Blue Ocean Leadership (BOL) Practices towards Promoting Employee Engagement in Public Service

Zaki Zakaria
Faculty of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia
Email: zakizakaria7477@gmail.com

Prof. Madya Dr Khairudin Idris
Faculty of Educational Studies, University Putra Malaysia
Email: kidin@putra.upm.edu.my

Dr. Mohd Bakhari Ismail
Cluster for Leadership and Executive Development, INTAN
Email: bakhari@intanbk.intan.my

Abstract
Malaysia has bold intention to be an advanced nation in 2020. Here, public service holds the key as they are the primary facilitator in achieving this noble dream. It required fully engaged public service workforce as achieving Vision 2020 is an ardours task. Getting employees' engagement is within reach with the introduction of Blue Ocean Leadership that provides a totally new approach as employees views are taken into consideration in developing new leadership profile. What makes it more interesting, it can be implemented at any time, low cost and able to provide high impact result. The issue of employee engagement needs special attention as the current situation portrays a shocking truth where only 13% of employees worldwide are engaged. In Malaysia, the rate is even worse as there are only 11% employees engaged in their jobs. Hence, employee engagement is critical issue that need to be addressed urgently in public service. As such, Blue Ocean Leadership is offering new framework and tools for leaders in public service with the aim of increasing level of employee engagement. Finally, this new leadership profile is shown on leadership canvas and shared among employees that aim to motivate them to strive for organizational excellence.
Keywords: Blue Ocean Leadership, Employee Engagement, Leadership, Vision 2020 And Public Service

1.0   Introduction

Malaysia is in the final phase of becoming an advanced nation in the year 2020. This is well explained in the current Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2015) that take place from 2016-2020 which strongly emphasize on various challenges that government is going to face in terms of economy, political and social well being. In fact, this 5 years plan reaffirms government commitment to a vision of growth that is based on prosperity and well being of citizen. Therefore, people will be the main centrepiece in this 11th Malaysia Plan whereby people economy will be given priority on the same page as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and per-capita income. It is the main intention of the government to build a better Malaysia for all Malaysians. In achieving this bold objective, public service hold the key as they are the main player and primary facilitator as outlined in Government Transformation Programme (GTP). However, the journey towards Vision 2020 is full of challenges due to many unexpected events that occur around the globe. Many unwitting global issues ranging from political turmoil, depreciation of currency, civil war, high inflation and recession for instance give huge impact towards achieving our national agendas. As such, public service have to shoulder heavy responsibilities as the objectives of the nation are totally different from their private counterparts which deal on issues like profit and loss, employee turnover and to enlarge shareholder wealth. On the opposite site, public service is dealing with issues linking to national goals such as national competitiveness, social welfare, human capital development, food security and income equity, to name a few.

One of the effective ways to get staff involvement is to ensure they are engaged in their daily jobs. It means they work like they enjoy playing every day. According to Boldani (2013), strong employee engagement will lead to various positive outcomes such as lower absenteeism, lower turnover besides improving quality of work and health. Jim Harter from Gallup Research mentioned that engaged employees have the mentality of thinking that they are responsible for the overall result of the organization. As such, they are more attentive, vigilant and always look out for the needs of their co-workers (Boldani, 2013). Despite its numerous advantages, most organizations are still struggling to foster employee engagement. In Malaysia, low engagement level remains a thorny issue for organizations in both private and public sectors. Findings by Gallup (2013) revealed a shocking truth about engagement level among Malaysian employees. It found out that only *11% of employees are engaged* and nearly 81% are disengaged. The remaining 8% is actively disengaged. In addition, a separate study by jobstreet.com in July 2016 that involved 5,256 respondents revealed that only *25% of Malaysian workforce is engaged*, 23% is neutral and 52% is disengaged (NST, Nov 11, 2016). All these low percentage recorded by Malaysian employees clearly shown that there are certain factors that hindering them from being engaged at workplace. For public service employers, this issue needs urgent attention as government workforce need to be at their best physical, emotional and psychological conditions to perform to their best abilities. This is vital as they are the backbone in transforming Malaysian to be an advanced nation in few year times.

