The Effect of School Bureaucracy on the Relationship between School Principal Leadership Practices and Teacher Commitment in Malaysia Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between principal leadership practices, teacher commitment and school bureaucracy, as well as investigating the mediating effect of school bureaucracy in enhancing teacher commitment in Malaysian secondary schools. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) was used to develop a mediation model in explaining the underlying mechanism of the effect of school bureaucracy on the relationship between principal leadership practices and teacher commitment. The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between leadership practices and teacher commitment in the schools, and the relationship was partially mediated by school bureaucracy. The findings could be taken into account by local educational leaders in their endeavor to improve the effectiveness of their teachers in schools.

Keywords: School bureaucracy, principal leadership practices, teacher commitment, secondary school

Introduction

The launch of the Malaysia Educational Blueprint 2015-2025 (MEB) was the beginning of a major transformation in Malaysia's education landscape. The Blueprint's major thrust was to upgrade and upskill competencies of both school teachers and principals with the primary aim of raising student standards and achievement. The current educational scenario demands that both teachers and principals address issues involving their increasing roles and responsibilities (extending beyond traditional classroom practices), the use of technology and digital tools in teaching and learning (including broader use of ICT for data collection and reporting) and school-based assessment in public examinations.

Indeed, reform is now the norm rather than exception in every teacher's life. This is evident in the current emphasis on outcomes in literacy and numeracy assessments, annual school performance management results, school inspectorate visits, district and

state departments involvement in setting goals for schools and school ranking. Based on empirical findings, Hattie (2009) claimed that the students contribute about 50% to their own achievement, teachers contribute about 30%, school (including principal) and peer effects about 5-10% each. He further suggests that in order to make a difference in achievement, the focus for improvement should first be on the teacher. Geijsel et al. (2003) echoed the same finding. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) found that approximately 20% of the variance in student achievement is accounted for by teacher and school-level factors.

In the same vein, being the critical factor in the education system, teachers are crucial in enhancing student ability through their work in school (Klar & Brewer, 2012; Nordin Abd Razak, Igusti Ngurah Darmawan & Keeves (2010). Mowday, Porter & Steers (1979) defined commitment to school as teacher beliefs and acceptance of school values and goals translates into their desire to achieve these same goals. Lin & Chao (2014), Lin & Lin (2012) and Chan et al. (2008) found that organizational commitment is positively related to teaching efficacy. Lin, Ho, Hsieh and Hsu (2010) also indicated that when school teachers have higher organizational commitment, their job involvement is correspondingly higher. When teachers commit professionally and strive for higher quality teaching, they will ultimately teach better. This in turn will lead to improvement in student learning (Huang & Shen, 2012). With this in mind, commitment is indeed an important quality to be developed and nurtured among school teachers. Moreover, total commitment is tied to increased productivity and lesser employee turnover (Khasawneh et al., 2014). To sustain as a competitive market force, highly committed employees will prove an advantage. Thus, to retain talented employees, fostering employee commitment is the foremost concern (Neininger et al., 2010). Underpinning teacher effectiveness, teacher commitment is the new trend in educational reform. It is closely connected to teacher work performance which notably is one of the most critical factors for the success of education and schools (Huberman, 1995). There exists a significant relationship between teacher quality and student achievement. Hence, the primary interest of the study is on Teacher Commitment in Malaysia.

Teacher commitment is determined by many factors. One key determining factor is leadership practices (Khasawneh et al., 2014) where leadership behavior influences their followers' commitment (Yukl, 2013). DuFour & Marzano (2011) and Hallinger & Heck (1998) stated that any action taken by a school principal which is antecedent to teacher action in the classroom has an indirect effect on student achievement. Hence, school principals need to be instructional leaders with regard to teaching and learning. They must be hands-on, engaged in instructional issues, work with teachers and ultimately lead the school to high levels of student achievement (Huff et al., 2011; Horng & Loeb,

2010). Besides that, Khasawneh et al. (2014) stated that transformational leadership behaviors help teachers to be more focused and make them feel their work is significant, while Leithwood & Sun (2012) stressed that transformational leadership impacts commitment significantly.

