

**PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND
MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOR IN
TWO ETHNIC-CULTURAL SETTINGS:
A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY**

by

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**Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

February 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is made possible only by the goodwill and encouragement given to me by so many people that it is impossible to list them. Nevertheless, special thanks and gratitude must be expressed to those who have done much towards the accomplishment of this research.

First, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Madya Dr. Yoong Suan. As my mentor, he has been an exceptional teacher and a most worthy counselor. As I struggled with the dissertation, Dr. Yoong Suan was always gracious and tempered his criticism with humor and encouragement. His approach helped make the lengthy project bearable.

I am also grateful to the principals of the schools I studied. Without their cooperation and their kindness, there will be no research of such depth. Special thanks to the teachers of the two schools who had in more ways than one made me feel welcome in their schools until I could feel myself as one of them.

Finally, I offer my deepest appreciation to my family - my daughter, Angela and my son Kok Ming for believing in me and giving me their support. I know that reading for the Ph.D. would prove to be difficult. I had grossly underestimated the enormous amount of time, effort, sacrifice and emotional hardship that the venture would demand of my loved ones. Above all, I salute my husband, Goh Ki Tian, for going above and beyond the call of duty. He provided me with support when I was at the lowest in my lonely sojourn and humored me when I was at a loss in my search for the 'truth' out there. I could not have made it without his constant encouragement, his patience and his love. Last but not least, my special thanks to my father Ng Kar Lim, who has inspired me all my life. I will be indebted and humbly grateful forever.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviations used in the study	Refers to	Notes/English Equivalents
EPRD	Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Dasar Pendidikan	Educational Planning and Research Department
ICSS	Sekolah Menengah Cina (Swasta)	Independent Chinese Secondary Schools
JKR	Jabatan Kerja Raya	Public Works Department
JPN	Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri	State Education Department
KBSM	Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Menengah	New Secondary School Syllabus
KBSR	Kurikulum Baru Sekolah Rendah	New Primary School Syllabus
LBDQ	Soal-selidik Pembangunan Tingkah-laku Kepimpinan	Leadership Behavior Development Questionnaire
MLQ	Soal-selidik Kepemimpinan Multi Faktor	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
MOE	Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia	Ministry of Education
MSSEE	-	Malaysian Secondary School Entrance Examination
PIMRS	Soal-selidik Kepemimpinan Pemelajaran Pengetua	Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale
PMR	Penilaian Menengah Rendah	Lower Secondary Assessment
PPD	Pejabat Pendidikan Daerah	District Education Office
PPSM	Persatuan Pengetua Sekolah-sekolah Malaysia	Association of Principals of Malaysian Schools
PTA	Persatuan Ibu-bapa dan guru-guru	Parent-Teacher's Association

SA I	Penolong Kanan Pentadbiran	Senior Assistant (Academic)
SA II	Penolong Kanan Hal-ehwal Murid	Senior Assistant (Student Welfare)
SMJK(C)	Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan (Cina)	National-type Chinese Secondary School
SMK	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan	National Secondary School
SPM	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia	Malaysian Certificate of Education
SRK	Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan	National Primary School
SSB	Sistem Saraan Baru	New Remuneration Scheme
STPM	Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia	Malaysian Higher School Certificate
UK	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
UM	Universiti Malaya	University of Malaya
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia	University Putera Malaysia
UPSR	Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah	Primary School Assessment
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia	University Science of Malaysia

ABSTRAK

STAIL KEPIMPINAN DAN TINGKAH LAKU PENGURUSAN PENGETUA DI SEKOLAH-SEKOLAH YANG BERLAINAN ETNIK BUDAYA: SATU KAJIAN KES PERBANDINGAN

Kajian terkini menunjukkan bahawa pemimpin-pemimpin yang berjaya memimpin organisasi berdasarkan persekitaran organisasinya secara keseluruhan. Pandangan yang luas ini mendedahkan konsep budaya sekolah yang membolehkan pengetua memahami perhubungan yang kompleks dan justeru itu dapat menyelesaikan masalah-masalah rumit di sekolah. Pengetua-pengetua yang mempertimbangkan konteks budaya sekolah adalah lebih berkemahiran untuk membentuk nilai-nilai, kepercayaan dan sikap yang sesuai untuk warga sekolahnya. Ini adalah penting kerana ia merupakan pra-syarat dalam pembentukan persekitaran pembelajaran yang stabil dan berkesan. Kajian ini menerokai dan meninjau untuk memahami perhubungan dinamis antara pemimpin dan pengikut dalam sesuatu situasi dan memahami asal-usul dan pembentukan nilai-nilai dan stail kepimpinan pengetua di dua buah sekolah di Malaysia, iaitu sebuah sekolah yang majoriti etnik-Melayu dan sebuah sekolah yang majoriti etnik-Cina.

