LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF HEAD TEACHERS AND UNITY LEVELS TEACHERS IN MULTIRACIAL SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Starting in school, people are introduced to various types of knowledge including the values of unity. Schools are also among the important institutions that able to help the formation of racial unity involving teachers and peers through the socialization process. Various courses and training related to unity have also been given to school leaders, especially head teachers to ensure these leaders able to translate their efforts by applying the values of unity in among the school community. This study was carried out to see the level of leadership practice the unity of head teachers and the level of unity of teachers in multi-racial schools. This study was conducted in primary schools in the middle zone districts, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Federal Territories and Putrajaya region involving 50 respondents to answer the questionnaire based on the Model of Unity among Teachers and School Pupils by Division Education Policy Planning and Research (BPPDP), Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE 2014). The findings of the study show that the level of leadership practice of teacher unity large is high (mean=3.84, s.p=0.87), as well as the level of teacher unity shows the level high (mean=4.37, s.p=0.53). This shows the leadership practice of unity of the principal has not been fully empowered to reach the highest level. Study This kind of thing can be continued on a larger scale to identify other factors that more impact on unity such as the cause that hinders towards unity in school.

Keywords: Leadership, Racial Unity, Headmaster, Leadership Practice

1. INTRODUCTION

The education system is the main tool used in fostering the spirit of unity among the community starting at school. According to Hew, L.P et.al. (2023), education is also an agent of community and country development in producing internationally competitive citizens. Most countries are trying to improve the quality of their education because quality education is able to produce a society and individuals who are balanced and have relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values so that they can live a healthy life and be able to contribute effectively to the development of the country (Madani. 2019 & UNICEF . 2015).

Leadership according to Jamaliah and Norashimah (2005), is a force that influences a person's behavior to the point of making them willing to cooperate to achieve a goal. It is supported by Cole (2015) & Chowdhury (2017) defining leadership as a dynamic process in which one person influences others to contribute voluntarily in realizing and achieving objectives towards common

goals.While unity is a result when an individual or a group of individuals is able to accept, respect and manage differences in culture, mother tongue and religious practices caused by different races. In addition, the Ministry of Education Policy Planning and Research Division (2014) states that unity also refers to an individual's ability to accept differences by having the values of open attitude, tolerance, cooperation and other values of unity.

In order to realize the desire to strengthen unity, the Malaysian Ministry of Education is the first ministry in Malaysia that has instruments to measure the level of unity, has an index of teacher and student unity and has a unity model specific to education. With the various efforts implemented by the Ministry of Education, particularly in relation to school leadership for unity, it is expected to increase the level of unity. However, after three years of measuring unity carried out by the Education Policy Planning and Research Division in 2014, 2016 and 2018, the unity index is decreasing according to the KPM's Unity Level Measurement Study Report in 2018 (Mohd Radzi. 2020).

Research on unity leadership practices and the level of teacher unity in schools is still understudied. After it was reported by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2018 that the unity index is decreasing, this study raises the main question of wanting to identify what is the level of unity leadership of head teachers in multi-racial schools? and what is the level of teacher unity in multiracial schools? This study will discuss the conceptual and theoretical framework used, the research findings obtained, discussion, implications and recommendations for the study of Principal Unity Leadership Practices and Levels of Teacher Unity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In strengthening unity in schools, head teachers are used as examples or follow practices that can create unity. The role of leaders for unity has been explained by several researchers in Mohd Radzi's study (2020), which include; Henze (2000) states that school leaders have the advantage to influence positive race relations in schools and between educational institutions. In addition, Miller (2019b) states that school leaders have a strong influence to create a positive culture in schools. Each school organization is unique and the character that is built is determined by the school leader. And according to Brooks and Watson (2018), leaders who understand the effects of disunity will try to deal with racism, think and act to strategize with other school leaders to overcome the problem.

Discussions about the role of school leaders that are considered important for school improvement will never stop (Cowie and Crawford. 2008). The study argues that principals need to continuously improve their professional identity in order to adapt to the various obstacles, challenges and experiences they face. These barriers may include political, social and cultural changes, race, gender or individual personal experiences. According to Robertson (2017), professional identity is the result of a process of learning and self-reflection. Therefore, all teachers have the ability to improve their personal and professional competence.

According to Ritacco and Bolivar (2018), the leader's identity greatly influences the success of a leadership. Crow et al. (2017) also found that principals' feelings about their professional identity

will create a strong and critical moral and is necessary for their ability to perform effective practices in schools. To improve the performance of teachers and students at school, Bahous et al. argue that leaders need to have a strong leadership identity and are influenced by the principal's beliefs, values and personal feelings (Boris-Schacter and Merrifield. 2000 and Crow et al. 2017).

