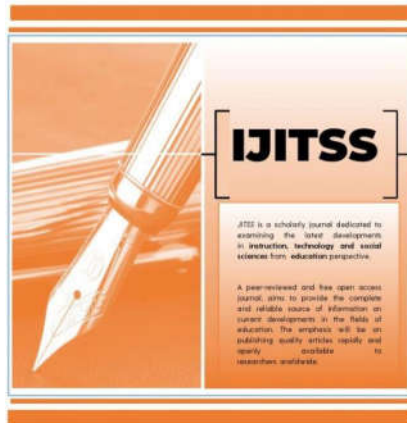


e-ISSN: 2716-6546

## **International Journal of Instruction, Technology & Social Sciences**



ISSN: 2716-6546

## **International Journal of Instruction, Technology & Social Sciences**

[www.ijitss.net](http://www.ijitss.net)

### **Teachers Followership towards School Principal's Leadership: A Qualitative Approach**

**Raamani Thannimalai<sup>1</sup>,**

*<sup>1</sup>Ministry of Education, Malaysia*

#### **To cite this article:**

Thannimalai, R. (2020). Teachers Followership towards School Principal's Leadership: A Qualitative Approach. *International Journal of Instruction, Technology and Social Science (IJITSS)*, 1(1), 24-38

# Teachers Followership towards School Principal's Leadership: A Qualitative Approach

Raamani Thannimalai

| Article Info                                                                             | Abstract                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Article History</b><br><br>Received:<br>01 April 2020<br><br>Accepted:<br>01 May 2020 | The aim of this research is to study the leadership-followership among principals and school teachers by focusing on followership. This qualitative study used three methods to collect data which were then triangulated. The first method employed a semi-structured interview with two principals, one from a secondary school and a primary school in Kedah, Malaysia respectively. Data was also collected through observation of video recordings of the principals and lastly through document analysis of articles and databases. The findings showed that followership exists in both schools; teachers were independent and had autonomy; levels of teachers' involvement in school discussions and decision-making was average in both schools; levels of teachers' collaboration in helping the school principals were high; levels of teachers' knowledge and skills were good; levels of professionalism in both schools could be considered high; levels of teacher's taking responsibility of their teaching, classroom and accountability was also high. Teachers of R1's school had an average level of discipline in doing their job as 'trust' and commitment was generally high among teachers of both schools, but decision-making among followers was average in both schools. It is recommended that a quantitative study be carried out to support this study to justify the relationship between followership and leadership. Theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and suggestions for future research are discussed. |
| <b>Keywords</b><br><br>Followership<br>Leadership<br>Teachers<br>Principals<br>School    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## Introduction

Leaders and followers play a crucial role in the success of organizations including educational institutions (Avolio & Reichard, 2008; Essa & Allatari, 2019; Oyetunji, 2013; Zogjani & Llaci, 2014;). However, the concept of followership still remains an under researched phenomenon (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe & Carsten, 2014). Followership is the opposite of leadership in a leadership-followership continuum and a follower is influenced by a leader (Kelley, 1992; Crossman & Crossman, 2011). In the context of the education system, the leader is the only proactive person while the followers are reactive parties of that system (Can & Aktas, 2012; Hinić, Grubor & Brulić, 2017). Through followership, an individual gets job satisfaction by supporting the leader to achieve organizational goals (Kelley, 2008)

Follower's contributions are just as important as leaders; nevertheless, importance is given to leadership (Shondrick, Dinh & Lord, 2010). Studies show that that follower' roles contribute to eighty per cent of an organization's success but leadership roles are prioritized in organizations (Kelley, 1992). Moreover, previous researches show that there is a wide gap between research on leadership and followership (Chaleff, 2009; Kellerman, 2008; Ye, 2010; Zogjani & Llaci, 2014;). Furthermore, systematic reviews on articles, books, conference papers show that leadership is a more popular area of research compared to followership. In view of this, this study will try to add knowledge to this field of followership and relate its contribution to a few leadership styles namely Dyadic leadership (Leader-Member Exchange Theory), Transactional Leadership, Active and Passive Leadership.

Over the past decade, Kelley's Followership Model has been used to investigate follower types within organizations (Al Anshory & Ali, 2014; Francis, 2014; Kalkhoran, Naami & Beshlideh, 2013; Oyetunji, 2013; Thomas, 2014). Furthermore, research has also emphasized follower styles and organizational outcomes (Gatti et al., 2014; Kalkhoran et al., 2013; Morgan, 2014). However, not many researched the contribution of teachers as followers to school principals as leaders in educational institutions. Furthermore, it is suggested that more research on followership be carried in educational contexts with different social and cultural backgrounds. (Can & Aktas, 2012, Hinic et al., 2017; Kelley, 1992).

