CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In recent years, a situation gradually emerges in which certain schools gain a good reputation for producing excellent results while others do not. This has inevitably created a situation where school principals try their best to ensure that their students achieve high quality passes at all common examinations.

What is meant here is that parents and educational circles generally acknowledge certain schools to be schools where the learning environment is good and where students obtained high academic achievements in National Examinations, such as Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR), Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR), Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) and Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia (STPM).

The principal, as a school leader, has a significant role to play in directing the activities of the school towards goal attainment. Taking this into consideration, leadership in school can no longer be taken for granted. In recent years, particularly since the 1980's, there has been a growing emphasis by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia on training a core of school principals who are professional in outlook, efficient in discharging administrative duties, creative in thinking and innovative in managing their schools. However, not many principals have the opportunity to

receive systematic or formal training in educational administration or school management and most of them have to learn on the job.

The question inevitably arises: "what makes one school more effective than another?" This question is of great importance to Malaysian parents as they compete with one another to send their children to the "right" schools - schools that would make a difference to their children's learning.

School principal has the responsibility to create the appropriate learning environment for his pupils and the instruction environment for his teachers. The extent to which principals learnt to cope with additional job demands will reflect the effectiveness of their leadership role.

Jacobsen (1982) stated that school principals may legitimately be held accountable for their own performance and decision, for making reasonable effort to properly and clearly inform students and teacher concerning performance. The responsibilities must be reasonable, they must be clearly and precisely stated; they must be communicated efficiently to those who are responsible, and the responsible persons must be dealt with fairly and consistently.

Principal can have positive effective effects on his staff, so that the quality of the school's instructional programme can be improved in a most pleasant and satisfactory way, or he may be a disruptive force. Although they have the power to develop and direct the staff under his charge, yet there are limitations to them. These

included occasional directives from Ministry of Education, financial constrains, pupils, caliber of teachers, members of the public who have access to politics and in authority.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

There is always a desirable of research regarding educational education in Malaysia. We can find some odd reference in official Teacher Commission Reports and Ministry of Education journals reflect upon the principal routine administrative functions from the technical point of view, such as keeping his ledger, how he should allocate monies so as to maximize resources, and the like, little comment is made on the principal's interaction with their subordinates (Lim,1983). However, teachers should be considered as most important asset to be utilized to maximize the output of pupils' academic performance.

This study intends to make a contribution to our understanding of effective schools in the Malaysia environment. The approach is the organizational approach; that is, we are more concerned with the people in the school and the education system such as the school principals.

Thus, the aim of this study is to examine the key factors and variables that directly or indirectly influence the educational outcomes of schools. It is also an attempt to investigate the specific influence of the leadership provided by principals.

Recent human literature tends to divide administrative leadership types into " System Orientation " and "Personal Orientation" categories. These two types have been given other names, such as Initiating Structure Leadership and Consideration Leadership In a wider perspective, if we can identify the main characteristics of school administration that could improve achievement, then from the policy-makers' point of view, more precise in-service and pre-service training programmes for principals could be developed and implemented.

The variables used in study are consideration and initiating structure, which reflects leadership behavior (independent variable) and school effectiveness (dependent variable). Both the consideration and initiating structure dimension of leadership behavior measured by the modified Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) Form XII (Shortened version). School effectiveness is measured based on academic performance of students in their National Examinations.

1.3   Statements of Questions and Hypotheses

This study will systematically classify and compare dimensions of leadership in two secondary schools in Pahang State in differing situations, using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire Form XII (shortened version) as developed by the Ohio Leadership Studies Group (1967). The basic questions in this study are that, school productivity and effectiveness are functions of a number of key variables

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that are largely related to the quality of leadership existing in school. The research questions and Statements of Hypotheses in the study are :

(1)   To determine to what extent, the secondary school principals will differ along the leadership behavior styles.

Hypothesis 1 : The leadership style of the two secondary school principals differs significantly along leadership dimension of Person Orientated and System Oriented Leadership

(2)   To determine what aspects of school leadership behavior are considered the most important contributors to the effectiveness of principals as school leaders?

Hypothesis 2 : The leadership style between and among principals of the two secondary schools differs significantly from one another.

(3)   To determine if there is any difference of school administration between urban and rural principal effectiveness and school effectiveness.

Hypothesis 3: The leadership behavior of urban and rural settlement secondary school differs significantly from one another.

(4)   To determine whether there is any relationship between the leadership behavior and school effectiveness (Pupils' academic achievement)?

Hypothesis : There is a significant relationship between leadership behavior and the academic achievement of pupils in urban and rural schools.

