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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS FOR REVITALIZING SCHOOLING IN MALAYSIA

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1. INTRODUCTION

Formal schooling in Malaysia began in 1816 with the establishment of the Penang Free School. Other schools were soon established in the Straits Settlements of Penang, Singapore, and Malacca, the Federated and the Unfederated Malay States. With the opening up of schools, the Malay Teachers College was established in Singapore in 1876-95, in Malacca in 1900, and in Tanjung Malim in 1922. The Malay Women Teachers' College was established in Malacca in 1935. In 1923, the Sultan Idris Teachers' College (SITC), Tanjung Malim, established the Department of Letters, which later became the Language and Literary Agency in 1956. The Translation Bureau of the Language and Literary Agency became the National Institute of Translation in the 1990s. The SITC became the Sultan Idris Education University in 1997. In the 1960s, and the Brinsford and Kirkby Teachers Colleges were established in England to cater for the training needs of Malayan teachers. From the 1960s, other teachers colleges were established in the various states of Malaysia. In 1979, the Malaysian Education Staff Training Institute (MESTI) was established to provide training for educational administrators. The field of educational administration, management, and leadership is approximately 50 years old. In Malaysia itself, the field of study of the art and science of education management is approximately three decades (Awang Had Salleh, 1980).

2. DEVELOPMENT OF POST SECONDARY COLLEGES, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

The development of education in Malaysia is directly interwoven with the planned national development agenda of the nation. Since independence in 1957, Malaysia has formulated eight development plans. During each five-year phase of the Malaysia Development Plan, many programs, projects, and activities were planned and implemented. In the education sector, most of the projects planned had to do with infra-structural development of schools, polytechnics, universities, and teachers training colleges. While most of the developments were funded by

allocation from the national budget, several large projects were undertaken by loans from such international agencies as the World Bank, of which include loans for development of buildings, the purchase and acquisition of equipment, and loans for training and staff development at Masters or Doctoral levels. The main institution in the country responsible for the Training of School Principals is *Institut Aminuddin Baki* (IAB) or, in English, the National Institute of Educational Management and Leadership (NIEML) (IAB, 1997b).¹

In 1957-2000, 27 teachers training colleges were established. These colleges provide general pre-service training to beginning primary school teachers as well as in-service training for practicing teachers. While most of the teachers training colleges provide general training, several of them specialize in particular subject areas, such as mathematics and science, language education, Islamic studies, sports, and technical and vocational education. As the education system develops, the teachers training colleges continue to provide not just more but a wider range and variety of programs of in-service training for teachers. There are also plans to offer training programs for teachers from private educational institutions and for teachers from other countries (Bajunid, 1998b).²

Before the 1970s, there was only the University of Malaya catering for the higher education and higher level skill needs of the country. Then, very few Malaysians went abroad for higher education if they could not receive such funds from international agencies as the Colombo Plan Scholarship, Commonwealth Scholarship, or Ford Foundation Scholarship. In the 1980s, more and more Malaysians went abroad for higher education. There was a shift in the policy of higher education, moving away from the elitist British tradition towards the mass access to higher education of the American system. As there was an expansion of mass secondary education, the expansion of higher education followed. The second

¹ IAB, initially called the MESTI, was established in 1979. The campus in Genting Highlands, Pahang, was built on a World Bank loan in 1979. Again in the late 1980s, a small sum of loan was allocated to the Institute for staff training programs, specifically to develop the corpus of relevant materials in the field of educational management and leadership. In the early 1990s, the Northern Branch of the institute was established and, in 1995, the Branch in Bintulu, Sarawak, was established. The City Campus or the Kuala Lumpur Branch of the Institute was established in 1998. Also, in the 1999-2000 period, the Principal's Institute, affiliated to the Faculty of Education, was established in the University of Malaya.

² In the year 2000, it is estimated that there are approximately 5.5 million school children in Malaysia. Because of the population growth, there has to be the creation on annual basis of approximately 500,000 new school places for the first year of schooling accordingly. There are approximately 1,600 secondary schools and 7,200 elementary schools with additional numbers of remote and under-enrolled schools. There are approximately 300,000 teachers and 50,000 education support workers and several hundreds of civil service personnel in the educational system. There are several thousand small religious schools and other private schools throughout the country. In all, there are over 590 private colleges, 11 public universities, and 6 private universities. The figures indicate trends which are relatively stable but are not accurate to the unit because of the speed and dynamism of development. There are plans to establish several more public universities and to invite the establishment of more private universities in the next decade.

and third decades since Malaysia's independence saw the founding of the Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Pertanian Malaysia, and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. The decades also saw the expansion of programs and intake of students in the Institut Teknologi Mara and the Tunku Abdul Rahman College. In the 1980s and 1990s, there was the founding of the Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Sabah Malaysia, and Universiti Sarawak Malaysia. With the establishment of these public universities, there was also the founding of the departments of educational studies, which eventually became faculties, schools, or centers of educational studies. These educational schools provided pre-service education for specially selected candidates who were expected, upon graduation, to serve as graduate teachers mainly in government secondary schools. These schools of education also began to provide limited places for Masters and Doctoral level studies for educators (Bajunid, 1991).

