

LEADERS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, TEACHERS' ACADEMIC OPTIMISM AND ORGANISATIONAL COMMITMENT IN MALAYSIAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Emotional intelligence – identified by previous study as an aspect that importance for leader to lead subordinate in achieving the aspiration and goals of organisation. Educational institutions require sound leadership as well as optimistic and committed teachers, working in harmony, unison and complementarity with each other. The main purpose of this study is to examine the emotional intelligence of school leaders (LEI) in Malaysia and its influence on teachers' academic optimism (TAO) and teachers' organisational commitment (TOC) in secondary schools. In addition, the study also examined the role of teachers' academic optimism as a mediator on the relationship between leaders' emotional intelligence and teachers' organisational commitment. Based on the quantitative data collection methods, the study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. A total of 385 secondary school teachers from northern zone of Peninsular Malaysia; Kedah, Perak, Perlis and Penang were selected as respondents using random sampling method. A set of questionnaire which comprises the Emotional Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ), the Teachers Sense of Academic Optimism for Secondary Teachers (TAOS-S) and the Multi-dimensional Commitment to Educational Organisational -Teacher Questionnaire- were employed as the instrument for data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive analysis and inferential statistics. The findings showed that the emotional intelligence of school leaders ($M=4.30$, $SD=.42$) and academic optimism of teachers ($M=4.29$, $SD=.53$) are at high level. However, the commitment level of teachers was only at highly moderate ($M=4.04$, $SD=.54$). In detail, each item of these variables (LEI, TAO, TOC) was shown at a high and highly moderate level with mean score 3.41 and above. In addition, the results of the study also show that there is no significant difference in the emotional intelligence of leaders based on gender. In fact, the findings of the study also show that there is no significant difference in teachers' commitment to the organisation based on demographic background (gender, age and year of service in the current school). The findings of the study also showed that there is a significant influence of leaders' emotional

intelligence on teachers' academic optimism and teachers' organisational commitment. In addition, teachers' academic optimism also showed a significant influence on teachers' organisational commitment. Accordingly, the findings also revealed that the teachers' academic optimism partially mediated the relationship between leaders' emotional intelligence and teachers' organisational commitment. In term of the implications, this research led to advancement of social exchange theory in the area that related to Malaysian educational context. The role of the emotionally intelligent leader is extremely important in enhancing teachers' academic optimism in order to foster organisational commitment of teachers in school. Therefore, the importance of leaders' emotional intelligence must be taken into significant consideration by the Ministry especially the sole national institute of education management and leadership of Malaysia, the Institute of Aminuddin Baki (IAB). Furthermore, the organisational commitment and academic optimism of teachers should be pressed at the teacher training institution in detail and in depth.