

Learning organization practices in empowerment District Education Offices through Indicators of change management

Prácticas de organización de aprendizaje en el empoderamiento de las oficinas regionales de Educación a través de indicadores de gestión del cambio

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the practices of learning organizations in the District Education Office (DEO) from the perspective of Officers and Deputy District Education Office Officers. Qualitative research using semi-structured interviews involved seven informants, consisting of five Head of District Education Officers (HDEO) and two Program Managers. The informants were selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Data were analysed using Nvivo 11 software to construct the themes studied. The findings show that the themes for learning organization practices in DEO include personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and thinking systems. The successful of change in the District Education Office requires elements of learning organization. The significance of this study is shown in the findings of this study, which were found to have implications for Learning Organization theory by adding the value of “characteristics of learning organization practice” implemented by HDEO in DEO. Learning organization practices at the District Education Office can be used as a guide to improve organizational practice in DEO. Further research proposals require more in-depth research on aspects related to the issues faced during the empowerment of DEO as a learning organization.

Keywords: Learning Organization, Empowerment, Indicators of Change, Change Management.

RESUMEN

El propósito de este estudio es explorar las prácticas de las organizaciones de aprendizaje en la Oficina de Educación del Distrito (DEO) desde la perspectiva de los Oficiales y los Oficiales Adjuntos de la Oficina de Educación del Distrito. La investigación cualitativa utilizando entrevistas semiestructuradas involucró a siete informantes, que consta de cinco jefes de oficiales de educación del distrito (HDEO) y dos gerentes de programa. Los informantes fueron seleccionados mediante muestreo intencional y muestreo de bola de nieve. Los datos se analizaron utilizando el software Nvivo 11 para construir los temas estudiados. Los resultados muestran que los temas para las prácticas de organización del aprendizaje en DEO incluyen dominio personal, modelos mentales, visión compartida, aprendizaje en equipo y sistemas de pensamiento. El éxito del cambio en la Oficina de Educación del Distrito requiere elementos de organización del aprendizaje. La importancia de este estudio se muestra en los hallazgos de este estudio, que se encontró que tienen implicaciones para la teoría de la Organización del Aprendizaje al agregar el valor de “características de la práctica de la organización del aprendizaje” implementado por HDEO en DEO. Las prácticas de organización de aprendizaje en la Oficina de Educación del Distrito pueden usarse como una guía para mejorar la práctica organizacional en DEO. Otras propuestas de investigación requieren una investigación más profunda sobre los aspectos relacionados con los problemas que se enfrentan durante el empoderamiento de DEO como organización de aprendizaje.

Palabras clave: Organización del aprendizaje, Empoderamiento, Indicadores de cambio, Gestión del cambio.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of District Education Office (DEO) is very important because the organization is closest to school. According to the Ministry of Education's statistics as of July 2016, the number of schools in Malaysia was 10,180 and the total number of teachers as of June 2016 was 421,828. The implementation of the DTP over four years has successfully bridged the gap between UPSR and SPM and between urban and rural schools. According to the 2016-2020 PPPM Annual Report 2013 has stated in the year 2016, the national achievement gap between urban and rural schools drastically expanded by 26.3% for Primary School Assessment (Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah - UPSR) 2016 compared to UPSR 2012 and the achievement gap between urban and rural schools at the Secondary School Certificate (Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia - SPM) level continued down by 22.9% compared to 2012 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2017a). Furthermore, in 2016 the percentage of low performing schools (Bands 6 and 7) increased to 1.9% and the percentage of high performing schools (Bands 1 and 2) continued to show an upward trend from 36.8% in 2015 to 39.9%. Furthermore, under the school based management policy, more schools are given certain level of authority to plan and decide how the instructions from the ministry will be implemented (Azlin Norhaini et al., 2016).

