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INCULCATING STUDENT LEADERSHIP PRACTICE THROUGH CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Noorhazlina Fairuz Fauzi[1*], Yahya Don[2], Mat Rahimi Yusof[3]

[1]   Kelantan Matriculation College, Kelantan, Malaysia
       Email: ynafairuz146@gmail.com
[2]   School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia
       Email: d.yahya@uum.edu.my
[3]   School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia
       Email: mrahimiy@uum.edu.my
[*]   Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Abstract:

The Philosophy of National Education in Malaysia is indeed playing a big role in developing students' potential in leadership practice. Students are the backbone of future leadership. This study aims to identify the level and differences of student leadership practices among National Secondary School students in the eastern zone of Malaysia. A quantitative survey using a questionnaire as the instrument was conducted on 394 students selected through random cluster sampling. The instrument used was adapted from the Inventory of Student Leadership Practices (S-LPI) to measure the dimensions of student leadership. The results showed the findings of the level and differences of student leadership practices based on aspects of gender, co-curricular activities and dimensions in the Student Leadership Model. The study finding is hoped to help achieve the National Education Philosophy's target which is to develop the potential of students and prepare great future leaders needed by the country and the people.

Keywords:

Student Leadership, Student Leadership Practices, Activities Co-Curriculum, Secondary School

Introduction

Leadership skills can be developed through a variety of means, methods, or activities. In particular, students are able to develop their leadership skills by participating in various co-curricular activities offered by their learning institutions (Zada & Zed, 2021). It is also an effort to develop students' ability to adapt to challenges, be able to think constructively in addition to building the natural abilities of leadership and the strength of students through teamwork, especially in co-curricular activities (KPM, 2013). To realize the National Education Philosophy, the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 is outlined according to the system of education in Malaysia. This is to achieve the goal of strengthening the vision and aspirations until 2025. This goal is emphasized to all students in schools in Malaysia. In fact, it also applies the practice of leadership, ethics and spirituality in line as 21st century citizenship personality skills (KPM, 2013). Student development is also the focus of the aspirations of the National Transformation 2050 (TN50) policy to create a highly skilled future generation. Every student in the future needs to possess key characteristics such as leadership skills and thinking skills to compete globally (Najib, 2017). The National Transformation Dialogue (TN50) which has been held since 2016 displays strong confidence that the younger generation is not only able to bring success to the country; but wants to make Malaysia a better country. TN50 is able to be the foundation and a reflection of future generations. This is because the aspirations of TN50 displayed by the youth can bring more success to the country. The government always emphasizes quality education at the core of the national education agenda to produce skilled human capital in all aspects based on PPPM 2013-2025.

Six Student Aspirations specifically developed for all students enshrined in the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 have outlined the importance of leadership skills and it is part of the nature of students (KPM, 2013). However, a study Ling et al. (2017) found that most schools undertake leadership skills development in a slightly laissez-faire manner, without properly identifying and nurturing students' leadership potential. In fact, a valid and reliable measurement scale for measuring the leadership competence of secondary school students has yet to be empirically proven (Ling et al., 2017). Student leadership is usually only observed when students actively participate in student bodies or co-curricular activities in school (Nashuha et al., 2019). An assessment score of 10 % co-curricular marks is one of the conditions for admission to a public university. However, the assessments made by each school vary. This difference exists because the assessment made is based on the perceptions and needs of a school (KPM, 1997). Even the quality of student leadership is not assessed in depth on this scale. It has been argued that scores from assessments are not fully utilized in planning leadership programs and that they represent nothing more than mere records kept by schools (Ling et al., 2017).

Moreover, Zakaria and Daud (2020) says the school environment is not conducive, does not use teaching and learning approaches as well as co-curricular activities which resulted in students' leadership attitudes are not displayed. Bad experiences in co-curricular involvement also have a negative impact on student leadership development (Haber-Curran, 2019). Therefore, educators or school stakeholders should conduct further studies as a guide in determining the syllabus or standards of leadership skills practice for future reference (KPM, 1997). Similarly, Sherif (2019) suggested the construction of student leadership models based on future studies related to educational and social contexts that are more context-sensitive and responsive to various learning environments and adolescent populations. Student leadership in

secondary education should be observed when students actively participate in co-curricular activities, student bodies, school supervisory liaison bodies (Kuranchie & Affum, 2021) and during classroom engagement for learning sessions (Sherif, 2019). These co-curricular activities build special responsibilities for students to experience leadership (Morni et al., 2019: Roslan & Hamid, 2020: Yusak, 2019).

