A Conceptual Framework: The Influence of School Culture Types and Personality Traits on Psychological Empowerment amongst Secondary School Teachers in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Educational reformers have considered teacher empowerment as one of the panaceas for school success. The concept of teacher empowerment has emerged as an important approach in promoting positive work behaviors with many researchers observing the link between the levels of teachers' psychological empowerment and the extent to which they feel motivated, committed and satisfied with their job. Drawing from an ongoing doctoral research which looked at the relationships of school culture types and personality traits towards psychological empowerment amongst secondary school teachers in Malaysia, this article discusses the formulation of a conceptual framework. Although there have been numerous empirical researches on the structural and psychological constructs of teacher empowerment, previous studies mainly looked at these constructs in isolation. This current paper discusses the concept of empowerment and intends to model teacher empowerment as a holistic framework from multiple perspectives. The framework puts forward in this paper is based on both the literature and a study investigating the relationships of school culture types and personality traits towards psychological empowerment amongst teachers in the context of Malaysian secondary school. In addition, this paper also attempts to discuss the possible research issues that could justify the development of the conceptual framework of the topic.

KEYWORDS: *Empowerment, Teacher Empowerment, Organizational Culture, School Culture Types, Personality Traits, Psychological Empowerment, Malaysian Secondary School Teachers.*

1.   INTRODUCTION

Teacher empowerment is not a new phenomenon in the Malaysian education landscape. As stated in the Educational Planning & Research Division in 1995, the concept of teacher empowerment which involves the decentralisation of decision making was introduced in our education system since 1993 as part of the national school reform initiatives (Hussein Mahmood, 1997; Boey, 2010) and has recently been further emphasised by the Ministry in the Blueprint as one of the main agendas in Malaysian education transformation (MOE, 2013; Aziah Ismail, Wan Norkursiah Zainol & Abdul Ghani Abdullah, 2016). This initiative aims to help teachers realise their true potential in the hope of harnessing their talent and creativity by encouraging them to become critical decision-makers who are highly confident, enthusiastic and determined in improving the performance and productivity of the school (Aziah, Wan Norkursiah & Abdul Ghani, 2016). While teacher empowerment is believed to have been practiced in the Malaysian schools for almost three decades now, the application is mostly only being limited to teachers' involvement in the classroom, particularly in teaching and learning due to the bureaucratic structure of the system (Maeroff, 1998; Abdul Shukor Abdullah, 1998; Abdul Latif, 2004). Evidence suggests that although the concept of teacher empowerment has been emphasised as an initiative in furthering the nation's education, it has not been practiced enough as teachers are still not empowered in issues involving school decision making and autonomy (Balakrishnan, 2015; Boey, 2010; Zulkapli Muhammad, 2008). Considering the importance of teacher empowerment in promoting positive work behaviours and school outcomes, there is a need to explore teacher empowerment through multiple lenses. This paper discusses the contextual, individual and psychological aspects of teacher empowerment as a construction of the teacher empowerment framework in the context of Malaysian secondary schools.

Indeed, teacher empowerment is a nebulous concept that can be interpreted and understood in multiple ways. From the sociological perspective, the central aspect of teacher empowerment is the need for a positive and empowering school culture (Balkar, 2015; Hawks, 1999; Baird & Wang, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Maher, 2000; Rondeau & Wagar, 2012; Peterson, 1993; Turro, 1996; Hill & Huq, 2004). Every school has a culture which is uniquely theirs, and this school culture determines the effectiveness of the school (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Similarly, Peterson (1993) emphasises on the cultural differences in schools and argues that each school should have its own empowerment philosophy and approach. This basically means that the school's unique cultural embodiment influences the level of empowerment attainable to its faculty members. Additionally, much of the current literature on teacher empowerment pays particular attention to collaborative or shared leadership (Killion, 2016; Sharp, 2009; Clear, 2005; Roberts & Woods, 2018; Balkar, 2015), which is a fundamental aspect of a school culture that is regarded as empowering. In this case, teacher empowerment occurs when principals are willing to share their 'power with' instead of having 'power over' their teachers. From this perspective, it is important to first understand the concept of power in the process of empowering others. Principals who think that power is finite tend to feel insecure and limit power only to

themselves. Meanwhile, principals who think that power is an infinite life force which comes from within are more willing to empower others by sharing power with them. Along the same lines, teacher collaboration, collegial support, unity of purpose, and learning partnership were also identified as important elements in building a positive school culture (Gruenert & Valentine, 1998). Thus, as teachers today have become key partners in school and student affairs, it is important to gauge their perceptions and evaluations on the organisational culture of their school, and to explore whether the schools in Malaysia cultivate a culture that facilitates and enables teacher empowerment.