Management and governance to enhance the efficiency of the education system remains as a key issue of efficiency in the provision of public services, which is still a function of functioning for the The Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoEM), State Education Department (SED) and District Education Office (DEO). It is visualised as hierarchical, highly centralized, and heavy at the top (sector, division) but small at the bottom (district, school), bureaucratic issues, as well as inefficient and ineffective management of resources and personnel, and the implementation of certain policies (Mohamed Yusoff et al., 2018). The SED and the DEO, which having limited authority in making decisions, drafting plans for school improvement and improving student performance in their respective districts. Ministry of Education Malaysia (2002) acknowledges that the following issues in the personnel administration and management system, which is a hierarchical and centralized with KPM structure, pose a number of weaknesses related to inefficient and ineffective service delivery that cause by overly bureaucratic procedures, especially in human resource management. Furthermore, the attitude of the teacher is also a constraint or problem in implementing changes in DEO such as teacher's do not implement the classroom assessment, teachers do not implement the *PdPc* Module, the teachers comfort zone problems and there are teachers that being guided who do not give full cooperation (Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah and Nurul Sahadila, 2018).

Learning organizations are still new to be understood especially among education institutions such as the District Education Office (Ghani et al., 2014). The failure of organizational members to understand the concept of learning organization has also led to a culture of positive change that resulting from a lack of exposure to the importance of learning organizations in DEO (Maidin, 2012). Thus, learning organizations can make management in the education sector more meaningful. Progress and change in education system reflect many organizations including education through learning organization approach. Learning organization is one of the strategies for enhancing the quality, competitiveness, effectiveness and excellence of organizations where the use and application of knowledge benefits not only the individual but to the organization as well.

The Process of Empowering the District Education Office as a Learning Organization

In the context of the process of empowering the District Education Office, the delegation of authority and responsibility from the Ministry to the DEO requires high accountability for the task to be carried out properly (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The process of empowerment is through Kanter's (1993) structural empowerment theory, whereby the process of empowerment of the District Education Office requires access to information, support, resources and opportunities where it affects job satisfaction, commitment organization and service effectiveness. This is supported by Walston's (2012) study that empowerment can improve job satisfaction among nursing students. According to Kanter (1993), power is a key driver in the process of empowerment and he believes that power can be enhanced and expanded if the implemented empowerment is used to share power with subordinates.

The theory of learning organizations presented by Senge (1992) explains much about the learning organization that involves five main concepts namely personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and thinking systems. To ensure the successful implementation of DEO through the District Transformation Program, DEO needs to plan and provide effective initiatives to help schools in need. This requires employees like SIPartners + and SISC + to use their knowledge, skills and creativity to guide schools or teachers in need. Such learning processes which integrated into daily work can result in changes in knowledge, beliefs and behaviours. Learning organizations encourage individuals to contribute new ideas, and it is important for individuals to come up with ideas that they think through action to enhance organizational excellence. Finding research from Bitty Salwana and Azlin Norhaini (2018) also show the lowest mean score for knowledge is to design effective staff development programs whereas for skills is to establish cooperation among subordinates. The changes implemented in DEO require each individual to develop constructive perceptions so that the process of empowering DEO can be achieved. Leaders also need to assure staff of the benefits of change implemented able to reduce the barriers to change. This is because mental models influence the way individuals deal with problems and how they react to them. Therefore, it is necessary to go through a team building and strengthening process to achieve results with other members of the DEO.

In addition, team learning is also important as it is a process of sharing and gathering information by a diverse group of individuals. The District Transformation Program creates a Performance Dialogue to monitor disciplinary issues, problem solving and action taking. According to Aida Hanim and Azlin Noraini (2018) research, major findings revealed that the teachers viewed some aspects of the policy has increased their workload and also a glaring gap between the implementation of the programme in the schools and the knowledge of the policy among teachers. Performance dialogues are a forum held at all levels, from MoEMs to schools to discuss educational performance based on data and facts from the dashboard, followed by robust and focused actions to achieve KPI goals. This process requires a lot of tolerance and respect in order to encourage the dissemination of ideas among the staff at the DEO, JPN and the Ministry. Therefore, meetings, web or paper

presentations are essential for sharing experiences, skills and opinions in order to spark new ideas that can contribute to the process of empowering DEO and achieving DTP success. So, the process of empowering DEO as a learning organization requires continuous learning and involves all people in DEO. Hence, the research question of this study is “What is the practice of learning organization in District Education Office in Malaysia?”.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study using a semi-structured interview method. The informants were selected using purposive sampling and snowball sampling. A total of five District Education Offices including two State Education Departments were involved in this study to represent the four selected zones, namely North Zone, South Zone, East Zone and Central Zone. Seven (7) officers were involved, consisting of five District Education Officers and two Program Managers (Table 1). The informants are fully involved in implementing changes in the DEO empowerment process through the DTP program as a learning organization. Informants also have the knowledge and experience in successfully implementing changes including the SISC + and SIPartners + programs and are capable of reflection and can provide clear explanations.