Literature Review

Student Leadership

Adolescent leadership is viewed as a number of experiences that emerge as a result of adolescent personal transformation and decision -making. A comprehensive understanding of leadership that reflects an adolescent's personality and developmental needs can unify educational efforts to develop ethical, motivated, responsible, community -oriented and successful leaders now and in the future (Sherif, 2019). This study uses the Model of Five Leadership Practices (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) which are five practices that must be present in exemplary leadership in examining various aspects related to student leader affairs with student leadership behaviour that is the situation of student leaders, followers and management involved. The Kouzes and Posner model of the instrument on student leadership practice inventory is designed to measure student leadership practice. The results of this model study have found that if a student leader succeeds in showing good behaviour, the student leader is considered the best model also example in leadership.

Table 1: Model of Five Leadership Practices

Five practices in Student Leadership
1. Model the Way.
▪ show examples of expected behaviors
▪ seek their own voices and then make clear behaviors about their value statements
▪ share values with group members and ensure that group members also adhere to the values shared by the group
▪ create a more caring leader environment by focusing attention on what one owns rather than highlighting differences
2. Inspire a Shared Vision.
▪ student leaders do not exist without followers, and are forward –looking
▪ create an environment with open communication to unite the hopes, dreams, and desires of the group, create direction or guidance on how long-term interests can be realized by working together
▪ revive team aspirations by using language motivation
▪ inspire the team by infusing enthusiasm and joy to achieve dreams
▪ predict unique opportunities in achieving group goals
3. Challenge the Process.
▪ eager to learn new things and challenge obstacles by opening new perspectives and encouraging followers to achieve excellence
▪ find new ways to increase their seriousness and take initiative in the process
▪ dare to take risks
▪ consider unavoidable mistakes as valuable learning opportunities
▪ create a safe environment for their followers as a trial experiment and learn from experience

- ▪ pay attention and listen to others rather than telling and talking
- ▪ get out of your comfort zone to find new ideas
- ▪ maintain momentum and give a sense of continuous progress

4. Enable Others to Act.
    - ▪ create trustworthy relationships to build passionate and cohesive teams and make others feel strong and capable
    - ▪ confident to take initiative and responsibility, build basic skills and abilities to execute commitments
    - ▪ create a climate where people feel in control of their own lives
    - ▪ share knowledge with team members
    - ▪ facilitate the development of individual skills through shared goals and roles
    - ▪ Provide opportunities for team members to improve their abilities and build self -confidence
5. Inspire the Heart.
    - ▪ Instill hope, spark motivation and give appreciation to the contributions made by followers individually and collectively.
    - ▪ Appreciation by leaders can take many forms,
    - ▪ To maintain the spirit of esprit de corps, congratulatory and positive remarks are seen as a sign of encouragement to celebrate the victory achieved through the results of joint collective efforts.
    - ▪ use a variety of ways to encourage contributions and celebrate the values and victories that have been achieved

Activities Co-curricular

Co-curricular activities based on the Government Gazette dated 28 December 1967 stated that these activities were known as "Group Activities". Furthermore, co -curriculum according to the Education Act 1996 is a co -curricular activity implemented in government schools and government assistance through the involvement of: i. sports games, ii. club associations, iii. uniformed body units and iv other activities Education Management Meeting No. 9. 1997, a representative of the Higher Education Division recommended that co -curricular activities in schools be evaluated based on a fixed format or method and recognized so that the validity and reliability are not disputed when co -curricular marks are made part of the evaluation marks for admission of students to Public Institutions of Higher Learning (KPM, 1997). The series, during the 2006/2007 intake to public universities, a circular was issued by the Ministry of Education Malaysia to access student success in co-curricular activities in schools. Each student is assessed by the teacher according to attendance, involvement, position and achievement in co -curricular activities. An assessment score of 10 % co -curricular marks is one of the conditions for admission to a public university. However, the assessments made by each school vary. This difference exists because the assessment made is based on the perceptions and needs of a school (KPM, 1997).