3. THE EMERGENCE OF NEW EDUCATIONAL LEADERS

During the last 40 years, private colleges began to offer courses on secretarial studies, accountancy, and other business related programs not offered by academe but required by business organizations and industries. Some colleges also began to offer industrial and vocational courses. Among the early distance education programs were those external degrees offered by the University of London. Such organizations as the International Correspondence School offered programs and tutorials for a wide number of courses. Early institutions of private education included the Goon Institution, Stamford College, Maktab Adabi, Taylor's College, and Kolej Damansara Utama, all in the Klang Valley and in the vicinity of Kuala Lumpur and its suburbs. Similar branches of these educational institutions were also established in other parts of the country, mainly in the major towns. As the demand for higher educational qualifications increased, these colleges began to embark on "twinning degree programs" jointly offered by several foreign universities and these private institutions themselves. Slowly but astutely, the paths of the democratization of higher education were charted out. There were several varieties of "twinning programs" which suited the needs of the students, parents, and the partner universities. The financial policies of these colleges had to ensure that the enterprise was viable and affordable. While these colleges were established under the existing regulations governing the provisions of education in both Malaysia and the partner educational institutions abroad, the programs they offered indicated the competitive and entrepreneurial nature of their leadership (Lee, 1999). Through such initiatives, the country was actually producing "world class" entrepreneurs and leaders in the education sector. In each of these colleges, there were the academic staff, the administrative staff and, of course, the Principals. While many of the academic staff, specifically, the principals, had worked in schools and universities before, most had not received training in the principalship. Nevertheless, they had developed themselves by taking management and other courses while actively acquiring knowledge and skills in the disciplines of education. The growth of private sector education had created an alternative model of educational provision with examples

of practical means of funding and management. Private sector education and public sector higher education had also produced a new type of educational leadership. These new educational leaders are Presidents, Rectors, Vice Chancellors, Deans and Department Heads, and Principals and their Deputies and Assistants in the private educational institutions. Principals of schools at all levels now have a new group of significant others who are educational leaders and managers in academic, teaching, and learning institutions. There are now a large number of practitioners who can talk the language of educational management and reflect on the similarities and differences of their functions and leadership at different levels and in different kinds of educational institutions (Bajunid, 1992b).³

4. EDUCATIONAL CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE AND THE EXPORT OF EDUCATION

In the 1990s, the country began to generate ideas and formulate policies regarding higher education in Malaysia. These ideas are primarily in response to events at the global and international level as well as in response to social demands and national entrepreneurship (Champy, 1995; Drucker, 1995; Naisbitt, 1994). The meeting of economic initiatives, market driven forces, science and technology driven changes all collectively acted as catalysts in the process of educational policy formulation. One of the most important national agenda was the founding of the Multi-Media Super Corridor (MSC), Malaysia's creation of its own "Silicon Valley." This important mega project is the launching platform to ensure that the digital economy takes a leading role in the transformation of Malaysian economy and society into a modern knowledge society with a highly skilled work force literate in Information Communication Technology (ICT). To this end, the government has established a National Information Technology Council (NITC). Among other tasks of the NITC is that of advising the government on e-learning. With the establishment of the MSC itself, seven flagships of the project were identified, including Worldwide Manufacturing Webs, Telemedicine, R & D Clusters, Borderless Marketing Centres, Smart Schools, Electronic Government, and National Multi-purpose Card. The Smart School Project has inspired thinking in very futuristic terms and in forward leaps, quite unfamiliar to the large bureaucracy of the educational sector, although quite common to those involved in entrepreneurship, think-tank organizations, and those involved in futures studies (Ministry of Education, 1997).

The growth of imagination in the public and private sectors have, in physical terms, shown the development of Putrajaya and its adjacent city, Cyberjaya, which are planned Malaysian cities of the future. The last decade of the last century has also, for instance, shown the development of the Malaysian Airline System (MAS)

³ In Malaysia, the term "headmasters" refer to heads of primary schools while the term "principals" refer to heads of secondary schools, polytechnics, and teachers colleges. In this paper, unless otherwise specified, the term "school leader" is used to refer to heads of educational institutions irrespective of levels of schooling or specializations.

as an international airline, the development of the Malaysian car industry, the computer industry, and the air-conditioning industry. The country also saw the development of a sophisticated network of national highways and the building of the Penang Bridge, one of the longest bridges in the world, and of the Petronas Twin Towers, the tallest twin towers in the world (Petroski, 1999). These physical artifacts were coupled with the achievements of many individual Malaysians in efforts such as sailing solo around the world, climbing the peak of Mount Everest, and braving the climate of Antarctica and the Arctic. Hosting the Commonwealth Games, the second largest sporting event in the world also became important to the national psyche (Bajunid, 1995b, 1997c; Mahathir, 1991).

5. THE SMART SCHOOLS OF MALAYSIA AND CHALLENGES FOR THE PRINCIPALSHIP

It is within these exciting development contexts of the plans and execution of such national achievements that the idea of the Smart School was conceived and developed. It is interesting to note that the idea is not developed just by Malaysian educators but also by entrepreneurs, politicians, and ICT leaders. Contributions of educators and ICT leaders from abroad were also sought after. The imagination of the mega project demanded of educational leaders not just to be proactive but to be futuristic and realistic and to at least be equal to other thought leaders in other fields of national and international human endeavors.