Ultimately, the aim of empowering our teachers is to improve the quality of teaching and the image of the teaching profession. This aspiration has become a national agenda which has been clearly outlined in the Blueprint, in which it emphasises the need to transform teaching as a profession of choice (MOE, 2013). With this intention, a little understanding of individual differences that shape work behaviours can go a long way in helping us better understand what makes teachers who are highly empowered truly unique. Perhaps we could ask instead, who are these empowered teachers? Recent evidence suggests that certain individual characteristics significantly influence employees' psychological empowerment, but these studies mostly focused on the individuals' perception of self-worth (Amir Masoud, 2017; Muhammad Imran et al., 2017). For instance, a study conducted by Seibert, Wang, and Courtright (2011) found significant relationship between core self evaluation and teacher empowerment. Similarly, Spreitzer (1995) in her study investigating the relationship between self-esteem and psychological empowerment found that individuals with higher degree of self-esteem are more empowered. This paper therefore seeks to fill the gap by discussing the personality traits of the teachers, in order to understand how different individual's characteristics, influence their experience or feeling of empowerment.

To this end, this paper is structured as follows: first, empowerment as defined in the literature on organisational behaviour management and educational research will be analysed; second, a model of teacher empowerment will be constructed from multiple perspectives as a holistic framework; third, the possible research issues that could justify the development of the conceptual framework of teacher empowerment in the context of Malaysian secondary school will be discussed.

2.   THE CONCEPT OF EMPOWERMENT

The concept of empowerment is widely used across a multitude of disciplines such as sociology, psychology, political studies, organisational behaviour management, nursing, and education (Lincoln et al., 2002). Drawing on the organisational management literature, empowerment is realised when the management and decision makers share information, resources, and power to provide employees with the autonomy to adapt and respond to the challenges and changes faced by the organisations or institutions. This includes control over resources such as financial, professional knowledge and manpower; and control over ideology such as beliefs, values and attitudes (Baltiwala, 1994). From a management standpoint, this much is clear. The challenge would be to define 'empowerment' as it is found to be less explicit in the literature. There seems to be no clear definition of empowerment across disciplines. As a

matter of fact, writers on the subject seem to be vague in their attempt to define what empowerment really is. Empowerment is defined and described in a plethora of ways; as a concept, a term or a process. This paper presents several empowerment definitions, as well as the working definition that is used to conceptualise teacher empowerment in the Malaysian context.

In broad terms, scholars have defined empowerment as the process of enabling an individual to make their own decisions by affording them some form of autonomy to control their own work (Breaugh, 1999; Kanfer & Ackerman, 2000). Empowerment is also defined as the notion of having the ability to control oneself and one's environment, expanding one's capacity and living up to one's full potential (Lee, 2005; Wilson, 1996). Blanchard (1996) views empowerment as the breaking down of the vertical hierarchical structures while Page & Czuba (1999) describe empowerment as "a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives and society" (p. 292). Similarly, Chamberlin (2008) asserted that when individuals are given decision making power, choice, and access to resources and information, they feel more empowered and act in accordance with their higher values to initiate their own growth.

Subsequently, the phenomenon of empowerment has emerged from two major perspectives (Liden & Arad, 1996; Spreitzer, 1997); the first is from a structural perspective (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Block, 1987; Lawler, 1986; Kanter, 1977, 1983) which focuses on the social and structural factors concerning the 'delegation of power'. Kanter's theory of structural empowerment posits that certain factors in a work environment can enable or impede employees' ability to accomplish their work in meaningful ways. The second is from a psychological perspective, also known as psychological empowerment which is related to the 'feeling of power'. In education research, psychological empowerment includes teachers' beliefs and perceptions that manifested in six dimensions, namely autonomy, professional growth, status, self-efficacy, impact and decision making (Short & Rinehart, 1992).

