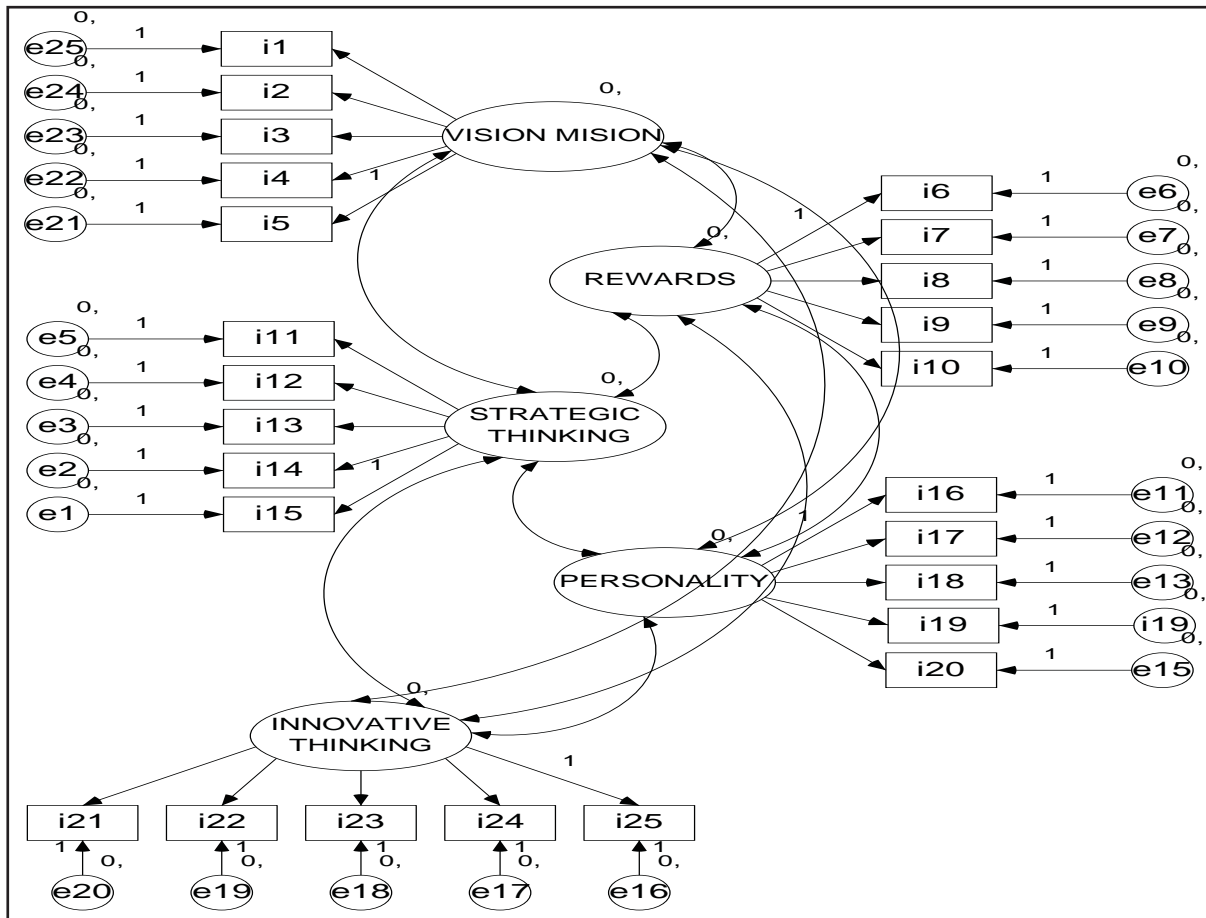


Figure 1:
The First Model of Structural Equation

Fifth, Environmental Interactions. The last of the leadership processes contained in this framework of instructional leadership is environmental interaction. This leadership process variable is comprised of the principal behaviors designed both to connect the instructional processes and the curriculum of the schools with its environment and to protect instruction and curriculum from fluctuations in that environment. It recognizes that principals play an important role in interpreting the needs and demands which abound in the school's environment. The principal more than any other staff member in the school is expected to mediate those environmental expectations and incorporate them into the school's program.

Conversely, the principal as a "boundary spanner" is also in a position to influence the expectations and desires of the parents,

the community, and the district office. Both of these roles suggest the important role played by instructional leaders in: (1) obtaining input from the environment, e.g. the school community, in defining the school's mission; (2) communicating the mission both inside and outside the school to key audiences; and (3) buffering the school's program from central-office and community pressures which might impede the accomplishment of the school's mission (Sani Ibrahim, 2013).