## **Literature Review**

This theoretical framework of this study is based on Kelley's Followership Model (Kelley, 1992) which is applicable to a school setting as it focuses on followership in organizational settings (Hinić, Grubor & Brulić, 2017). Four crucial qualities that followers share are abilities to manage themselves; commitment to the organization; highly competent and focussed on organizations' visions (Kelley, 1988). Conversely, leaders must be able to teach their followers ways to lead and how to be good followers (Banutu-Gomez, 2004). Importantly, leaders and followers are thus mutually interdependent with the latter influencing the former (Henry, 2012). Furthermore, effective followers are cooperative and collaborative (Chaleff, 1995), and the 'ideal' follower is capable of sustaining organizational performance" (Blackshear, 2003).

### **Followership**

Effective followership takes place when followers staunchly support leaders in pursuing an organization's mission and vision (Chaleff, 1995, Kelley, 1992, Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). If leadership involves influencing others, followership then is allowing to be influenced (Uhl-Bien & Pillai, 2007).

### **Follower trust**

Follower trust is the glue that holds followers and leaders together in organizations (Covey, 2004; Bennis & Goldsmith, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Unfortunately, leaders are frequently ineffective in instilling trust needed by their followers (Den Hartog and Verburg, 2004; Kouzes and Posner, 2011). Active followers according to Kelley's Model are proactive and do more than is required (Rothbard, 2001) resulting in job satisfaction and commitment (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

### **Follower commitment**

Follower commitment and compliance is a continuum related to the degree of follower trust in a leader (Senge, 2006; Caldwell & Hansen, 2010). According to Meyer and Allen (1997); Gade, (2017) and Griffith, (2003); commitment is a process whereby workers recognize the aims and values of the organization and maintain their existence. The behaviour of an individual, who believes strongly on the values and aims of the organization, is motivated and willingly works to attain the organization's vision and is determined to be in the organization is known as commitment (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

### **Kelley's Followership Model**

The way individual's follow can be illustrated by a two dimensional model (Kelley, 1992). The first dimension is independent, critical thinking, versus dependent, uncritical thinking followed by the second dimension which is active versus passive behaviour.

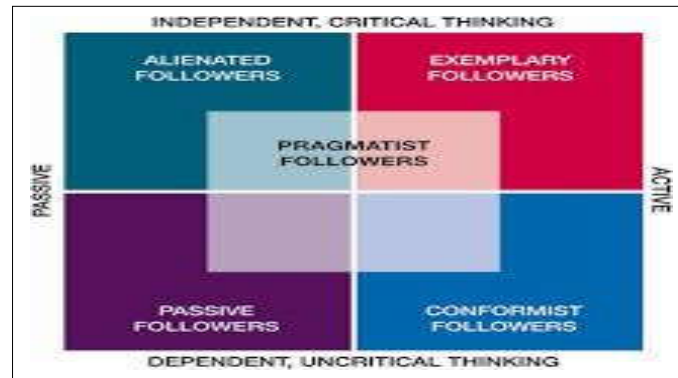


Figure 1: Kelley's Model of Followership (1992)

Based on the two dimensions, Kelley (1992) identified five basic styles of followership that is: alienated, passive, conformist, pragmatist and exemplary followers. (i) Alienated followers: they are independent and critical thinkers, they are passive in their roles; see themselves as outsiders, show disapproval (Kelley, 1992); (ii) Passive followers: dependent, uncritical thinking individuals who are a passive (Kelley, 1988); (iii) Conformist followers: 'yes people' of the organizations, active participants who do not demonstrate critical thinking skills; they follow orders (Bjugstad et al, 2006); (iv) Exemplary followers: independent, critical thinking, active engagement, excel in all tasks; (iv) dependable (Mushonga & Torrance, 2008); (v) Pragmatic followers are average in their independence and engagement; they perform the required tasks, but seldom do more than expected (Lussier & Achua, 2010).

This research will study the following areas: teacher leadership and collaboration; teacher knowledge, skills and professionalism; teacher responsibility and accountability; teachers discipline and commitment. The research questions which will guide this study are:

- RQ1: To what extent can your teachers become a leader, by being independent or projecting autonomy?
- RQ2: What is the level of teachers' involvement in school discussions and decision-making or play a role of leadership without depending on principals?
- RQ3: What is the level of teacher collaboration in schools in helping the principal? Do they contribute in helping the school administration by being involved in school development efforts?
- RQ4: What is the level of teachers' knowledge and skills in their subject matter?
- RQ5: What is the level of professionalism among teachers in handling situations or problems at school?
- RQ6: What is the level of teachers taking responsibility of their teaching, classroom and accountability of their students learning in line with 21st century Teaching and Learning?
- RQ7: What is the level of teachers' discipline in taking their job as 'Trust'?
- RQ8: What is the level of teacher's punctuality in coming to school and their commitment towards teaching?

## Method

This study administered the qualitative approach using the triangulation method which is collecting data from different sources to answer research questions through assimilation of findings from different approaches which are unrelated to one another (Creswell, 2013; Lawlor, Tilling & Smith, 2016). During this study, interviews, observations and document analysis were used to collect focused, comprehensive and unbiased data (Fritz & Bell, 1993; Creswell, 2013).