Based on literature, there are many reasons that lead for this phenomenon. As human is a complex creation that portray certain emotion, feeling and behaviours when performing their jobs, they are actually showing important signs that organization should realize. Why they become disengaged at workplace? This must be the prime question that leaders must ask themselves. In fact, there are many antecedents that lead towards employee disengagement ranging from ineffective leaders, organizational failure to emphasize employee engagement as main priority, poor co-worker relationship, fail to understand employee well being and do

not dare to consider staff opinion in decision making. There are also leaders whom do not intend to put engagement as part of organization overall strategy. As Malaysia is trying hard to achieve Vision 2020, it is indeed a high time for public service to introduce one of these winning formulas at workplace. Blue Ocean Leadership (BOL) is a worthwhile new approach that can be applied to promote employee engagement in public service by simply asking employees input in determining key leader activities. Moreover, it can be implemented any time, at low cost and can be fast executed. This is the main objective as at the end of the day, having high engaged employees is vital towards recording excellence organizational performance as wish by many.

2.0   Blue Ocean Strategy (Bos) Principles Towards Blue Ocean Leadesrhip (Bol) Concept

BOL was introduced by Professor W. Chan Kim and Professor Renee Mauborgne in 2014 (Kim & Mauborgne, 2014). It is based on the principles they derived from the framework of their own creation Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS). In BOS, both of them introduced three principles of high impact, low cost and rapid execution that proven highly effective in helping business industries to remain competitive by making competition irrelevant. In making these three principles blend so well, BOS is underpinned by two core values namely creativity and innovation. As a result, BOS is successful in developing uncontested market space that is beneficial for companies to grow demand and break away from stiff competition in the same business line. They also highlighted that company can sustain and stimulate growth for long term if opt for powerful leap known as 'value innovation' (ICBOS, 2016)

The dynamic concept of BOS has attracted government of Malaysia to embrace BOS in 2009. It was chosen as the concept, framework and tool is simply worthwhile to be applied in public sector. After few years of its implementation, BOS has recorded amazing result towards delivering efficient and effective service deliveries. As mentioned by Chief Secretary to the government, Tan Sri Ali Hamsa in his welcoming remark during International Conference of Blue Ocean Strategy (ICBOS) on 18 August 2016 at Putrajaya, BOS has build the way for greater collaboration between 80 government agencies that have changed the way how the nation works. He further explained there are 90 projects under BOS initiatives that touch the life of many Malaysians. Implementing BOS provide government the opportunity of doing things differently. BOS also revolutionises the way government does business. It makes government agencies becoming more open to work together in creating a win-win situation for the public and the government. The most important aspect for government is the ability of public service machineries to deliver fast and effective services to the people.

Based on their experiences and successful implementation of BOS application around the world, both Professor W. Chan Kim and Professor Renee Mauborgne introduced the new management tool namely Blue Ocean Leadership (BOL). They mentioned in BOL perspective, every leader has their customer. Hence, the underlying concept is that leadership can be thought of as a service that people in an organization 'buy' or 'don't buy'. As mentioned by Kim and Mauborgne (2014):

"*When people value your leadership practices, they in effect buy your leadership. They're inspired to excel and act with commitment. But when employees don't buy your leadership, they disengage, becoming noncustomers of your leadership*"

They defined BOL as a systematic approach to enhance leadership practices that maximise the existing untapped talent and energy of human capital towards organizational excellence. This can be implemented by getting employees views and opinion for consideration on leadership practices. Here, leadership practices are defined as act and activities in which

leaders invest their time and effort in the organization. In return, employees will feel engaged as their opinions are taken into consideration towards developing new leadership profiles at multi level leadership position for organizational transformation.

Modus operandi of BOL is more concern about act and activities of leaders rather than focusing on traditional leadership approaches which give attention towards leader values, traits, styles and behaviour. By changing certain act and activities of leaders, it will give quick impact towards observing organizational change as employees do not expect their leaders to change characters and personality instantly. What makes it more interesting, this approach can be implemented at low cost, fast execution and able to deliver high impact result.

To summarize, BOL is not about individual leadership but more concern towards organizational performance through increasing employee level of engagement. It is not dealing with top level leadership but engage with multi-level distributed leadership. BOL is referring to organizational development and not leadership per se. It also focuses on acts and activities of leaders and not concentrating about leadership traits, behaviours or styles. Moreover, changing behaviour is the most difficult part to achieve as people prefer to be in status quo or sitting in comfortable zone. Applying BOL also will lead to releasing existing untapped talent instead of seeking additional resources to develop other leadership programs. Thus, BOL is going to provide new paradigm shift regarding leadership concept in this 21st century by focusing in increasing the engagement level among employees as this is the main key for organizational success.