Brooks (2012) is of the view that, since much of the work of educational leaders is focused on the future progress of the school such as mission, goals, strategic plans and others, it is important for issues of equity (equality) between races to be given attention. If addressing racism is not part of the school's plan for the future, it will be more difficult for the school to better address racism (Brooks. 2012; Scheurich & Skrla. 2003). Jefrrey and Terri (2019) are also of the view that if school leaders increase their knowledge about other races, they may realize the benefits that can be obtained from those other races and will reduce the feelings of racism that exist in each of them.

In addition, school leaders also need to see that school is the foundation in forming a generation of unity. Unity according to the National Institute of Public Administration (1980) is a process that unites members of the community and the country as a whole through national ideology so that each member of the community can form a common identity and value as well as a common national feeling among them. While Mohd Yassin (2006) says unity refers to a form of unification of various groups that have different social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, under a form of national identity that is more specific but that can be accepted by the majority of all ethnic groups in this country.

In the school context, the concept of unity is very important to be created at the school level because this unity is the basis for the young generation in building the nation state system. This is supported in a study by Ku Hasnita (2007) who states that education is one of the important factors in the concept of unity. So, in connection with that, Yong Hie et. al. (2018) stated that teachers are agents of socialization in the formation of racial unity. Teachers need to appreciate the ideology of the country and teachers are also responsible for making students aware of the importance of unity in society.

Miller's study (1995), he stated that teachers need to avoid negative feelings such as having a negative impression of different races. In the context of this study, teachers play a role in instilling noble values including the value of racial unity to students at school. By appreciating this noble value, it becomes one of the principles that can provide balance in economic and social development in a multi-racial society in Malaysia (Zaliza & Norlin. 2009). According to Abd Rahim (2001), schools and teachers play a more effective role than other parties in instilling good values among students because students receive formal and systematic education at school. Therefore, a teacher must always show a positive attitude in himself to instill a positive attitude in his students (Zuria & Salleh. 1998). Otherwise, all negative examples of teachers will influence and be followed by students.

Review from past studies, every study that conducts research on school unity tries to emphasize the role of each party in moving towards racial unity. However, there has not been a study of the approach regarding the evaluation of the head teacher's unity leadership practice and the level of teacher unity that has been done.

2.1. Concept of Leadership

Leaders play an important role in an organization. The role of leaders is to bring direction in achieving organizational goals by creating a situation that will influence the attitude, motivation and behavior of employees. According to Shastri, Shahsi Mishra & Sinha (2019) and Keskes (2017), leadership is defined as a relationship between individuals and groups based on mutual interests in behaving according to the leader's instructions. Leadership is the process of influencing followers according to Yukl (2014). According to Cole (2015) and Chowdhury (2017) also define leadership as a dynamic process where one person influences others to contribute voluntarily in realizing and achieving objectives towards a common goal.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this study was to identify the level of leadership practices of headteacher unity and the level of teacher unity in multi-racial schools. The framework of this concept is as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Concept Framework


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┌─────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Head Teacher Unity      │◄────────►│ Level of Teacher Unity  │
│ Leadership Practices    │          │                         │
└─────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────┘
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2.3. Functionalism Theory

Education plays a role as one of the agents of socialization that forms shared values and also forms a balanced social and economic structure. Through the education system, each individual is introduced to values that are considered important by the community such as tolerance, mutual respect and cooperation among multi-racial and multi-ethnic communities. So with functionalism theory, education can affect the social mobility of an individual. According to Amir Hasan (2006), a person's mobility means the movement of individuals or groups between different positions in the social stratification hierarchy of society. This mobility can also occur vertically or horizontally (Bity Salwana, Mohd Radzi & Rorlinda. 2022).

Brinkeroff and White (1989) formulated the three main assumptions of functionalism theory which are stability, harmony and evolution. Stability will determine the extent to which a society can maintain its balance. While harmony refers to the spirit of cooperation in society to achieve a certain goal. Evolution, on the other hand, is described as a change that occurs in society as a result of reform, but is still able to maintain the stability and harmony of the society. Summarized, this theory emphasizes the importance of understanding among community members for the sake of harmony and stability in the community.

