

Emotional Intelligence in Headmaster's Leadership: The Importance of Self and Emotional Control in Managing Action

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to present data from a study that on emotional intelligence and self-control amongst 746 headmasters as respondents. This research was conducted to explore the importance and level of emotional intelligence amongst primary school headmasters across Malaysia. Different reviews based on mixed local and global literature was also discussed. Recent development had highlighted the need for emotional intelligence in leadership. However, existing literature has limited information on the level of emotional intelligence amongst headmasters in primary schools. Therefore, this paper aimed to highlight the importance of self-control and emotional control, especially in school leadership.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Leadership, Self-Control

Introduction

The importance of emotional intelligence has drawn the attention of several experts from various fields. One of the important elements in EQ that is closely related to leadership is self-control. Kunnanatt (2008) described self-regulation as a competence or the ability of an individual to be proficient in self-emotional management and subsequently be flexible or remain in a positive behaviour when giving any response or in directing his behaviour (Lam & O'Higgins, 2012).

In this article, the headmaster's ability to regulate emotions in facing various challenges in school leadership was examined. The research examined whether emotional control and self-

control have an impact on effective leadership. Emotional control and self-control are very important and considered the main requirements in determining the headmaster's ability to face various leadership and management situations and always remain positive when communicating with their supervisory staff.

Emotional Intelligence and Self Control

Briefly, emotional intelligence is a process of cognition which occurs within individuals to understand, monitor and use emotional information that they received (Goleman, 1998). Klemp (2005) also referred to emotional intelligence as a set of skills or abilities in identifying one's emotions, understanding, evaluating and differentiating the emotions involved as a tool to guide individuals generate positive thoughts, and thus act effectively in interactions with others.

Jaafar et al (2011) found that emotional intelligence can influence and become a determining factor in assessing individuals' mental health status. This is because individuals with good mental health are associated with positive behaviour through which the role of emotional intelligence on individuals is seen to have a great impact.

In regard to self-efficacy, emotional intelligence can create a healthy adolescent behaviour to form a good identity (Dev et al., 2018). Apart from that, emotional intelligence can also be seen from the social relationship perspective. Through good emotional control, an individual can establish a network of positive social relations with others (Koleilat & Mneimneh, 2018). A study by Afolabi (2013) found that emotional intelligence had a significant impact on behaviour and social relations. Individuals with low emotional intelligence level tend to show negative behaviour towards others while those with high emotional intelligence level are more likely to exhibit a positive behaviour.

Individual Differences in Managing Emotion

This study aims to review the importance and role of emotional intelligence for individuals, especially in regard to the headmaster's leadership. From an individual perspective, a theory suggests that individuals with high levels of emotional intelligence also have high personal well-being and vice versa. The theory was proposed by Carmeli et al (2009), which supported the finding that there was a positive relation between emotional intelligence and individual psychological well-being, including the components of self-acceptance, life satisfaction and self-esteem. Each individual has different capabilities and abilities in accepting and regulating his own emotions and the emotion of others as well as adjusting the information obtained with appropriate behaviour (Johnson & Blanchard, 2014).

The Importance of Self-Control and Managing Action

The importance of emotional intelligence to individuals is accordingly seen as an important factor which is capable of influencing aspects of relation and social interactions. Ability in emotional intelligence benefits an individual in effective conflict management. Hopkins & Yonker (2015) found that there were some relations between ability in emotional intelligence and conflict management with respect to problem solving ability, social responsibility and impulse control related to conflict management in work situations. Deficiencies in communication skill and social relation affect the recognition of an individual's emotions, which in turn leads to lack of knowledge in recognising and regulating emotions. As an example of a study to review the aspect of emotional intelligence training for medical students, it can have a positive impact on the well-being of the students. (Calabrese et al., 2019)

The study of Moura et al (2015) also mentioned that now researchers have begun to apply neuroscience to understand how the brain functions and differs between individuals' ability in emotional intelligence and how their emotions affect attitudes and behaviour. An opinion suggested that emotional intelligence was an important factor for an individual to succeed and perform as compared to intellectual intelligence (Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005). This statement was acknowledged by Boas & Morin (2019) who asserted that the quality of an individual's life was dependent on emotional intelligence. This was proven through the results of a study which found that there was a significant relation between the elements of emotional intelligence and quality of an individual's life. This opinion was also supported by Dev et al (2016) who studied the role of emotional intelligence amongst university lecturers and the study results showed that there was a significant relation between emotional intelligence, behaviour and work performance.