2.1 Four Pillars of Blue Ocean Leadership (BOL)

According to Kim and Mauborgne (2014), there are four pillars of BOL that differentiate it from other traditional leadership approaches as follows:

i)   Focus on acts and activities
- BOL is *action based* as it simply focuses on *act and activities* of leaders as opposed to who they need to be. All stipulated acts and activities are easy to observe, measure and linked directly to performance. These act and activities are reflected in the development of leadership profile. BOL is emphasize on time and resources needed to bring the required change at workplace.

ii) Connects to Market Realities
- BOL is focusing on customer of leadership that is the *employee themselves*. Staffs are being asked to highlight leadership practices which are connected to the market realities. Asking staff opinion make them feel appreciated, thrive and highly motivate to give their best abilities in ensuring organizational objectives can be met.

iii) Distributive Leadership
- BOL promotes organizational excellence by promoting the concept of empowering leaders at every level. The term used is *distributive leadership* that involve leaders at the top, middle and frontline. This action is taken as leader at each level has their own distinctive leadership profile that involve of different tasks, degrees of power and working environment. As such, good leadership derived by acts and activities that leader need to take at each level will create value for both employees and customers.

iv) High Impact Leadership with Low Cost
- Leaders are being ineffective due to lot of time spent on act and activities that not lead to increase productivity. Using *BOL Grid* (eliminate, reduce, raise and create), BOL breaks the trade-off between impactful activities and cost (time taken) where it recommend leaders to eliminate and reduce several unproductive acts and activities.

By having freed time from this exercise, it will enable them to raise and create other acts and activities that are going to have high impact towards organizational productivity. It can be implemented without having to attend leadership training that is costly and time consuming. Having this approach is helping developing effective leaders as they are able to unlock the ocean of unemployed talent and energy to drive into high performance organization by fully engaging with staff, utilize the time and resources available.

These four pillars pave the way for boosting employees' engagement as BOL just focus on acts and activities and not on who leaders need to be. It also connect leaders actions closely to market realities by defining what leadership practices hold them back and what leadership actions would enable them to thrive and best serve their clients. This type of collaboration between leaders and employees will instil trust and *strengthening employee engagement*. In addition, it also promotes the concept of distributive leadership across all management level because outstanding organizational performance often comes down to the motivation and actions of front and middle leaders who are in closer contact with the customer. Finally, BOL is pursuing high impact leadership acts and activities at low cost by identifying what activities leaders need to eliminate and reduce (cold spot) besides what actions need to be raised and create (hot spot) that are identified as key elements in boosting employee engagement and productivity at workplace.

2.2 Four Steps of Operating Blue Ocean Leadership (BOL)

As mentioned earlier, BOL is based on acts and activities that leaders need to undertake by using BOL grids that are eliminate, reduce, raise and create. As such, BOL is focusing on *collective effort* of leaders and employees regarding action based that are gearing towards high impact result within short time and keeping cost at low. According to the founder of BOL, Kim and Mauborgne (2014), there are four steps to implement BOL at workplace which are:

i)   Examine Organization's Current Leadership Reality

- Leaders need to understand how employees perceive and relate their experiences with the current leadership approach. This input can be taken from survey or having interviews with selected respondents in organization. This first stage is more concerning about collecting data, ideas and notion that later on translated into individual *Key Leadership Acts* (KLAs) or known as *As-Is Leadership Profiles*.

ii)   Develop Organization's Alternative Leadership Profiles

- The second stage is about applying Blue Ocean Leadership Grids (eliminate, reduce, raise and create) in order to come up with *To-Be Leadership Profiles*. This process in known as identified cold spot and hot spot activities. *Cold spot* refer to acts and activities that need to be eliminate or reduce as it take leaders time which add little value to organizational performance. On the other hand, *hot spot* is dealing with acts and activities that need to be raised and create by leaders as these activities have high impact towards organizational performance but currently underinvested by leaders.

iii)   Select To-Be Leadership Profiles

- The third stage is the process of choosing the preferred leadership profile by sharing them in *Leadership Fair*. Here, it will display few To-Be Leadership Canvases and leaders will decide To-Be Leadership Profile (preferred leadership acts and activities that are vital for high impact organization).

iv)   Institutionalise New Leadership Profiles

- The last stage is to *communicate the new leadership profiles* to all managers and staff by holding regular meetings to monitor its progress. At this point of action, development of action plan for each KLAs take place that might involve all leadership levels (junior, middle and top level) or any level that has been decided by the management.