Dengan berdasarkan teori-teori yang berkaitan dengan kepimpinan pembelajaran, transformasi dan transaksi serta tingkah laku pengurusan yang lain, dan dengan menggunakan Skala Penilaian Pengurusan Pembelajaran Pengetua (PIMRS) dan Soal-selidik Kepimpinan Multifaktor (MLQ), kajian ini menerokai stail kepimpinan dan tingkah laku pengurusan dua orang pengetua dari segi konteks budaya sekolah masing-masing. Objektif-objektif kajian ini adalah: 1) membina profil dan membandingkan ciri-ciri sekolah majoriti etnik-Melayu dan sekolah majoriti etnik-Cina; 2) mengkaji stail kepimpinan dan tingkah laku pengurusan pengetua-pengetua di dua buah sekolah dan bagaimana mereka berinteraksi dengan konteks sekolah masing-masing; 3) mengkaji bagaimana guru-guru mentafsir kaedah kepimpinan pengetua dan tingkah-laku pengetua dalam pembinaan budaya.

Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kajian kes untuk mengkaji stail kepimpinan dan tingkah laku pengurusan dua orang pengetua dari aspek perbandingan budaya. Melalui perhubungan yang rapat dan masa yang panjang bersama dengan guru-guru dan pengetua, data-data dikumpulkan. Data-data menunjukkan bahawa budaya sekolah dan konteks sekolah serta ciri-ciri peribadi pengetua mempengaruhi kepimpinan pengetua. Persepsi guru-guru terhadap stail kepimpinan dan tingkah laku pengurusan pengetua didapati melalui soal-selidik PIMRS dan MLQ dan data-data ini dirumus dan disahkan. Maklumat lanjut didapati melalui temuduga dengan guru-guru dan pemerhatian atas tingkah-laku dan aktiviti-aktiviti yang dilakukan oleh mereka.

Hasil dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa terdapatnya perbezaan signifikan mengenai ciri-ciri sekolah dan stail kepimpinan dan tingkah laku pengurusan pengetua di dua buah sekolah yang dikaji. Berdasarkan lima dimensi Hofstede, apabila dua buah sekolah yang dikaji itu dibandingkan, sekolah yang majoriti etnik-Melayu dicirikan dengan jarak-kuasa yang lebih tinggi, lebih kolektivistik, lebih fiminisme, rendah dalam '*uncertainty avoidance*' dan berorientasi masa jangka-pendek. Nilai-nilai tempatan yang dapat dikenalpasti juga digunakan. Perbezaan signifikan juga didapati di dalam nilai-nilai yang telah dikenalpasti di kedua-dua buah sekolah tersebut. Konteks budaya dan ciri-ciri sekolah didapati mempengaruhi stail kepimpinan dan tingkah-laku pengurusan pengetua masing-masing. Kekangan kajian dan implikasi untuk kajian masa depan juga dibincangkan.

ABSTRACT

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLE AND MANAGEMENT BEHAVIOR IN TWO ETHNIC-CULTURAL SETTINGS: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

Emerging research has shown that successful leaders view their organizations' environment in a holistic way. This wide-angle view offers school principals the concept of school culture. The concept of school culture provides a wider framework for understanding complex relationships and solving problems within the school. By taking into consideration the school cultural context, school principals will be better equipped to shape the values, beliefs and attitudes that are prerequisites to promoting a stable and nurturing learning environment. This study explores and seeks to illuminate the situational dynamics of leader-follower relationships, to disclose the genesis and development of principals' value frameworks and work styles in the two mainstream schools in Malaysia, the ethnic Malay-majority and the ethnic Chinese-majority school.

