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Investigating the Role of School Principals in Creating a Harmonious 3R+1R Learning Environment

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Abstract

This paper presents a relatively new approach to investigate the Principals' leadership behaviours. Qualitative data gathered through interviews with Principals from eight secondary schools (four urban and four rural) in Sabah and Sarawak will be collated and mapped against Jack Welch's typology of leadership (Bryne, 1998; Shanley, 2005), namely "E to the fourth power" leadership model. This typology serves as a dynamic way for obtaining insights into principals who occupy the apex of leadership and management in the school's social system. The leadership behaviours will be mapped against school performance. Results and findings will be discussed.

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1. Introduction

This paper highlights the preliminary findings on the views of eight Principals in secondary schools about their roles in creating a harmonious (3R – reading, writing and arithmetic) and 1R (relationship-building) school environment to enhance teaching and learning.

The discourse on leadership has been as long as human civilisation itself. However, while human development has somehow reached the stage of 'momentary' equilibrium in terms of understanding its natural growth and processes ('momentary' because of human's insatiable quest to know more and hence, continuous manipulation through genetic modification or engineering), leaders and their corresponding leadership behaviours have somehow eluded us further.

Hence, the debate on what leadership behaviours are best is still as hot as ever. No one leadership behaviour or style suits all situations. For example, a paternalistic leadership style may be appropriate for organisations whose members prefer to wait for and receive instructions but may be inappropriate for organisations with a creative culture. However, we can all unanimously agree that leadership behaviour of the person holding the highest

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