3.0   Capitalizing On Employee Engagement

What is employee engagement? According to Baldoni (2013), he defined it as people like their job, understand their task and know how their daily job contributes to the success of an organization. Gallup Global Workplace Report (2013) divided level of employee engagement into three categories that are engaged, disengaged and actively disengaged. Engaged employee are those who are enthusiastic, committed, focusing in creating new values, generate new ideas and drive innovation. Disengaged employee are referring to those staff that are essentially 'checked out', putting time but no energy or passion, sleepwalking through their day and show little concern about productivity and purpose. The last category that is actively disengaged is employees who are unhappy at work, out to damage organization, drives the customer away and hostile towards organization.

Employee engagement remains big issues for organizations worldwide either in public or private sector. Organizations realize the importance of engagement as it will lead to job satisfaction, creativity flourish, building enthusiastic workforce and thus leading towards high productivity. Employee who feel attach to their organisation will perform at their best abilities, show eagerness and motivated to give full commitment as they feel responsible towards the performance of their beloved organization. A study undertaken by McKinsey & Co in 2012 concluded that engagement is a powerful indicator of a company's health and long-term performance (Ray et al., 2012). Higher level of engagement will be translated into better performance, improved customer satisfaction, generate revenue growth and produce better product. Many studies confirm that engagement truly matters to performance. For instance, studies in 2010 found that companies that have high levels of engagement outperform total stock market index by 22% compared to those organizations that possess low engagement level that recorded 28% lower than the average. In fact, there is strong relationship between worker engagement and business outcomes such as productivity, profitability and customer perception of service quality. It also stimulates bottom-up innovation (Bazigos and Harter, 2016). Furthermore, companies that have engaged employees recorded fewer turnovers (Ray et al., 2012).

High engagement with employees will lead to retaining talent in the workforce. For Malaysia, managing and retaining talent has been identified as a critical enabler under Government Transformation Programme (GTP). High talented employees are the main keys to propel Malaysia towards competitive status of high-income economy and Vision 2020. Indeed, talent is the true asset for any organization and not the infrastructure. According to Talent Corp Chief Executive Officer, Johan Mahmood Merican, strong talent pool is required by Malaysia as they are the key economic driver in the future. Vision 2020 aspiration is keep alive if we have talented workforce to bring the necessary change that lead to higher productivity (NST, February 17, 2016).

Research undertaken by Gallup in 2013 shows there is positive relationship between employee engagement and boost productivity. The research that used the concept of new meta analysis which involved 1.4 million employees found out that organizations with high level of engagement recorded 22% higher productivity (Baldoni, 2013). Engagement also

improves quality of work and health. According to Kaufman et al. (2013), higher employee engagement translates towards stronger customer relationship and contributes significantly for better financial performance. Garrad and Premuzic (2013) mentioned high level of engagement boosts employee wellbeing, performance and retention. They also mentioned enthusiastic employees tend to have better service quality and customer ratings. Meaning to say, employee engagement drives positive result. Based on the various findings mentioned above, we can conclude that there are crucial links between level of engagement and excellent organizational performances.

3.1 Challenges in Fostering Employee Engagement

Considering numerous benefits of employee engagement offers, why most organizations struggle to foster it? Each year, companies are spending millions of dollars in an effort to improve employee engagement but the impacts are minimal. For many organizations worldwide, they send their staff to attend different types of training in order to increase motivation, improve communication skill, fostering strong teamwork and improving service delivery. They put high hope this investment will translate into higher productivity and excellence performance. However, much of this huge investment did not bear the desired result. Some companies are even taken personal satisfaction as a sign for engagement without taken into account behavioural signal of their employees in order to justify Return on Investment (ROI) on training spending. This is not the true indication about measuring employee engagement level (Graber, 2015).