In Malaysia another factor for consideration affecting leadership practices and teacher commitment is bureaucracy, now being advocated as a means to organize human activities towards set goals. Bureaucracy is a tool of power, and effective device to control and direct human effort and acceptable behaviors (Muringani, 2011). It ensures order, rationality, accountability and stability and has made this impersonal mass administration system completely indispensable. Bureaucracy is one of the rational structures that has an increasing role in modern society. It is red tape and paper work, often viewed as highly rigid and impersonal. Bureaucracy is seen as an enemy of innovation as it focuses on compliance to regulations and requirement. The word *bureaucracy* is synonymously negative in its connotation. A bureaucratic organization can be a large or small organization. Bureaucracies have long been criticized as being too complex, inefficient, or too inflexible. In such places, employees are treated like machines, where their personalities and passions extruded through rigid drilling protocols (Muringani, 2011). The dehumanizing effect of excessive bureaucracy has become a major concern in modern society.

Based on the literature review, in this study we delved deeper in the enduring issues of teacher commitment, leadership practices and school bureaucracy in Malaysian secondary schools. We also investigated the mediating effect of school bureaucracy on the relationship between teacher commitment and leadership practices.

Literature Review

Teacher Commitment

Organizational commitment was earlier defined as the individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization (Porter, Steer, Mowday & Boulian, 1974). This definition was widely used in most research (Yousef, 2000). This identification and involvement can be characterized by a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values (Pool & Pool, 2007), Wright & Kehoe (2009) and a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; Porter, Steers, Mowday & Boulian, 1974) with a definite desire to maintain organizational membership (loyalty, Crosswell, 2006; Meyer and Allen, 1991; Marsh & Mannari, 1977; Kanter, 1968). There are researches who found that commitment

is the factor that links employees to their organizations (Meyer & Allen, 1997) which invariably helps an organization to succeed (Fornes, Rocco, & Wollard, 2008; Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1982, 1979). Therefore not unexpectedly, organizational commitment is a variable that has received great attention from researchers (Chughtai & Zafar, 2006; Mowday Steers & Porter, 1982).

Furthermore, Aydin, Sarier & Uysal (2013), Gemlik, Sisman & Signri (2010), Douglas (2010) and Hodge & Ozag (2007) found that organizational commitment is a multi-dimensional construct   within which an individual feels psychologically bound and is desirous of maintaining organizational membership. He would also assume a measure of loyalty where he would identify with the organisation's purposes, successes, and is willing to exert substantial effort on behalf of the organization. When this association is positive, then it would foster increased levels of personal and professional satisfaction and hence, increased productivity. Emplacing this idea in the context of school, teachers who have spent enough time in the same school often identifies with the school, adopt school goals as their own, and are willing to put in the extra mile (Hoy, Tarter & Bliss, 1990) to help the school realize its goals. Sammons & Bakkum (2011) has confirmed that organizational commitment is positively related to teaching efficacy.

Teacher commitment and engagement has been identified as one of the most critical factors in the success and future of education (Huberman, 1993; Nias, 1981). Teacher commitment is highly related to teachers' work performance which has a significant influence on students' achievement. It is an indicator for an educator's success Crosswell (2006) for with regard to their profession, they will pursue the best practices in their routine of teaching. With the student being the most important constituent, (Celep, 2001) committed teachers must be the prized assets of schools.

Principal Leadership Practices

The role of principals in fostering student learning is an important facet of education policy discussions. Strong leadership is viewed as especially important for revitalizing failing schools. School leadership is increasingly a priority for many countries concerned with improving student achievement (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008; Robinson, Hohepa & Lloyd, 2009, cited in Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS), 2013 by Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2014) and in improving underperforming or failing schools. (Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2013).