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to one technical institution in the country. The percentages of questionnaires that can be used were 95 or 95%. Samples were adequate based on the recommendations of J.F. Hair *et al.* (2010), in utilizing the SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) technique, the

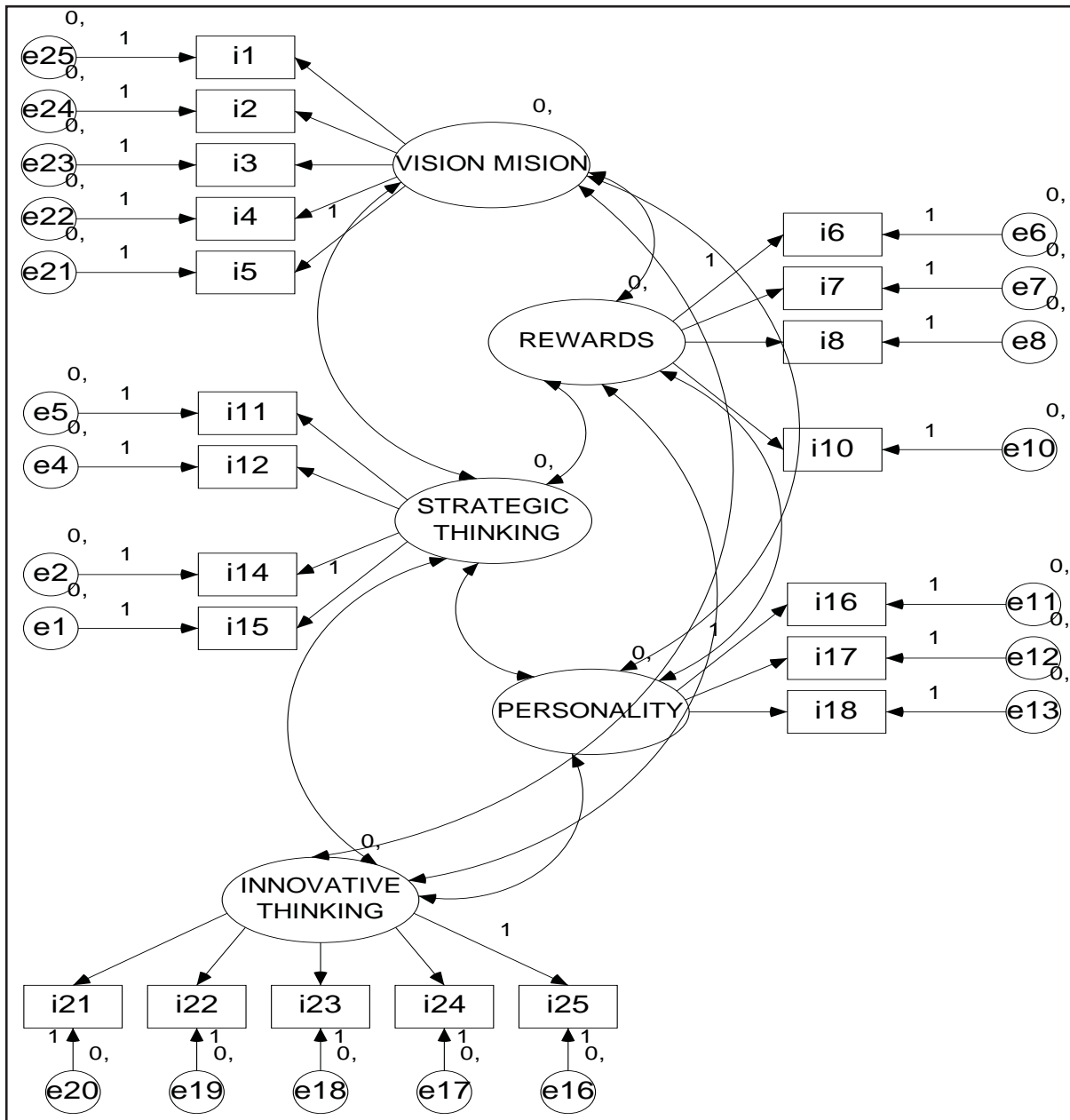


Figure 2:
The Final Model of Structural Equation

number of samples must 100 if the number of construct is five or less latent construct (cf Awang, 2014).

Researchers are also suggested to increase the number of samples if they encounter any of these conditions: (1) data displays abnormal characteristics; (2) using alternative estimation procedure; and (3) anticipating more than 10% of missing data.

The participants were 95 lecturers from one technical institution in the country.

They were selected randomly to complete the questionnaires. Lecturers were briefed on the nature of the questionnaires and confidentiality was confirmed. They were allowed as much time as they needed to complete the questionnaires, typically requiring 30 – 40 minutes.