## Sample

The sample of this study consisted two principals; a principal from a secondary school and a headmistress from a primary school. The aim was to obtain data related to their experience, perceptions and thoughts about followership style in their schools. Two different levels of education, that is, primary and secondary, were chosen so that the two respondents (leaders) from the two different environments and with two different experiences could be differentiated. The secondary school is a premier school in Kedah and the primary school is an Excellent Cluster school

## Semi-structured Interview

Semi-structured interviews are intended to gather accurate information such as socio demographic information, age, income, qualifications, educational level and so on (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Merriem, 1998). The interview was made up of two parts. The first part of the interview protocol consisted of three questions regarding both principal's biography and the permission to carry out the study in the schools. The second part of the interview consisted of four parts with one to three questions each to gather information to answer the research questions.

## Observation

To carry out observations, cameras were used to take pictures and videos as evidence of the atmosphere of the communication process between principals and teachers. Additionally, this method was used to evaluate the services provided by the school principals to teachers from the schools.

## Documents

References and previous studies regarding theories of followership were searched using the Web of Science, Google Scholar and Scopus database for the latest publications on Leadership and Followership in the field of Education.

## Data Interpretation

Data collected will be interpreted by the following research areas: teacher leadership and collaboration; teacher knowledge, skills and professionalism; teacher responsibility and accountability; teachers discipline and commitment.

## Teacher leadership and collaboration

*RQ1a: To what extent can your teachers become a leader, by being independent or projecting autonomy?*

The respondents for this study had differing perceptions about their teachers' abilities to become leaders, by being independent or projecting autonomy. The first respondent (R1) emphasized organizational establishment which showed that teamwork was present among teachers in his school and that became the strength and trademark of his school. Moreover, most of the teachers had reflected

high leadership attributes. The second respondent (R2) stated that her teachers were highly independent whenever they had to make a decision. The teachers were able to interact, collaborate and cooperate with each other to accomplish tasks.

*RQ1b: What is the level of teachers' involvement in school discussions and decision-making or play a role of leadership without depending on principals?*

R1 offers empowerment to the teachers to make decisions and the teachers usually make their own decisions in their brain-storming groups. Teachers were given autonomy and they had a chance to perform their best. Similarly, there was high involvement among teachers in decision making in R1's school. R2 stated that her teachers' were involved in decision making during school discussions as she gave them opportunities to contribute ideas.

*RQ1c: What is the level of teacher collaboration in schools in helping the principal? Do they contribute in helping the school administration by being involved in school development efforts?*

R1 mentioned that his teachers collaborate fully by giving suggestions which are then discussed in his management group meetings. The teachers would carry out the suggested plans if the management decides to carry them out. Thus, it was evident that there was two way communications between the school staff, specifically, the teachers and the administration. Meanwhile, R2 was very satisfied with the high level of collaboration among teachers in her school. The teachers collaborated with each other for any event held at the school. Both interview responses concurred that there was adequate and effective collaboration among the teachers in helping the principal. Although R1's answer was vague he implied that there existed two way collaboration between teachers. R2 was more accurate in her response and gave examples to prove her point about the existence of collaboration amongst teachers of different races in helping with school development programmes and in ensuring the success of such programmes.

### **Teacher knowledge, skills and professionalism**

*RQ2a: What is the level of teachers' knowledge and skills in their subject matter?*

Both schools where respondents R1 and R2 were principals have teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled. School 1 had teachers who were specialized in their fields or subject-matter and some are Excellent Teachers, Specialist Teachers and some are examiners of papers at National level exams. A high percentage of teachers in R2's school 2 (95%) are teaching the subject they majored at university or at teacher training college and hence are called 'optionists' and are therefore considered knowledgeable and skilled in their subject matters. There are teachers who are 'non-optionists' but have undergone 'conversion courses' so that they are trained to teach subjects aside from which they had majored at University or college such as Mathematics and Science. R2 made sure all teachers are competent and had mastered their subject matters through coaching sessions by their Panel Heads during 'In-House' courses at school or she will send them for courses at the 'Teacher Development Centre' or the *Institut Aminudin Baki* which is an essential part of the school's in-service continuous professional development programme.

*RQ2b: What is the level of professionalism among teachers in handling situations or problems at school?*

The respondents of this study had their own personal views about the ways of handling situations or problems among teachers at their respective schools. The first respondent (R1) gave appreciation to all the teachers after they had done an excellent job overall. This school had excellent teachers for both curriculum and co-academic activities. R1, who said that the level of professionalism was high among his teachers, acknowledged that all the teachers were aware of their job descriptions and core business as teachers. His teachers were also competent in handling situations and problems that arose effectively.

R2, however, responded that she had clarified to the teachers on how to handle situations or problems professionally by giving daily and weekly motivational sessions. She also relied on the SWOT analysis to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats faced by the school. R2 also listed teachers' duties and responsibilities in the Organization Action Plan. Consequently, the teachers knew what they were assigned or had been required to do. She celebrated teachers' birthdays and gave them gifts with the multi-pronged aim of acknowledging and appreciating their efforts besides fostering closer ties with her subordinates. She believed that this leadership style led to a win-win situation for both the administration and the fellow teachers in the school to ensure the mission and vision of the school to continue and improve as an excellent school was attained. R2 was also able to ascertain that about 60% of her teachers were adept at handling situations or problems professionally.

