

DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP:
A CASE STUDY OF EXCELLENT PRIMARY SCHOOLS
IN KUALA LUMPUR,
MALAYSIA

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2015

ABSTRACT

Trends in educational leadership now no longer see the principals assume all responsibilities as school leaders. Trending leadership is not just to focus on the ability, skills or talents of individuals but rather to focus on how to create a culture of accountability and shared a common culture of learning and developing school leadership ability (Harris, 2002). Lashway (2003) states, school management is no longer the main task of a principal because he has other tasks that are more complex.

There are a lot of studies have been made regarding educational leadership, including the leadership of Distributed Leadership. This exploratory study is aimed to identify the existence of the practice of distributed leadership in five excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur based on respondents perception. The analysis based on four dimensions in distributed leadership: 1) Setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school; 2) The school culture (in terms of cooperation, collaboration and professional development community); 3) The sharing of responsibilities; and 4) The practice of leadership.

Adapted questionnaire of Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS) by Gordon (2005) and was distributed to middle leaders and teachers with more than 10 years of service. The study found that the level of the existence of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur is in high level. In addition there is a positive correlation to the 4 dimensional distributed leadership elements contained in the study is based on Distributed Leadership.

ABSTRAK

Trend dalam kepemimpinan pendidikan sekarang tidak lagi melihat pengetua menanggung semua tanggungjawab sebagai pemimpin sekolah. Kepimpinan bukan hanya memberi tumpuan kepada keupayaan, kemahiran atau bakat individu tetapi sebaliknya memberi tumpuan kepada bagaimana untuk mewujudkan budaya kebertanggungjawaban dan perkongsian budaya pembelajaran serta membangunkan keupayaan kepimpinan sekolah (Harris, 2002). Lashway (2003) menyatakan, pengurusan sekolah tidak lagi menjadi tugas utama pengetua kerana beliau mempunyai tugas-tugas lain yang lebih kompleks.

Terdapat banyak kajian telah dibuat mengenai kepimpinan pendidikan termasuk jenis kepimpinan 'Distributed Leadership' ini. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti kewujudan amalan 'Distributed Leadership' di lima buah sekolah rendah cemerlang di I berdasarkan persepsi responden. Analisis berdasarkan empat dimensi dalam kepimpinan 'Distributed Leadership' iaitu: 1) Penetapan serta perkongsian misi, visi dan matlamat sekolah; 2) Budaya sekolah (dalam aspek kerjasama dan pembangunan masyarakat profesional); 3) Perkongsian tanggungjawab; dan 4) Amalan kepimpinan.

Diadaptasi daripada soal selidik 'Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale' (DLRS) oleh Gordon (2005) dan telah diedarkan kepada pemimpin pertengahan dan guru-guru yang mempunyai pengalaman lebih daripada 10 tahun perkhidmatan. Kajian mendapati bahawa tahap kewujudan 'Distributed Leadership' di sekolah-sekolah rendah cemerlang di I adalah pada tahap amalan yang tinggi. Di samping itu terdapat hubungan kait yang jelas terhadap empat dimensi 'Distributed Leadership' yang terlibat dalam kajian ini.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing my dissertation, I have learned many things perseverance, discipline and the importance of my family and friends. There are several people who have been with me every step of the way through this process. I sincerely thank and acknowledge the valuable support and guidance of the following individuals:

Dr. Michelle Jones, my Supervisor, has been patient with me, encouraged me throughout the process of fulfilling the requirements for this degree. Her expertise and guidance has been valuable to me throughout the entire process, and I sincerely thank her for being my Supervisor.

Prof. Alma Harris, the one that I admired of her leading style and charismatic. To be a student in IEL is once in a lifetime great experience.

To all lecturers, Dr. Bambang , Dr.Sailesh, Dr.Sathia and IEL committee Madam Suhaila, Miss Nordiana, Miss Noraishah and all MEL members.

“ It is not easy, that’s why not all people have a Master Degree (Harris, 2015) ”

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to Dear ALLAH, my husband, my children and my parents. I thank them for the guidance, support, strength, and knowledge necessary to accomplish my goal.

Thank you ALLAH for this opportunity and the strengthALHAMDULILLAH.

My husband Khalid Sulaiman, who has been a constant source of encouragement in my life and has been continuously patient with me every time that I need.

My children, Haikhal, Aiman, Hakeemi and Ammar, have also been understanding and patient with me while working with my writing. I hope it will motivated, value education and always pursue their own goals.

My parents, have always support me in whatever dream I had, no matter how long it took me to get there. Their endless support and constant belief in my abilities have made me who I am today.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Leadership in the organization of the school is a very important function as an agent of social change. Leaders at the school interact with all stakeholders: pupils, teachers, parents, government agencies and private sector where all this requires effective communication.

Many studies have been conducted in educational leadership, especially in relation to the role of principal. Research undertaken in the 1980's has recognized the role of the principal as crucial in determining the success of the school. However, trends in educational leadership, now see the sharing of responsibility among the school population as a new form of leadership practice.

An independent study on leadership in primary and secondary schools in Wales and England by Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP (PwC) in 2007 showed the need for staff to develop school leadership, the nurturing of talents in their staff and leadership can spread throughout the organization. Their study shows 95% of leaders and 85% of secondary school and primary school leaders feel that their leadership responsibilities have broadened their organization. However, the observation of PwC study found that many teachers and support staff do not feel themselves involved in aspects related to leadership. This message clearly shows there is no parallelism between the perceptions of school leaders and teachers' perceptions of support staff involved in the study. Thus, the findings of the PwC study is the need for a leadership study to be widely disseminated, comprehensive and do in-depth (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2007, p 8).

According to the Malaysia's Ministry of Education, principals of secondary schools and headmasters of the primary school are selected individuals who lead and guide organizations in called 'the school'. Their skills and ability to manage, govern and lead the organization can be measured by an increase of the achievement in all areas including academic, co-curricular and holistic personality development of students. Apart from determining the focus of the school and school key performance indicator (KPI), effective principals should encourage the existence of a community who lead in the organization. Community leaders can be created by spreading the leadership at all levels in schools and not only among mid-level leaders only.