Using a theoretical framework that looks into the instructional, transformational and transactional leaderships as well as other management behaviors, and by using the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) and Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), this study explored principals' leadership style and management behavior of two principals in their respective school's cultural context. The objectives of the study were: 1) to profile and compare the distinctive characteristics of the ethnic Malay-majority school and the ethnic Chinese-majority school; 2) to study principal's leadership style and management behavior of the principals managing the two schools and how they interacted with the school context; 3) to study how the teachers interpreted the leadership approaches, culture-building behaviors and other leadership characteristics of their principals.

This study employed the qualitative case study method to study the principals' leadership style and management behavior of two principals using a cross-cultural comparative approach. By prolonged engagement and close interactions with the teachers and principals, the data collected showed how school culture and context combined with principals' personal attributes shaped their school leadership. Teachers' perceptions of their respective principals' leadership style and management behavior obtained by PIMRS and MLQ were summarized and validated. Further information was obtained through interviews with the teachers and observations of their behaviors and activities.

The results show that there were significant differences between the characteristics of the two mainstream schools and that there were significant differences in the principals' leadership style and management behavior. Based on Hofstede's five dimensions, the ethnic Malay-majority school was characterized by a larger power distance, more collectivistic in orientation, more feminine inclined, low uncertainty avoidance and short-term time orientation when compared to the ethnic Chinese-majority school. Common local values that were identified were also used to reflect the culture and values of the teachers in the two schools. Again there were distinctive differences in these values between the two mainstream schools. The cultural context and characteristics of the respective schools that were identified showed that they influenced the respective principals' leadership style and management behavior. The limitations of the research were addressed and its implications for further study were discussed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Leadership is a contextual related phenomenon and it should be studied in specific organizational context in which it is practiced (Leithwood, Carson, Chapman, Hallinger and Hart, 1996). Interest in leadership in the school context gained prominence with the 'Effective School Movement' in the 1980s when there was a prolific amount of literature and research done on effective schools (Edmonds, 1979; Purkey and Smith, 1983; Bossert, 1985; Greenfield, 1991; Mortimore, 1998). Indeed much has been written about the leadership role of school principals in the improvement of schools (Greenfield, 1986; Sergiovanni, 1987; Sheive and Schoenheit, 1987; Sashkin, 1988).

In Malaysia, progress towards selecting effective school principals has been underway, when the Institute of Aminuddin Baki started the program for principalship (*kepengetuaan*) with the intention to expose teachers, who aspired to be principals and to incumbent principals, to the various theories of leadership. Credit is given to, for example, University of Malaya for conducting programs in principalship at master's degree level which commenced in 1999. However, in many of such programs including in-service courses, principals are generally exposed to prescriptive articles from educational journals and copies of routine handouts. These are structural-functional routines, which can serve as loose guidelines for principals. Hence, principal's knowledge and skills derived from this manner is incomplete, fragmented and piecemeal.

There has been an increase in awareness that the essential factor underlying effective schools is an “ethos” or “culture” (Deal, 1987) of excellence and those effective school leaders are *cultural builders* (Sashkin and Sashkin, 1998). It has been identified that school culture is the missing factor in educational leadership theory (Cheng, 1995; Hallinger, 1995; Hallinger and Leithwood, 1996; Ibrahim, 1996). Traditionally, culture was often treated as an ‘implicit variable’ (Hallinger and Leithwood, 1996) and the initial foray into looking at school in a cultural context by Getzels and Campbell (1968) had not been followed by any additional theoretical exploration nor empirical study. Only recently, Hargreaves (1999) identified that understanding the school culture as a prelude to managerial intervention as essential towards managing change and promoting school improvement.

1.2 Administrative Relationship in Schools.

In the 1990s, there were significant changes in the education system in Malaysia. Among the changes were the democratization of education, the decentralization of the national education system and the shift towards standardization and quality assurance (Lee, 1998). The democratization of education means all students proceed to upper secondary level and thus completed five years of secondary education. This move is not only limited to lengthening the provision of education but schools are also restructured to meet diverse needs of the communities that they serve, incorporating, for example, pre-school, special education and post-secondary education in the schools (Lee, 1998; Sufean, 2004). Another important change in the school system is the steps taken to decentralize the national education system. Decentralization reforms have devolved the management of schools to local authorities. This started the school restructuring movement, which focuses on the redistribution of power and responsibilities from the middle (district and state) authorities to local schools. This has put emphasis in the empowerment of teachers and community members. This implies shared leadership and as a result

schools are becoming more non-bureaucratic with characteristics of being flatter, more problem-focused with highly permeable boundaries. There are further changes. One of them is the smart school project that was implemented in selected schools in 1997, which would be implemented in all schools by 2010 (Lee, 2002). In this program, learning is enhanced by the extensive use of multimedia technology and schools will have to promote computer studies, and use of information technology.