School leaders contribute to student achievement by their leadership impact on the school, its organization and climate and especially upon teachers and teaching (TALIS,

2013). Teachers affect only their direct students, while principals affect all students indirectly in a school. The overall impact from increasing principal quality exceeds the benefit from a comparable increase in the quality of a single teacher. Therefore, the management of teacher quality is an important pathway through which principals affect school quality (Branch, Hanushek & Rivkin, 2013).

Instructional leadership in schools has proven to be more prominent and effective in improving student achievement. Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe (2008) and Sammons & Bakkun (2011) have convincingly showed that instructional leadership is focused on effective teaching and learning and hence it is likely to have a larger impact on pupil outcomes. Their analysis showed that the impact of pedagogical leadership is nearly four times that of transformational leadership. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the nature of instructional leadership is top-down in nature, and recent studies showed that school improvement programs were not meeting the desired outcome as schools were becoming more democratic (Supovitz, Sirinides & May, 2010).

One component of instructional leadership is being able to cultivate a learning climate. In a study done by Raman, Chang & Khalid (2015) using Teachers Organizational Commitment from Celep (2000) on 178 teachers in five excellent schools in the district of Kubang Pasu, Kedah, Malaysia. It was confirmed that school climate indeed has a positive relationship with teacher commitment.

Relationship between Teacher Commitment and Principal Leadership Practices

Heck & Hallinger (2009) and Dale & Fox (2008) have found that leadership is an antecedent of organizational commitment. On principal leadership practices, Mendels (2012) argues that instruction is the heart of the principal's job; Sharma (2012) also states that instructional leadership is crucial in the development and sustenance of an effective school. Yunus & Iqbal (2013) also contend that the key to instructional leadership is in the principal defining his role in terms of recognizing instructional priorities rather than by serving as a school manager.

The strength and quality of leadership skills and effectiveness of the educational leaders play a vital role in influencing the character of educational organizations (Sasnett & Ross, 2007) and was shown to have significant impact on lecturer commitment to the institution (Shirbagi, 2007).

Heck & Hallinger (2009) further emphasized the importance of mediating variables between leadership and student outcomes. They stressed that leadership effect on learning is through their indirect impact on people, structures and processes over time.

Mediating Role of School Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is a rational, efficient way of completing tasks and rewarding individuals based on their contributions. Yet, it also represents an impersonal, inefficient, cumbersome organization which is unresponsive to human needs. In schools, having a bureaucracy provides a means of control and ensures order, rationality, accountability and stability. When it comes to bureaucracy, the school and leadership work hand in glove where power and authority is decentralized to various school departments (Muringani, 2011).

A study from Mashayekhi, Sajjadi & Tabrizi (2013) found that efficient management of an organization would accordingly promote a positive school climate which in turn would foster the development of committed teachers. This is therefore one factor that should be deliberated on as it is central to school academic achievement. When teacher commitment is high, committed teachers would exercise any means to help their schools excel (Mowday, Porter & Steers, 1982; Schein, 200). Structural and social determinants were also found to be related to teacher commitment (Gellatly, 1995).

In Malaysia, currently research studies done on the bureaucratic mechanism in schools in relation to teacher commitment is scarce. Therefore study needs to be done to provide more data in the effort to enhance school effectiveness and improvement.

Research Objectives

There are three major research objectives as follows:
1. To investigate the effect of principal leadership practices on teacher commitment in Malaysian secondary schools.
2. To describe the perception of school teachers regarding their principal leadership practices that enhancing teacher commitment in Malaysian secondary schools.
3. To examine if school bureaucracy a significant mediating variable for the relationship between leadership practices and teacher commitment in Malaysian secondary schools.