In the wake of such changes, educational policy-makers supported by other national policy-makers, articulated the policy of developing Malaysia as a centre of educational excellence. Strategies for the “export” of education are explored. Ideas of educational accountability and quality and many related concepts, such as world class standards and the borderless world, have become everyday diction and parlance in educational circles (Peters & Austin, 1985). The national policy of “corporatization” has moved the leaders of public universities to establish a Consortium for Distance Education and the founding of an “Open” Distance Learning University. The policy of privatization has created opportunities for private education entrepreneurs to establish private universities. Between the mid-1990s and the end of the 20th century, seven Acts related to education were passed by the Parliament (Government of Malaysia, 1996). Collectively, these Acts aim to establish conditions which foster educational development while sustaining the principles of eliminating poverty, fostering national unity, and creating opportunities for individual and societal development. In the closing years of the 20th century and as the nation enters the new millennium, six new private universities were established, including a multimedia university and a virtual university. The processes of the democratization of higher education have begun and are spreading. The idea of the democratization of higher education is being related to the idea of continuous lifelong learning. Throughout the country, especially in private sector organizations, the idea of the “learning organization” is well received and begins to be translated into the human resource development and training cultures of organizations. Leaders of these “learning organizations” - whether Principals or

Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), currently designated Chief Information Officer (CIOs) - are challenged to keep pace with the rapid national and global changes and to use educational knowledge relevantly and effectively (Kanter, 1995; Senge, 1990).

All the above changes discussed have significant influence and implications for the training of educational leaders, specifically, principals and other administrative personnel. With the implementation of the Smart School Project, beginning with 90 schools and eventually involving all schools in the country, new possibilities for education are opened up. If the philosophy of lifelong education is put in place and e-learning stretches from every home across all levels of schooling into various forms of virtual, multimedia, distance and traditional education, a new revolution in learning and lifestyle is setting in.

6. THE TRAINING OF TEACHER EDUCATORS SPECIALIZED IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

The early university teachers who taught educational administration were not academicians who pursued degrees or wrote their theses on educational administration phenomena. During the period of elitist higher education provisions, most of the academicians pursued programs in such basic disciplines as history of education, philosophy of education, educational psychology, sociology of education, and linguistics or in such other areas of education disciplines as measurement, curriculum development, comparative education, science education, and social studies education. Among these scholars, there were a few who followed courses on the history of higher education and educational administration. The early university scholars who taught educational administration in the various universities were those who specialized in the history of education or higher education. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, several officers from the Ministry of Education were sent abroad to pursue doctoral study programs. Most of them specialized in the areas of sociology, policy studies, and curriculum studies but not specifically educational management or school leadership. It is this group of early doctoral scholars who were looked upon as education specialists and leaders and whose contributions were sought after as consultants and experts in the whole spectrum of educational concerns. Often, these early scholars had to stretch their specializations and apply their knowledge and experiences relevantly to the various fields of education, including educational administration and school leadership.

The second group of education officers who were sent to pursue master degree programs included those who pursued their degree programs in the United States, as different from those who conducted master level research in the University of Malaya or in other British or Commonwealth universities. From among these early scholars, there were those who took many of their courses from the schools of economics and management, rather than from schools of education. Not surprisingly, there are those educators who look at education phenomena from either public or business sector perspective and not from the perspective molded by the "core technology" of the education profession itself. The argument of the "core

technology” perspective is the argument of giving legitimate and professional credence to and addressing educational issues by taking into consideration insights from educational philosophy, educational foundations, curriculum, pedagogy and instruction, and evaluation. How these various perspectives color and influence thinking and decision-making in policy-making committees at various levels are subjects not fully documented. Nevertheless, experience and practice indicate that the disciplinary and personal knowledge orientations of these significant leaders do influence their preferences and positions on particular educational issues (Elbaz, 1983).

Since the 1970s, there were at least six main groups of teacher educators who contributed to the development of programs of education administration. All the educators in the five groups had one experience in common, namely, they were once students and almost every one of them had pursued Teacher Certification Programs and had been schoolteachers. The first group was those who had worked as teachers briefly and then joined the faculties of education in the various universities. For the most part, they had not been leaders at the system level – as District Education Officers, State Directors of Education, or as Directors of the Professional Divisions of Education of the Ministry of Education. Very few from this group were Superintendents or institutional leaders who were Heads or Principals of Polytechnics, Teachers College, or School Principals. As academicians in the universities, these scholars had contributed through academic perspectives, applying their educational disciplines to the educational administration and school leadership areas. Significant contributors from this group include Fatimah Hamid Don, Ishak Haron, Robiah Sidin, Awang Had Salleh, Rahimah Ahmad, A.I. Ramaiah. From this group, there are those who became school deans, vice chancellors, or leaders of professional organizations. They accumulated enough administrative experiences in later professional life to speak authoritatively on educational policy, administration, and leadership.

The second group composed of practitioners from the Ministry of Education. They shared their experiences of management and leadership with generations of principals who followed training programs. Some of these practitioners wrote papers and recorded their experiences. Most, however, relied on the oral tradition and happily shared their experiences in interviews and as panelists in forum, but did not write academically or journalistically. The significant contributors in this group include Hamzah Salas, Talib Mohd Zain, Abdul Rahim Che Teh, Hussain Ahmad, Jumaat Mohd Noor, Rashid Mohd Noor, Ong Poh Kee, Kum Boo, Tan Boon Lin, D. S. B. Malayapillay, Goon Fatt Chee, and Nayagam. This was the group of reflective educational administration practitioners who, in the early 1970s, began offering weekend courses and short weekday in-service courses on educational administration. The early courses they offered focused on office management, General Orders, financial General Orders, professional circulars, and school discipline.