Table 1 The informant for the semi-structured interviews

Informant	Position	Service Period	State
HDEO1	Head of District Education Officer	Less than one year	Selangor
HDEO2	Head of District Education Officer	2 years	Melaka
HDEO3	Head of District Education Officer	5 years	Johor
PM4	Program Manager	More than 11 years	Putrajaya
HDEO5	Head of District Education Officer	2 years	Perak
PM6	Program Manager	3 years	Kedah
HDEO7	Head of District Education Officer	2 years	Kelantan

In addition, Darussalam et al., (2014) stated that validity of instrument is significant to ensure the accuracy of the instrument as well as the data. In addition, the interview transcriptions were given to the participants as a means of member checking to ensure that the participants' responses were accurately transcribed and that the data were accurately interpreted; that the themes were correctly developed. This was also a measure of ensuring validity of the data. Thus, in this study, researchers have used Cohen Kappa Coefficient Index Analysis to determine the reliability of categories, themes, sub-themes and sub-themes developed from interview findings.

The researcher has gained the view of three qualitative experts to evaluate the emerging themes and then calculate the value of consensus of intercoder appointed experts. The results of the calculations made for the three experts show the overall average value of the Kappa coefficient of approval is 0.822. The value $K = 0.822$ obtained was very strong at the level Idris (2013). Then, the Nvivo 11 application was used to manage the data according to themes and sub themes according to the research questions and research framework. Data collection procedure for qualitative was as follow; first researchers make a phone call to agree to an appointment to meet with all the DEO officers involved. Second, researchers explain to all DEO Officers regarding the purpose of the study, the length of time the researcher was at the DEO, the data collection procedure and the number of study participants involved. Lastly, the researcher established friendly relations with all participants. So that there is a cohesive relationship between the researcher and the participant during the interview session. In addition, the researchers also asked the participants to set the appropriate time and place for the convenience of conducting the interview. The researchers received excellent cooperation and moral support from all participants in the selected DEO.

Then, the Nvivo 11 application was used to managed the data according to themes and sub themes according to the research questions and research framework. The software can break down categories into larger themes, themes, sub themes and sub-sub themes. The interview data in this study were divided into sub-sections or sub-themes (elements) as well as sub-themes. This will facilitate researchers in the coding process of sub-themes and sub-themes that have been developed for each component of the empowerment process, learning organization and indicators of change management implementation. Each existing theme needs to be given a specific code and researchers determine the theme using inductive methods from the results of the interviews and then deductively follow the constructions from the reading of the literature. During the coding process, the researcher constantly made comparisons between categories, major themes, themes, sub-themes and sub-themes and conducted cross-checking. This method of comparative analysis is important in the study approach as the coding process in this study has been the basis for comparing and asking questions. In addition, the themes that are formed are “mutually exclusive”, the themes that emerge are accurate and not transferable (Creswell, 2012)

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to explore informants' overall view of the organization of learning in the District Education Office. The qualitative feedback obtained reflects the induction of a broad range of perspectives of the informant of the study, as if it were a reflection of the broader experience of learning organization practices that have taken place in DEO. In particular, the diversity of views includes the aspects of 1) personal mastery, 2) mental model, 3) shared vision, 4) team learning, and 5) thinking system. The feedback on the practice of learning organization at the District Education Office is shown in Figure 1 below.