Methodology

Population and Sample

The population for this study were all secondary school teachers who are currently employed by the Ministry of Education in Malaysia. There are 181747 teachers from 2404 secondary schools across Malaysia. A proportional stratified random sample of 384 teachers was selected from this pool based on sample size determination of Krejcie & Morgan (1970) at the significance level of p < .05. This randomized procedure was taken to ensure that all subgroups were selected (Fraenkel et al., 2012; McMillan, 2012) and were able to give a comprehensive picture and make a statistically sound generalization about this field of study (Meyerhoff & Schleef, 2010). Data gained from the returned questionnaires indicated that over 76.04 % of secondary teachers who responded were female, with more than 5 years of teaching experience (70.83%), with more than 5 years of teaching experience in that particular school (65.89%) and have a bachelor degree (87.76%), Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the secondary teachers who participated in the study.

Table 1
Sample personal characteristics

Demographic variable	Category	Number of respondent	Percentage
Gender	Male	92	23.98
	Female	292	76.04
Teaching Experience	1-3 years	68	17.71
	3-5 years	44	11.46
	More than 5 years	272	70.83
Teaching Experience in that	1-3 years	83	21.61
Particular School	3-5 years	48	12.50
	More than 5 years	253	65.89
Academic Qualification	Bachelor Degree	337	87.76
	Master Degree	45	11.72
	PhD	2	0.52

Note: N= 384

Research Instruments

A quantitative questionnaire was used to collect data in this study. The first section of the questionnaire contains the adapted Teachers' Organizational Commitment in

Educational Organizations (Celep, 2000); the second section was the Marzano's School Leaders Evaluation Model (2013); and the third section was the Hall's Organizational Inventory (1968). The respondents were asked to refer to their current schools and to answer a range of questions regarding their commitment, principal leadership practices and school bureaucracy. The scales referred to a list of organizational and professional duties.

Measurement for Teacher Commitment

Celep's Teachers Organizational Commitment in Educational Organizations (TCEO). It is used to measure teacher commitment and has four domains with 16 items. The teachers perceive their level of commitment to: school (CS); teaching work (CTW); teaching profession (CTP) and work group (CWG). All items are in the active voice and are positively worded statements. Examples of items include 'I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful' and 'I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization'. All items are rated on a four-point, Likert-type response scale ranged as follows: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= agree; and 4= strongly agree. Teachers are more committed if their score are high. The TCEO was selected because it proves to be valid and reliable. The coefficient alpha internal consistency estimates of reliability in pilot study was ranged from 0.74 to 0.82 showing that it is reliable in measuring the variable (Hair et al., 2014).

Measurement for Principal Leadership Practices

To measure principal leadership practices, the Marzano's School Leader Evaluation Model (SLE) (2013) was employed. It contains 24 items of principal actions and behaviors which were organized into five domains: a data-driven focus of student achievement (DD); continuous improvement of instruction (II); a guaranteed and viable curriculum (GC); cooperation and collaboration (CC); and school climate (SC). The SLE was adapted and adjusted to suit the Malaysian educational setting context. It rated on a four-point rubric scale ranged as follow: 1=ineffective; 2= developing; 3= effective and 4= highly effective. The reliability of the questionnaire was established during the pilot study and the overall alpha reliability coefficient for the scale ranged from .71 to .95 indicating that it has a high reliability in measuring the variable principal leadership practices.

Measurement for School Bureaucracy

Hall's Organizational Inventory (HOI) (1968) is used to measure organizational (school) bureaucracy. HOI has six domains with 12 items: a division of labor based on fictional

specialization (DL); a well-defined hierarchy of authority (HA); a system of rules covering the rights and duties of employees (RR); systematic procedures for dealing with work situations (SP); impersonality approach to interpersonal relations and promotion of rational behavior according to organizational goals (IA); and promotion and selection based on technical competence (TCOM). All items are rated on a four-point, Likert-type response scale ranged as follows: 1= once a while; 2= sometimes; 3= often; and 4= always. HOI was chosen because the overall alpha reliability coefficient for the scale is satisfactory, ranged from .71 to .94.