On top of all these changes, teachers too were sent for upgrading courses, undertake action research and further their studies. This would mean more skilled and more professional teaching staff. All these changes affect school processes and structures, and they in turn have a direct impact on the role of the school principals. In the face of such new administrative relationships, principals must acknowledge the need to shift from educational administration to educational leadership. Educational leadership is a sub-category of leadership, but a bit more specific because it is premised on the intention of the leadership to provide for the betterment of the school in general and the pupils in particular (Dimmock and Walker, 2005). The phrase 'for the betterment' can be translated as physically, emotionally, spiritually and intellectually (Rosnani, 2004; Sufean, 2004).

In the midst of restructuring and the devolvement of power, principals have to bring some semblance of order by providing clear goals and expectations. New sets of relationships and interactions based on new concepts will have to replace old practices. With new sets of relationships, schools have to be less bureaucratic, autocratic-authority, and hierarchical. There is an obligation for schools to communicate with and the involvement of parents in school decision-making and governance (Leithwood, et al. 1996).

Steps are being taken by the central government, which has publicly supported numerous decentralization programs; however, the MOE has been reluctant to relinquish its authority over to the schools. Lee (2002) calls it "the form is there but not the substance". The MOE still maintains tight control on policy formulation, curriculum and assessment. However, the translation of policy and ideas into actual practice very much depends on local factors like feasibility of the programs, resource constraints, time, bureaucratic routine and the personalities of the key actors in the implementation process. More often than not ideas are interpreted differently in different schools and translated into different policies and practices. The local settings have different values and beliefs and look at things differently and have their "own way of doing things" (Deal and Kennedy, 1982). Very often similar policies may end up as different practices in different schools. As a result, there is a wide range of cultural hybrids and mixes (Green, 1997). It would be a mistake to view national policies simply as impositions on local context since this would overlook the agency of local actors as well as different forms that adaptations to local context brings (Christie, 1996).

The centralized "one size fits all" approach to school leadership appears to neglect the local contexts operating at each school. As Cheng (1995) pointed out that culture can treat the invader as unfriendly and kill off the virus as easily as let it live. Handy (2000) in his *Theory of Cultural Propriety* has stressed the need for leaders to read the culture of the organization correctly and use the appropriate leadership style and management behavior.

Hofstede (1997) studied cultural values across nations and found distinctive patterns in individual behaviors, which were shaped by the greater culture. Among the 53 countries studied, Hofstede(1997) found that Malaysia scored highest for power distance index (PDI). The PDI indicates emotional distance and the large PDI

score is interpreted to mean subordinates are unlikely to approach and contradict their bosses directly. This power distance relationship when translated in school context, it means that the principal-teacher relationship is an unequal one with "dependence well established in the teachers' minds" (Hofstede, 1997; 34). While Hofstede's study showed different PDI for different countries, it can also be postulated that different schools would show different PDI too because of their different ethnic settings.

New administrative relationships resulted from the restructuring of schools would require teachers to take more responsibilities. It also requires that principals allow their teachers the space to exercise such independence of authority. Such new relationships may be quite alien to teachers and to the principals themselves. Each school context would have a different way of looking at these new relationships and each school has different reactions to it. Hence, principal's leadership style and management behavior would have to be culture sensitive.

1.3 Background Information.

A brief look at the evolution of the national educational system since its inception during the British Colonial government to the present day would be helpful. This does not only set the background scene for this study but it also highlights that Malaysian schools still differ much in their ethnic-cultural settings. It is important to understand this from the very beginning of the study because this is where this study is anchored.