In the construction of research items, the researcher takes into account the factors that can maintain stability and harmony as well as the evolution of all races in the school. These items take a stable factor which is that none of the races feel threatened by the response they will give. For the

harmony item, it is also ensured that the instrument maintains or does not affect the spirit of cooperation among teachers to achieve the school's goals. The items given are also expected to indirectly give awareness to head teachers and teachers to change for the better, that is to do the practices as stated in the items that contain the values of unity, and increase their ability to accept, respect and manage differences among themselves them.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section discusses the following aspects:

3.1. Research Design

The design of this study is a quantitative design using the survey method. This method was chosen because according to Gay et. Al. (2011) explained that survey methods involve the assessment of perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, practices, interests for a group of respondents. In the context of this study, the respondents will express their opinions about the level of leadership practice of head teacher unity and the level of self-unity of teachers in multiracial primary schools.

This study involved 50 primary school teachers in the middle zone states. Since this study involves a relatively large area, it is more appropriate to use a quantitative method. The advantages of this design allow a lot of information to be collected at one time, low cost and easy to handle (Creswell. 2014).

3.2. Population and Study Sample

The population of this study is primary school teachers in the Central Zone district (Selangor, Federal Territory, Putrajaya & Negeri Sembilan). This study uses the sampling method "convenience sampling" or random sampling. This technique is based on the ease of accessing the studied population. This technique also does not take certain characteristics that can be observed by the researcher in the selection of the study sample. According to Fah & Hoon (2014), this technique also cannot confirm whether it represents the population or not. For sampling purposes, Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) sample size determination table was referred to for conducting this study. The study sample was a total of 50 teachers in schools of various races in districts close to Selangor.

3.3. Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study are divided into three sections, namely the demographic section, the section on the leadership practices of headteacher unity and the section on the level of teacher unity. The instruments for the level of leadership practice of principal unity and the level of teacher unity are measured using a questionnaire that has been adapted from the research questionnaire "Leadership Practices of Principal Unity, the level of Teacher Unity and the Level of Secondary School Student Unity" used by Mohd Radzi (2021). In the section on the level of principal teacher unity leadership practice and the level of teacher unity, the study respondents will answer the

questionnaire based on the Likert scale provided. There are five numbers in the Likert scale which are 5 – Always, 4 – Often, 3 – Sometimes, 2 – Rarely, 1 – Never.

3.4. Validity and Reliability Instrument

Validity is used to measure the accuracy of a measure used in the study (Sabitha 2005). According to Sabitha again, validity aims to ensure that the measurement used contains all the characteristics or ideas that should be present in the concept being measured. the reliability test for the item measuring the level of teacher unity in the Teacher Questionnaire reached Cronbach's alpha value between 0.85 to 0.97 with the corrected item value - total correlation between 0.34 to 0.83. This means that, overall, the items in this research instrument are appropriate and can be used for the purpose of the study.

3.5. Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining permission to conduct the study, the questionnaire was distributed online in which respondents only had to fill out a Google Form. The Google Form link is distributed through a group in the Whatsapp application to school teachers in the Central Zone district. Data collection took 2 weeks for 50 primary school teachers.

3.6. Data Analysis

The collected research data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The data collected through the questionnaire will be entered into the SPSS software to obtain and organize the data in the form of a table. All findings are collected in the form of tables and graphs and Cronbach Alpha will be used to test the reliability of the values. Descriptive analysis will be used to determine the level of head teacher unity leadership practices and the level of teacher unity in multi-racial schools based on descriptive data such as mean percentage and standard deviation.

4. FINDINGS

This study involves descriptive data analysis to answer the objective of the study. Descriptive analysis provides a mean value that allows the teacher's assessment of the principal's unity leadership and the level of teacher unity to be interpreted as either very low, low, moderate, high and very high as determined by Kuebler and Smith (1976). The mean score and interpretation are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Min Score Interpretation

Min Score	Interpretation
≥ 4.51	Very High
3.51 – 4.50	High
2.51 – 3.50	Moderate
1.51 – 2.50	Low
≤ 1.50	Very Low

Source: Kuebler and Smith (1976)

4.1. Demographics of Respondents

The findings of this study are based on a study of 50 respondents consisting of teachers in the Central Zone district. The research data has been analyzed using descriptive analysis which will identify the level of head teacher unity leadership practice and also the level of teacher unity.

Table 2: Headmaster Profile

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS		FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Gender	Male	6	60
	Female	4	40
Race	Malay	8	80
	Chinese	1	10
	Indian	1	10
	Bumiputera Sabah	0	0
	Bumiputera Sarawak	0	0
	Others	0	0

This study found that this survey involved a total of 10 head teachers who were evaluated to identify the level of head teachers' unity leadership practices in multi-racial schools. Based on Table 2, the number of male head teachers is more, which is 6 people, compared to female head teachers, which is 4 people. This study has also evaluated a total of 8 Malay head teachers, one Chinese and one Indian. Overall, a head teacher is rated by 5 teachers in the school where they serve.