In fact, the co -curriculum is a complement to the curriculum so that the goals of a planned and perfect education can be achieved through the improvement of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor dimensions of students (KPM, 1991). However, the failure of school leadership to understand the concept of co-curriculum according to government policy, makes co -curricular activities marginalized and seen as not as important as academics (Ahmad & Sulong,

2019). The focus of the educational element if reached more deeply is not only focused on the implementation of teaching and learning of students while in the classroom and school, but it can extend beyond the classroom because the surrounding conditions can affect thformation of student character. Therefore, a commitment for improvement by the Ministry of Education Malaysia in transforming national education is through PPPM 2013-2025. It is specifically to empower students and sustain leadership (Najib, 2013). In line with the results of the National Education Dialogue in PPPM 2013-2025 also states that the structure of education should build students as a whole in accordance with the National Education Philosophy. This clearly explains the involvement of national secondary school students in co -curricular activities is seen as a medium for the formation of leadership and teamwork.

Methodology

This study aimed to identify the levels and differences of five student leadership practices based on the item construct of the Model of Five Leadership Practices constructed by Kouzes and Posner (2007) based on gender aspects and types of co-curricular activities. There are five practices in exemplary leadership namely model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act and inspire the heart.

Participants and Instrument

This study used a total of 394 students from several national secondary schools in the Eastern Zone of Malaysia. The respondents of the study were students involved in co-curricular activities in national secondary schools and were randomly selected independently to answer the questionnaire. This quantitative research used the Student Leadership Practices Inventory (SLPI) (Kouzes & Posner, 2007) questionnaire as a student leadership instrument that was analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 26. The S-LPI consisted of 30 items of student leadership practice measurement questionnaire which used a likert scale of 1 (strongly disagreed) to 5 (strongly agreed) to address the research objectives.

Procedures of data collection and analysis

The data collection procedure will begin by applying for a letter of identification from the School of Education, Universiti Utara Malaysia. The next step is to apply for permission to conduct research in schools under the auspices of the MOE from the Department of Planning and Policy at the Ministry of Education Malaysia. The application process is carried out through online filling. After obtaining approval from BPPDP-KPM, the researcher applied for permission with all school principals for the processing of data collection. The questionnaire form was communicated online to the school to be distributed to all respondents. An allocation of time of a week is given to the respondents to answer the given questions. After that, the collected data were tabulated into data analysis software, and multiple analysis techniques were applied that comprised descriptive and inferential statistics. In descriptive statistics mean, standard deviation was calculated whereas in inferential statistics independent samples t-test, and ANOVA test was applied by using SPSS–26.

Result and Discussion

This section will explain the descriptive analysis of the data obtained. Table 2 shows the number of samples for this study.

Demography of Respondents

Table 2: Respondents Based on Gender and Co-Curricular Activities (n=394)

Types of Co-Curricular Activities	Male	Female	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Clubs/ Societies	32	68	100	25.38
Sports/ Games	66	82	148	37.56
Uniformed Units	18	128	146	37.06
Total	116	278	394	100

Table 2 shows that the study respondents involved 116 male students (29.44%) and 278 female students (70.56%). Sports/games co-curricular activities were the highest co-curricular activities participated by respondents at 37.56%, followed by uniformed units (37.06%) and clubs/society at 25.38%.

Level of Student Leadership Practice

Table 3: Level of Student Leadership Practice

Constructs	Level	
	Mean	SD
Model the Way	4.32	.53
Inspire a Shared Vision	4.15	.63
Challenge the Process	4.26	.58
Enable Others to Act	4.42	.53
Inspire the Heart	4.50	.49
Overall Student Leadership Practice	4.33	.50

Table 3 above shows the level of student leadership practices that have been practiced by national secondary school students. The overall level of student leadership practice was at a high level (M = 4.33, SD = .50). Inspire the Heart construct was the highest leadership practice practiced among students (M = 4.50, SD = .49). This shows student leaders have an esprit de corps spirit and are able to appreciate peers in co-curricular activities. This finding is clearly supported by [20] who stated that co-curricular implementation in schools plays a role of widespread dissemination, supporting and instilling the spirit of esprit de corps, i.e. the spirit of belonging that exists in multiracial students in schools, fostering students to be responsible, compliant, independent, efficient, positive thinking and team spirit.