Research done by Gallup concluded that less than one third of American employees are engaged in their jobs and this finding has remained consistent since 2000 (Harter and Adkins, 2015). Another separate research undertaken by Gallup's in 2013 conceals a shocking truth which stated that only 13% of employees in the organizations worldwide are actively engaged whereas 63% are not engaged and the remaining 24% are actively disengaged. In United States alone, only 30% are committed to their jobs, 52% merely put their time in (disengaged) and the rest 18% are categorized under actively disengaged. This 18% group alone costs the US economy half a trillion dollars each year. The scenario in Malaysia is even worse. It is really a sobering truth that only 11% of Malaysian employees are committed to their jobs whereas 81% are not engaged at all. The remaining 8% fall under the last group that is 'actively disengaged'. The global scenario in selected countries pertaining to employee engagement level is shown in Table I below:

Table I:
Level of Employee Engagement in Certain Countries (Gallup Workplace Report, 2013)

Country	Engaged	Not Engaged	Actively Disengaged
United States	30%	52%	18%
Germany	15%	61%	24%
United Kingdom	17%	57%	26%
Australia	24%	60%	16%
Malaysia	11%	81%	8%
Japan	7%	69%	24%
Korea	11%	67%	23%
China	6%	68%	26%
Worldwide	13%	63%	24%

In reality, it is really hard for companies to foster engagement when taken into account the uniqueness of every organization either in public or private sector. This is understandable as the nature of every organization is complex that consists of various types of employees which are different in ages, roles, job functions, culture, socio-economy status, styles and even motivation level. In Malaysia public service context, the scope of public service is wide. It covers police & armed forces, fireman, teachers, medical & health personnel and administrative & support staff. Overall, there are 1.6 million government employees scattered all over the country. Taken out specific job categories that belongs to police, armed forces, fireman, teachers and medical staff, there are left over of 250,000 government employees working in 25 federal ministries, 770 public agencies, 13 state governments and 154 local authorities (NST, February 23, 2017). As they are the backbone to implement government programmes and initiatives towards achieving Vision 2020, they must give full commitment and fully engaged in their tasks. However, the current scenario describe worrying situation about engagement level among Malaysian employees. On top of that, there is no attempt being made to study about engagement level among public servant in Malaysia. Statistic mentioned by Gallup (2013) is the combination of employees in both private and public sector where as study undertaken by Jobstreet.com (2016) is based on private sector employees' perspectives.

Organizations that manage to have a pool of engaged employees will reap major benefits from them. In fact, many empirical studies have confirmed the positive result between employee engagement and performance. For instance, research done by (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004) concluded that engaged employees are enthusiastic and possess high energy thus experiencing positive emotions that translate into being more productive. In another related research done by Bakker (2004) that involved four different Dutch service organizations, the result showed engaged employees suffer less health issues in the forms of headache, cardiovascular problems and stomach-ache. All these studies proved that engagement is truly important to get the desired result as employees will strive to give the best for the benefit of the entire organization.

In discussing about the issue of employee engagement, there are many factors that contribute towards increasing or decreasing the level of this construct. According to Bazigos and Harter (2016), a study done by McKinsey's Organizational Health Index in 2012 found out that one of the reasons that lead to employee disengagement is *role ambiguity*. Staffs lose focus as they are not clear about their duties and job expectations which make them unaccountable for their daily tasks. Another important element that organization fails to highlight is *constant communication* with staff. Leaders who fail to have frequent conversation with employees through team meeting, discussion, dialogue and informal communication hindering employees from getting engaged. This is vital as day-to-day lines of communication dispel ambiguity. Engagement will only flourish when employees receive regular feedback about their action and progress. This demonstrates that communication with staff has direct influence on the engagement level of the team.

As it currently stands, employee engagement remains big challenges for organizations worldwide. Kaufman et al. (2013) reported that studies by Bain and Netsurvey that involved 200,000 employees across 40 companies in 60 countries revealed three troubling trends as follows:

    i)   Engagement scores decline as employee tenure increases. It means the longer an employee is serving the company, the least engaged he is;

ii) Engagement scores decline most at the lowest levels of the organizational layer. This can be translated that employees at the bottom of the hierarchy level is actively disengaged than the top executive level in which the former form the majority of the employees; and

iii) Engagement levels are at the lowest in sales and service function where most interactions with customers occur.

Thus, getting employees engagement is not a simple process at all. It needs proper planning, top level commitment and continuous communication at all level. Employee needs to be convinced that organizations are serious in creating supportive working environment that really matter to them. Expecting employees to give their best abilities in their daily tasks is full of challenges but not impossible to achieve. This is attainable if organizations manage to engage them in an environment in which they are eager to give their best shot. If this scenario takes place, that particular organizations are on the right track to post higher productivity and recording resounding performance.