Teachers need to be given confidence in their ability to continue to lead fellow colleagues and to mentor all new teachers in school leadership activities. However, some criteria should be considered when the principal wants to appoint a chief among the teachers. Among them, the vision teacher should be appointed in line with the vision, mission and goals of the school, the ability to manage a team, the ability to influence peers and also have good interpersonal skills.

Furthermore, an important aspect of leadership is dispersed collaboration, partnership and effective distribution of tasks and activities among teachers. When all school activities are successfully implemented, even teachers who are appointed have the support and cooperation of leadership in a positive spread. Its impact will be visible on the continued success of the organization itself.

1.2 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Principals who practice Distributed Leadership allow the leadership to move to all levels in the organization. The widespread practice of leadership in schools is to encourage interaction among many leaders in either teachers or students. Distributed leadership practices can be implemented if the organization has the capability and capacity in terms of leadership and it has to be based on the needs of the organization.

Distributed Leadership is basically the leadership at all levels in the organization and not just dependent on the direction and decisions of superiors (Harris, 2002). It actually involves a lot of leadership in school activities and leadership practices effectively lower level.

Distributed leadership means of providing instructional leadership within the school (Gordon, 2005). Distributed leadership does not mean “no one is responsible for the overall performance of the organization”, rather that, the leader must create a common culture of expectations regarding skill and knowledge and holds individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective result (Elmore, 2004, p.38).

Therefore, it is very important and should be established as a community of distributed leadership in schools, not to mention the excellent school who want to continue the legacy of excellence. The practice of distributed leadership is a way of creating a community of leaders in the school, where the school moves to a variation of achievement (Davies & West, 2006)

The Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS), which was deemed valid and reliable in a study conducted by Gordon (2005), include the five dimensions from Elmore’s research subsequently condensed into four dimensions. These are: mission, vision and goals; school culture; sharing of responsibilities; and leadership practices.

1.2.1 Mission, Vision and Goals

In a school organization, everyone should be alert and involved with the school's vision. Teachers who will act as a leader also should be clear with the vision and mission of the school and are aware of the direction desired by the principal. Neuman & Simmons (2000) explain that a shared vision encompasses clear goals where the focus is on student achievement.

1.2.2 School Culture

Schools must have a culture that encourages change and leadership of teachers. In addition, principals need to believe in the abilities and skills of teachers as leaders in doing their job. Trust given is a tribute to the teachers and they will try to do their best and implement it as soon as possible. School cultures will change as an added benefit if the organization pursues a common purpose, understands the change process, develops relationships, fosters knowledge building and strives for consistency (Fullan, 2001)

1.2.3 Shared Responsibility

This aspect of shared responsibility is a form of creating future leaders who will continue the practice of leadership and professionalism through the application of experience of delivering. The application of value that each individual has a responsibility in the organization of the school. The concept of shared responsibility is that leadership activities should not be responsibility of one individual but should be shared between numerous people in an organization (Storey, 2004)

1.2.4 Leadership Practices

In a culture of leadership practices, teachers are given the responsibility to be given the confidence and opportunity as possible to give the best results. Teachers have the expertise and

experience should be recognized. Leadership practices may examine, the task or activities used in the performance of a routine; who is responsible for the task; what tools are necessary to perform the task; and the leadership function or goals the tasks is designed to address (Spillane, 2006)

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

School performance is closely related to the leadership style or in the main referred to the headmaster at the primary school level. A principal who is a leader of change not only transform the physical school but can also make a paradigm shift in terms of academic achievement, involvement in extra-curricular and school generation that attitude and morality. The culture of the school leadership encourages community leaders that are able to move the school to work in a team where skills and experience are shared and combined in order to achieve the school's vision.

Looking at the schools who are mandate to maintain excellence both in terms of academics, extra-curricular or school culture, the researcher is seeking the type of leadership that is practiced. Do the practices of distributed leadership happen in excellent primary schools ? If so, the question is to what level are the practices of distributed leadership being practiced in excellent primary schools ?

The focus on distributed leadership has been chosen made because the researcher believe that leadership traits can indeed lead to the success of a school. Confidence also comes from reading the results previous studies related distributed leadership. Based on these tendencies, the researcher decided to examine to what extent the practice of distributed leadership practice in five selected excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In conducting this study, the researcher interested to know this two main items;

1. What is the status of the existence in four dimensions of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?
2. What is the level of Distributed Leadership practiced in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE

Education Development Master Plan (Ministry of Education, 2007), through the Core 6 clearly pointed to accelerate excellent educational institutions. When associated with trends in educational leadership research, it is not just a focus on the ability, skills or talents of individuals but rather to focus on how to create a culture of accountability and shared a common culture of learning and developing school leadership ability (Harris, 2002).

Researcher suggested this study to see an overview of the existence and extent of the practice of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the corpus of knowledge in the field of educational leadership of our country.

1.6 PROCEDURES

This study was conducted using descriptive quantitative research methods. The survey method to be used is considered suitable to the study which is to identify the existence of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools selected outstanding. To find out the existence of distributed leadership in selected schools, the researcher adopted the instrument

developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The instrument is known as Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). The DLRS instrument developed was based on a longitudinal study by Elmore (2004) to measure the willingness and involvement of schools in Connecticut when distributed leadership in education reform era around 2004-2007.

These are the four dimensions contained within the distributed leadership instrument that form the focus of this study. That four dimensions are; 1) setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school; 2) the school culture; 3) the sharing of responsibilities; and 4) the practice of leadership. DLRS Instrument named as Educational Leadership Questionnaire contains 40 items that need to be answered by respondents based on five-degree Likert scale.

By expanding the reading of characteristics in distributed leadership, researcher chose to use the instrument Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). The instrument was named Educational Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) have been modified to make it more suitable in Malaysian schools system contains 40 items that need to be answered by respondents based on five-degree Likert scale. This ELQ focus to defined the existence in four dimensions of distributed leadership.

That four dimensions were; 1) setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school; 2) the school culture; 3) the sharing of responsibilities; and 4) the practice of leadership. The survey data were analyzed using latest version of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 21.0) Finally, researcher come out with the finding about an existence of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in four dimensions of Distributed Leadership.