Based on the above definitions and descriptions of empowerment, the working definition of teacher empowerment in this paper follows Short and Rinehart's (1992) conceptualisation of psychological empowerment, which is the beliefs and perceptions of teachers in having a sense of autonomy in their daily operations at work; the ability to take charge of their professional growth; a sense of status in their job; self-efficacy; an impact on the students; and the ability to make decisions that best benefit their students.

3. DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025 (MOE, 2013) stated that national education should, among other things, aim at building and developing school capacity. As such, principals are urged to delegate power to the teachers by giving them more autonomy to make instructional decisions (Sayyed Mohsen Allameh et al., 2012). Literature shows that teachers who are empowered are more driven to increase school productivity, and as a result, will increase school capacity. Consequently, teacher empowerment becomes an important national education agenda. Melenyzer (1990) views teacher empowerment as the autonomy provided to teachers to make decisions and act upon their ideas which in turn can influence the way they perform in their profession. Marks and Louis (1997) proposed a slightly different view and

describe teacher empowerment as "an educational reform initiative that often accompanies policies to increase decision-making authority and accountability at the school level", while Hoy and Miskel (2012) define teacher empowerment as the sharing of power by the administrators in which teachers are encouraged to use in a way that is beneficial. Thus, teacher empowerment can be viewed as a process where teachers are afforded some form autonomy to take ownership of their own growth and from it, they become more competent and confident. However, this can only be manifested when schools are supportive in facilitating teachers to feel more empowered (Frymier, 1987).

Empowerment in the workplace cannot exist without environmental and social contexts such as organisational culture. McClelland (1975) posited that empowerment requires people to gain information about themselves and their work environment, as well as be willing to work with others for change. Following the same line of thought, Whitmore (1988) views empowerment as a process of personal and social transformation that enables people to take charge of their own work environment and increase their influence at work. Meanwhile, Maslowski (1997) defines school culture as "the basic assumptions, norms and values, and cultural artifacts that are shared by school members, which influence their functioning at school." Often, the school's cultural compass provides bearing intended to give directions to the faculty members (Zulfikri, Yahya, Yaakob, & Raman, 2015). To put it simply, Bower (1966) describes school culture as "the way we do things around here". On the basis thereof, school culture plays a significant role in teacher empowerment. This paper therefore looks at school culture types as one of the important determinants to teacher empowerment.

Additionally, it is also important to identify empowered teachers based on their individual characteristics, such as personality traits. Feist and Feist (2006) defined personality as a pattern of moderately enduring traits and exclusive characteristics that give not only consistency to a person's behaviour, but also individuality. These individual differences can influence the process of empowerment among teachers. Personality traits that facilitate the feeling of empowerment are known as 'empowerment potentials' (Amir Masoud, 2017) and teachers who exhibit these unique characteristics have the potential to attain a higher level of psychological empowerment. These characteristics which are perceived by some scholars as stable or not malleable reflect teachers' intrinsic nature, learned behaviours and overall cognitions. Thus, teachers with high levels of empowerment potentials are sought after since their source of power lies intrinsically, and therefore they are not easily influenced by external stimuli.

The conceptual framework presented in this paper explains how the contextual and individual aspects of empowerment influence teachers' psychological empowerment. In other words, this paper attempts to model a teacher empowerment framework by looking at how different types of school culture affect teachers' psychological empowerment, and how teachers' individual differences in terms of their personality traits influence their perceptions and experience of empowerment. The conceptual model shown in Figure 1 also provides a theoretical guide to conduct a study on teacher empowerment in the context of Malaysian secondary school. Looking at empowerment through both the sociological and psychological lenses, this paper is conceptualised as follows:
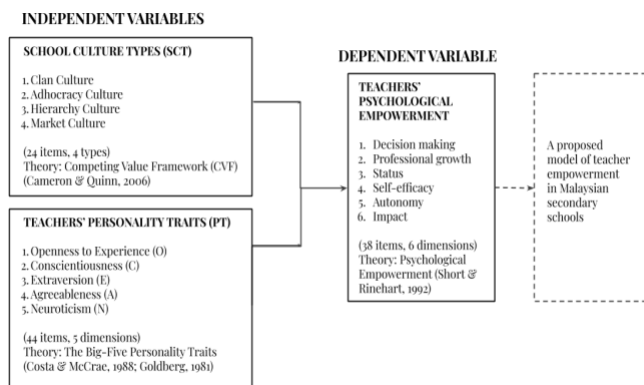
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