For public servant in Malaysia, this is vital as they are currently involve in Eleven Malaysian Plan (2016 – 2020) which is the final lap before moving towards another phase that is a fully developed nation by the year 2020. As such, having highly motivated and engaged government officer hold the key in ensuring its success. They need to be happy at work, showing strong character, dedicated and willing to give extra effort in delivering effective services and thus meet the expectation of the nation. Hence, employee engagement must be given utmost priority and BOL might be able to offer one of the effective ways in promoting employee engagement among government employees at workplace.

4.0   Promoting Employee Engagement Through Blue Ocean Leadership (Bol) Practices

It is a fact that employees are difficult to get engaged if they are not fans of their boss. This is the key aspect that each leader should focus on in their effort to foster strong team engagement. How to get your staff 'buy' organization vision and mission and thus make them engaged in their daily task? According to Kim and Mauborgne (2014), staff views must be taken into consideration in terms of defining certain acts and activities that leaders should do to improve the current working scenario at workplace. This is the focus of BOL as it is promoting employees engagement and motivate employees to become the customer of their boss leadership. Based on the research done in many organizations, both of them believed there is relationship between leadership practices and employees' level of engagement. Here, leadership practices are defined as acts and activities in which leaders invest their time and effort for an organization.

Another factor that is important to get employee engagement is getting trust from employees. According to Kaufman et al. (2013), 'trust in management' is important to measure the level of employee engagement. This trust element might be different from organizational culture as it might refer to leadership openness, leader values, effective management of the company, proud of product and service offered besides realistic expectation from top management. Here, BOL provides the platform to instil the culture of trust among employees as it promotes the concept of distributive leadership across all management level. It means staff at different level in organizational hierarchy has their views, opinion and thought taken into consideration in transforming leaders to be more effective in performing their daily activities. The fair process in undertaking BOL will confers in trust among staff that is considered as important instrument in creating strong bonding between followers and leaders.

According to Gallup study in 2013, the main cause of employee disengagement is poor leadership (Kim and Mauborgne, 2014). As organization is a complex structure with diverse workforce background, effective leaders are badly needed at each level namely at front line, middle and top level. BOL is offering the new approach in unleashing unexploited talent and energy of organizations by making employees becoming engaged with their daily jobs. It propose an analytical tool which is called '*Leadership Canvas*' that show what are the acts and activities that leaders at each level need to eliminate, reduce, raise and create. This leadership canvas leads to create unique profiles for each leader as they are dealing with different tasks, degree of power and surrounded by different working environment. This action is important step to demonstrate to all employees that their organizations are taking serious attention and steps towards enhance organizational performance based on views from all employees. As such, employees will feel motivated as they realised that their inputs have been considered in the organization transformation plan. Hence, they are motivated to give high commitment as the proposed changes are part of their ideas in their quest with other staff to deliver high performance result.

On other perspective, the nature of jobs in public service is dealing with service delivery. As leaders in public service are dealing with too many programmes and ad-hoc activities, they need to prioritize which activities should be given utmost attention than others. Meaning to say, they need to focus on specific tasks that have positive impact instead of doing many unimportant jobs that really waste their most precious asset that is time. Here, BOL paves the way for creating new leadership canvas either at junior, middle or top level. It proposes certain activities that are pivotal towards delivering high impact result for organization. As these changes are based on employees own input, staff have confident in the changes made. This process also will make staff feel more engaged with their leaders. The reason is they have 'good feeling factor' that they have greater ownership of what their leaders are doing.

The good thing about BOL is it is easy to measure the effectiveness of the leader. Employees are able to monitor progress as it is stated in leadership profiles and need to be reported during review meetings. This progress will be discussed and appropriate actions will be taken to ensure its successful implementation. The result will also be displayed and shared among staff in order to know whether leaders are making the headway as agreed during BOL process. Here, everyone can see the clarity in the job tasks and eventually close the gap that hindering them from being engaged at workplace. From this meeting, it will keep leaders and staff of becoming honest, build confidence, sincere and continue their effort towards achieving required change as agreed. Moreover, this is an important indicator towards achieving organizational vision, mission and objectives. This process will groom them to be effective leaders and employees as they are fully committed to pursue changes which are necessity to progress.