The third group of scholars making contribution to the development of educational administration includes those who held some kind of leadership positions in the education system before they pursued higher education and/or joined the universities as teaching staff. These were the people who were inspectors of

schools, teacher education lecturers, directors, as well as deputy and assistant directors, of education, and principals of schools. The significant contributors from this group include Ee Tiang Hong, Francis Wong Hoy Kee, Paul Chang, Tengku Ismail Jiwa, Kamaruddin Kachar, Mohd Yaacob Mohd Nong, and Saad Yasin.

The fourth group comprises those from the educational system itself. Included in this group are the Directors General of Education who were interested in the field of educational management and the Directors and Deputy Directors of and lecturers from IAB. Those who contributed to the corpus of educational management knowledge and related knowledge areas include Chew Tow Yow, Harcharan Singh Thandi, Ibrahim Ahmad Bajunid, Leong Wing Fatt, Azmi Zakaria, Abdul Rahim Selamat, Maheswari Kandasamy, Abdul Wahab Ghani, Mohd. Hanafi Kamal, Hussein Haji Ahmad, and Hussein Mahmood. There are those from this group who contributed within and beyond the field of educational management and became educational leaders in the wider domains, across curriculum, instruction, and technology at the national and international levels (Bajunid, 1992b).

The fifth group is a small but very interesting and important group with members contributing to the training of educational leaders. These are the knowledge leaders from the public and private sectors and from non-governmental organizations. In many training and development programs for school principals, experienced leaders from these other sectors are called upon to share their leadership experiences with school principals and other leaders. Their views are often refreshing, challenging, reinforcing and different, and providing wider frames of references pertaining to the phenomena of leadership.

One other group of significant contributors, the sixth group, is composed of top educators from abroad who have influenced educational scholars and thinkers in Malaysia. While the major influences are from the United States of America, Britain, Canada and Australia, there are also educators from the Middle East, Indonesia, India, China, and Taiwan; they have influenced Malaysian educators, either through their writings and teachings or through personal contacts. The influences of these foreign thinkers are philosophical, theoretical, and empirical. Among these contributors are Jean Piaget, Benjamin Bloom, Jerome Bruner, John Goodlad, Howard Gardner, Hilda Taba, R. G. Walker, Eric Hoyle, Philip Hallinger, Thomas Greenfield, Peter Ribbins, Za'aba, and Hamka. Time-honored world thinkers and scholars, such as Socrates, Confucius, and Ibn Khaldun, have played important roles in this influence, particularly, in the realm of culture and education. The prophets from the major religions, particularly Islam, have continued to play fundamental roles in determining the philosophy and framework of educational thought in Malaysia.

Over the last three decades, the collective contributions of these individuals and their various "groups" have helped build the corpus of educational management knowledge, including the knowledge of school leadership in Malaysia. It is this corpus of knowledge, at once individual and collective, at once personal and public, and at once nostalgic reminiscence and reflective, that is used as the content of managerial and leadership training of educational administrators and school principals. It is also the existing corpus of universal and indigenous knowledge on educational leadership and the school principalship that is being used by the

emerging generation of scholars in the field. Through their research and experiences, this new generation of scholars is beginning to contribute significantly to the growing corpus of “mature knowledge” in the educational management field (Bajunid, 1996, 1998a, 1998c, 1998d).

7. TENSIONS IN CURRICULAR CHOICES IN THE TRAINING OF SCHOOL HEADS

Since the establishment of MESTI, curriculum developers have struggled to understand and make decisions regarding the most appropriate curriculum for management training. Regarding the roles and responsibilities of principals and of training programs, there are various schools of thought, personal preferences, and misunderstandings or partial knowledge. Among these tensions of choices are the issues of academic or practical training, the mix of content, the curriculum of training programs, and philosophical perspectives, approaches, and emphases. All major tensions have embedded within them some assumptions, theoretical perspectives, personal preferences and philosophies regarding both the nature of desired knowledge, attitudes, and skills pertaining to institutional educational leadership and of the modalities of training.

Two major tensions concerned the balance between the academic content and the practical content and the focus on the instructional leadership or administrative leadership core curriculum. The first tension of the balance of academic and practical content is a legitimate recurring area of discussion. This was not a divisive issue in IAB, because IAB was established as a training organization. Therefore, from the outset, IAB (formerly MESTI) attempted to provide a strong practical orientation to its programs. If its programs were to be criticized, it could be criticized for having its emphasis on training and practice rather than on the academic approach and on mastery of theories. If the organization was not able to provide as much practical content and practice experiences, it was not because of its curricular policy but because of shortage of funds, personnel, and time resources.

The second recurring tension had its origins in the training of the curriculum developers themselves. The formulators of the head teachers' curriculum who were from the Teacher Education Division and the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education and those others who were trained in schools of education for their Masters degrees favored the recognition of instructional leadership roles of principal. Those who obtained their degrees from management or economic schools and did not have teacher education or curriculum development work experiences favored the training to be focused on school finance, General Orders, and office management (IAB, 1990).⁴ From the long deliberated outcomes of such professional

⁴ There are two major schools of thought regarding the training of principals. These schools of thought are not theoretical or academic schools, but are positions held by main decision-makers at any point of time. Broadly, one school favors a broad based outward looking approach: specifically, an approach which searches for new ideas from any area of management, specifically from public service, private sector, or non-governmental management experiences which may be of value to educational management. The other

debates, IAB offered courses which provided a balance in its programs. The balance of the components for emphasis encompassed the following areas: Educational Foundations; Legal Foundations; Office Management; Financial Management; Curriculum, Instruction and Evaluation; Physical Plant Management; Student Services Management; Co-Curricular Activities Management; Hostel or Residential Management; and Community Relations.