SCHOOL CULTURE TYPES (SCT)

1. Clan Culture
2. Adhocracy Culture
3. Hierarchy Culture
4. Market Culture

(24 items, 4 types)
Theory: Competing Value Framework (CVF)
(Cameron & Quinn, 2006)

TEACHERS' PERSONALITY TRAITS (PT)

1. Openness to Experience (O)
2. Conscientiousness (C)
3. Extraversion (E)
4. Agreeableness (A)
5. Neuroticism (N)

(44 items, 5 dimensions)
Theory: The Big-Five Personality Traits
(Costa & McCrae, 1988; Goldberg, 1981)

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

TEACHERS' PSYCHOLOGICAL EMPOWERMENT

1. Decision making
2. Professional growth
3. Status
4. Self-efficacy
5. Autonomy
6. Impact

(38 items, 6 dimensions)
Theory: Psychological Empowerment (Short & Rinehart, 1992)

A proposed model of teacher empowerment in Malaysian secondary schools

Figure 1 A conceptual framework of teacher empowerment in Malaysian Secondary School

I. The Conceptual Framework of School Culture Types

In this paper, school culture types are conceptualised as the contextual aspect of teacher empowerment as it carries the potential to either facilitate or inhibit teachers' psychological empowerment. In order to investigate how different types of school influence teachers' psychological empowerment, this paper presents a discussion on the Competing Values Framework (CVF), which was developed by Quinn and Rohrbaugh in 1983. As its name suggests, the Competing Value Framework (CVF) was designed to resolve the value dilemma in an organisation, which could be explained through two core value pairs, where the contradicting values of each pair are placed at the opposite ends of a continuum (Lawson, 2003). The first value pair is the perceptions of the school's structure (flexible or controlled) and the second is its focus (internal or external). From this two-dimensional construct, four school culture types emerged, namely Clan culture, Adhocracy culture, Hierarchy culture and Market culture, which can be described as follows:

a) Clan Culture
Clan culture focuses on flexibility and discretion and it is internally oriented. The cultural characteristics are commitment, collaboration, loyalty and teacher involvement. It focuses less on structure and control and teachers are given more autonomy as compared to the Hierarchy Culture. It is internally oriented, and it cultivates family-like relationships. Principals and school leaders are supportive and facilitative.

b) Adhocracy Culture
Adhocracy culture is flexible, but it is externally oriented. Schools with adhocracy culture are agile and easily adaptable to changes. This type of culture values creativity, change, risk taking and growth. Principals and school leaders in adhocracy culture are visionary, innovative and creative.

c) Hierarchy Culture

Hierarchy culture is internally oriented and stresses on control and stability. Schools that lean to Hierarchy culture have respect for position and power. The characteristics of this culture are efficiency, adherence to the rules and regulations and formality. Principals and school leaders in Hierarchy type of schools act as a coordinator, monitor and organiser.