1.4   Operational Definition

The variables were defined as follows:

(1)   Consideration Structure referred to the principal's behavior as indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect and warmth in the relationship between the principal and his staff. It also reflected the extent to which the principal was likely to have relationship with his teachers characterized by mutual trust, respect for their ideas,

(2)   Initiating structure referred to the principal's behavior in delineating the relationship between him and staff members and in setting up well defined patterns of organization, channels of communication and methods of procedure. It also reflected the extent to which a principal was likely to define and structure his own role and those of his teachers towards goal achievement.

(3)   School effectiveness referred to these important performance outcome indicators of schools, which are academic achievement, job satisfaction and perceived organizational effectiveness. Schools administrators can improve the quality and effectiveness of schools by using a number of critical processes - decision making, communication and leadership. These are administrative processes that educators must employ effectively if they are to help develop quality schools. Two general approaches, a goal perspective and a system – resource model, dominate the study of organizational effectiveness.

(4)   The operational definition of effectiveness used in this study is the extent to which goal set have been achieved. A principal is thus effective if he achieve the objectives that are set – by the school and by the Ministry of Education. 'Principal's effectiveness' would be the measure of the principal's achievement against school outcome such as school climate and morale, and academic performance. The principal's achievement is also defined in terms of the principal's ability to achieve the school's instructional programme with appropriate academic support and enrichment activities.
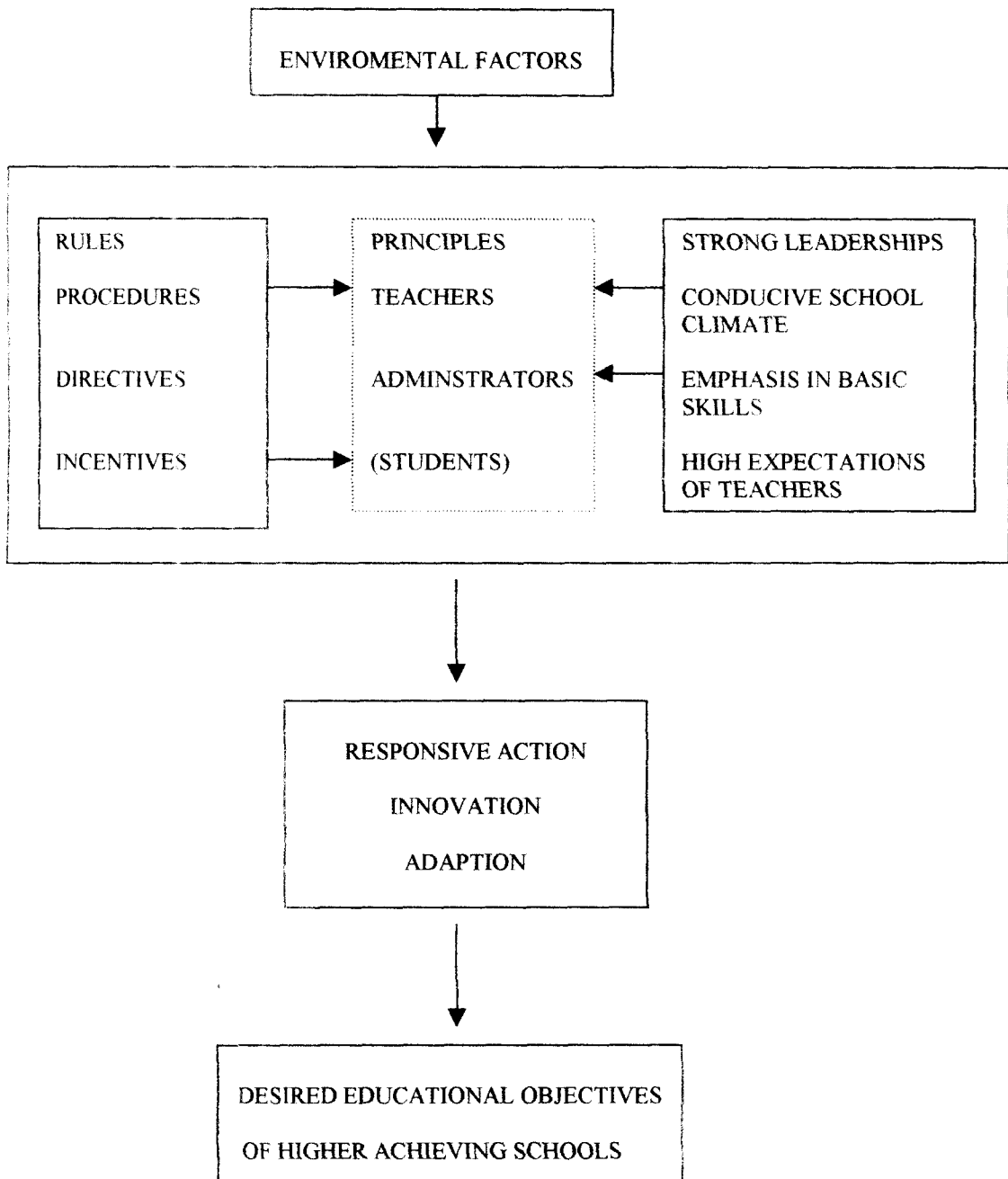
Education is the tool of country development, thus attention should be paid to matter pertaining to this particular field, especially problems that occur in the realm of education.