Differences in Leadership Practices Based on Gender
An independent sample t-test procedure was conducted to identify differences in student leadership practices based on the gender aspects of the respondents. The findings are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: T-Test: Student Leadership Differences Based on Gender

Student Leadership Practices Components	Male n (116)		Female n (278)		T Value	p Value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Model the Way	4.09	.69	4.31	.57	-2.99	.00*
Inspire a Shared Vision	3.87	.78	4.09	.62	-2.68	.01**
Challenge the Process	3.94	.72	4.25	.56	-4.12	.00*
Enable Others to Act	4.16	.68	4.42	.49	-3.83	.00*
Inspire the Heart	4.17	.72	4.41	.49	-3.28	.00*

**p< .01, *p< .05, df = 392

The results of the analysis based on Table 4 above showed that there were significant differences in gender mean scores for the dimensions of the model the way (t = -2.99; p <0.05), inspire shared vision (t = 2.68; p <0.05), challenge the process (t = 4.12; p <0.05), enable others to act (t = 3.83; p <0.05) and inspire the heart (t = 3.28; p <0.05) among male respondents compared to female respondents and. The results of this analysis explained that female students have higher mean scores than male students in all dimensions of student leadership. These findings are supported by a study Kuranchie and Affum (2021) were found that female students practice higher student leadership than male students.

Table 5: ANOVA Test of Student Leadership Differences Based on Aspects a Types of Co-Curricular Activities

Types of Co-Curricular Activities	(N)	Mean	SD	df1	df2	F	p
Clubs/Societies	100	4.16	.58	2	0.30	0.94	.39
Sports/ Games	148	4.23	.60				
Uniformed Units	146	4.26	.50				
Total	394	4.22	.56				

*p< .05

Based on Table 5, the results of one-way ANOVA test statistically showed no significant difference in student leadership mean, based on types of co-curricular activities (F (2, 390) = 0.94; p> 0.05) among East Zone national secondary school students in Malaysia. This explained that the nature of student leadership was still practiced despite different types of co-curricular activities. [17] noted that students highly value student leadership and regard its stance as a means to increase self-belonging in school, are committed to working harder in achieving goals, acquire lifelong skills and enjoy better relationships in school.

Conclusion
Student participation in school leadership is an important element in secondary education in Malaysia (Nashuha et al., 2019). Students feel valued as individuals who have the potential to develop future generations and the nation towards success, as emphasized in the National Education Philosophy "that education in schools helps build individuals in a holistic and integrated manner that encompasses leadership skills" (KPM, 2013). Understanding the

definition of student leadership and the shared nature possessed by student leaders is one of the factors in striving towards a successful nation (Ling et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to develop students' leadership and 'leadership identity' or sense of self-ability to lead (Renn & Ozaki, 2010) while in school in order to become future leaders. Therefore, it is important to understand the type of leadership style exhibited by student school leaders in Malaysia. This is because throgh the development of training and leadership programs will help increase the knowledge of student leaders about the leadership framework and personal abilities as leaders in the organization. As a leader, students need to respond to each situation with appropriate flexibility and be responsive to change with a variety of perspectives (Tan & Adams, 2018).

Student leadership is seen as one of the important problems in the field of educational leadership because of its impact on students, especially for secondary and tertiary level students. The nature of student leaders is seen and studied as a contributing factor to the effectiveness of student leadership in schools. Categorized as one of the types of school leadership, student leadership is considered very beneficial for the development of self-confidence and self-esteem as well as very prudent for the country (Nashuha et al., 2019). Therefore, understanding student leadership in schools can help see the leadership practices and traits that exist with the student leaders in striving to become a developed country (Tan & Adams, 2018). However, student leadership is also a different field in research and practice (Morni et al., 2019). Therefore, student leadership and the development of student leadership in secondary schools are critical issues that deserve to be investigated. All students have leadership potential, and they are able to acquire leadership skills through a variety of situations and experiences.

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