d) Market Culture

Market culture is externally oriented and emphasises on control and stability. Schools with a Market culture are goal-driven and results-oriented. They mainly focus on gaining recognitions and reaching new heights. In Market culture, principals and school leaders are competitive and aggressive.
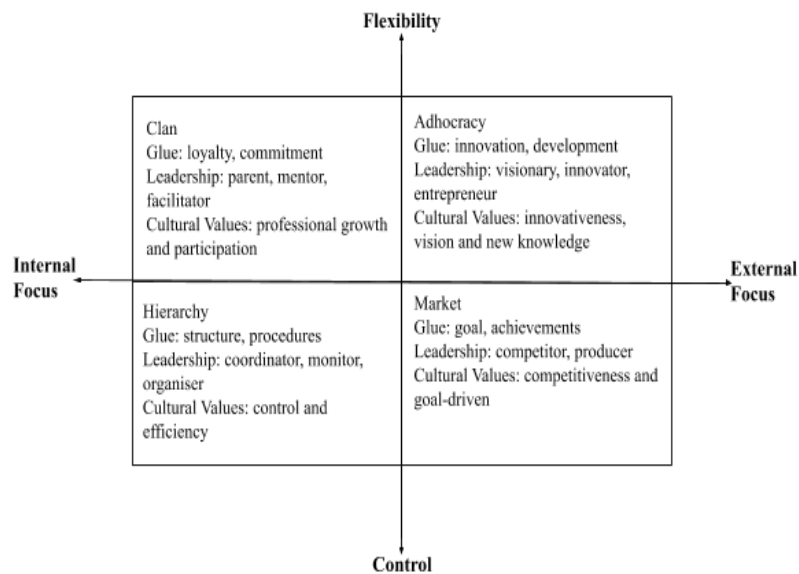

Figure 2 The Competing Values Framework (source: Cameron and Quinn (2006)

The dominant value measured from this construct reveals the type of the school culture. The adoption of Competing Values Framework (CVF) provides a platform for identifying the type of school culture which contributes to teachers' psychological empowerment. This model is a practical tool to help analyse the school culture types, and to assist in plotting a course for moving the school towards the direction of empowering its teachers.

II. The Conceptual Framework of Teachers' Personality Traits

Most theorists and psychologists have reached a consensus that people can be described based on their personality traits. On this account, a vast number of empirical works have been conducted to conceptualise human personality over the last several decades (Allport, 1961; John & Srivastava, 1999; Kroes, Veerman & De Bruyn, 2005). The Big-Five, which is also known as the Five Factor Model has been recognised as the best personality model as it is able to describe personality variations across different

cultures (Harari et al.,2014; Pappas, 2013; Digman, 1990; Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997; Bond et al., 1975; Schmitt et al. 2007). The Big-Five personality traits emerged mainly from two empirical approaches, the first is rooted in lexical approach and the second from quantitative inquiry based on questionnaires designed by psychologists for practical and theoretical applications (McCrae & John, 1992; Johnson, 2017). The model is constructed based on human's biology which also proves its universality (Yamagata et al., 2006; Gurven et al., 2013; McCrae and Costa, 1997). Ackerman (2017) posits that this model has been widely applied across cultures, resulting in various research confirming its validity.

The Big-Five took decades of research which was grounded from Cattell's 16 factors (1965). The model was originally derived in the 1970's from the works of Paul Costa and Robert McCrae (1988), and Lewis Goldberg (1981). This model comprises five broad personality traits namely:

a) Openness to Experience
   John & Srivastava (1999) describe openness to experience as the depth and complexity of an individual's mental activity and experiences. Those who score high in trait openness are more intellectually curious than those with lower trait openness. They are also more willing to try and learn new things and they tend to enjoy creative work. Furthermore, many research found significant association between high IQ levels and openness to experience (McCrae & Sutin, 2009).

b) Conscientiousness
   Conscientiousness describes individuals who can control impulses and act appropriately. Those high in trait conscientiousness are more well-organised, determined, self-disciplined, and goal driven. It is easier for them to delay gratification, follow the rules, and plan and organise effectively as compared to those with low conscientiousness levels (John & Srivastava, 1999).

c) Extraversion
   Extraversion derived from a combination of two main elements, namely agency and sociability (Bono & Judge, 2004). A study done by Barrick and Mount (1991) found that extraverts thrive in jobs that require a higher degree of interpersonal skills. This personality dimension includes attributes such as assertiveness, sociable, cheerfulness, outgoing and optimistic.

d) Agreeableness
   Individuals high in agreeableness possess the ability to establish or maintain relationships (Bono & Judge, 2004). They tend to be more cooperative and they can get along with others more easily as compared to those with low levels of agreeableness. Characteristics that are associated with agreeableness include trust, kindness, affection, and other prosocial behaviour.

e) Neuroticism
   Individuals who are high in neuroticism are more susceptible to negative emotions such as sadness, anxiety and irritability and those with low levels of neuroticism are more emotionally stable and resilient. Research found that trait neuroticism correlates negatively with self-esteem and general self-efficacy (Judge, Erez, Bono & Thoresen, 2002). This trait has also been linked to lower motivation and poorer job performance (Judge & Ilies, 2002).