The leadership canvases that BOL promotes able to offer employees a concrete and visual framework for them to understand and discuss for the improvement that leaders need to make in order to perform effectively. On top of that, the fair process that makes the implementation and monitoring of those changes is simple and easy than the traditional leadership approaches which are more towards top-down approach. The great thing about BOL is those transformation is concerning about acts and activities of leaders which take less time and effort. This process is not trying to alter who they are but jut *changing the tasks* that are carrying out every day. As mentioned by Kim and Mauborgne (2014), strength of BOL is its *scalability*. It means the BOL process can be carries out by any leader at any organizational

level by applying the four steps and not necessarily carried out from company's top gun. BOL is worth to be applied as it able to strengthen employee engagement which is considered as the key element towards improving productivity and organizational excellence performance. Having highly committed and engaged workforce in public service will form the strong foundation towards achieving a fully developed nation by 2020. The truth is out there.

5.0   Conclusion

Vision 2020 is looming as Malaysia has high ambition to be a fully developed nation by the year 2020. In becoming an advanced nation, the main focus now is towards having highly reliable and committed public service workforce as they will play prominent role in making this vision attainable. As stated in Government Transformation Programme (GTP), public servants are the primary facilitators in achieving Vision 2020 after being introduced in 1990. Taking into account the low level of engagement among employees worldwide, it is timely for any organization either in public or private sector to give serious thought on the issue of employee engagement. This is extremely important as every organization on this planet dreams to have engaged employees as they are going to perform at their best abilities and thus achieving organization vision, mission and objectives. As for employees in public sector, they are the key players in making Vision 2020 attainable. As such, they need to be engaged with their jobs as it will pave the way for better performance.

However, the current scenario portrays that majority of the employees in Malaysia are disengage with their jobs. This is not a good sign as Malaysia is badly needed fully committed employees to take this nation towards greater height. Empirical studies and past research have proven that engagement level among employee worldwide remains low for years. This is really disheartening considering every employee comes to work every day with the intention to give their best shot at their job. For public service in Malaysia, this issue must get serious attention from top management. How much loss in terms of time, money and resources if employee is not happy at work? As Malaysia is trying hard to achieve Vision 2020, it is indeed high time for ministries and government agencies to look seriously on this matter. As this point of time, not many attempts have been made to study on the issue of work engagement among public sector employees in Malaysia despite numerous benefits on offer. The findings by Gallup (2013) and Jobstreet.com (2016) reveals lot of work need to be done in increasing the level of employee engagement in Malaysia.

Having engaged employee will lead to many positive results in terms of increasing productivity, low turnover and better financial performance. Many studies have proven these findings. Hence, every organization is seeking to have engaged workforce as at the end of the day, great performance will be used as an indicator to measure their overall result. However, it is easy to be said than to be done. In fact, getting employee engagement remains huge challenges for any organizations worldwide. Public service is not an exception. As employees are diverse in nature, organizations need to carefully examine what factors are important to get the best performance from their employees.

In public sector, it is really challenging for government agencies to foster engagement when taken into account the uniqueness of ministries and departments. This is due to the nature of government ministries which are complex in terms of vision, mission, organizational structure, job functions and organizational climate. Not to mention various types of employees characters which are different in ages, roles, designation, thinking, socio-economy status, leadership styles and even motivational level. Therefore, those employees that has strong engagement at their workplace will contribute more effort in making their organization

perform exceptionally well as they feel indebted to the organization. In return, they will give full commitment, go extra mile, energetic at work and highly optimistic that their effort is vital in contributing towards organizational excellence performance.

Thus, the introduction of BOL is timely as it is able to offer the framework and tool to increase the level of engagement among staff in the public service by simply asking employees inputs and ideas. This simple approach yet effective method can be implemented at any time that provides high impact result with lower cost. Having secured employee engagement will definitely ease heavy burden among leaders in public sector as they have multiple roles and responsibilities towards fulfilling national agendas. This positive working environment where everyone works to the best of their abilities will lead towards the creation of high reliable workforce in public sector. This kind of situation will pave the way for effective leaders' development as they are able to focus on certain acts and activities that are able to increase productivity and boosting organizational performance. Finally, having effective leaders and pool of engaged employees in public sector will ensure Malaysia ambition to be an advanced nation by the year 2020 remains on the right track. This is the dream of every Malaysians, indeed.

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