1.7 THESIS OVERVIEW

The dissertation was written in six chapters. Each chapter focuses on the things that determine the plot and structure that can provide information about this research. Chapter One will identify the research problem, rationale and justification for much needed research in the area of the existence and extent of the practice of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur.

Chapter Two will examine the reviews from educational leadership figures who tend to kind of distributed leadership. The views and findings of these figures as a guide and reference in order to explain more clearly related to distributed leadership.

Meanwhile in Chapter Three, will identify the research design approach, methodology, data collection tools and methods chosen for this study. The validity and reliability of the study and how any ethical issues will be addressed will also be clearly addressed.

Chapter Four is about the findings of the study and how it was processed until there is a decision on the level of existence Distributed Leadership in excellent primary schools involved in the study. Discussions made based on feedback from survey respondents and focus made on each of the four dimensions studied in distributed leadership. The final conclusions are made in the average percentage for the level practices of distributed leadership at the excellent primary schools are involved in the research.

Chapter Five analyzed and discuss the findings from the questionnaire to the schools that participated in this study. Through Chapter Five is also the comparison made on the level of practice distributed in the schools. The findings are associated with literature review referred in Chapter Two.

In Chapter 6, the researcher explains the advantages and disadvantages that are found throughout the study. It is also deal with the whole problem related to the study. Starting from

the idea to do this research, research questions, findings and impact in the world of educational leadership. Apart from that, many emerging ideas in the minds of researcher who are all related to the Distributed Leadership and the correlation of educational leadership that contribute to the excellence of the school. The researcher also proposes several measures for the study about Distributed Leadership in future.

Summary

Explore the science of leadership in education, there are a number of educational leadership style each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages. Researcher is keen to explore the science of Distributed Leadership because of the characters in distributed leadership is very interesting to explore. Thus, researcher have chosen to make a study on the level of existence of distributed leadership in five excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur.

By expanding the reading and appreciate the characteristics of distributed leadership, researcher chose to use the instrument Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS) to assess the existence in the four dimensions of distributed leadership. That four dimensions were; 1) setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school; 2) the school culture; 3) the sharing of responsibilities; and 4) the practice of leadership.

DLRS Instrument named as Educational Leadership Questionnaire contains 40 items, through the procedures required in research ethics, the researcher performed with the findings and will discuss these findings in greater detail. This finding would also be helpful in giving ideas of educational leadership because researcher believe that excellent school should be lead by excellent leader.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Education Development Master Plan (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2007), through the Core 6 clearly pointed to accelerate excellent educational institutions. When associated with trends in educational leadership research, it is not just a focus on the ability, skills or talents of individuals but rather to focus on how to create a culture of accountability and shared a common culture of learning and developing school leadership ability (Harris, 2002).

The leaders or principals need to relinquish power and authority, that there is an inevitable shift away from leadership as position to leadership as interaction and that principals will need to build a high degree of reciprocal trust to negotiate successfully that fault lines of formal and informal leadership practice (Harris, 2011).

Distributed leadership has the attention of practitioners, profesional developers, philanthropists, policymakers and scholars (Spillane & Diamond, 2015). Some state and local governments have invested in promoting a distributed approach to leadership. Furthermore, effective professional learning communities gave an impact to the progress between and across schools, and to support improvement and change the school system (Jones & Harris, 2013)

According to Harris (2004), distributed leadership as multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization made coherent through a common culture. Hopkins and Jackson (2002) defines leadership as distributed leadership potential within an individual and can be used in an organization when it is highlighted.

Roland Barth (2006) from Harvard University states that “teachers have exceptional leadership and leadership is a great resource that is not used to develop the school. All teachers can lead. Leadership means making sure that those who you believe or imagine could happen. Everyone deserves the opportunity”. Therefore it is very necessary in the community to established leadership in school organizations.

What distributed leadership means for principals is a fundamental change in their understanding of leadership and in the ways they enact their leadership roles. It implies the relinquishing of some authority and power, which is not an easy task, and a responding of the role from exclusive leadership to form of leadership that is more concerned with brokering, facilitating and supporting others in leading innovation and change (Harris, 2012)

The practice of distributed leadership is a way of creating a community leader in the school, where the school moving from achievement to alteration (Davies & West,2013). Thus, every school is involved with the vision of the organization and all play an active role in changing the organization and not just manage the organization.

School leadership has a greater influence on schools and student when it is widely distributed and some patterns of distributed are more effective than others (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2010)

Today, the existence of leader charisma is not something that is easily found and the number of such leaders is very little. If efforts to create responsible leaders is not done then the success created will not last and will probably become extinct.

Michael Fullen in *The Josey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership* (2007) have concluded that the complexity of the present education system, school leaders should develop a

strong synergy to improve the school. Further, according to Harris (2008), the theory of distributed leadership that is capable of identifying many potential to be a leader in an organization. However she stressed that the key to the success of distributed leadership depends on how it is facilitated, motivated and supported.

As a supporter of distributed leadership, Spillane did a lot of researches related to the practice of distributed leadership. Spillane (2006) has given a contemporary theory of distributed and heavily influenced by his study of distributed cognition and activity theory. He described the latest views on the basic activities of distributed leadership is a relationship and social interaction in an organization.

2.2 DEFINITION OF DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

The idea of distributed leadership as “leadership shared within and between school” (Harris, 2008, p.16) is the main factor in maintaining the school excellent. Furthermore, she (Harris 2004) defines distributed leadership as multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization made coherent through a common culture. Hopkins and Jackson (2002) said, leadership as distributed leadership potential within an individual and can be used in an organization when it is highlighted.

Meanwhile, according to Spillane et. al., (2001, p.13) has been defining distributed leadership as an activity that is played by a group of individuals in various levels to lead and mobilize other staff in the instructional change process. He also said distributed leadership implies a social distribution of leadership function is stretch the coop leadership over the work of

the individual number and the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders share responsibility.

The idea of distributed leadership as leadership shared within and between school” (Harris, 2008, p.16) is the main factor in maintaining the school excellent.