### **Teacher responsibility and accountability**

*RQ3a: What is the level of teachers taking responsibility of their teaching, classroom and accountability of their students learning in line with 21st century Teaching and Learning?*

R1 highlighted development of ICT and its use in the daily Teaching and Learning process. However, because the school is old, the infrastructure is in a critical state and it lacked facilities like computers and free access to the internet. This being a major hindrance, teachers have been consequently encouraged to bring their own laptops to the classrooms. About 75% of teachers were accounted as being responsible for their teaching and their students' learning in the classrooms. However, the lack of resources remains a major stumbling block in the effective and widespread implementation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Teaching and Learning practices.

R2, on the other hand, emphasised that she had an observation record of teachers Teaching and Learning processes which contributed marks in obtaining the Cluster School status. She had her own record book to record teachers' responsibilities and accountability with regards to their teaching and learning and other co-curricular activities without the teachers' knowledge. This was valid proof for teachers and it has spurred teachers to be better committed and to carry out quality Teaching and Learning. R2 exclaimed that the level of responsibility and accountability among the teachers at her school was high overall.

### **Teachers' discipline and commitment**

*RQ4a: What is the level of teachers' discipline in taking their job as 'Trust'?*

Both the respondents of this study had similar perceptions of discipline among teachers. Both of them were confident that the level of teachers' discipline was fairly high. R1 confidently stated that his teachers had carried out their jobs consistently well and voluntarily without being supervised or constantly monitored. R2 also agreed her teachers had also been on task at their jobs at all times with the school monitoring system being in place. She emphasised that she was also firm in making decisions and had regularly reminded teachers of deadlines and their responsibilities.

*RQ4b: What is the level of teacher's punctuality in coming to school and their commitment towards teaching?*

Both the respondents agreed that the level of teacher's punctuality was high as they came to school on time. Most of them were committed towards teaching because they understood and adhered to the Ministry of Education's Protecting Instructional Time policy and guidelines.

## **Discussion**

From our findings, both the respondents stressed that their teachers were independent, could make decisions or play the roles of a leader without depending on their principals. The teachers were given adequate opportunities to participate and they were willing to take the extra mile and cooperate with each other. This revelation or indication is in line with Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis (2013) who posited that high teacher participation of school decision making was associated with positive perception of the leadership and collegiality components of school climate.

Both respondents also mentioned that their teachers were able to collaborate when the school management required them to do so. This is also in line with Sarafidou and Chatziioannidis (2013) who stated that participatory forms of decision making provide a platform for teachers to work collaboratively with their principal.

According to R1, brain storming is carried out among teachers to generate ideas. The ideas were then taken into consideration by the principal before he brought them up to the management group to be further discussed if any should be accepted. If an idea was accepted then it was passed back to the teachers to be refined and implemented in their own groups. This is in line with Simon (1997) who explained '*Zone of Acceptance*' in which the follower accepts the decisions made by his superior'. According to R2, her teachers had very high initiative and commitment to collaborate to ensure programmes for example co-curricular activities and community service programmes such as painting the mosque in their school was a success. Efforts and willingness to sacrifice their time and energy for the sake of their organization besides reflecting their followership to their headmistress was indeed high. This is in line with Organ (1988) who emphasized '*Zone of Stewardship*' which explains that followers will go the extra mile for their organization and are fully committed to achieve the best for their organizations. R2's leadership is in line with Cameron, Mora, Leutscher & Calarco (2011) who explained that school leaders who portray their qualities through activities and practices, instil trust and commitment among followers.

R2 explained that teachers who were not competent in terms of knowledge and skills in their subject matters and who needed help with up skilling themselves in aspects related to best practices were carefully identified and sent for in-service courses or in-house training sessions. Such on-going professional development was a form of life-long learning that was deemed necessary by R2 as she was convinced that it will ensure that those teachers will be able to contribute positively to her organization's productivity. This is in line with Cameron et al., (2011) and Caldwell (2012) who explained that investing in human capital and pairing that investment with practices and systems is crucial to build teacher commitment and trust which can contribute to improved and better quality of teaching, learning and assessment of students as envisaged by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning in classrooms.

R2 frequently bought gifts for her teachers when she went on holidays abroad. These made her teachers very happy with her leadership besides fostering good relationships with her and were thus willing to work with her and carry out her requests in relation to school development. This is in congruent with Pfeffer (1998) who explained that organizations quite often treated employees as instrumental vehicles to achieve organizational targets and these practices create a transactional relationship with employees. Moreover, according to Bass and Avolio's (1990), Transactional leadership model leaders' skills and



behaviours influence performance. Both respondents, R1 and R2, had implemented the transactional leadership model to instil and promote good teacher discipline and commitment towards their teaching responsibilities. Another key feature of this leadership style can also be attributed to the open and cordial communication between the principal and the teachers that has averted the undue pressure or negative stress that is imposed on teachers in most other schools.