8. QUALITY AGENDA IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR: ENRICHING EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAINING

The corpus of educational management knowledge in Malaysia is enriched from the corpus of management knowledge from the business and private sectors and from public service and non-governmental organizations. In the 1970s, the public sector introduced Quality Control Circles (QCC) with the aim of the provision of quality service to the public. By then, MESTI (IAB) had trained school leaders in QCC techniques and encouraged the formation of QCC in schools and educational organizations. Over the years, other ideas pertaining to the quality agenda were introduced and applied to education. Hence, the education system and educational institutions were familiarized with the ideas of Quality Control, Quality Assurance, Quality Management and, more recently, Total Quality Management (TQM) (Bogan & Bogan, 1994; Hand & Plowman, 1992). As applied to education, the ideas of TQM became Total Quality Management in Education (TQME). In the 1990s, the Malaysian Civil Service promoted the idea of standards and benchmarks, particularly, the ISO (Malaysian Administrative Modernisation & Management Planning Unit [MAMPU], 1992).

By the early 1990s, IAB had begun training school leaders and principals regarding ISO documentation. The government also required that main governmental agencies implement the ISO and obtain certification. Initially, the education sector too was required to obtain the ISO as adapted to the education and training sector. On their own initiative and at their own speed, several Directors of Education and many principals began the arduous and painstaking process of obtaining ISO certification in order to ensure customer satisfaction and consistent quality in the provision of services and thus prevent non-conformity to benchmarks and standards set or established. Today, there are several primary and secondary schools, polytechnics, teachers colleges, and educational organizations which have achieved ISO certification. This achievement has given new confidence to principals and educational leaders that their organizations are comparable to "world class" institutions elsewhere. The introduction of Performance Evaluation Measures and Master Teachers and Principals of Excellence awards also enhanced professional self-confidence while making higher demands for educational standards and general accountability (MAMPU, 1993). Within the education sector too, there were other

school of thought favors an inward-looking profession specific approach: specifically, a classroom and school-view approach. This approach focuses, principally, on the core technology of schooling.

ideas regarding quality accountability. Such ideas included the early ideas of the Quality Schools, the Good High School, the School Improvement Movement, and the Effective School Movement (Cornesky, 1993; McKay & Caldwell, 1991; Mortimore, 1993; Mortimore & Whitty, 1997). As the organization responsible for the training and development of principals, IAB had to formulate training curriculum to ensure the relevance and non-obsolescence of knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired during training. Educational leaders in Malaysia argue that a rich and dynamic curriculum formulated for educational management training must take into consideration the existing school curriculum, both the pre-service and in-service curriculum of teacher education, and the management and leadership training curriculum in public service, business sector, and non-governmental organizations. In addition, the curriculum for the training of principals had to take into consideration national aspirations, technological, scientific, and vocational changes in society as well as the changes in societal values and governmental policies. Furthermore, principals have to understand in historical, contemporary, and professional perspectives, the nature of basic and advanced cultural and scientific literacy. Cultural and political ideologies aside, principals must master the strategies of character development, particularly in multicultural, multireligious, and multilingual contexts (Grossman, 1996; Jabnoun, 1994). It is clear that principals and educational leaders are involved in thought leadership as it pertains to management and educational leadership in universal, indigenous, and sector- or profession-specific contexts. There is the undisputed requirement that, as thought leaders and reflective practitioners, they have to develop broad and multiple frames of cognitive references (Gardner, 1989; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Trompenaars, 1993).

9. EARLY TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PRINCIPALS AND HEADMASTERS

Even before the establishment of IAB, there have been mandatory short weekend courses for school heads. With the establishment of IAB in 1979, the training of school heads have been on-going and expanding in the range of courses offered and in the opportunities offered for almost every administrator and school leader. Deputy Principals/Senior Assistants and Subject Department Heads were also given specifically customized training programs. Typically, a school head receives training for at least three weeks. In addition to such mandatory training, school heads are also invited to attend other short training programs from a wide range of course offerings by the Institute throughout the year. The Teacher Education Division offers training in the area of instruction and pedagogy. The Curriculum Development Centre, the Technology Division, the Vocational and Technical Division, and the Islamic Religion Division, as well as the Examinations Syndicate and other Professional and Administrative Divisions of the Ministry of Education, also offer a wide range of in-service programs, seminars, workshops, briefing sessions, and courses related to their specialized areas. State Education Departments and federal and state government agencies also offer training and development opportunities in a wide range of areas for civil servants, including school heads. In

addition to the above, there are private consultancies and training organizations which offer training courses and seminars on personal development, organization development, peak performance, cross-cultural, and quality management programs. Whether these opportunities are taken or not depend on the initiative of individual heads and the support from funds made available from the government and the Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), as well as leave granted by State Education Departments for the particular short term study program (Bajunid, 1992a).

Professional development opportunities were provided for head teachers since the early years of independence of Malaysia. Most of the programs were, however, not award-bearing although principals received attendance certificates. Beginning in 1993, head teachers were awarded the Diploma in Management by IAB. The Diploma is awarded after candidates complete a program of study which provides educational management principles and practical experiences related to the work of principals.