To date, there is a growing interest in personality psychology to better understand workplace attitude and behaviour. Evidence also reveals that the Big-Five model is the most acceptable measure of human personality that is currently being used widely in various contexts and disciplines (Wilt & Revelle, 2015; Ackerman, 2017; Gurven et al., 2013). On the basis thereof, the Big-Five model is conceptualised as the theoretical underpinning in investigating the individual aspect of teacher empowerment amongst teachers in the Malaysian secondary schools.

III. The Conceptual Framework of Teachers' Psychological Empowerment

The emergence of psychological empowerment as a concept can be traced back to 1988 when it was first introduced as a motivational construct by Cogner and Kanungo (1988). Cogner and Kanungo (1988) assert that when the need for self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) or self-determination (Deci, 1975) is fulfilled, people will feel empowered. Thomas and Velthouse (1990) added three more constructs, namely impact, choice and meaning to further develop the concept. Spreitzer (1995) then provides a different perspective on the concept in which he used the interpersonal concept of empowerment for workplace. His conceptualisation focuses on employee's perceptions of empowerment. The four constructs of psychological empowerment emerged from Spreitzer's (1995) work are impact, competence, decision making and meaning. Later, Short and Reinhart (1992) expand the concept and found six dimensions that best describe psychological empowerment in the context of education. This paper will adopt the conceptualisation of psychological empowerment developed by Short and Rinehart (1992) as its framework, and the six dimensions of psychological empowerment in this construct are as follows:

a) Autonomy

Autonomy can be described as teachers' perceived control over certain aspects of their work life (Short, 1994; Short & Johnson, 1994). Teachers who are afforded greater autonomy tend to feel more empowered as they feel like they have some sense of ownership over their work. Firestone (1991) found that autonomy can lead to a greater sense of accomplishment among teachers. Teachers who are provided some form of autonomy feel supported and this can help develop their leadership potential (Rodgers and Long, 2002). On the other hand, Mcnary (2003) argued that teachers felt oppressed and demoralised when they felt like they did not have some degree of autonomy to do their work. Similarly, Rosenholtz (1987) pointed out that schools that are bureaucratic tend to stifle teacher autonomy.

b) Professional growth

Professional growth refers to "teachers' perceptions that the school in which they work provides them with opportunities to grow and develop professionally, to learn continuously, and to expand one's own skills through the work life of the school" (Short, 1994). Robertson and Tang (1995) found that teachers who were committed to their professional growth often felt like their work had personal meaning and thus, led to increased feeling of empowerment.

c) Status

When teachers feel respected, they take pride in their work as a teacher and they feel more empowered to do their job. Teacher status refers to the respect teachers

get from the superiors, students, parents, peers, and community members to the teaching profession (Lintner, 2008). Short and Johnson (1994) suggest that teachers' contributions and successes should be acknowledged and celebrated to enhance status. When teachers' innate desire to be valued and respected for their performance is met, they feel more empowered (Schneider, 2000).

d) Self-efficacy

Teachers' self efficacy can be described as teachers' perceived ability to do their job well. Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of actions required to produce given attainments". Short and Johnson (1994) highlight the importance of improving teacher effectiveness as teachers who believe in themselves tend to be more self-sufficient and in control in their work role which lead to the feeling of empowerment.

e) Impact

According to Short (1994), teacher impact alludes to teachers' perceptions on the influence that they have on the lives of their students and the work that they do. Teachers need to know that what they do matter. When they feel that they have made a significant impact by doing something worthwhile, they will feel more empowered.

f) Decision-making

Schools can facilitate and enhance teachers' sense of empowerment by involving them in the decision making process. As Short (1994) stresses, teachers can only feel empowered when they believe that their involvement and opinion have an impact on the school outcomes. Thus, teachers need to be given a significant role in school decisions. Teacher involvement in decision making includes teachers' participation in conversations on problem-solving, professional learning and goal-setting (Boland-Prom & Anderson, 2005).