R2 also explained that when her school was nominated by the State Education Department to compete for the Cluster School Award, she had to work in school from morning until night to solve problems amongst her staff and at the same time make all the necessary preparations for her school to meet the criteria of a Cluster School. According to Cameron et al., (2011); Caldwell, Dixon, Floyd, Chaudoin, Post and Cheokas (2012) and Paine (2003), previous leadership researchers argue that leaders need to show their commitment to accomplish excellence if they desire to receive follower commitment and trust. Thus, R2 was clearly a case of leadership by example and who was able to walk the talk.

A similarity that was observed between R1 and R2 is both leaders did not speak about the *Performance Appraisal System* although it is compulsory for all principals in Malaysian schools to appraise their teacher's performance and contributions every year under the Yearly Work Target. This is in line with Borisova (2019) that leaders are prejudiced by the 'Halo Effect' that is teachers are overrated to be excellent in all areas although they might just excel in one or two areas in their job description. Both respondents did not emphasize the *Excellent Performance Award* too as it has been researched that organizational leaders who persist in conducting biased performance appraisals destroy morale and undermine commitment which can affect followership towards leaders (Grubb, 1999; Kohn, 1993; Roberts, 2003). Another similarity between R1 and R2's leadership is that both practiced empowerment and shared decision-making. This is in line with the findings of De Pree (2011) and Covey (2014) who posited that this type of leadership inspired followership and the failure to authorize or empower and distribute decision-making to subordinates is an obstacle to building or promoting followership.

Although R1 and R2 both showed that they had two-way communication with their teachers, R2 showed more commitment to communicating by meeting at least one teacher every day to ask if she/he had any problem or ideas to share during her *Management by Walking Around*. R1 managed more by empowerment. R2 too emphasized that she asked for teachers ideas and opinions during meetings which showed she communicated more with her teachers and that there was constant trust and interactive engagement with the teachers. This is in line with Caldwell and Clapham (2003) who explained that honest communication was the single key factor that accounted for organizational trustworthiness. As a result, feedback and reviews from teachers that were worthy were always appreciated and taken into consideration by R2.

Additionally, R1 and R2 concurred that both of them were against being autocratic. R1 allowed his teachers to manage programmes and only intervened if they faced any problems. He believed in holding back his opinions until the situation deems necessary for him to interfere. He preferred resorting to collaboration and teamwork. R2 also asserts that teachers should be allowed to interact with one another, cooperate and collaborate until they faced a problem. This finding supports Notgrass (2014) who explained that follower preferences for *Management-by-Exception* (passive) leadership behaviours which involve waiting for significant problems to arise before interfering. This had worked well in the context of R2's school where the teachers themselves embraced different ways to tackle various teething issues faced on a daily basis efficiently.

R1 stated he believed in leading by "*Leadership- by -Example*" to solve the littering problem in his school. He picked up rubbish by himself rather than ask students to do so. This trend was then followed by other teachers at his school and the culture of cleanliness was evident at the school over time. Meanwhile R2 claimed that her leadership had strong followership as her teachers had emulated her dress sense and style of wearing matching coloured clothes. This is in line with Northouse (2007) who

explained that Leadership include both leaders and followers with the concept that leadership is a process whereby leaders influence followers' thoughts and/or behaviour.

From our findings, both respondents had shown that leader's roles and styles were important to influence and foster followers' discipline and commitment towards the teaching profession. According to Avolio and Reichard (2008) the success or failure of organizations, including educational institutions, is a result of both the leaders and followers' roles. The respondents, R1 and R2, agreed that the leaders had vast and specific roles to influence the followers and followers also had myriad evolving roles to be committed in their work.

Both respondents, R1 and R2, were able to supervise their teachers' to be committed and responsible towards teaching by giving clear explanations and guidelines through daily, weekly and monthly meetings that included motivational moments (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Gade, 2017; Griffith, 2003) Teachers were continuously reminded of their responsibilities and discipline in taking their job as 'Trust'.

In order for leaders to be successful, they must guide their followers to lead and to be good followers (Banutu-Gomez, 2004). However, the Principal of the secondary school, R1, seemed to leave most of the responsibilities to the teachers to work in teams and make decisions on their own, thus, contradicting with Banutu-Gomez (2004). On the other hand, the principal of the primary school was more authoritative and often ordered her teachers to follow her and comply with her decisions. R2 had relatively contributed more to teaching or coaching her subordinates compared to R1.

Leadership and followership co-exist and followers actually get the job done, as such, the role of followers can no longer be ignored (Kelley, 1992). R2 realized this and took initiatives to celebrate teachers' birthdays and buy gifts for them from overseas. This was seen as a constructive effort to win over their hearts so that they will give their fullest commitment to the organization and in recognition that many teachers had actually worked "over-time" which they had never been paid for. Without their tireless contributions to the school, she would not have been granted the *New Deals* or the school would not have become an Excellent Cluster School. This was not emphasized by R2 during the interview. The ages of R1 and R2 are almost similar and their experience as principals was almost the same but the difference in their leadership may be due to other reasons like personal ambitions or competitiveness. R1 seems contented with his position and school performance although it was not a cluster school nor is he interested to get the *New Deals*. On the other hand R2 is an ambitious headmistress who wants her school to be a high performing school and is constantly geared towards improving the school ranking and the teachers' and students' performance.