2.3 LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Effective leadership is fundamental to ongoing school improvement (Muijs & Harris, 2007). Many believe that the school management is characterized only by the leadership or principals (Abdul Shukor Abdullah, 2004), without realizing that the leadership of all members of the school community have also contributed towards the success of a school (Hussein Mahmood, 2005). While the nature of school leadership was essentially led by the Principal, Senior Administrative Assistant, Senior Assistant Student Affairs, Senior Co-Curriculum and senior teachers of subjects.

The school is a community organization that provides opportunities for professionals to learn from each other while working together (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Apart from that, there is harmony in the theory of transformational leadership, which also recognizes the right leadership qualities determine the success of the school.

School leadership has a greater influence on schools and student when it is widely distributed and some patterns of distributed are more effective than others (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2010)

A professional learning community recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Some school staffs equate the term “collaboration” with congeniality and focus on building of teamwork.

The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together and improve their organization duties exceeding the target set. Avolio and Bass (2004) also concluded transformational leadership as a process to affect and change the consciousness subordinates about important matters, and to know themselves, opportunities and challenges towards of it. A good leader will form a learning community in well organized and professional. Professional Learning Community (PLC), thus giving a direct positive impact on the students and the organization itself.

A professional learning community recognize that they must work together to achieve their collective purpose of learning for all. Thus, an indirect result of good leadership also provide a natural agent to transform the organization. Some school staffs equate the term "collaboration" with congeniality and focus on building of teamwork. The powerful collaboration that characterizes professional learning communities is a systematic process in which teachers work together and improve their organization.

2.4 SCHOOL OF EXCELLENT

In Malaysia, there are different types of schools with the categories identified relate to communities and environment needs. The most important in categories the school refer to students achievement and school performance. Here are some types of schools that under the Ministry of Education known as Daily Schools, Vocational School, Boarding School, Sports School, Art School, Smart Schools, School Cluster of Excellence and High Performance School.

Excellent schools categorized in this study are daily primary school recognized by the Education Department in Kuala Lumpur as an excellent in curriculum, co-curriculum and the physical environment is conducive. The schools involved in this study are schools that received recognition as either Outstanding Academic School, School of High Performance or Cluster School.

Schools that achieve high academic success, led by principals that have the attributes of effective leadership (Atan Long, 1990). Among the other views linked leaders and school success is "I have never seen a progressive school principals are governed by weak, or school principals who resigned administered by the competent. I've seen schools that successfully developed backward and pathetic schools have developed deteriorated sharply. In each case, the vicissitudes of a high school principal is due (Davis & Thomas, 1989:17, in Ishak Sin, 2006)

Summary

Distributed Leadership requires high level of trust, shared problem as well as a commitment to horizontal and vertical engagement both internal and external to the organisation. Fundamental to this is clear articulation of the goals and processes to realise these goals through effective planning rather than direct implementation. Distributed leadership models can result in improved outcomes for teachers and students.

According Harris (2008), the theory of distributed leadership that is capable of identifying many potential to be a leader in an organization. However she stressed that the key to the success of distributed leadership depends on how it is facilitated, motivated and supported.

Referring to the view of those who know the world related to Distributed Leadership clearly demonstrate this leadership style is something that is attractive and should be explored in more depth. Researcher think there is more skill in distributed leadership needs to be studied in depth. It is very interesting to continue to explore all about distributed leadership.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Spillane et. al., (2001, p.13) defines distributed leadership as an activity that is played by a group of individuals in various levels to lead and mobilize other staff in the instructional change process. He also said distributed leadership implies a social distribution of leadership function is stretch the coop leadership over the work of the individual number and the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders share responsibility. The idea of distributed leadership as “leadership shared within and between school” (Harris, 2008, p.16) is the main factor in maintaining the school excellent. Furthermore, she (Harris 2004) defines distributed leadership as multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization made coherent through a common culture.

The purpose of the study is to find out the status and level of the existence four dimensions of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur. It was conducted using a descriptive quantitative research methods. The survey method to be used is considered suitable to the study which is to identify the existence of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools selected outstanding. To find out the existence of distributed leadership in selected schools, researcher have adapted the instrument developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The instrument is known as Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). DLRS instrument developed based on a longitudinal study by Elmore (2004) to measure the willingness and involvement of schools in Connecticut when distributed leadership in education reform era around 2004-2007.

There are 4 dimensional instrument distributed leadership that is the focus of this study. That four dimensions were; 1) setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school;

2) the school culture; 3) the sharing of responsibilities; and 4) the practice of leadership. DLRS Instrument named as Educational Leadership Questionnaire contains 40 items that need to be answered by respondents based on five-degree Likert scale.

The questionnaire has been distributed to a targeted group which are five excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur. The five excellent schools that involved in this survey are SK Taman Setiawangsa, SK Taman Melawati (2), SK Taman Melati, SK Bintang Utara and SK Bukit Damansara.

The schools involved in this study is an excellent school and has awarded for Academic Excellence, School of High Performance and Cluster School. Researchers have referred to the District Education Office before observing and have been proposed by the officer contacted. By targeted 60 sets in each school, questionnaire totaled 288 sets are returned with the cooperation of schools, especially from Students Counselor.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In conducting this study, the researcher interested to know this two main items;

1. What is the status of the existence in four dimensions of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?
2. What is the level of Distributed Leadership practiced in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?

3.3 RESEARCH GOALS

The aim of this study is to identify the existence of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools Kuala Lumpur.

3.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To investigate the status and level of the four dimensions of distributed leadership practices in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study conducted using a descriptive quantitative research methods. The survey method to be used is considered suitable to the study which is to identify the existence of distributed leadership in selected excellent primary schools. To find out the existence of distributed leadership in selected schools, researcher have adapted the instrument developed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). The instrument is known as Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). DLRS instrument developed based on a longitudinal study by Elmore (2004) to measure the willingness and involvement of schools in Connecticut when distributed leadership in education reform era around 2004-2007.