The historical development of the educational system in Malaysia is both complex and interesting (Tan, 1994). There is an abundance of literature (Wong & Ee, 1975; Rosnani, 1996; Tan, 1997; Kua, 1999; Lee & Tan, 2000; Yen, 2002; Bakri, 2003) that provides extensive coverage of the evolution and development of

education in Malaysia. Malaysian schools have always reflected the diversities of the country's ethnic composition and historical development. Under the British colonial government there were four main types of school: the English-medium schools that were set up by the government and Christian missionary societies; the Malay-medium schools, which existed in the forms of *pondok* schools, and the *madrasah*, which were essentially religious schools and the government-aided Malay vernacular schools; the Chinese vernacular schools, which were set-up and maintained by the Chinese communities and the Tamil vernacular schools, which were mainly the responsibility of the estate management.

The Razak Report and the subsequent enactment of the Education Ordinance 1957 laid down the foundation of the National Education Policy. After Malaya gained independence in 1957, the Rahman Talib Report and its subsequent Education Act 1961 stipulated that all secondary schools within the national system must teach in one of the two official languages of the country, English or Malay. All national schools must also prepare their students for public examinations to be conducted only in English or Malay (Tan, 1997). This decision affected the Chinese secondary schools. To gain acceptance into the national school system, they had to convert their medium of instruction to English or Bahasa Malaysia in order to receive full government aid. Schools, which refused to comply with these conditions, would receive no government funds and had to become private or independent schools outside the national system. Fifty-four out of the 70 Chinese secondary schools converted their medium of instruction into English. These were known as national-type secondary schools or SMJK(C). There were no Tamil-medium secondary schools.

Before independence, there were no Malay-medium secondary schools. Since then the setting up of Malay-medium secondary schools, especially in the rural areas was given a higher priority. There had been a steady increase in the number in the 1960s. Under the education act, provisions were made for Islamic religious instruction at all national and national-type schools. It was made compulsory to all Muslim students.

The National Language Act promulgated in 1970 saw the progressive implementation of *Bahasa Malaysia* as the main medium of instruction in all national and national-type schools. At the primary level, all English-medium schools were converted into Malay-medium, while the Chinese and Tamil-medium of instruction remain as the Chinese and Tamil primary schools. At the secondary level, its implementation was done progressively in stages beginning in 1971 and the conversion was completed in 1983. By 1983, all first year courses in the universities were conducted in *Bahasa Malaysia*.

The former conforming Chinese-medium secondary schools, despite their conversion to English and then later to Bahasa Malaysia as the medium of instruction still retain their distinctive characteristics and are steep in the ethnic Chinese culture. A large majority of the students is ethnic Chinese in origin. Mandarin or the local Chinese dialect is still widely spoken. Such is the situation today.

As for the former Malay-medium school, there are two distinctive types: the first are schools converted from the English-medium. The school population is generally more multi-ethnic where English is still fairly widely spoken among the students. The other type is Malay-medium schools built by the government since independence. The overwhelming majority of the students in this Malay-medium school are ethnic Malays.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Leadership is the ability to influence other people to reach common goals (Thomas and Inkson, 2004). "Influence" as practiced by the principal could take the form of task-oriented or relationship-oriented. How other people (teachers) interpret and react to "influence" very much depend on their deeply embedded mental programming (Hofstede, 1997) and cultural programming (Hofstede, 1991). Hence, it is important to demonstrate that principal's leadership style and management behavior is perceived differently in different school context. Only then, does it make sense to speak of how principal's leadership style and management behavior is affected by school context of different ethnic-cultural settings. From this, it is possible to further understand and identify conception(s) of leadership style and management behavior that can be suitably adopted. This is an important issue because research (Pettigrew, 1987; Sashkin and Sashkin, 1998) has shown that leadership has different meanings and interpretations according to different contexts.

Many principals may have adhered to the concept of universality in leadership and management constructs as well as recipes and "one size fits all" theories on teacher motivation and development. What meanings and interpretations of leadership are likely to emerge in this ensuing scenario? Will different school context with its clear distinct ethnic composition and ethnic setting influence principal's leadership style and management behavior? Will there be particular conceptions of leadership style and management behavior suitable for different school context? How and what are the "dynamic relationship" between the principals and their teachers in their quest towards their common goals? Herein lies the root of the research problem.