## **Limitations**

The samples of this study were limited to two principals and teachers of those two national type schools in the state of Kedah, Malaysia. Furthermore, the research was guided by a few aspects as fixed in the semi-structured interview. These reasons could have affected the findings of this study.

## **Conclusion**

Although decades of research on leadership have only emphasized the importance of leadership in an organization, this study found that followership is equally important and plays an integral role in supporting leadership. A symbiotic relationship is built among leaders and followers which is crucial for the sustainability of both. From the findings of this research, it can be concluded that followership exists in both schools but at different levels. Followership style seems to be more apparent in the school where R2 is a Headmistress. This was mainly attributed by her leadership style which has Directive

characteristics especially where decision –making is concerned. She reflected some transactional leadership traits which she exploited to influence and get the support of her followers. She also practises Servant Leadership as she will serve the teachers first and then expect the teachers to follow her. Her leadership style was adapted depending on the situation, her teachers and the school environment.

On the other hand, R1 seemed to have undertaken ‘Laissez –faire ’leadership. He delegated and empowered duties to his teachers at the beginning of the year and expected the teachers to cooperate, collaborate and produce results. He only interfered when there were controversies or issues. Despite his style of leadership, followership was evident and still prevailed because the school had this as its own culture which has been a tradition. Irrespective of who the Principal was, the culture of the school will be continued.

From the interviews, it can be concluded that teachers were independent and had autonomy. The level of teachers’ involvement in school discussions and decision-making was average in both schools as the final decisions were eventually hierarchical or were made by the principals. The levels of teachers’ cooperation and collaboration in helping the school principals were high. They contributed a lot in helping the school administration through committed involvement in school development.

It can be concluded that the level of teachers’ knowledge and skills was good as their school performances in major examinations were excellent and R2’s school had been awarded the Excellent Cluster School. The level of professionalism in both schools can also be considered as high when handling issues or problems. The level of teachers’ taking responsibility of their teaching, classrooms and accountability was also high and they adhered to the Ministry of Education’s policy of 21<sup>st</sup> century Teaching and Learning. The teachers of R1’s school had an average level of discipline in taking their job as ‘Trust’ and commitment was generally high among teachers of both schools.

Leader member exchange (LMX), a relational leadership theory, recognizes the elements of leader, follower, and the quality of their relationship. This relationship existed in both schools between the follower and the leader especially when there was empowerment of duties and followers had to be accountable when given the autonomy. Since school principals depend on teachers for the success of their schools, it is imperative for principals in Malaysian schools to make conscious effort to recognize and promote followership style characteristics among teachers so that it could lead to more effective leadership outcomes and performance. Leadership performance will accelerate the schools’ abilities to achieve their mission and objectives. Leadership performance and followership adaptability can be enhanced by having workshops at state or even national levels. At present, seminars and colloquiums for teachers are only carried out at school levels to save government expenditure. Principals and teachers should be constantly exposed to new knowledge, skills and best practices in management and leadership if they want to improve themselves and or to enhance their school effectiveness. This is gravely needed especially if Malaysia wants to compete in the fast growing global market and be able to produce human capital that can keep up with the demands of the ever evolving IR 4.0

This research found levels of decision-making among followers as average in both schools. This is because it cannot fully take place where the leadership styles are Authoritative and Directive. Principals in Malaysia must be given training on how to adapt and exploit styles like Servant Leadership as followers of a servant leader will become more independent or Leader –Member Exchange Theory where followers go far beyond their formal job description and the leader in turn does more for those followers.

The followers in R2’s primary school are Conformist Followers who are loyal to their organization and are prepared to give up or compromise their own needs to satisfy the leader and the organization. The followers of R1’s secondary school are pragmatic as they are average in their independence, engagement and general contribution to the organization. They rarely question the leader’s decisions. The teachers are followers who perform required tasks but seldom do more than expected. So, since

there is a lot of compliance on the part of the teachers as followers, they can be said to be reflecting good discipline and are committed.