4. Issues Pertaining Teacher Empowerment in the Context of Malaysian Secondary School

The 21st century Malaysia, like many other countries, focuses on developing future proof education to foster the country's economic and social growth. This aim is further emphasised in the current national education policy, the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, which serves as a prescription to a sustainable transformation of the country's education system. With this intention, schools are continuously being bombarded to meet the increasing accountability standards as imposed by the Education Ministry in order to respond to the diverse needs of the students, teachers and society (Tie, 2012; Anthony, Said, Ismail & Mahani, 2015; Perera, 2015). Due to this, school administrators such as principals, are often put in the hot seat to cultivate a culture that is conducive to school transformation and development. Principals need to find ways to build and develop school capacity that promotes collaboration to help meeting school improvement goals. Thus, teacher empowerment has become an important agenda as teachers are now expected to be more involved in the school initiatives.

However, the scenario of our education system as it is traditionally being structured, which is bureaucratic in nature, can potentially inhibit teacher empowerment. Considering the fact that our education system is obsessed with the narrow definition of success; focusing mostly

on world rankings and standardised testing such as PISA as our benchmarks, teachers are put under pressure as they are being held to higher standards of accountability and responsibility to achieve the Ministry's ambitious success goals. Further, most of the decisions made are initiated from the education and school authorities in a top-down manner and little input is sought from the teachers. Besides, the high level of supervision and direction from the Ministry and the school authorities seems to be counterproductive as this could further restrict teachers' abilities to make responsive decisions that best benefit their students. This can potentially hamper teachers from leveraging their skills and experience, which in turn, will further inhibit the process of empowering our teachers. Zielinski and Hoy (1983) asserted that the feeling of disempowerment occurs when teachers feel that the interference of external forces in their work is becoming so strong, that their influence on students is limited and their teaching does not give positive outcomes.

Evidence from empirical data has shown that teacher empowerment can remedy issues relating to the quality of teaching and learning. The Blueprint (2013) reported that a study by the Higher Education Leadership Academy or Akademi Kepimpinan Pengajian Tinggi (AKEPT) in 2011 observing 125 lessons in 41 schools across Malaysia found that only 50% of lessons were delivered in an effective manner. Meanwhile, only 12% of teaching adopted the best practices of pedagogy, and only 38% on the satisfactory level. It is even more worrying that 50% of the respondents indicated that the teachers' teaching delivery was unsatisfactory, claiming that it was dull, passive and unattractive. This is alarming, considering that teachers are the nation builders and so the quality of education is largely dependent on the quality of the teachers. From all this, it can be observed that the quality of the teaching profession is being compromised. In response to the above-mentioned issues, the Ministry, under the helm of the new Education Minister, Dr Maszlee Malik, has placed 'improving the quality of teaching' at the heart of its efforts towards a world-class Malaysian education. In this regard, the Ministry is collaborating with the Education Performance and Delivery Unit (PADU) to outline strategies for upskilling and empowering teachers (The Star, 22 Jul, 2018). Considering the importance of teacher empowerment in promoting positive work behaviours and school outcomes, there is a need to explore to what extent do teachers in Malaysia feel that they are being empowered in their profession.

5. CONCLUSION

The teacher empowerment framework that is proposed in this paper could provide an avenue for researchers in understanding the contextual and individual aspects that could influence teachers' psychological empowerment. This framework could serve as a guideline for future work that aims to move schools in the direction of empowerment by identifying the types of school culture as well as the personality traits that could contribute to teachers' psychological empowerment. The framework can also be a basis for researchers to examine the relationships among the contextual, individual, and psychological aspects of teacher empowerment for different populations and settings. Best practices can also be established by identifying the school's cultural characteristics as well as the teachers' individual characteristics that could contribute to teachers' psychological empowerment.

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