By expanding the reading of characteristics in distributed leadership, researcher chose to use the instrument Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). The instrument was named Educational Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) have been modified to make it more suitable in Malaysian schools system contains 40 items that need to be answered by respondents based on five-degree Likert scale. This ELQ focus to defined the existence in four dimensions of

distributed leadership. That four dimensions were; 1) setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school; 2) the school culture; 3) the sharing of responsibilities; and 4) the practice of leadership.

3.6 PARTICIPANTS

According to Creswell (2005), convenience sampling is one of the components of the non-probability sampling can be used if the sample was readily available and represent the criteria required by the researchers. Researchers set out the criteria the sample is from the teachers and middle leaders as Senior Assistant School, Head Field and General Committee.

Researcher distributed 300 sets of ELQ in five schools involved with the target of 60 set in each school. This number is calculated to meet the criteria of reliability and validity in answering research questions. Target responder is the leader among mid-teachers, senior teachers of subjects, teachers who serve more than 5 years. ELQ is not for the feedback from the headmaster. Of the total, 288 sets of ELQ (96%) were returned. Researchers had ignored 12 ELQ set (14%) non-refundable refer to technical issues.

3.7 INSTRUMENTATION

The instrument was named as an Educational Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) contains 40 items that need to be answered by respondents based on five-degree Likert scale. The survey data were analyzed using latest version of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 21.0). Data processing will focus on the discovery of the existence and level of four dimensions Distributed Leadership practices as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Dimensions and Constructs Item

Dimensions	No. of Item	Total of Item
1. Setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	8
2. School culture	9,10,11,12,17, 18,19,20,21,22	10
3. The sharing of responsibilities	13,14,15,16,23,24,25,26, 27,28,29,30,32,33,34	15
4. The practice of leadership	31,35,36,37,38,39,40,	7
		n = 40

The data published will answer research questions 1:

- 1. What is the status of the existence in four dimensions of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?**

Next, analyzed will focus on level of practicing Distributed Leadership at selected schools. Table 3.2 will show clearly how the existence of distributed leadership is measured and evaluated. This analyzed will answer research question 2:

2. What is the level of Distributed Leadership practiced in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?

Table 3.2: Scale of Availability Distributed Leadership

Score	Level of Availability Distributed Leadership
0 - 40	Low
41-60	Moderate
60-80	High
80-100	Very High

Summary

In conducting for this study, starting from identified various aspects, selection of research topics, issues, instrument to be used and up to the processing of data researcher need to work with well plan. In selection of the sampling and respondents also plays an important role because it can affect the findings. The proper planning is essential so that the findings obtained really answer the research questions. In using of DLRS instrument is appropriate and relevant to compliance with related leadership research about existence of Distributed Leadership at excellent primary school in Kuala Lumpur.

CHAPTER 4

FINDING AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study is to identify the existence of four dimensions distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur and on what level does the practice of distributed leadership is practiced in the schools.

Researcher chose to use the instrument Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS). DLRS instrument developed based on a longitudinal study by Elmore (2004) to measure the willingness and involvement of schools in Connecticut when distributed leadership in education reform era around 2004-2007.

Researcher have made some modified to the instrument and it was named Educational Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) contains 40 items. It has been distributed to five excellent primary schools involved. With the target of 60 sets in each school, this number is calculated to meet the criteria of reliability and validity in answering research questions. Targeted responder is the leader among mid-teachers, senior teachers of subjects, teachers who serve more than 5 years. ELQ is not for the feedback from the headmaster. In totaling 288 sets of ELQ were returned and have been analyzed using latest version of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 21.0).

The instrument Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS) have been modified to make it more suitable in Malaysian schools system contains 40 items that need to be answered by respondents based on five-degree Likert scale. This ELQ focus to defined the existence in four dimensions of distributed leadership. That four dimensions were; 1) setting and sharing the

mission, vision and goals of the school; 2) the school culture; 3) the sharing of responsibilities; and 4) the practice of leadership.

4.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

To overview for this study, the researcher interested to know this two main items;

1. What is the status of the existence in four dimensions of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?
2. What level of practicing Distributed Leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?

4.3 RESPONDENTS

Researcher distributed 300 sets of ELQ in five schools involved with the target of 60 set in each school. Target responder is the leader among mid-teachers, senior teachers of subjects, teachers who serve more than 5 years. ELQ is not for the feedback from the headmaster. From 300 sets was distributed to the target, 288 sets of ELQ (96%) were returned. Researcher had ignored 12 sets of ELQ (14%) non-refundable refer to technical issues. Information identified responder is the average of the academic teacher, senior teacher and head of the field. In terms of service experience, 92.7% are teachers who have served more than 10 years. This information is important because responder who has long worked to provide more accurate information on their actual experience of leadership in their schools.

4.4 FINDINGS

The process of analyzing the data generated focused to answer two research questions in particular. The analysis is published in the form of a percentage of the average.

Research Question 1:

What is the status of the existence in four dimensions of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?

Researcher took into account all the dimensions and the number of 40 items involved in the computation of the data. Table 4.1 describes each dimension and in particular items involved.

Table 4.1: Dimensions and Constructs Item

Dimensions	No. of Item	Total of Item
1. Setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	8
2. School culture	9,10,11,12,17,18,19,20, 21,22	10
3. The sharing of responsibilities	13,14,15,16,23,24,25,26, 27,28,29,30,32,33,34	15
4. The practice of leadership	31,35,36,37,38,39,40	7
		n = 40

4.4.1 Dimension 1

Based on the data shown in Table 4.2, the respondents gave a statement that there is a clearly vision and mission statement (91.1%) have been shared among school communities . For the total average of 70.43% in Dimension 1 (Setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school) proved leaders and teachers understand and can explain the mission, vision and goals of the school. However, respondents gave a statement that parents and caregivers need to be exposed to better understand and appreciate the vision and mission of the school as data recorded at an average of only 12.3% only. This situation can be relate to the defines by Harris (2004), distributed leadership as multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization made coherent through a common culture. The school leaders should look back and make a plan how to make sure that school mission can be widely shared within parents and guardians.