Table 3: Profile of Respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS		FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Location	Rural	29	58
	Urban	21	42
Type of School	Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK)	40	80
	Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (SJK)	10	20
Gender	Male	35	70
	Female	15	30
Age	30 Years and Under	10	20
	31 – 40 Years	19	38
	41 – 50 Years	16	32
	51 – 60 Years	5	10
Race	Malay	32	64
	Chinese	7	14
	Indian	5	10
	Bumiputera Sabah	6	12

	Bumiputera Sarawak	0	0
	Others	0	0
Period of service in school	0 - 3 Years	7	14
	4 – 6 Years	9	18
	7 – 9 Years	13	26
	10 – 12 Years	16	32
	13 – 15 Years	3	6
	16 Years and Above	2	4
Gred	DG41	9	18
	DG42	15	30
	DG44	13	26
	DG48	6	12
	DG52	5	10
	DG54	2	4
	JUSA C	0	0

Referring to Table 3, the following is the profile of the respondents consisting of 50 teachers involved in this study. Based on the location factor, a total of 29 teachers (58%) in the city were involved in this study, while the number of teachers outside the city involved was 21 (42%). Based on the type of school, only 10 people (20%) teachers serve in Chinese & Indian National Type Schools (SJK) and the remaining 40 people (80%) are teachers in National Schools (SK). Based on gender, there are more female teacher respondents than male teachers. Respondents were 35 female teachers (70%) and 15 male teachers (30%).

This study also involved all age groups starting with teachers aged 30 years and under as many as 10 people 20%) young teachers, 19 people (38%) teachers aged between 31 - 40 years old, 16 people (32%) teachers aged between 41 to 50 years old and 5 people (10%) teachers who are between 51-60 years old. In addition, the respondents of this study consisted of 32 (64%) Malay teachers, 7 (14%) Chinese teachers, 5 (10%) Indian teachers and 6 (12%) Sabah Bumiputera teachers.

Based on the period of service in the current school, this study involves 7 people (14%) teachers who have served 3 years and below, 9 people (18%) who have served 4 years to 6 years, 13 people (26%) teachers who have served 7 years to 9 years, 16 (32%) teachers who have served for 10 to 12 years, 3 (6%) teachers who have served for 13 to 15 years and 2 (4%) teachers who have served for 16 years or more.

The respondents of this study based on job grade involved a total of 9 people (18%) teachers in grade DG41, 15 people (30%) teachers in grade DG42, 13 people (26%) teachers in grade DG44, 6 people (12%) teachers in grade DG48, 5 people (10%) in grade DG52 and 2 people (4%) teachers in grade DG54.

4.3. The level of principal teacher unity leadership practice

The findings for the first objective of the study is to identify the level of principal teacher unity leadership practice shown in Table 4. The evaluation is made by the teacher towards the principal teacher.

Table 4: The Level of Principal Teacher Unity Leadership Practice

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
The head teacher's practice applies the value of being open	3.64	0.85	High
The practice of head teachers instilling the value of tolerance	3.62	0.83	High
The head teacher's practice of applying the value of cooperation	4.02	0.81	High
The practice of head teachers instilling the value of trust	3.97	0.86	High
The head teacher's practice is to apply high values of prudence	3.86	0.83	High
The practice of head teachers is to apply values of appreciation	3.77	0.82	High
The head teacher's practice of applying caring values	3.96	0.83	High
The head teacher's practice of applying fair values	3.90	0.85	High
The head teacher's practice of applying the value of trust	3.91	0.80	High
The head teacher's practice of applying rational values	3.87	0.84	High
Overall Level	3.84	0.87	High

N Teachers = 50

Findings show that the head teacher's unity leadership practice is at a high level with a mean score of 3.84 (standard deviation 0.87). The highest practice applied by head teachers is the value of collaborating with other races with a mean value of 4.02 (standard deviation = 0.81). Head teachers are also at a high level for the practice of applying other values of unity, namely the values of openness, tolerance, cooperation, prudence, appreciation and concern with a mean score between 3.62 to 4.02 (standard deviation = 0.81 to 0.86). Based on the teacher's evaluation, the lowest level achieved by the principal is the practice of applying the value of tolerance with a mean score of 3.62 (standard deviation = 0.83). Overall, head teachers have reached a high level and have not yet reached a very high level in the practice of unity leadership. It can be concluded that the head teacher has not fully practiced as a unity leader.