There are numerous studies that examined leadership in Malaysian schools. Among them are Yin (1991), Ramaiah (1993, 1995), Ibrahim (1996, 1999, 2000) and Jamaliah (1999). Furthermore, most of these studies were carried out as empirical studies where questionnaires and statistical analysis were used. The current emphasis in the study of schools is more often centered on the quantitative approach, which focuses on the work of climate and leadership style per se. Although this approach has generated a lot of findings, there is a lack of concrete advice on how to deal with issues and problems related to local sensitivities. Little attempts were made to understand other contextual forces that acted upon the principals as they acted out their leadership style and management behavior in their respective schools. Did these contextual forces work against them or were they able to change those forces to their benefits? It is evident and most obvious that in the field of education, there must be enough fundamental information on which further and future research could apply this findings.

It is also important to investigate the experiences and coping strategies of the principals from a social-cognitive approach. As Leithwood et al. (1996) argued that much insight into the principal's leadership style and management behavior will come to light when principal's leadership style and management behavior is studied based on the social and political context which frames their work, the problem within this work context and their problem-solving strategies in order to overcome difficulties.

It is crucial to take into consideration the context which the principals work when addressing problems (ibid.). Different skills would be needed to address similar problems but in different context and framework. Ethnic-based values tend to pervade schools especially in the case of Malaysian schools which have clear distinct ethnic settings. Hence, real-life description of school culture is called for in order to achieve a more in-depth examination of principal's leadership style and management

behavior. Examining the culture of schools from the perspective of both principals and teachers will provide a richer and more detailed picture of the total school environment. The culture of the school is best described by its own teachers who have internalized the unwritten values that underlie its' leadership style and management behavior. These teachers are often the best informants on how their principal interprets the values of their school.

There is a need to study school leadership style and management behavior within the context of the ethnic-cultural setting. This is because ethnicity and culture affect a person in four interconnected layers, namely values, cognitive schema, demeanor and language. These layers affect a person's behavior as well as how the person is perceived. The degree of principal's effectiveness is also affected by these values. These values and expectations shape not only what the principals and teachers perceive as desired outcomes for schools, but also conceptions of leadership. They may also influence the nature of the interactions that occur between the principal and the teachers. It is hoped that this study will be able to make a contribution by providing further insights in this area.

As leadership is a process and being contextual sensitive, this study is interested in exploring and describing principal's leadership style and management behavior in schools of different ethnic settings because different interpretations are given to leadership in different contexts. This would provide insights into how school leaders build effective cultures, which are instrumental in constructing and leading effective schools. This study will also lend understanding to school leadership and school culture by examining the relationship between them.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

Given these issues, the primary purpose of this study was to explore principals' leadership style and management behavior as perceived by the principals themselves and by their teacher-followers within the school context. Since there exist several types of schools, each with their own distinctive characteristics shaped by their ethnic and cultural differences, this study proposes to compare principal's leadership style and management behavior in schools that possess two different ethnic-cultural settings, namely: the ethnic Malay-majority school and the ethnic Chinese-majority school. To achieve this, in-depth exploration of the process of leading and managing as carried out by the principals must be carried out. These investigations involved observing principal's leadership style and management behavior and the characteristics of the school context in which the leadership was practiced. The aim of these observations was to gain a sense of how principals developed their leadership style and management behavior in the school context.

Although Leithwood and Duke (1998) proposed that cross-cultural research may proceed with different approaches, this study started with a theoretical construct and used it as a lens for viewing behavior within a school social system. Based on this approach, a variety of different approaches to leadership was used in this study: instructional leadership, transformational leadership and transactional leadership. Although only three main leadership style and management behavior were initially used, other leadership approaches were allowed to emerge as the study moved forward. The initial focus on the three leadership approaches, although limited, they were used to make the point that the meaning associated with each varied across different ethnic settings. This would in turn mediate functional utility and construct validity in cross-ethnic research. Such framework of conceptualization proved useful on two counts: it aided in understanding differences in leadership across school

contexts and cross-ethnic studies such as this would further enrich understanding of these constructs.

In short, the study focused upon understanding principal's leadership style and management behavior in the ethnic Malay-majority school and the ethnic Chinese-majority school and how contextual factors influenced the leadership style and management behavior of principals. Specifically, the objectives of this study are:

- a. to profile and compare the distinctive characteristics of the ethnic Malay-majority school and the ethnic Chinese-majority school.
- b. to study principal's leadership style and management behavior of the principals managing the two schools and how they interact with the school context.
- c. to study how the teachers interpret the leadership approaches, culture-building behaviors and other leadership characteristics of their principals.

1.6 Research Questions

Based on these purposes and objectives, the study addressed the following research questions.