Table 4. 2: Setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school

Items	%
Teachers and administrators understand, support a common mission for the school and can describe it clearly.	92.1
The school has clearly vision and mission statement.	91.1
The school curriculum is consistent with the policy set.	89.3
School improvement is based on the school development plan.	87.6
School goal are aligned with its mission statement.	87.5
The objective of school achievement is a collective formed.	81.2
Most pupils are able to explain the school's mission clearly if asked.	22.3
Most parents / guardians are able to explain the school's mission clearly if asked.	12.3
Average:	70.43

4.4.2 Dimension 2

The good cooperation and teamwork is very important in determining the success of a school. Practice leadership in 'one man show' usually does not promise a positive culture of excellence and eventually will fade on its own. A good leader will provide a culture and environment that supports the success of the school.

In discussing about the school culture, the existence in dimension 2 of distributed leadership presents clear that a positive school culture is very helpful to the success of a school. Leaders and teachers should play a positive role in the formation of a good school culture, shared vision and mission, and thereafter maintain a school of excellence. It is clear that the success of a school must have a healthy partnership between the leader and the followers.

Refer to Table 4.3, the item 'Teachers and school leaders share accountability for the academic performance of pupils' recorded the highest percentage, 93.1%. Based on the researcher's experience, excellent schools continue to adopt a culture of excellence in terms of cooperation for the success of students. The overall average for school culture dimension is at 87.61%. Every items represent in Dimension 2 (School Culture) shows that in high average. Detailed information can be found in Table 4.3 below. The results can be relate to the general opinion that a good school come out from the good school culture.

Table 4.3 : School Culture

Items	%
Teachers and school leaders share accountability for the academic performance of pupils.	93.1
School uses the expertise needed in specific areas at the district level to help improve students' learning.	91.5
The school agreed on the importance of the role of parents in educating their children.	90.1
The teachers provided time, space and opportunity to work together in teaching and learning.	89.8
Schools are central to effective learning and continually make improvements based on success and failure.	89.7
Decisions involving changes to teaching and learning is based on the assessment data.	89.4
Everyone at the school have high expectations of pupils' academic performance.	88.4
Parents can easily have connection with the school.	88.3
School provides a variety of data that can help teachers to improve student achievement.	84.1
There is a formal structure (committee) that allows teachers to engage in decision-making.	71.7
Average:	87.61

4.4.3 Dimension 3

Further, the data identified to the next dimension, namely the sharing of responsibilities aspects. This dimension is represented by the highest item of 15 items. Responsibility sharing aspect is very closely linked to distributed leadership as including values of responsibility and trusted between leaders and followers. All elements studied had high readings above 80% except for item 'The headmaster and I together in the planning of the professional development plan'. This may be due administrators' to address several specific teachers in decision-making and planning. Apart from this, in Malaysia school management, teacher advices refer to Senior Assistant where every senior assistants have their respective duties.

Overall in Dimensions 3 (The Sharing of Responsibilities) , the average practice of sharing responsibilities recorded data at a rate of 88.11% as shown in Table 4.4. This data clearly illustrate the practice adopted for a maximum responsibility. This data also support the fact that the sharing of task and responsibilities is important to assist school success. If every teacher managed to do the best on its own, the school would excel naturally.

All items in this dimension indicate a very positive reading. Practice accountability is certainly a factor in this excellent primary schools are able to maintain their excellence. Good leaders will create a good culture. The great leader will create a culture of respect not fear. The followers will always sincere in discharging its duties even when he or she is not in school because it is a culture of excellence.

Table 4.4 : The Sharing of Responsibilities

Items	%
Profesional staff have the responsibility to make decisions that contribute to achieving the goals of the school.	94.5
The headmaster have the knowledge of current issues in education.	93.5
Teachers are actively involved in making decisions about the delivery of teaching and learning.	92.1
School leadership welcomed the idea of teachers on issues related to the achievement of the curriculum and increase student achievement.	92.1
Informal school leaders played a major role in improving the performance of professional staff and student achievement.	91.7
School provides staff development programs aligned with the mission and goals of the school.	90.8
Headmaster encourage teachers and other staff involved in decision making.	90.3
The headmaster is very consistent in his/her words.	90.2
There is a sense of respect and trust between school leadership and the professional staff.	89.9
The school support innovations and new instructional ideas.	87.8
My development planning is based on the self-needed and also for school.	86.6
Headmaster participate in staff development programs held at the school.	83.4
There is a sense of respect and trust between teachers and supporting staff.	81.3
Headmaster actively engage in own profesional development programs.	81.2
The headmaster and I together in planning of the professional development plan.	76.3
Average:	88.11

4.4.4 Dimension 4

The questions in Dimension 4, which is about the practice of leadership on average total recorded readings at a rate of 81.94%. It is based on 7 items contained in the questionnaire as shown in Table 4.5. The item ‘District Education Offices and schools work together to determine professional development activities’ recorded an average of 69.9% and is the lowest in this dimension. Researcher assume that relations officer from District Education Department is usually limited only to the headmaster or senior level assistance, the responder may give a low score on this aspect. There are relatively low score is also given in the item ‘Teachers are interested in participating in school leadership’ shows that most responder more interested and comfortable as acting as executors compared to the main administrator.

Table 4.5: The Practice of Leadership

Items	%
Senior teachers fill most leadership roles.	93.7
Teachers appointed to lead a program has sufficient time to produce something meaningful and effective.	89.5
New teachers are provided the opportunities to be a leader.	84.6
Teachers appointed to lead a program has sufficient resources to produce something meaningful and effective.	83.5
The professional staff / teachers are given the ability and opportunity formally as leader.	82.2
Teachers are interested in participating in school leadership.	70.2
District Education Offices and schools work together to determine professional development activities.	69.6
Average:	81.94

Research Question 2:

What is the level of Distributed Leadership practiced in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?

In forming the second research question, it is easier because data show clearly percentage was distributed leadership practice was happen in the schools surveyed. Researcher put a scale to measure as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 : Scale of Availability Distributed Leadership

Score	Level of Availability Distributed Leadership
0 - 40	Low
41- 60	Moderate
61- 80	High
81-100	Very High

Based on the scale, the level of distributed leadership practices that show is as follows in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Level of Availability Distributed Leadership In 4 Dimensions

Dimensions	Average (%)	Level of Availability
1. Setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school	70.43	Moderate
2. The School Culture	87.61	Very High
3. The Sharing of Responsibilities	88.11	Very High
4. The Practice of Leadership	81.94	Very High

Summary

After completion of the process of analyzing data representing DLRS in four dimensions, researcher found that the facts support a finding that positive and Distributed Leadership is practiced in excellent primary schools that participated in this study. Data shows that almost all of the items had a positive and rewarding reading. There are even items that show a very high reading and above the average of 90%.