## Recommendations

More studies must be carried out about the relationship between followers and leaders in Malaysia. This qualitative research must be continued and expanded to interviewing teachers on leadership styles which suit their followership style. This is to obtain more knowledge so that changes can be implemented to the present top-down management in schools where decision-making is done mainly by the school principals and obediently followed by teachers. It is recommended that future studies integrate quantitative and qualitative analysis on followership using Kelly's questionnaire with satisfaction and commitment for a more in-depth and comprehensive research. It is also suggested that further studies should study the relationship of leadership styles of principals with followership styles of teachers at different levels of education such as at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

## References

- Al-Anshory, A. S., & Ali, H. M. (2014). The gap between primary and secondary school teacher followership styles at Adni Islamic School, Malaysia. IIUM. *Journal of Educational Studies*, 2(2), 59-83.
- Avolio, B. J., & Reichard, R. J. (2008). The rise of authentic followership. In R. E. Riggio, I. Chaleff & J. R. Lipman-Blumen (Eds.), *The art of followership: How great followers create great leaders and organizations*. (pp.55-73). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bass, B., & Avolio, B. (1990). Developing transformational leadership: 1992 and beyond. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 14(5). doi: 10.1108/03090599010135122
- Banutu-Gomez, M. B. (2004). Great leaders teach exemplary followership and serve as servant leaders. *Journal of American Academy of Business*, 4(1/2), 143-151.
- Bennis, W., & Goldsmith, J. (2010). *Learning to lead: A workbook on becoming a leader*. Basic Books.
- Bennis, W., & Goldsmith, J. (2010). *Maintaining trust through integrity* (pp. 293-304). The Jossey-Bass Reader on Non-profit and Public Leadership.
- Bjugstad, K., Thach, E. C., Thompson, K. J., & Morris, A. (2006). A fresh look at followership: A model for matching followership and leadership styles. *Journal of Behavioural and Applied Management*, 7(3), 304.
- Blackshear, P. B. (2003). The followership continuum: A model for fine tuning the workforce: A seasoned public manager draws on her experience at the federal and local levels and offers a case illustration from Anne Arundel County, MD, on how to identify opportunities for improving organizational performance. *The Public Manager*, 32(2), 25.
- Borisova, A. (2019). Modern approaches to solve the problems in performance appraisal of employees-national and European context. *Публични политики. BG (ISSN 1314-2313) Public Policy. bg*, 10(4).
- Caldwell, C., & Clapham, S. E. (2003). Organizational trustworthiness: An international perspective. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 47(4), 349-364.
- Caldwell, C., & Hansen, M. H. (2010). Trustworthiness, governance, and wealth creation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 97(2), 173-188.
- Caldwell, R. Leadership and Learning: A Critical Re-examination of Senge's Learning Organization. *Syst Pract Action Res* 25, 39–55 (2012). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11213-011-9201-0>
- Caldwell, C., Dixon, R. D., Floyd, L. A., Chaudoin, J., Post, J., & Cheokas, G. (2012). Transformative leadership: Achieving unparalleled excellence. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 109(2), 175-187.
- Cameron, K., Mora, C., Leutscher, T., & Calarco, M. (2011). Effects of positive practices on organizational effectiveness. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 47(3), 266-308.

- Chaleff, I., (2009) *The Courageous Follower: Standing up to and for our leaders*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Collinson, D. (2006). Rethinking followership: A post-structuralist analysis of follower identities. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 17(2), 179-189.
- Covey, S.R. (2004), *The 8th Habit: From effectiveness to greatness*, Free Press, New York, NY.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating*. W. Ross Mac Donald School Resource Services Library.
- De Pree, M. (2011). *Leadership is an art*. Currency.
- Essa, E. B., & Alattari, A. (2019). The relationship between followership styles and leadership styles. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership (REAL)*, 4(2), 407-449.
- Griffith, J. (2003). Schools as organizational models: Implications for examining school effectiveness. *The Elementary School Journal*, 104(1), 29-47.
- Kalkhoran, M. A. N., Naami, A., & Beshlideh, K. (2013). The comparison of employees' followership styles in their job attitudes. *International Journal of Psychology and Behavioral Research*, 2(3), 115-125.
- Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. T. (2011). *The leadership challenge*. San Francisco: John Lilley.
- Lateh, H. H., & Raman, A. (2005). A study on the use of interactive web-based maps in the learning and teaching of geography. *Malaysian Online Journal of Instructional Technology*, 2(3), 99-105.
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. (1994). The art of science. *The handbook of qualitative research*, 361376.
- Francis, A. (2014). Followership among UK secondary school teachers. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 13(4), 111-123.
- Fritz, S. M., & Bell, L. C. (1993, March). Methodological triangulation: Agricultural education enrolment and the non-traditional student. In *Proceedings of the Central Regional Research Conference in Agricultural Education*.
- Gade, P. A. (Ed.). (2017). *Organizational Commitment in the Military: A Special Issue of military psychology*. Psychology Press.
- Gatti, P., Tartari, M., Cortese, C. G., & Ghislieri, C. (2014). A contribution to the Italian validation of Kelley's followership questionnaire. *Testing Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology*, 21(1), 67-87. doi:10.4473/TPM21.1.5
- Grubb, T. (1999). Performance appraisal is a game of "Let's Pretend." In, *Proceedings of the TSU System-Wide Business Symposium*, Ed. Mary Astone. Troy State University, Troy, Alabama. February 1999. *Performance Appraisal Reappraised: It's Not All Positive*. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228653738\\_Performance\\_Appraisal\\_Reappraised\\_It's\\_Not\\_All\\_Positive](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228653738_Performance_Appraisal_Reappraised_It's_Not_All_Positive) [accessed Mar 30 2020].
- Henry, B. C. (2012). Leadership models for effective change management. *International Journal of Computer Science and Management Research*, 1(4), 817-819.
- Hinić, D., Grubor, J., & Brulić, L. (2017). Followership styles and job satisfaction in secondary school teachers in Serbia. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 45(3), 503-520.
- Kellerman, B. (2008). *Followership: How followers are creating change and changing leaders*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Kelley, R.E. (1988). In praise of followers. *Harvard Business Review* 66(6), 142-148.
- Kelley, R.E. (1992). *The power of followership: How to create leaders people want to follow and followers who lead themselves*. New York: Doubleday Currency Publishers.
- Kelley, R.E. (2008). Rethinking followership. In: Riggio RE, Chaleff I and Lipman-Blumen J (eds) *The Art of Followership: How Great Followers Create Great Leaders and Organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 5-15
- Kohn, A. (1993). *Punished by rewards*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin
- Lawlor, D. A., Tilling, K., & Davey Smith, G. (2016). Triangulation in aetiological epidemiology. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 45(6), 1866-1886.
- Ligon, K. V., Stoltz, K. B., Rowell, R. K., & Lewis, V. J. (2019). An empirical investigation of the Kelley followership questionnaire revised. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 18(3).
- Ling, W. N., Ghazali, M. I. B., & Raman, A. (2016). The effectiveness of student teams-achievement division (STAD) cooperative learning on mathematics achievement among school students in