Research Model

This study was using variance-based partial least squares-structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) to analyze the data as it was non-parametric as permitting the development of parsimonious predictive-based research model (Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2014). The PLS-SEM was employed as traditional statistical techniques in leadership studies can be a challenged (Sosik et al., 2009). Besides, as PLS-SEM uses composite factoring technique, it is deemed to be better suited to assess the model under investigation.

The primary concern of this research were the teacher commitment, principal leadership practices and school bureaucracy in our structural model. Besides that, the mediating effect on the relationship between teacher commitment and principal leadership practices was also analyzed. A two-stage approach to compute the reflective model for the variables of the study. This two-stage approach also added to the advantage of parsimonious modelling to this study (Becker et al., 2012). The analysis was done using SmartPLS software (Ringle, Wende & Becker, 2015).

Results indicate that all reflective indicators of teacher commitment have outer loadings above 0.80 except in the case of CWG (0.745), HA (0.771) and TCOM (0.799) in school bureaucracy but they still reach the satisfactory level of indicator reliability (Table 2).

Construct internal consistency reliability was achieved in all 384 respondents with composite reliability values of 0.866 for teacher commitment, 0.895 for school bureaucracy and 0.929 for principal leadership practices (see Table 2). All constructs have Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above 0.50 which provides evidence for convergent validity of the constructs (Roldán & Sánchez-Franco, 2012).
The cross-loading of the indicators in Table 3 were examined by assessing the discriminant validity. All indicators loaded the highest on their constructs. Fornell-Larcker's approach was applied to test for discriminant validity. Table 3 shows that Fornell-Larcker criterion of the constructs are higher than their latent variables

correlations with other constructs. It provides additional evidence for discriminant validity of the constructs.

Table 2

Validity and reliability of the three main variables of the study

Constructs	Indicator	Loading	Composite reliability	Cronbach' alpha reliability	AVE
Teacher Commitment			0.866	0.863	0.618
Commitment to School	CS	0.853			
Teaching Work	CTW	0.876			
Teaching Profession	CTP	0.892			
Work Group	CWG	0.745			
Principal Leadership Practices			0.929	0.929	0.725
A Data Driven Focus of Student Achievement	DD	0.871			
Continuous Improvement of Instruction	II	0.911			
A Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum	GC	0.852			
Cooperation and Collaboration	CC	0.897			
School Climate	SC	0.883			
School Bureaucracy			0.895	0.895	0.587
A division of labor based on fictional specialization	DL	0.809			
A Well-Defined Hierarchy of Authority	HA	0.771			
A System of Rules Covering the Rights and Duties of Employees	RR	0.853			
Systematic Procedures for Dealing with Work Situations	SP	0.810			
Impersonality Approach to Interpersonal Relations and Promotion of Rational Behavior according to Organizational Goals	IA	0.813			
Promotion and Selection Based on Technical Competence	TCOM	0.799			

Table 3

Fornell-Larcker validity assessment

Construct	Principal Leadership Practices	School Bureaucracy	Teacher Commitment
Principal Leadership Practices	0.851 (Fl)		
School Bureaucracy	0.684	0.766 (Fl)	
Teacher Commitment	0.598	0.599	0.786 (Fl)

Note: Fl = Fornell-Larcker coefficients

Relationship between Teacher Commitment and Principal Leadership Practices

The result in Figure 1 shows that principal leadership practices has a significant and positive effect on teacher commitment, the total effect of principal leadership practices on