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Table 5: Level of Teacher Unity

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Be Open	4.35	0.60	High
Tolerance	4.36	0.56	High
Cooperation	4.31	0.60	High
Believe	4.19	0.65	High
High Prudence	4.39	0.55	High
Appreciation	4.42	0.59	High
Caring	4.40	0.58	High
Fair	4.39	0.61	High
Trust	4.46	0.58	High
Rational	4.42	0.58	High
Overall Level	**4.37**	**0.53**	**High**

N Teacher = 50

Findings show that the level of unity of head teachers is at a high level with a mean score of 4.37 (standard deviation 0.53). Teachers achieved a high level of unity values with a mean between 4.19 (standard deviation = 0.65) to 4.46 (standard deviation = 0.58). The highest mean achieved by teachers in the value of unity is the value of trust (mean = 4.46, standard deviation = 0.58), while the lowest mean achieved is the value of trust (mean = 4.19, standard deviation = 0.65).

It is concluded that the level of unity has existed among teachers but only at a high level, and not yet at the highest level. This analysis shows that teachers are able to accept, respect and manage differences. Teachers have also not reached the highest level for the values of unity that they have.

5. DISCUSSION

The role of the head teacher has changed not only to focus on academic excellence and school and student co-curriculum, but also to focus on aspects of unity that need to be fostered in the school community as well. Head teachers are at a high level in practicing the practice of unity leadership by applying the values of unity. All values of unity are at a high level, but the head teacher needs to improve the value of tolerance which is the lowest value in the mean score of the head teacher's unity leadership practice.

In addition to the role of imparting general knowledge to students, teachers also have space to inculcate in students the importance of the values of unity. Starting from the teacher, the values of unity must be applied and practiced among teachers so that teachers can be a model of unity for students and then become a model of unity for society. Based on the results of the study, the level of teacher unity is at a high level. All values of unity are at a high level and teachers are able to apply those values in themselves.

5.1. Implications

Overall, the findings of this study have implications for the theory and model used in this study. The results of the study support the Functionalism theory in which education plays an important role in strengthening unity. Functionalism theory which prioritizes stability, harmony and evolution is also referred to in this study. While the model referred to in this study is the Unity Model Among Teachers and School Pupils by the Education Policy Planning and Research Division (BPPDP), Ministry of Education Malaysia (KPM 2014). A complete and suitable model is referred to in the implementation of unity programs such as Student Integration Plan for Unity (RIMUP) and so on. The research instrument also refers to the three main dimensions in the unity model to measure unity among educators.

Next, the implications of this study on the policy of unity through education which shows the relevance of some education virgins that aim for unity as found in the National Education Policy Book by BPPDP, Ministry of Education Malaysia (2017). Among them, such as the use of Malay as the language of unity, the learning syllabus and examination system coordinated by the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

This study has implications for the courses and training that have been given to school leaders and teachers should be continued. The Implementation of Unity Values Course organized by the Aminuddin Baki Institute (IAB) is one of the courses that needs to be continued with the aim of providing knowledge and skills to school leaders to lead the school community towards unity. In addition, this course exposes the principal with the values of unity as found in the Model of Unity among Teachers and School Students. In addition, by attending organized courses and training can improve professional identity that can help head teachers self-reflect on their leadership role (Robertson. 2017).

Next, the implications of this study for head teachers is that they can assess and detect strengths and weaknesses in their unity leadership practices. It is a demand in the Malaysian Ministry of Education Policy that wants all school leaders to play a good role as unity leaders. The Application of Unity Values Course and Unity Practice Guidelines in Schools should be used as a reference in playing their role in forming unity in schools. The findings of this study show that principals need to improve their practices in applying the values of unity.

Studies can be carried out to study the factors that are an obstacle towards unity in schools so that head teachers and teachers can deal with these issues and challenges. This is because the school is the center of initial unity for this multiracial community. In addition, the results of this study are only for the Central Zone district. Therefore, the results of this study cannot be generalized to the entire population of primary schools in Malaysia. Further studies can be done with a larger population within the same scope of study.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this study show that the principal's unity leadership practice has been accepted by teachers in their respective schools. The performance score of the head teacher's

practice is at a high level. This shows that this unity leadership practice was successfully highlighted by the headmaster and can be seen by the teachers so that the teacher can make an assessment of the headmaster on the practice. While the level of teacher unity in multi-racial schools is at a high level of interpretation, not a very high level. This is a good starting point in fostering unity in schools because the teachers already In addition to supporting the theory and model of unity referred to in conducting the study, this study also provides input in the empowerment of unity in education and also provides input for head teachers to improve practice unity leadership in schools.

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