School are complex organizations and positive changes in the way they operate require, amongst other things, some sort of model which explains why and how certain practices could be more effective. In the organization approach to the issue of educational effectiveness, the school is not just considered a black box containing students to which resources are applied and from which some outflow or educational outcome is derived. Rather, the school is considered as an adaptive system, which has a structure, which is influenced by rules, procedures and incentives that organized within the system, and by other environmental and exogenous factors.

In this model as illustrated in Figure 1, the actual boundary of the shape of the 'box" enclosing the principals, teachers and administrators is dependent on the ability of the school system to adapt to a changing environment and to changing goals. The boundary is therefore shown as a dotted perimeter and not as rigid lines. The final system boundary is determined by the way the school, under the leadership of the principal, reacts to external pressures. A strong principal is an effective leader who is able to offset the rigidities of the large centralized bureaucracy. The assumption here is that responsive and innovative schools will be more able to achieve the desired educational objectives.

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Figure 1:

Conceptual Model For Studying Effective Schools

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│  │              │ ───▶ │              │ ◀─── │                      │  │
│  │ PROCEDURES   │      │ TEACHERS     │      │ CONDUCIVE SCHOOL     │  │
│  │              │      │              │      │ CLIMATE              │  │
│  │              │      │              │      │                      │  │
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│  │              │      │              │      │ SKILLS               │  │
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│  │ INCENTIVES   │ ───▶ │ (STUDENTS)   │      │ HIGH EXPECTATIONS    │  │
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1.5   Need and Importance of the Study

The principal has a significant role to play in directing the schools towards goal attainment. Taking this into consideration, leadership in school can not longer be taken for granted.   School teachers who had experience only in managing children and teaching in a classroom can no longer be considered adequately prepared to fill the role of a leader.   It is a professional position needed specific preparation.   The Report of the Royal Commission of the Teaching Service (1971) describes the situation more aptly; headmasters have little or no training in administration and have to rely on their judgement guided perhaps by clerks who in many cases are themselves not well qualified or equipped to carry out the multifarious functions.

To initiate any form of leadership training will require empirical knowledge on the nature and dimensions of the existing leadership behavior. The investigation attempts at defining, describing leadership behavior of principals in the secondary schools. The identification of strengths and weakness of behavior characteristics and the consequent formulation of desirable leadership behavior would be most useful in the implementation of training programs for prospective educational leaders.

It also concerns itself with the question of how to develop indicators of school performance and school effectiveness. As it turned out, it became clear that

effective school research, as against research on effective and successful business corporations is mostly conducted in the United States. Such research is certainly more required in Malaysia schools, which have the unique feature of having to instruct pupils in two languages, which might not be the mother tongue of the pupils.

1.6   Limitations of Study

This study is limited geographically conducted among two secondary schools in Pahang.   One of it is situated in urban area where its academic achievement for the past five years exceeds 90 % passes, whereas the second one comes from rural settlement and its common examinations is below 50 % passes. The results of the study cannot be used as an inference to all secondary schools in the nation. This is because there are so many other urban and rural features common to other places in the same state.

This study is also based on the respond of teachers working in the selected schools.   Their perceptions towards the research study might vary from different internal and external factors.   For the purpose of this study perceptions were derived from questionnaire administered by the researcher.

The study is limited to the leadership behavior of principals without focusing on the administrative behavior or effective management of schools. Leadership research is played by a number of very difficult problems. In the present research

where is necessary to study the leadership behavior and relate their differences to the difference in achievement scores of the two groups of schools, one of the main difficulties is to select large enough samples of cases is not easy to find.

Another factor which has an impact to the limitations of the study is the fact that, researcher had measured school effectiveness with academic achievement and had ignored the school's role in developing creativity. self-confidence, aspirations and expectation -- all of which are needed for future success in school and adult life. In addition the measure of school effectiveness based on academic performance will also be affected by socioeconomic background of the family, differences among schools and teachers Schools are not homogenous in their effects on students, schools differ in the effectiveness of their efforts to influence achievement test scores.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed how principals and teachers play important roles in maintaining the educational standard of the school. The effectiveness of leadership behavior has been reflected through principals' involvement in the instructional programmes which would affect the teachers' education attitude. The purpose of the study is to find out whether the leadership behavior of the principal has any effect on the pupils' academic achievement