The questionnaire used consists of two parts: A and B. Part A is the demographics of the respondents; while the part B is a leadership inventory or KII (Kudder Interest

Table 1:
Significant Value of Hypothesis Relationship

Hypothesis and Variables Relationship	p-Value	Result
Vision, Mission <--- Rewards	0.016	Not Significant
Vision, Mission <--- Strategic Thinking	***	Significant
Vision, Mission <--- Personality	0.557	Not Significant
Vision, Mission <--- Innovative Thinking	0.772	Not Significant
Rewards <--- Strategic Thinking	0.001	Significant
Rewards <--- Personality	0.001	Significant
Rewards <--- Innovative Thinking	0.138	Not Significant
Strategic Thinking <--- Personality	0.261	Not Significant
Strategic Thinking <--- Innovative Thinking	0.397	Not Significant
Personality <--- Innovative Thinking	0.001	Significant

*** p < 0.001

Table 2:
Interpretation of the Hypothesis Statement Relationship

Hypothesis Statement	p-Value	Hypothesis Result
H1: Rewards have a significant relationship with Vision Mission	0.016	Does not support
H2: Strategic Thinking has a significant relationship with Vision Mission	***	Supported
H3: Personality has a significant relationship with Vision Mission	0.557	Does not support
H4: Innovative Thinking has a significant relationship with Vision Mission	0.772	Does not support
H5: Strategic Thinking has a significant relationship with Rewards	0.001	Supported
H6: Personality has a significant relationship with Rewards	0.001	Supported
H7: Innovative Thinking has a significant relationship with Rewards	0.138	Does not support
H8: Personality has a significant relationship with Strategic Thinking	0.261	Does not support
H9: Innovative Thinking has a significant relationship with Strategic Thinking	0.397	Does not support
H10: Innovative Thinking has a significant relationship with Personality	0.001	Supported

Inventory), which consists of five constructs adapted from models of P. Hallinger & J. Murphy (1985); J. Murphy (1990); J.M. Liedtka (1998); McEwan (1998); NASSP (2001); Curt Grayson & David Baldwin (2007); and Paul Sloane (2007) in order to obtain relationship of the elements of leadership in the context of TVE or Technical and Vocational Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, Measurement Model. This study was analyzed using CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) to measure the correspondence between the measured model. CFA is a multivariate statistical analysis approach to test and validate the hypothesis of measurement model.

Measurement model, in figure 1, was confirmed statistically by each of the observed variables that are related to latent variables (factors) that are the basis of the measurement model. The results obtained should be χ^2 / df ,

where less than 5 ($CMIN / df = 3,717$) $RMSEA = 0.057$ less than 0:08 and CFI TLI and IFI everything is over 0.9 (0950 0943 and 0951), in which the models achieve the equivalence.

The study also found that there is no significant differences between study data and model of hypothesis. Then, convergent and discriminant validity were assessed. Factor analysis of all items obtained was greater than 0.5 and composite reliability was above 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

The results of the analysis showed that all the values for each construct has the relationship between each other. In conclusion, the five constructs in the measurement model covers reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity. See figure 2.

Second, Structural Equation Modelling. This test is seen by some significant regression load path. Significant value evaluated from the critical ratio that exceeds 1.96 ($p < 0.001$). Table 1 shows the path coefficients hypothesis

tests conducted by SEM (Structural Equation Model). The results in table 1 also show that not all constructs had significantly higher on these items. This is based on p-values that comply with $p < 0.001$.

Table 1 shows that the results of the significant value of hypothesis relationship. The findings show that all variable relationship have not influence except Vision, Mission <--- Strategic Thinking, Personality <--- Innovative Thinking, Rewards <--- Personality and Rewards <--- Strategic Thinking. This is because it have the value of $p < 0.001$ (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 2 shows the results of the hypothesis for each hypothesis statement. The findings show that when the value of $p > 0.001$ was not supporting the relationships between constructs significantly due to the relationship between the constructs was not significant between each other.

CONCLUSION

The findings show that the elements of Strategic Thinking and Rewards influence in developing the Vision and Mission of the TVE (Technical and Vocational Education). In addition, the Personality also has a significant relationship with the element of Rewards and Innovative Thinking.

As a leader in TVE institutions, it is necessary for the leaders to practice the effective leadership style as well as the realization of education and training systems in line with industry requirements and the current market. This process is to produce human resources who are capable, innovative, highly motivated, efficient, and productive in organizational management and services, especially TVE in Malaysia (cf Esa, Hadi & Hashim, 2012).¹

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¹**Statement:** We would like to declare that this article is our original work; so, it is not product of plagiarism and not yet also be reviewed and published by other scholarly journals.

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