teacher commitment is 0.421 (p<0.01) confirms the positive effect of principal leadership practices on teacher commitment as stated in Objective 1.
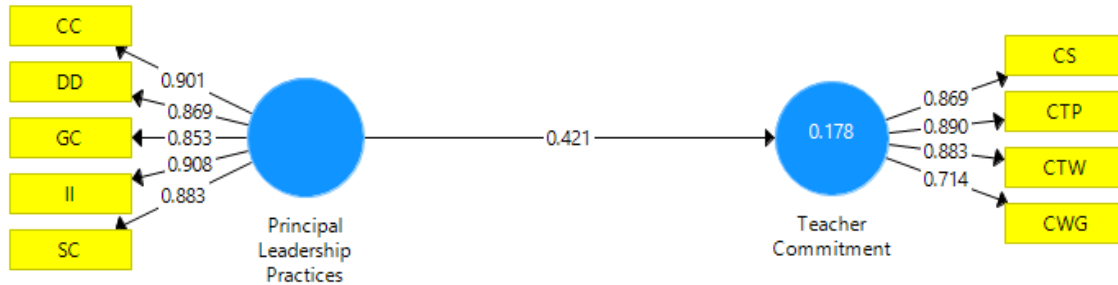

Figure 1: Predictor of dominant domains of principal leadership practices in fostering teacher commitment

Mediating effects were then tested according to the suggestions given by Hair et al. (2014). Statistical significance of the path coefficients was evaluated by the use of bootstrapping (Henseler et al., 2009). Assessing the mediating roles of three forms of need satisfaction, the relationship between principal leadership practices and teacher commitment remains significant with β = 0.134 (in Table 4) by adding the mediation effect of school bureaucracy in Figure 2. Thus, school bureaucracy partially mediates the relationship between principal leadership practices and teacher commitment. The findings substantiate Objective 3.
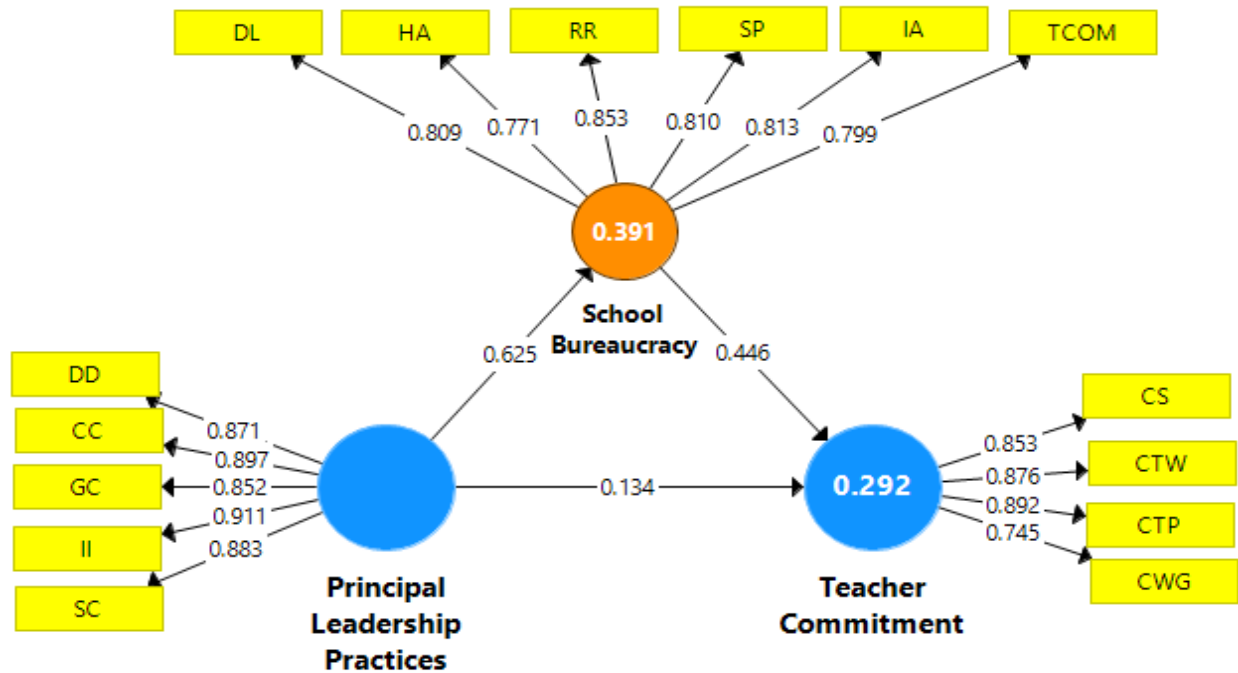

