

THE LEADERSHIP STYLES OF SECONDARY MATHEMATICS TEACHERS IN BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

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Abstract

The leadership style a teacher possesses is one of the influential factors in students' learning, motivation and output. Applying the type of suitable leadership style, by other supposedly stable factors, can be regarded as an effective factor in shaping the teachers' success in teaching the subject they are entrusted to teach. There are many different types of leadership styles. However, for this study, we focused on the three major styles of leadership, in particular the democratic leadership, the autocratic leadership and the laissez-faire leadership. In this study, we investigated the preferred leadership style of the secondary Mathematics teachers in Brunei Darussalam. In addition, we also identified the relationship of leadership styles with the teachers' education level, age, gender and their years of teaching experience. This study also explored the factors that contribute to the mixed leadership styles of the teachers. A survey using the leadership styles questionnaire were distributed to a sample of 44 Mathematics teachers in two government secondary schools in Brunei Darussalam. From the findings, democratic leadership style was dominantly portrayed by majority of the Mathematics teachers (52%). Furthermore, the teachers' leadership styles had no significant correlation with their gender. Interestingly, this study revealed that there were significant correlations between the teachers' democratic leadership styles and their age, education level and years of teaching experience. A further analysis of the data showed that four teachers had a mixed leadership style, a combination of autocratic and democratic. Interviews were conducted with two selected Mathematics teachers who we found to have the mixed leadership styles, and based from the interviews, the major feature we detected was that they were both teaching students of mixed abilities. Observations of their teaching lessons were also conducted and we detected that these two teachers tend to apply autocratic leadership style in teaching the low ability students. For example, direct instructions were given in class so that the students were clear on what to do. In contrast, they also tend to apply democratic leadership style in teaching the high achieving students. For instance, instead of giving direct instructions to solve a particular problem, they usually allowed time and opportunities for students to think and express their ideas in how to solve a particular problem.

Keywords: Leadership style, mathematics teachers, secondary schools