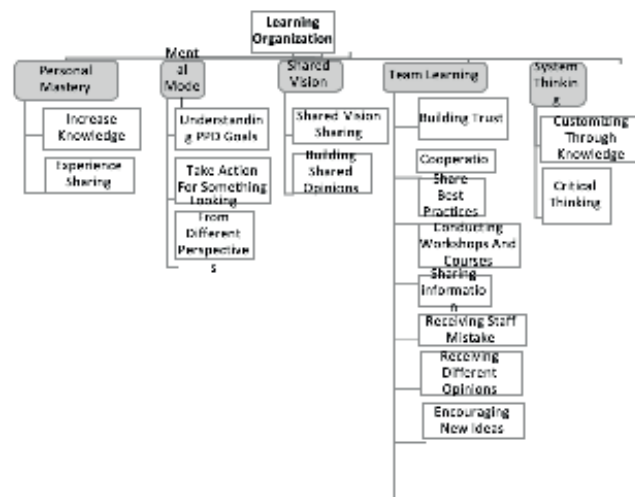


Figure 1. Feedback on learning organization practices at the District Education Office

Learning organization refers to an organization that always provides space and facilities for all organizational members to build learners (Nawai, 2006). In this study, the learning organization adopted five principles of learning organization by Senge (1992), namely personal mastery, mental model, shared vision, team learning and thinking system. Learning organization practices can make every person in DEO want to increase their knowledge and skills to cope with educational change. This is in line with the statement by Maidin (2012) that the practice of learning organizations is necessary to equip teachers with the latest knowledge, skills and information that enable them to respond to dynamic educational changes.

Based on the analysis of the interviews, there are two aspects of personal mastery practiced in DEO, namely 1) knowledge enhancement and 2) experience sharing. This finding is in line with the study of Ghani et al., (2014) that is related to the sequence of learning organization practices, where individual learning within the organization is followed by collective learning culture, organizational leadership, organizational climate and structure as well as the vision and mission of the learning organization. The qualitative findings indicate that there are four ways in which the HDEO has taken steps to improve its knowledge, attend workshops and courses, read and conduct dialogue sessions. To attend workshops and courses such as organized courses, DEO officials attend courses organized by PADU and the Ministry. This statement is supported by the Deputy DEO (PM6): "...courses organized by the Department, through the courses I attend, at least I have new knowledge, like new programs from the Ministry, new policies that we need to work on, such as moving forward." (PM6).

HDEO encourages staff to attend appropriate courses, as well as staff with their own initiative to attend courses to enhance their knowledge and skills so that tasks can be performed better. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Azeez et al., (2015), which show that among the principals that need to be paid attention to is the focus on efforts to improve teachers' knowledge and skills through continuous capacity building to overcome student violence. Attending courses helps staff to improve their skills and knowledge in performing tasks. The finding of this study also supports the study of Ishak et al., (2014), which in relation to the leadership practice of learning organizations in Malaysian high schools where the findings indicate the need to attend courses as crucial to improving one's skills and knowledge.

In addition, the learning organization practices are well practiced in each DEO, where the sharing and gathering of information between experienced DEO staff and leaders is ongoing and individuals in DEO are constantly striving to improve their knowledge and desire to remain in a state of continuous learning. For a dialogue session with colleagues to enhance their knowledge, the Head of DEO (HDEO3) stated that:

...I prefer brainstorm sessions with friends who have different backgrounds because in terms of communication, I really like those who have ideas, for discussions because I can quickly pick up instead of reading which is probably just a theory. But talking to people in different fields will improve our knowledge quickly. (HDEO3)

The findings of this study also support the findings of the study conducted by Keong et al., (2018), by showing that school teachers share feedback or educational information especially on learning improvement and teaching activities related to student's achievement. Therefore, HDEO practices the learning organization for the dimension of personal mastery well in DEO.

In addition, the results of the interview found that sharing of vision was divided into two aspects: sharing of vision and forming a shared opinion. HDEO implemented shared vision sharing through workshop slots, meetings and bunting displays. However, this finding is contrary to the findings of Ghani et al., (2014), where the practice of learning organization is in the simple and satisfactory way that allows the vision team to help new scholars to understand their vision's needs. Sharing a vision with staff can provide a clear understanding on how to achieve that vision. The preference of HDEO in usually shares its vision during workshop slots, meetings and bunting displays is to ensure all staffs are

aware that the vision needs to be taken together. For sharing the vision through the workshop slot, HDEO would like to share the vision in the workshop slot based on the statement by the Head of DEO (HDEO2) which is: "...at the Principal level, I'll take the slots in the ongoing workshop. It was like last night My officer had a meeting with the KK GP in high and low school. I came back last night to see a workshop and asked for my one-hour slot." (HDEO2).