These findings have significant impact on distributed leadership theories that support the excellence of the school. Any kind of distributed leadership effectiveness depends on several factors including the development of an organization, willingness to change, culture and development needs. It also depends on the pattern of distribution and that for which it was transmitted. Distributed leadership also depends on the relationship and mutual trust between members of the organization (Harris, 2008).

Experience in the course of the study researcher found that almost all of the excellent schools involved in this study have a positive work culture, great teamwork and help each other. Leaders who spread wisdom to build this leadership will help to increase the success of a school. Factor making the school appear as an excellent school leadership is closely linked to major, but maintaining the excellence of a school is more difficult and it depends on factors followers lead.

According to percentage recorded in Table 4.7, shows that all four dimensions thoroughly practiced and balanced.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter , researcher will describe the whole report with more details on the findings. The findings are associated with the existence and practice of distributed leadership to the four dimensions studied. Formulations made with whole part of the research question, the method including the thoughts and literature review. In general, there is evidence of distributed leadership practice in excellent primary schools around Kuala Lumpur that involved in the study.

5.2 DLRS AND DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

As mentioned in the chapters before, Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS) developed based on a longitudinal study by Elmore (2004) to measure the willingness and involvement of schools in Connecticut when distributed leadership in education reform era around 2004-2007. It was modified by Gordon (2005) in four dimensions were; 1) setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school; 2) the school culture; 3) the sharing of responsibilities; and 4) the practice of leadership to measure teacher engagement of distributed leadership practices.

In this study, researcher need to made some modified especially in sentences structured to make it more suitable in Malaysian schools system. Its contains 40 items in five-degree Likert Scale and was named Educational Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ). ELQ has been distributed to five excellent primary schools located around Kuala Lumpur area. Targeted respondent is the leader among mid-teachers, senior teachers of subjects, teachers who serve more than 5 years. ELQ is not for the feedback from the headmaster. From 300 sets was distributed to the target,

288 sets of ELQ (96%) were returned, and the data analyzed base on information from the totaling 288 set of ELQ.

Educational institutions is not just a focus on the ability, skills or talents of individuals but rather to focus on how to create a culture of accountability and shared a common culture of learning and developing school leadership ability (Harris, 2002).

Teachers have exceptional leadership and leadership is a great resource that is not used to develop the school. All teachers can lead. Leadership means making sure that those who you believe or imagine could happen. Everyone deserves the opportunity. Therefore, it is important in the community to established leadership in school organizations (Roland Barth, 2002).

Referring to the views of Harris(2002) and Roland Barth (2002), it is clearly describe that distributed leadership is working to build a culture of good leadership, sharing knowledge and expertise among its citizens to improve school success. Forming a school of excellence is not easy but maintaining the excellence is something more difficult. So it is very important at the school to create an good culture.

Harris (2008)also stress that the theory of distributed leadership that is capable of identifying many potential to be a leader in an organization. The key to the success of distributed leadership depends on how it is facilitated, motivated and supported'.

During the running and processing the results of this study, researcher acknowledges that all excellent schools are adopting all four dimensions of distributed leadership that were having a positive school culture, always sharing the vision, goals, responsibilities and have a good leadership practices. No wonder that all the schools involved in this study are called excellent primary schools.

5.3 RESEACH QUESTION, THOUGHT AND FINDING

Sparked the idea to start this study is actually the admiration researcher to excellent schools known before. More interesting on how these schools can remain outstanding for a long time. Consequently, it was published the following research questions:

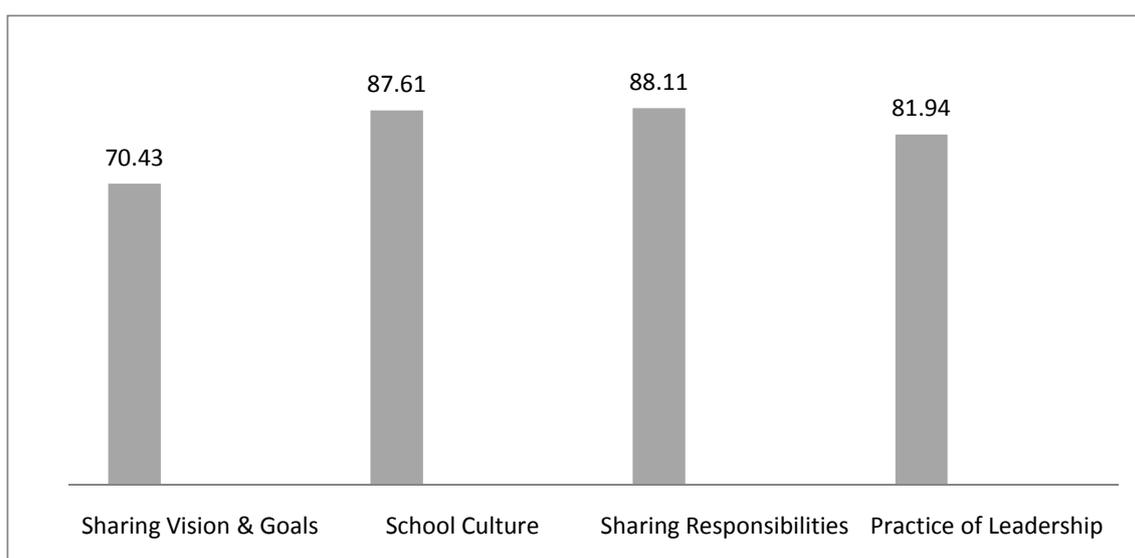
1. What is the status of the existence in four dimensions of distributed leadership in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?
2. What is the level of Distributed Leadership practiced in excellent primary schools in Kuala Lumpur ?