Figure 2: Mediating effect of school bureaucracy on the relationship between principal leadership practices and teacher commitment

Table 4:   Analysis of effects

Constructs	Principal Leadership Practices	School Bureaucracy	Teacher Commitment
Principal Leadership Practices	-	0.625	0.134
School Bureaucracy	-	-	0.446
Teacher Commitment	-	-	-

In other words, the direct effect of principal leadership practices on teacher commitment is 0.134 while the mediating effect is 0.279. The total effect of principal leadership practices on teacher commitment is 0.413 (see Table 5). To conclude, school bureaucracy mediates the relationship between teacher commitment and principal leadership practices.

Table 5:   Summary of effects

Independent variable	Effect	Teacher Commitment (Dependent variable)
Principal Leadership Practices (IV)	Direct	0.134
	Mediating (school bureaucracy as mediator)	0.279
	Total	0.413

The study indicates that there is direct effect of principal leadership practices on teacher commitment with effect size $\beta = 0.134$. However, the effect is partially mediated by school bureaucracy that increase the effect from to $\beta = 0.421$.

Discussion and Conclusion

Malaysian secondary school teacher commitment level was high with differing priorities. Teachers are committed to the teaching profession, committed to teaching work and committed to school. The findings also showed that teachers perceived their school

principals to strive in ensuring improvement in instruction, promoting cooperation and collaboration amongst school teachers whilst nurturing and safeguarding a positive school climate. In addition, commitment to being a teacher is the strength of teacher motivation as it is intrinsic. This means a teacher is readily involved in teaching per se, to constantly seeking new knowledge and upgrading professional skills besides teaching competencies (Lei, Razak & Thurasamy, 2014). Teacher commitment to teaching per se is important because this is what drives them to strive for their students. They are able to carry out what we perceive as routine teaching duties with much enthusiasm (Wong, Malissam & Faas, 2015).

Besides that, the school teachers also noticed that the top management in their schools were professional in a school bureaucracy. Whilst applying a system of rules covering the rights and duties of employees and promoting rational behavior according to organizational goals, the school's top management adopted an impersonal approach to interpersonal relations and observed systemic procedures for dealing with work situations.

The dominant predictors of principal leadership practices in fostering teacher commitment were continuous improvement of instruction, cooperation and collaboration and lastly school climate. As pointed out by Hallinger & Heck (2010), principal leadership makes a difference in the quality of schools and student learning. A strong principal leadership is required to ensure an effective school as he would be able to guide and lead a school to educate all its students (Kouzes & Posner, 2010). It implies that quality instruction is top priority in such a school. This idea is consistent with the research findings in this study.

Besides this, Hallinger (2011) also spelt out that an instructional leader should guide and interact with teachers in propelling instructional efficacy to achieve better student performances. Exemplary instructional practices include academic emphasis and continuous improvement of instruction.

Thoonen, Sleegers, Oort, Peetsma & Geijsel (2011) found that teacher collaboration in professional learning activities, especially a culture of reflecting on what works and what doesn't is a powerful predictor for excellent teaching practices. The term 'school culture and school climate' have had many authors referring to them interchangeably (Maslowski 2006). School culture influences and affect individual members of a school. It is a holistic entity that influences everyone within a school. It is considered an important characteristic that influences teacher behavior and teachers' attitudes

(Seashore 2009). These attitudes are crucial for innovation, school improvement (Kruse & Louise, 2009) and student achievement (Krüger Witziers & Sleegers, 2007).

There is a significant relationship between principal leadership practices and teacher commitment in this study. At the same time, there is partial mediation on the relationship between principal leadership practices and teacher commitment via school bureaucracy. It showed that other than principal leadership practices having a direct influence on teacher commitment, such influence is also achieved by regulating school bureaucracy.