This method can also provide an emphasis on the vision that the DEO wants to achieve and know the level of vision achievement. The findings of this study support the study by Pak (2012), where sharing this vision enhances the commitment and workforce of the team members. This finding is also in line with Senge's (1990) statement that shared vision can also create strong motivation and leaders need to share their vision with staffs to achieve organizational success.

The Head Education Officer also develops a collective opinion of staff through two aspects, which are in line with the organization's goals, plan, vision and mission of two methods such as the Gantt Chart and the Plan Organize Lead and Check (POLC). The wanted goals should be in line with the goals that are designed according to the vision and mission. These are officials for those who use the POLC to ensure that the goals are still in line with the DTP goals. This is based on the statement by the Deputy Director (PM4):

"...I need to have a plan for my level. My plan is more about how to lead how to organize because of POLC, Plan Organize Lead and Check. So, I'm more into the planning, this department is the lead. So that's how I set my goals based on POLC." (PM4).

In addition, teamwork is a collaboration between staff to think together to achieve the same goals. Team learning is also a process of sharing and gathering information with a diverse group of staff with diverse experiences, expertise and ideas from multiple perspectives. Eight themes are shown in the interviews, which consisting of building trust, collaboration, sharing best practices, conducting workshops and courses, sharing information, accepting staff mistakes, accepting different opinions and encouraging new ideas. Based on the findings, there is a good relationship between staffs and school in making DEO a learning organization. For friendship, this is clearly stated by the Head of DEO (HDEO3) i.e.:

"We really don't have a problem when we are out of the field, we are playmates, jokes and so on. But when it comes to work, it works and needs to be serious." (HDEO3).

In implementing the change in DEO, KPDD builds the trust of staff through a friendly relationship, where it recognizes the weaknesses and strengths of staff and has a good relationship with the school. The findings of this study support the findings of Yaakob and Ramle (2017), by showing that collaboration practices can foster a sense of belonging among teachers in schools. In addition, cooperation practices are well implemented in DEO. There are several aspects of cooperation that include cooperation, Human Resource Development, formal council co-operation, effective communication, and mutual support between sectors. In terms of cooperation, staff at DEO have always adopted a cooperative attitude towards achieving the goals of DEO. This is supported by the Head of DEO (HDEO3):

"...so this (cooperation) must be felt by all staff as a team, not necessarily the title of the boss so that we can work in the team, it's important that they respect, they know we are the boss. But in other words, co-existence exists if we do not put ourselves from top to bottom, bottom to top." (HDEO3).

The practice of cooperation is very important in the DEO because in order to bring about change, the cooperation of all citizens is necessary in order to attain change in common. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Hussein et al., (2016), which found that teamwork and learning were found to be closely related to organizational innovation. Teamwork and learning are also the important elements in contributing to high achievement. The findings of this study also support the findings of Ghani et al., (2014) by stating that organizational structures and systems need to support organizational people to form a workforce in solving problems and that teamwork needs to be implemented across disciplines or departments. In addition, cooperation also involves the effective communication aspect of obtaining support from other officers. Among them is the Deputy DEO (PM6): "...how we communicate with all the officers and get the approval and support of all the officers, it is only natural that some employees are dissatisfied. That is usually the end they will accept and do the work together..." (PM6).

This aspect of communication is also important to ensure that the best decisions are made by engaging all parties in making decisions. The findings of this study support the findings of Ismail and Ismail (2018) that communication is a very important aspect of applying the 21st Century Learning (*PAK21*) concepts in teaching and learning (*PdPc*) in schools.

In addition, sharing of best practices is also often practiced in DEO and this is the portrayal of improving personal and school performance. Interviews show that team learning also involves sharing best practices within the school and within the DEO itself. There are three aspects to best practice sharing which consisting of PLC sharing, best practice benchmarks and cluster formation. For PLC partnerships where they share teacher innovations in the classroom, the Head of DEO (HDEO2) states that: "So we created a PLC partnership and for the rest of the day we were able to bring together all the teacher's innovations in the classroom and we created a carnival at DEO." (HDEO2).