The factors in distributed leadership is something very interesting to be associated with excellent schools. Dimensions are created in distributed leadership itself is already quite perfect if the principle aim to upgrade the school. The function as a Professional Learning Community and Transform Agent may form itself if the maximum practicable in distributed leadership has been practiced. It can be support with the statement by Spillane (2001), distributed leadership as an activity that is played by a group of individuals in various levels to lead and mobilize other staff in the instructional change process. He also said distributed leadership implies a social distribution of leadership function is stretch the coop leadership over the work of the individual number and the leadership task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders share responsibility.

To complete this research, the process of analyzing data began with each of the 40 items contained in the ELQ. Estimated data created with the help of an expert, the score published in average for each item. 40 items have already been structured in line of four dimensions distributed leadership (please refer to Table 4.1).

The data recorded at 70.43% for Dimension 1 (setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school), 87.61 for Dimension 2 (the school culture), 88.11 for Dimension 3 (sharing of responsibilities) and 81.94 for Dimension 4 (practice of leadership). It shown clearly in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Availability Of Four Dimensional Distributed Leadership In Excellent Primary School Kuala Lumpur



Based on this average, the practice of sharing responsibilities (Dimension 3) registered the highest reading (88.11). The researcher further strengthens the assumption that excellent schools always have good teamwork and sharing of duties has always practiced widely and fairly. Meanwhile, the data for dimensions 1 (setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school) had the lowest reading. This shows that sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school should be extended to all citizens including students and parents.

Finally this study defined that distributed leadership really happen at excellent primary school in Kuala Lumpur in high level practices at the reading percentage for 82.02%.

Summary

In learning of science and theories of leadership, especially educational leadership has opened the minds of researcher that each type of leadership has its own advantages and disadvantages. The success of a school depends on the leadership style practiced at the school (Hussein Mahmood, 2005; Mortimore, 1997). The school is a community organization that provides opportunities for professionals to learn from each other while working together (Muijs & Harris, 2006).

This study focused on the existence of Distributed Leadership in excellent primary schools around Kuala Lumpur. The results showed Distributed Leadership practice occurred and recorded an average overall practice relatively high among school leaders and followers. This finding supports the Distributed Leadership practices can improve success of a school. Measured through four dimensions, namely 1) setting and sharing the mission, vision and goals of the school; 2) the school culture; 3) the sharing of responsibilities; and 4) the practice of leadership to measure teacher engagement of distributed leadership practices indicates the size of Distributed Leadership practice is comprehensive and balanced.

Distributed Leadership as “leadership shared within and between school” (Harris, 2008, p.16) is the main factor in maintaining the school excellent. Furthermore, she (Harris 2004) defines distributed leadership as multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of expertise in an organization made coherent through a common culture. Hopkins and Jackson (2002) said, leadership as distributed leadership potential within an individual and can be used in an organization when it is highlighted.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Through Chapter 6, researchers appear to deal with the whole problem related to the study. Starting from the idea to do this research, research questions, findings and impact in the world of educational leadership. Researcher found a lot of experience directly or indirectly when preparing this study. Apart from that, many emerging ideas in the minds of researcher who are all related to the Distributed Leadership and the correlation of educational leadership that contribute to the excellence of the school.

6.2 CONCLUSIONS

Referring to the analysis and findings of this study, the researcher suggests that:

1. Distributed Leadership is a more complex and comprehensive leadership style that can have a positive impact on the development of the school.
2. Effective educational leadership is demonstrated when the leader creates future leaders who can maintain the excellence of the school.
3. The phenomenon of distributed leadership is the kind of leadership that is increasingly popular and widespread in many schools.
4. Excellent cultural practices, helping each other and focusing on producing excellent students is widely practiced in the schools involved in this study.
5. The vision and mission of the school should be shared among all its citizens to be more transparent and reach the planned goals.

6. Senior leaders must instil a sense of trust and confidence in the ability of future leaders.
7. The practices of distributed leadership in all schools that are involved in this study are high.

These findings are supported by the statement of Harris,(2002) when associated with trends in educational leadership research, it is not just a focus on the ability, skills or talents of individuals but rather to focus on how to create a culture of accountability and shared a common culture of learning and developing school leadership ability. The statement by Davies and West, find that the practice of distributed leadership is a way of creating a community leader in the school, where the school moving from achievement to alteration. Thus, every school is involved with the vision of the organization and all play an active role in changing the organization and not just manage the organization.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS

Although this study is a relatively small sample, the effects and implications will encourage further studies because the findings clearly show distributed leadership practices occurring in excellent primary schools involved in the study. There are a variety of distributed leadership studies that have been made by researchers before. This study is quite different because the researcher focused on distributed leadership practice in five excellent primary schools. The findings of the researcher showed excellent schools have more to do with the excellent cultural practices. This can be attributed to a change leader and often interchangeably, but these schools continue to excel due to the application of the values and culture of excellence among its citizens. Some of the implications identified:

1. Distributed leadership assumes that teachers should participate in leadership tasks but with proper training.
2. Sharing the vision and mission of the school is not only for teachers but should be extended to pupils and parents to maximum the effect.
3. Leaders need to create equal opportunities among their followers and not just rely on a number of the same teachers every time they receive assignments based on trust.
4. The success of a school is not only achieved by educators, but it should come as a package and partnership with all citizens, including students and local community represented by parents.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

At this stage, researcher identified several recommendations for improvement for the next study.

Among them are;

1. This research can be done on a larger scale and more comprehensive to be more clear about the existence of distributed leadership.
2. This study will be more attractive if it involves lower school performance, rural schools and schools of excellence in order to see more clearly the comparison.
3. This descriptive study can be enhanced if conducted in a mix-method in order to produce more in-depth and focused study.
4. In addition, the findings of this study can be used as a suggestion to the Planning and Policy Unit, Ministry of Education in order to increase the Education Leadership Training for potential educational leaders.

The findings are expected to benefit the researchers next. It may also be appropriate to make reference in particular to teachers who learn about Educational Leadership in the future. Although researcher assume that this contribution is very small, but still able to contribute to the world of educational leadership, especially in Malaysia.