1. What are the characteristics of the organizational cultures of the ethnic Malay-majority school and the ethnic Chinese-majority school?
2. What is the nature of the principal's leadership style and management behavior of the ethnic Malay-majority school and the ethnic Chinese-majority school?
3. What kinds of contextual or cultural constraints and impacts are on their leadership style and management behavior in the two mainstream schools?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings from the study could identify the various leadership style and management behavior that were used by principals in different school contexts. Hence, the findings could provide school principals with appropriate role models as

well as the opportunity to glimpse still more to the nature and task of leadership than has been described in the study.

It is imperative the principal's leadership style and management behavior be studied in its context in which it is practiced because it provided further understanding to both the nature of successful school leadership and, just as important how it can be applied so that effective school cultures are built. Furthermore, there is little literature as principal leadership and management behavior practiced in its school context especially of different ethnic settings and different historical-linguistic background. The results from this study could provide additional data to this scarcely documented aspect of school leadership.

The study could also be important for school principals as the findings can help them to be more sensitive to culture and adopt ways that are culturally refined. It is important for leaders to develop their cultural intelligence because leadership is largely in the minds of followers. If followers perceive a person as a leader, he/she will gain power, authority and respect afforded to a leader. However, certain characteristics are looked for in a leader and the behavior that indicates these characteristics is different in different cultures.

The findings in this study may encourage principals to be culturally intelligent leaders and create awareness that principals need to use knowledge and mindfulness (Thomas and Inkson, 2004) to develop a repertoire of leadership styles and management behavior that can be adapted to each specific situation. Besides, principals will also need knowledge of his/her own preferred style of leadership style and management behavior to see how far and to what extent he/she has to adapt to suit the school culture. In the end, a culturally intelligent leader is able to find a leadership style and management behavior that strikes a balance between his/her

preferred (normal) style, the expectations of followers, and the demands of the situation.

The findings would be important to principals who aspire to build a culture of excellence in their schools. The findings in this study may show that any universal approach to leadership has its pitfalls. Mimicking a leadership style that is advocated by a particular effective school could lead to counter productivity.

1.8 The Conceptual Framework

This study falls within two conceptual frameworks, which are, the analysis of principal's leadership style and management behavior and the study of school contexts of different ethnic settings. In the field of principal's leadership and management behavior, the focus is on the principal and the teacher-followers. The principal has his/her own perception of his/her own leadership style and management behavior while the teacher-followers have their perception of their principal's leadership style and management behavior. In the field of school context of different ethnic settings, it is on the teachers' insight into the social reality of their school in which the teachers perceive the reality of teaching, its impact on their lives, how their identity as teachers is formed, the assumptions that teachers construct about their schools and schooling, and the ways that self-perception of race, class and gender has an impact on their schools and everyday reality.

1.8.1 Principal's Leadership and Management Profile

The principal has his/her own preferred (normal) leadership style and management behavior with his/her own perception of it, which may not be the same as that perceived by his/her teachers. The perception of the teachers on his/her leadership style and management behavior is important because as a leader he/she leads only when he/she is given the authority and power to do so (Kanter, 1997). To

get a guide as to the kind of leadership style and management behavior the principals are expected to exhibit, the theoretical-framework approach as recommended by Leithwood and Duke (1998) was adopted.

As numerous writings (Tichy and Ulrich, 1984; Bass, 1985a; 1985b; Bennis and Nanus, 1985) have commented about the role of transformational leadership in effecting major changes and as transformational leadership has also been reported to work well in schools (Leithwood and Jantzi, 1993; Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999), this study used it as one of the leadership approaches in the study of principal's leadership style and management behavior in a school setting. Besides, the challenges of new administrative relationships in school and school restructuring have often been cited as reasons for advocating a move from instructional to transformational forms of school leadership (Leithwood, 1992; 1994). Among the challenges are; high degrees of uncertainty about educational ends and means; changes in core technology of schooling and the subsequent redesign of school organizations in support of these changes; and a desire to professionalize teaching by making teachers, themselves, taking responsibility of providing instructional leadership to their peers. Together with transactional leadership, and by using them together in this study, they drew attention to the context and process of leadership (Pettigrew, 1987). Leadership and followership are inextricably linked (Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership is seen as an exchange relationship between leader and follower whereby compliance is agreed, explicitly and implicitly, through reciprocal exchange. On the other hand, transformational leadership is a more uplifting process with higher order goals. In transformational leadership, leaders look for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher order needs so that through a process of mutual stimulation, they "unite in the pursuit of higher goals, the realization of which is tested by achievement of significant change" (Burns, 1978; 425). Thus, Burn's (1978) leadership is a mobilization process, with both motives