This is in line with the findings of Yaakob and Ramle (2017) who found that collaborative practice enables teachers to share teaching practices in the form of knowledge or physical activity such as sharing of teaching aids; excellent teachers

giving guidance to novice teachers so that novice teachers are exposed to knowledge and new skills in the teaching and learning process (McLaughlin & Talbert, 2001). In addition, there are also practices of conducting workshops and courses related to *PAK21*, *PILL* and courses at IAB. There are DEOs that conduct workshops and courses related to *PAK21* for principals and teachers, by allowing these parties to enhance their knowledge and skills in *PdPc* in more interactive and fun way, and according to the DTP goals. This is clearly stated by the Head of DEO (HDEO2) i.e.: “...we have a *PAK21* workshop. We always call the teacher, but this time I want the Headmaster to participate in the workshop. He needs to know *PAK21* because he’s an instructional leader...” (HDEO2).

The findings of this study support the findings of the study by Amrullah et al., (2018) as it found high levels of confidence in implementing in teaching as they have been trained in based pedagogy since university and teacher education institutes. The confidence also being gained through the attended courses which organized in school and DEO. In addition, HDEO regularly conducts information sharing with staffs and schools including information sharing at DEO, external agency invitations, Facebook social media and Compact Disc (CD) to share *PdPc PAK21* with all teachers including principals. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Sabri (2017) who found that knowledge sharing is an informal study among participants (three principals and three senior assistants, two Mathematics committee chairmen and two Mathematics teachers) who conduct informal discussions in the teachers’ room with the committee chair as well as informal discussions with instructional leaders of other schools through telephone and booklet (Facebook) Mathematics teachers.

Information sharing takes place at each DEO where they regularly conduct discussions such as performance dialogues, morning briefings, in-person meetings, group discussions and sessions with DEO leaders. Information sharing is also a common place when employees acquire new knowledge about DTP after attending a course. Information sharing within the DEO is usually briefed as stated by the Deputy DEO (PM6):

“...our morning briefing is on Sundays which is the first day of the week, for example there is an important briefing where an officer goes to the course, we can share in two to 15 minutes we report in the morning briefing what other DEO officials need to know.” (PM6).

Information sharing can induce people in the organization new knowledge that can be used to perform their tasks. The findings of this study support the study by Nor Forniza (2013), who stated that team learning is a process of sharing and gathering information with staffs with diverse experiences, expertise and ideas from multiple perspectives. The findings of this study further support the study by Farrukh et al., (2015) by stating that information sharing factors are the critical factors that must be in place for organizations to become learning organizations.

In addition, the interview also showed that KPP received staff error in a prudent way; through good language style, the use of social media Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). It is a common practice for HDEO to accept staff error by admonishing them to use soft language style and intonation to avoid conflict between headmaster and DEO. This finding is also in line with the findings of Humairah (2017) who found that Madrasah’s leaders practiced democratic leadership in improving the quality of Madrasah Aliyah State 1 Medan, where Madrasah’s leaders openly received criticisms and suggestions from subordinate, accepting others’ opinions, joint decision-making between staff and leaders, always motivating staff, adopting high quality relationships and tolerance among all schoolchildren.

The interview also showed that HDEO received different opinions through managing perceptions and through meetings. The HDEO accepts the opinion by managing the perception that all opinions expressed at the meeting are acceptable if the opinion is sound, as the HDEO always ensures that the final decision is satisfactory to all parties. This finding supports the findings of Zainuddin (2015) by showing that accepting others’ opinions is one of the most effective leadership qualities in school management. The role of school leaders and administrators is very important in accepting the ideas and opinions of others, especially teachers when implementing a policy, program or activity where such ideas or views are analyzed and discussed to achieve the best results. In addition, the HDEO also promotes new ideas among staffs as well as principals and head teachers through both formal and informal mediums. To formally encourage new ideas is through meetings. Among them is the Head of DEO (HDEO1) who stating that:

“I always see any staff who always offers ideas in discussions. I always see these kind of officials (meetings) because they always give me ideas.”