- Sarikei District, Sarawak. *International Journal of Advanced Research and Development*, 1(3), 17-21.
- Lussier, R. N., & Achua, C. F. (2010). *Leadership: Theory, Application, Skill Development*. Mason, Ohio: South-Western Cengage Learning, 6.
- Merriem, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997). *Commitment in the workplace: Theory, research, and application*. Sage.
- Mushonga, S. M., & Torrance, C. G. (2008). Assessing the relationship between followership and the big five factor model of personality. *Review of Business Research*, 8(6), 185-193.
- Notgrass, D. (2014). The relationship between followers' perceived quality of relationship and preferred leadership style. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 35(7), 605-621. doi: 10.1108/loj-08-2012-0096
- Organ, D.W. (1988), *Organizational citizenship behaviour: The good soldier syndrome*, Lexington Books, Lexington, MA.
- Oyetunji, C. (2013). The relationship between followership style and job performance in Botswana private universities. *International Education Studies*, 6(2), 179-187
- Paine L. S. (2003). *Value shift: Why companies must shift social and financial imperatives to achieve superior performance*. (McGraw-Hill, New York)
- Pfeffer, J. (1998). *Understanding organizations: Concepts and controversies*. McGraw-Hill.
- Raman, A., Chang, C. L., & Khalid, R. (2015). Relationship between school climate and teachers' commitment in an excellent school of Kubang Pasu District, Kedah, Malaysia. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 6(3 S1), 163-173.2
- Raman, A., Don, Y., & Kasim, A. (2014). The relationship between principals' technology leadership and teachers' technology use in Malaysian secondary schools. *Asian Social Science*, 10(18), 30-36.
- Roberts, G. E. 2003. Employee performance appraisal system participation: A technique that works. *Journal of Public Personnel Management*, 32(1): 89.
- Rothbard, N. P. (2001). Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 46(4), 655-684.
- Sarafidou, J., & Chatziioannidis, G. (2013). Teacher participation in decision making and its impact on school and teachers. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 27(2), 170-183. doi: 10.1108/09513541311297586
- Schaufeli, W. B., & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behaviour*, 25(3), 293-315.
- Senge, P. (2006). *The fifth discipline*. New York, N.Y.: Currency Doubleday.
- Shondrick, S. J., Dinh, J. E., & Lord, R. G. (2010). Developments in implicit leadership theory and cognitive science: Applications to improving measurement and understanding alternatives to hierarchical leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21(6), 959-978.
- Simon, H.A. (1997), *Administrative Behaviour*, 4th ed., Free press, New York, NY.
- Thannimalai, R., & Raman, A. (2018). The Influence of Principals' Technology Leadership and Professional Development on Teachers' Technology Integration in Secondary Schools. *Malaysian Journal of Learning and Instruction*, 15(1), 203-228.
- Thomas, D. (2014). Comparison of Rwandan and American followership styles. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 13(4), 124-135. doi: 10.12806/V13/14/C13
- Uhl-Bien, M., Riggio, R. E., Lowe, K. B., & Carsten, M. K. (2014). Followership theory: A review and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 25(1), 83-104.
- Uhl-Bien, M., & Pillai, R. (2007). The romance of leadership and the social construction of followership. In B. Shamir, R. Pillai, M. Bligh, & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *Follower-centered perspectives on leadership: A tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl* (pp. 187-210). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishers.
- Ye, Y. (2009). Factors relating to teachers followership in international universities in Thailand. *Scholar: Human Sciences*, 1(1).