The First National Seminar on Educational Management was held in 1991. To date, nine such National Seminars were held. Since 1998, in addition to face-to-face sessions, IAB has begun a series of teleconferences throughout the country to create opportunities for educators to follow the keynote addresses and other important forum during national seminars and conferences. The National Seminars, together with the published papers of the seminars, have become a major mechanism to disseminate innovative practices and bring educators together to stimulate discussions on the roles, functions, and challenges of principalship (IAB, 1999).

10. SPECIAL TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL GROUPS

Members of one of the groups of principals who receive training and special programs are head teachers from the Chinese and Tamil Schools. There are many programs specifically designed and customized for Chinese and Tamil school principals because of the perceived differences of interventions required in Chinese and Tamil school management. The main concern in these schools is the acquisition of mother tongue competence simultaneously with the mastery of Malay (the national language) and English (the international language). Also, Chinese schools are relatively homogeneous and mono-cultural and are urban-based, while Tamil schools are also homogeneous and generally plantation-estate-based. Besides the special customized programs provided for the above groups, there are also specifically designed programs for those head teachers working in isolated and small schools, particularly, in Sabah, Sarawak, Pahang, and Perak. Small schools are those “under-enrolled” schools with less than 150 students. Isolated schools are those schools in remote areas, relatively not accessible by road. Such schools may be “under-enrolled” or may have more than 150 students. The status of such schools changes fast because of movement of parents, development brought to remote areas, the creation of cluster schools, and the building of residential facilities. Notwithstanding the changes, it is estimated that there are approximately 1,400 of such schools.

In the larger cities, particularly in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Ipoh, and Johor Bharu, there are several schools considered “difficult” to manage because of the “unsettled populace” and “new immigration” nature of the demography and the conditions in the living environment. Usually too, in such unsettled environments, many of the students come from parents who are in the lower economic strata of society. Often, students from culturally disadvantaged environments are exposed to various kinds of negative influences which affect their academic performance in schools. It is assumed that this kind of schools demands different kinds of management and leaders. Consequently, specially designed training programs are offered for school principals and other staff working and leading in such areas. These special programs are designed to address the specific needs of these specific institutions and environments. To this end, individuals working in or individuals to be deployed to work in such institutions and environments are given training in knowledge, skills, and attitudes deemed necessary for leadership therein. Notwithstanding the special programs, in Malaysia's centralized public educational system, the principle adhered to in training policy as in other policies and programs, is the principle of “inclusiveness.” In almost all instances, principals from all streams of education, from different ethnic and geographical backgrounds and, sometimes, even from different levels and generational experiences, are brought together for common training programs (IAB, 1995, 1997b).

11. THE NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION FOR HEADTEACHERS (NPQH)

The National Professional Qualification for Headteachers has been introduced as a professional qualification to be achieved before the school headship. The program for NPQH is seen as a further development of the program of training conducted by IAB during the last two decades. The planning for the NPQH program was undertaken in the early 1990s. However, the timing for the implementation of the program had to be postponed until several other government initiatives were formulated and implemented. Among these initiatives were the Master Teacher Program, the Excellent Principal Award, and the Time-Based Promotion initiative. These programs had to be implemented to ensure that there was no status incongruence and that the position of headship was not a position that everybody aspired for as it was the only route for promotion in the teaching service. These three major initiatives created other career routes and promotional opportunities for teachers in their areas of interest, hence, leaving the position of school heads for those interested in that area of specialization.

In the early 1990s, IAB began plans to send its staff to acquire mastery in the philosophies, methods, contents, and strategies for implementing Principal Assessment programs. To this end, materials were gathered from many sources to develop NPQH. In order to plan and implement NPQH, the Malaysian Education Principal and Executive Development Centre (MEPADC) was established in IAB (IAB, 1997a). At the policy level, the MEPADC and NPQH received the support of

the Minister of Education and the former Director General of Education, Mohd Noor Daim. In terms of policy leadership, the present Director General (1997-), Abdul Shukor Abdullah, has been the prime mover for the establishment of the Principal's Institute at the University of Malaya. In order to assure acceptance and ensure success of NPQH, the widest range of participation of significant interests groups and individuals with expertise was encouraged. These included union and professional leaders and people from the civil service bureaucracy.

IAB played a major role in curriculum development for NPQH, with the Director leading the processes of conceptualization and curriculum development. The main contributors were Noor Bakar as Head of the Task Force with the assistance of Kamaruddin P. Mohd, Mahinder Singh, Nor Hasimah Hashim, and Mazlan Shamsuddin, as well as adjunct professional help of ideas especially in comparative perspective from educators throughout the country. Foreign institutions and experts who contributed to the formulation of NPQH include Harry Tomlinson and other academicians in the field in the professional network of Malaysian educators (IAB, 1997a).

There are six major areas of concepts and materials development for NPQH: Health, Fitness, and Wellness Measures; General Knowledge; Educational Management Knowledge; Human Relations Skills; Computer Skills and ICT skills; and Personal Knowledge and Self Knowledge.

The 1999-2000 academic session is the first year of implementation of NPQH. It is still in its formative developmental stages. It was the aim of the program to develop a battery of assessment instruments which include general Intelligence Quotient (IQ), multiple intelligence frameworks, emotional IQ, leadership IQ, adversity IQ, executive IQ, and spiritual IQ measures. Other NPQH measures discussed but not implemented widely for various reasons include Thinking Skills Certification with the Cambridge University and Outdoor Leadership Training (Cooper & Sawaf, 1997; Goleman, 1995, 1998; Stoltz 1997).

12. CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN EDUCATION

NPQH is a bold attempt and necessary attempt to ensure that principals are trained to be masterful of the core technology of schooling and administration. The extent of the contemporary relevance and future effectiveness and usability of the knowledge and competencies acquired from the program should, however, be seen within the broader framework of societal concerns and new professional insights and discoveries. The framework of societal concerns is embedded in the controversial issues in education in Malaysia. Malaysian society continues to formulate and reformulate policies to address some of these issues (Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara, 1988).

Controversial issues in education are those same controversial issues in the wider society. In many of these issues there are strong divisions. The laws of the country and the political culture which prefers the mode of "bargaining and consensus" among the political parties in racially "sensitive" areas of national interests do not allow for public debates on sensitive issues. Issues of race, language, and religion

often lead to unbridled anger and primordial passions and positions taken by extreme groups. To avoid wide spread racial clashes, there are safeguards in the Constitution regarding these sensitive issues. Like other people in the polity, educational leaders are subjects to the laws of the land. In order to serve effectively, school principals must therefore understand the history, politics, and cultural ramifications of these issues as they exercise thought leadership in their learning organizations (Quong, Walker, & Stott, 1998; Starratt, 1993; Waterman, 1987). Young people with different generational histories will want to ask questions and require intellectual justifications regarding all aspects of status quo positions in all domains of human activities - political, economic, social, spiritual, and recreational. According to the educational stakeholders in Malaysia, the preparation of school principals must therefore take into consideration the sweep of national and educational history which constitutes the great traditions of the nation and its communities. At the same time, the principal as leader is required to understand the contemporary popular culture which attracts young people in their times. It is within this context of the cultural continuity and the need for discontinuity that the principal has to operate in as a change master. How well the principal plays his or her role will influence in varying degrees the quality of values clarification, thought clarification, attitudes, motivation, and behaviors of the students, teachers, and even parents and the community. The leadership of principals in the new context is therefore one of thought leadership (Allee, 1997; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Langer, 1989; Sergiovanni, 1984).

In addition to the broader macro-level controversial issues in society are the issues in the profession of education itself. Principals more than their teachers are expected to understand the scope of these educational issues and make their professional decisions accordingly. As thought leaders, they are expected to be familiar with the terrain of educational philosophies and the state of the art knowledge of the disciplines of education. Because the school is the site for teaching and learning, all the educational knowledge which are "received wisdom" and all the "new leading edge findings" are expected to be evaluated, selected, implemented, and applied in the school contexts, not experimentally, but judiciously and effectively. In the realm of educational management and leadership, school leaders are expected to intellectually master and make sense of the various recurring questions, including as the following: the rights of the child; the rights of parents and of teachers; the debate on private or public education; school finance; educational reforms; politics and economics of education; teacher trade union movements and professional organizations; desegregation and diversity; and a host of other issues. In professional matters, principals are expected to understand such issues as teaching as a subversive activity, and to control the curriculum, the policies of assessment and measurement and the types of testing and measurements, educational standards and accountability, and educational research. Additionally, as principals exercise their leadership and train their staff while developing themselves, they have to provide leadership regarding such interesting emerging phenomena as neuro-linguistic programming, multiple intelligences, quantum learning, super learning, accelerated learning, power learning, or e-learning (Alder, 1994; Bajunid, 1997b; Crowther et al., 1994; Delors, 1996; Rylatt & Lohan, 1995).

As the country enters the new millennium, the speed, scope, and momentum of its development unleash unparalleled experiences of its activities, often beyond the immediate comprehension of the various elite groups and even the top leadership from various sectors. There are no comparisons and no models of “perfect fit” of educational development available for the new change imperatives. Also, for such societal transformations, there are no comparisons of experiences in the living memories of educational policy-makers and educational leaders. Experienced educators, as well as younger educators with less training and experience, have to make sense of the changes, locate themselves in the sweep of educational development history, and contribute meaningfully and effectively (Ministry of Education, 1997). In the wake of this development are school principals. Within the influential framework of training and development of school principals are the policy analysts, curriculum developers, opinion leaders, ICT specialists, management and leadership experts, and change-masters of all persuasions. Various and collectively, they are required to contribute to formulating relevant transitional and futuristic curriculum to enable school principals to exercise their leadership roles in the rapidly changing new environment of scientific, technological advances which are driving economic change and changes in the life styles. Such changes embrace the notions of knowledge management and intellectual and social capital, and create new meanings for access, equity, and efficiency.