“(Researchers ask about mediums to stimulate new ideas through discussion). Yes, discussion. Sometimes I see in the monthly meetings, there are management meetings, sometimes executive meetings involving these principals who are responsible for creating subordinate excellence in him.” (HDEO1).

There are CDEOs that encourage staff to provide ideas especially during discussions and meetings. In addition, the idea of giving ideas is also using virtual mediums such as WhatsApp Group or Telegram Group where opinions are always taken into account by HDEO to evaluate the impact of the idea. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Zainuddin (2015), who found that quality leaders always listen, evaluate and accept ideas and opinions from others; even when the ideas are given by their subordinates, where good ideas are accepted to be implemented, while the views the less well-intentioned will be rejected for better by giving reasonable reasons. Further, for the thinking system, the interview found that the HDEO was able to adapt through knowledge by understanding these two aspects; open-mindedness and discussion meetings or workshops. HDEO is able to adapt to changes that occurring in DEO through

the knowledge of security. The open-minded CDEOs tend to receive knowledge from employee's easier especially the one that is technology related. This is supported by the statement of Deputy Director (PM4):

“So, that meant for me to adapt to change, one I had to open up to and I had to learn even though I knew, but we weren't good at computers. So, we have to be more open and I catch up with technology because otherwise I would miss it. So that's my preparation to adapt to the environment.” (PM4).

Furthermore, the HDEO also adapts to the knowledge shared during the discussions or workshops. Indirectly they can teach each other or share their knowledge to facilitate their day-to-day work in DEO. The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Yusoff and Ismail (2016), as it found that leaders in national secondary schools in the northern zone, Peninsular Malaysia have high levels of distributive leadership practice and conflict management of high school leaders. Learning new knowledge and exchange knowledge and skills are among of those practice. Further, the findings indicate that the HDEO is able to think critically while analyzing an issue. Critical thinking skills include the ability to compare and contrast, prioritize, and analyze something (Pusat Perkembangan Kurikulum, 2001). There are CDEOs who can resolve issues critically using Ishikawa's approach as well as prioritizing the most important issues to resolve. This is based on the statement made by the Chairman of the DEO (HDEO3) i.e.:

“For me when we see a small problem, we are actually looking for a big problem. I use Ishikawa's theory for example where we look for an issue but can solve many things, for example he has five things, not all five things we want to solve, maybe we will solve one and the other will be done automatically.” (HDEO3).

The findings of this study support the findings of Peng and Nadaraja (2016) which showing that the application of critical and creative thinking skills (KBKK) in terms of implementation in KOMSAS teaching and learning at Petaling district secondary school is satisfactory where students agree when teachers ask students to think of how many solutions to a question as well as characterize and categorize subjects accordingly.

Finally, the interview found that the HDEO was able to see things from a different perspective, by thinking outside the box. This is in line with Senge's (1994, 2002) statement that the practice of mental models should encourage diverse perspectives among employees and acts as a process of reflection in the organization. However, this finding is consistent with the findings that HDEO does not make assumptions to understand goals and take action, but HDEO understands DTP and DEO goals based on predefined guidelines, which are based on the District 3 Transformation Program Management Handbook (2017b). HDEO defines organizational goals in order to make it easy to plan and achieve them. In addition, HDEO also understands the objectives of the workshops and meetings attended. Subsequently, the HDEO takes action against data or evidence based on the priority issues that need to be resolved immediately. Interview analysis shows that the HDEO is based on evidence or investigation and priority issues. The HDEO also takes action based on the evidence or investigation and this is supported by the Deputy Director's (PM4) statement which is:

“...I usually make Ishikawa, Ishikawa fish bone diagram because I like what they say based on the data. So, I'm usually going to call the teachers because the teachers know more about the issue, but I don't want to talk about it, assumption. When it comes to that kind of source, what data does it support.” (PM4).

Therefore, the overall results of the interviews show that the HDEO practices of learning organization practices are using known features such as personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and thinking systems. It is hoped that the characteristics of the learning organization in this study can serve as a guide and reference in the effort to maintain DEO as a learning institution.