The role of emotional intelligence for individuals is further seen in the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress management. A study on 460 university student found that there was a positive relation between emotional intelligence and stress management. Findings from research concluded that emotional intelligence was also an important factor in stress management for individuals, either personally or in a work load environment (Khairunisa et al., 2019).

The Importance of Headmaster's Emotional Intelligence and Self-Control in Malaysian Educational Context

Araujo & Taylor (2012) also proved that the application of emotional intelligence in workplace provided a positive influence in terms of individual confidence. This study aims to determine that the role of emotional intelligence mainly involves the headmaster as a school leader and its influence on school performance.

The study results can be used as a guide for selecting potential school leaders based on emotional intelligence. Without this study, the importance and relation between emotional intelligence and effective leadership will not be identified. The headmaster's level of emotional intelligence is divided into three categories, namely low (scores 37–86), medium (scores 87–136) and high (scores 137–186). Overall, the analysis found that the majority of respondents have a high level of emotional intelligence, which was 99.5 % (742 people). Meanwhile, the moderate level of emotional shortness had only 0.5 % (four people).

In this study, the relation between emotional intelligence and headmaster's leadership style showed a significant relation. It was concluded here that the higher the level of emotional intelligence, the more effective was the headmaster's leadership towards teachers under his supervision.

In this study, Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between the level of emotional intelligence and headmaster's leadership. It could be concluded that there was a relationship between level of emotional intelligence and effective leadership.

The data testing process found that the results of the analysis showed a correlation. It was concluded that the relation between level of emotional intelligence and level of transformational leadership style of headmasters gave a positive and significant value. The value found clearly showed that the higher the level of emotional intelligence, the higher the level of headmaster's transformational leadership style practice and both had a positive relation.

The results of this finding are in line with the study results of Kotzé & Venter (2016), which found that emotional intelligence showed a significant and positive relation with effective

leadership. The study concluded that emotional intelligence contributes to the capacity of employees to be more productive and further help in improving the organisational performance.

Likewise, a study by Drakulevski et al (2017) which reviewed the relation between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership found that the study respondents had high transformational leadership style. In addition, this was associated with respondents' ability to study in coordinating, regulating their emotional intelligence and subsequently providing a positive impact on the transformational leadership style. Dabke (2016) and Duncan et al (2017) also agreed by assuming that emotional intelligence plays an important role in effective leadership aspects. The study results found that the emotional intelligence of 200 respondents had contributed to the respondents' transformational leadership style, while the meta-analysis results from Harms & Crede showed that emotional intelligence had a very strong relation with leadership style.

Leaders who have a high level of emotional intelligence tend to indirectly adopt a leadership style that can also increase work motivation. A study by Setyowati et al (2019) which evaluated vocational principal's emotional intelligence influence on work motivation found that his leadership could indirectly increase teacher's motivation by practising good behaviour, giving enthusiasm and praise as well as always appreciating his work. Communication was also seen to positively impact on the relation between principals and the teachers under supervision. However, the type of leadership style in the study was very vague because it was not clearly stated by the study respondents.

The leaders' practice of transformational leadership style was in line with increasing the level of emotional intelligence. Leaders with a high level of variables studied emotional intelligence were able to generally increase the motivation of their subordinates and individuals and applied good practices and values in the daily life aspects. Positive relationships and communication were also factors in improving school performances

Conclusion

In regard to quality of life, emotional intelligence plays a major role in guaranteeing individual's well-being in various aspects. This is because each individual has a different level of emotional intelligence and cognitive level. Therefore, the individual's ability to make emotional assessments and take action on inputs received with appropriate action depends on different skills and levels (Parmentier et al., 2019).

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