The changes to the principalship are both daunting and exciting. The models of school leadership expected in the new work environment call for in-depth clarifications of educational policies and values. The challenges also call for clear thinking regarding educational philosophies, curriculum, student assessment, learning contexts, relationship spaces (including cyberspaces), study materials, teaching methodologies, learning modes, school management, and school leadership. The challenges demand review of existing laws, rules, regulations, paradigms of thinking, and ways of “doing education.” The challenges demand for new definitions of formal, non-formal, and informal education and new reinforcing relationships among the various constituencies in the education sector (Vaill, 1996). Beyond the structural reviews, the challenges demand, hitherto, unexamined and unexplored adventures into the realms of meanings, of knowledge reorganizations, competence, and performance measures, and of mastery learning and certification (Phenix, 1964). The challenges also demand novel understandings of human potentialities, motivation, attitudes, and self-concept development, especially in the face of the emerging high-tech, high-touch world of education (Naisbitt, 1999). Besides intellect, experience, and will, the new challenges demand a grasp of the sense of history, wisdom regarding the realities of today, and imagination regarding the possibilities of the future in the processes of educating the young and educating adults as well. Again, clearly, the new challenges make strong non-traditional demands from the principals. How each individual principal and the community of principals in Malaysia respond to meet the challenges outlined will be significant in determining whether the education sector contributes coherently and in unison with other sectors in the polity in the exciting developments taking place (Fullan, 1991). The ultimate challenge for principals is to ensure that their students and staff become achievers and that everyone develops with dignity, strength, and positive

self-concept. More than ever before, there is the necessity to understand the roles of the reflective practitioner, not only in the learning organization, but through life's journeys (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Schon, 1983).

13. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REFORMS AND IMPROVEMENTS

In Malaysia, much has been done to improve administrator training and education during the last 20 years. As the country enters the 21st century, much more remains to be done. As the education system is funded mainly by the federal government, there is a tendency for frontline educators to become dependent on central policy leadership (Bajunid, 1995a, 1998a; Government of Malaysia, 1998). Educational leadership, however, is really local leadership, in the classroom, in the institution, and in the community. There is a need, therefore, to balance and synergize national policy leadership and real local leadership. In order to foster the healthy and dynamic growth of students in the contexts of rapid changes in life styles in the homes, work places, local communities, and global societies, educational systems and institutions must themselves initiate changes. To create positive conditions of growth of students, teachers, and the community, school leaders must create the conditions for learning and develop schools as institutions in the great traditions. More than ever, school principals have to understand the nature of organizations, specifically, school or educational organizations and human behaviors in such organizations. Deep understanding of the morphology and meanings of organizations need to be acquired by the mastery of concepts, theories, or metaphors pertaining to educational organizations. For instance, at one level of analysis, principals could see schools as "social systems" or apply Senge's (1990) notion of "learning organizations," and they could see student growth in terms of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) "ecology of human development" as their frameworks of analyses of the purposes of their stewardship.

In the Malaysian context, there are indeed almost everyday many local, national, and international seminars and workshops concerning education and education-related issues being organized. In many of these seminars, measures are often proposed for school improvement and for the improvement of school leadership. Among the actions that are proposed and regarded as important to be taken by all those concerned with management education, specifically pertaining to the principalship, are the following:

- a) a review of the philosophy of administrator education, addressing the breadth and depth of training programs in the context of technological changes, societal expectations, and knowledge development;
- b) the development of needs inventory for schools;
- c) customized professional development programs for principals;
- d) alternative and supplementary and complementary modes of training to be used as integrated elements of a holistic principal training delivery system;
- e) modular approaches to training which provide accreditation and transfer of credits for academic purposes or recognition for promotion purposes;

- f) quality tools for use by principals and their deputies in order to enable them to provide school based training for their staff;
- g) extensive, intensive, and hands-on personalized training opportunities;
- h) affordable training;
- i) the development of a wide range of growth opportunities which meet multiple learning styles through such methods as forum, workshops, seminars, distance learning, publications, and networking;
- j) the development of tool kits and application of standards criteria, such as the ISO or other international standards criteria, to improve the performance of students, teachers, administrators, and organizations and community accountability;
- k) professional skills assessment inventory for all types of school principal/administrator experiences and all school leadership levels;
- l) the formulation and development of position statements regarding accountability, status of principals, and other concerns related to school leadership, schooling, education, and critical societal matters;
- m) the development of professionalism in educational management and leadership through professional organizations;
- n) the development and recognition of school leadership initiatives to visit and share exemplary programs and the fostering of national contests and activities which create and support educational excellence;
- o) the development of specific skills which enable school leaders to engage parents and the community in the education challenge; and
- p) the fostering of accountability of the education system and educational institutions by the creation of linkages with educational writers and other education interest groups.

14. CONCLUSION

The domain of educational management and leadership in Malaysia is exciting with vast opportunities to elicit deep structure knowledge and understanding, especially in research and training. As Malaysia is a multiracial and multicultural society with a tradition of drawing values and knowledge from world civilizations, the possibilities of creating knowledge, both “universal” and indigenous knowledge, are real. Likewise, the dissemination of such knowledge through various training curriculum and delivery modes are equally stimulating. As a new training program, NPQH is still in its formative stages. Content analysis of the documents pertaining to the program as well as evaluation of the pilot implementation of NPQH reveal that there are critical aspects of educational concerns which are not yet addressed by the program. Among the omissions are attention to the corpus of educational thought and development studies insights, particularly, the field of human development across the life-span. Other areas of neglect include the non-utilization of the very rich literature on knowledge creation, knowledge management, and dissemination, literature on motivation, and the inspirational works of mankind in the great traditions. Indeed, there is very little significant research done in education and

educational management in Malaysia (Bajunid, 1997a, 1998b, 1999). The debate whether the training of school principals should be narrowly focused only on the principalship and schooling or that it should take into consideration broader issues of “timeless leadership” have not even begun. Again, whether leadership training should be principally competency-based and technocratic or should be broadly intellectual and “dramatic” taking into consideration life’s complexities with all its passions, emotions and joys, and successes and tragedies have not emerged as prioritized issues on agenda for serious and sustained debates.

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