5. IMPLICATION

Senge's (1990) learning organization theory consists of five principles, namely personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and thinking systems. Research conducted shows that the District Head Education Officer (HDEO) practices the five principles of learning organization well in managing change in DEO. Based on the findings of this study, this study supports and reinforces the five principles of Senge's (1990) learning organization. In detail, the Head Education Officer practice personal control followed by shared vision, team learning, thinking systems and mental models. In addition, the findings of this study were found to have implications for learning organization theory by adding the value of the “characteristics of learning organization practice” implemented by HDEO in DEO. Learning organization practices at the District Education Office can be used as a guide to improve organizational practice in DEO. The Table 2 shows characteristics of the learning organization practices which practiced by the HDEO based on five principles: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning and thinking systems.

Table 2 Characteristics of HDEO learning organization practices at the DEO

Senge (1990)	Findings
<p>Personal Mastery The desire to increase knowledge and to be in a constant state of learning Individuals have their own experiences that form the basis of a knowledge Being able to see things in a creative way Learn from mistakes while performing tasks</p>	<p>Personal Mastery Enhance knowledge through four methods Attend workshops and courses such as organized courses, and own initiatives; Read; The dialogue sessions are divided into three, one-on-one dialogues with the Head of DEO, Principal and Headmaster and colleagues; Creating creativity. Sharing experiences</p>
<p>Mental Model Assumptions, generalizations, or depictions of an individual understand the world and how they respond to it Encourage different perspectives among staff as a process of reflection cycle</p>	<p>Mental Model Understand the goals of DEO The guidelines set by the Ministry, define the goals as well as through meetings and workshops Take action on something Take action based on evidence or investigation and take action based on priority issues Looking at it from a different perspective Thinking outside the box</p>
<p>Shared Vision Leaders share a shared vision with staff to achieve organizational success. Build personal goals that align with your organization's vision</p>	<p>Shared Vision Sharing a shared vision Sharing your vision through workshop slots, meetings and bunting displays Build an opinion together Build a collective opinion of staff through two aspects: Goals are in line with organizational goals Plan in line with the vision and mission of two methods such as Chart Gantt and Plan Organize Lead and Check (POLC)</p>
<p>Team Learning Collaboration between staff to think together to achieve common goals Communicate publicly by accepting mistakes without criticizing staff Encourage group activities as a way to address work issues Listen to staff opinions Respect employees' ideas by looking at them from their perspective</p>	<p>Team Learning Build trust Friendship, recognizing the strength of friends, acquaintances, and good relationships with customers Cooperation Attitudes towards cooperation, human resource development, formal councils, effective communication, and mutual support among the sectors Share best practices PLC sharing, benchmarking of best practices and cluster formation Conduct workshops and courses 21st Century Education (<i>PAK21</i>), Five-Step Intervention Plan (<i>PILL</i>) courses and courses from IAB. Sharing information Sharing information District Education Office Briefings, sessions with the Chairman of the DEO, internal partnerships, group discussions, and meetings or meetings External agency invitation Facebook Compact Disc (CD) Receiving staff mistake Language style, use of social media and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Accept different opinions Manage perceptions and through meetings Encourage new ideas Through the medium formally and informally</p>
<p>System Thinking Ability to think overall without segmentation Ability to adapt to the outside environment and within the organization Consider and address issues that exist within the organization</p>	<p>System Thinking Adjust by knowledge Open-mindedness and discussion of meetings or workshops Critical Thinking</p>

4. CONCLUSION

The District Transformation Program (DTP) is largely focused on strengthening the District Education Office (DEO) and students' learning in schools. Successful implementation of DTP through the change management indicators requires the principles of organizational learning and its practice among leaders and staff. The empowerment process is also necessary to make DEO a learning organization especially in terms of accountability and support. Therefore, the findings of this study can add value and give positive implications onto the implementation of empowerment

processes in order to enhance the level of practice of learning organizations in DEO. Besides, it would produce to more knowledgeable and proactive DEO citizens in making DTP successful. The indicators can be a guide to ensure changes are made in accordance with DTP planning and goals.

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