It may be to a lesser or greater degree but most school systems today in Malaysia have bureaucratic attributes. It is a must have to draw up an organization chart in a fairly extensive manner and often than not it details a hierarchy from the principal right down to the clerk, depicting the chain of command and authority in that school. All activities of the school are controlled by policies, rules, regulations and standardized procedures which prescribe the necessary behavior of teachers and students and the expected output, outcome and impact of the operating procedures of the school (Harper, 1965). This is because a bureaucratic school system is clearly focused on a uniform goal. Currently it would be to raised academic standards and school achievement.

The bureaucratic system in school would result in compliance (satisfaction) or resistance (dissatisfaction) by its employees, i.e the teachers. For the former, satisfaction in a bureaucratic school system is derived from the fact that it is a stringent system of organization, with strict orderliness and objectivity with hardly any subjective means of consideration. From curricular, to co-curricular programmes, teacher employment, appraisal and promotions are defined clearly and disseminated in legislative documents and school circulars. This bureaucratic methodology that promotes conformity works fine for some teachers. Their response to this is to give their continual support and commitment; the power structure system perpetuated or further developed (Yukl, 2013). Life can be rewarding for those who are able to conform to bureaucratic expectations. Those who resist would soon see the futility of resistance, fall by the wayside or begin to conform.

Implications

The impact of a school leadership on teachers and their work commitment and activities is clear. In his research framework, Yukl (2013) pointed out that leadership behavior has a direct influence on teachers' commitment, compliance and resistance. Likewise, some recent studies indicated that leadership is an antecedent to organizational commitment (Darolia, Kumari & Darolia, 2010; Heck & Hallinger, 2009).

Leadership is most effective in enhancing teacher commitment (Bennis & Nanus, 2003). Principal leadership practices were able to create and maintain an *esprit de corp* culture, where teachers were energized and creative, and loved coming to work (Bennis & Townsend, 2005). It is important to note that besides improving schools, effective leadership models also boost teacher commitment (Teh, Wong, Lee & Loh, 2014; Seashore, 2009). These effective models further reinforces the call for school leaders to improve student learning by shaping positive working conditions and climate apt for teaching and learning that will help spur teacher motivation (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008). These models emphasize that leadership best practices are able to promote a collaborative school culture and learning community. Principals are encouraged to hold periodical meetings for educational planning to resolve school problems by roping in and involving teachers to further boost their sense of belonging in school and in their profession.

This study concluded that principal leadership practices has an indirect effect on teacher commitment through school bureaucracy as a partially mediated model. Teachers in Malaysian secondary schools believe that bureaucracy has helped them become more committed to school as all teachers will toe the line and eventually adapt well to the school system. In other words, using effective leadership practices school principals will enhance teacher commitment; that is then accentuated because of the school bureaucratic system.

Despite recent critics of bureaucracy insisting that rigid, control-oriented structure over people was incompatible with professional learning communities (DuFour, DuFour, & Eaker, 2008; Kruse & Louis, 2009), teachers in Malaysian secondary schools was of the opinion that bureaucracy assisted in fostering teacher commitment. This finding is therefore inconsistent with the viewpoint that there is now a decline in the use of bureaucratic structure in modern organizations (Crozier, 2010; Etzioni-Halevey, 2010).

Limitation and Recommendations for Future Research

This study researched a small section of Malaysia's educational leadership linking principal leadership practices, teacher commitment and school bureaucracy and it could be expanded in a more comprehensive manner.

This study did not address the various types of schools in Malaysia. This demographic data may provide useful information to the schooling systems in making appropriate decisions on up skilling the school system. Future studies may focus on this aspect. A

similar study on high performing schools, trust schools, transformation schools, integrated schools, public and private faith-based schools by size and functions may provide additional information.

This study did not control various teaching grades of teachers. A similar study that addresses similar grading with varying subject matter background may provide additional useful information.

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