and values. Hence, both transformational and transactional leadership are needed. Incorporated into this study is also instructional leadership. Principals are looked upon as leaders in the affairs of instruction and so important it is that it is mandatory that principals have to have a minimum of six periods of classroom instruction per week. Although these three approaches of leadership are used in this study, they by no means downplay the importance of other approaches. These three leadership approaches of transformational, transactional and instructional leadership provide a starting point for this study while other approaches of leadership are allowed to emerge as the study progresses. This way, this study can address questions about leadership within a sufficiently broad analytical approach. Figure 1-1 shows how perception of principal's leadership style and management behavior is obtained from both the principal himself/herself and from their teacher-followers. This is done in order to obtain the principal's leadership and management profile.

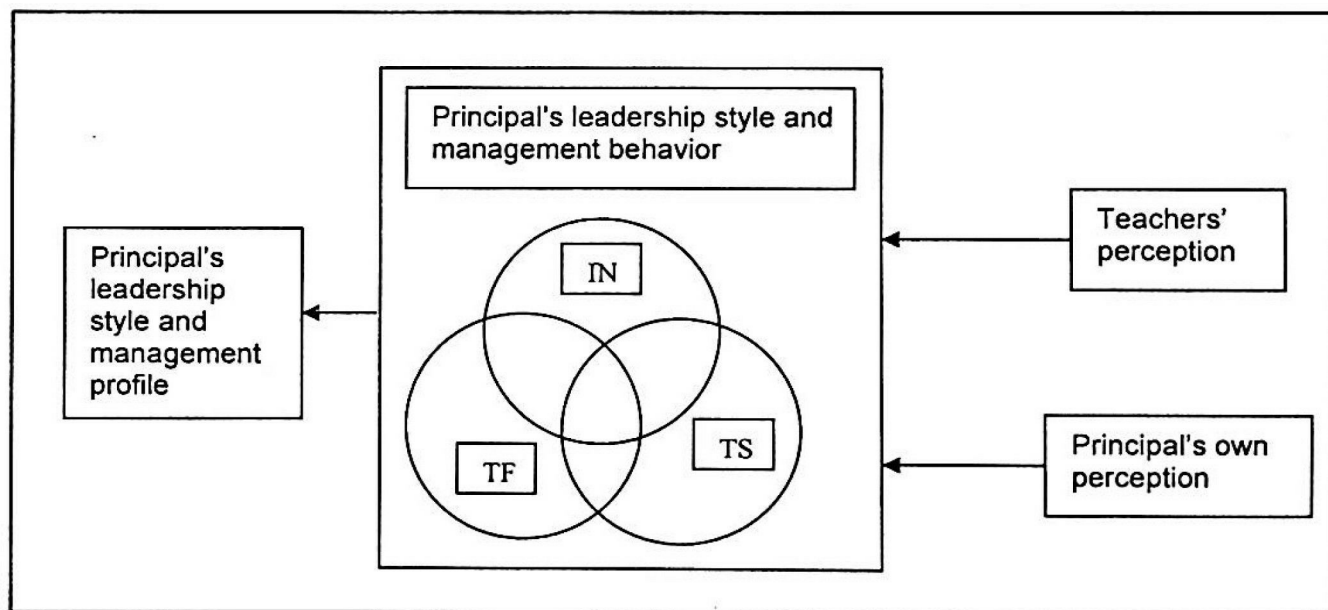


Figure 1-1 Principal's Leadership Style and Management Profile

Note:

- IN Instructional leadership
- TF Transformational leadership
- TS Transactional leadership

For principals, keeping the focus on teaching and learning is considered as the most important task. Research has shown that school principal can have a discernible effect on a school's level of productivity (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Hallinger, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Clark, 1989). The principal exerts this influence primarily in his/her role as the school's instructional leader (Edmonds, 1979; Bossert, et al., 1982; Sweeney, 1982). To appraise the instructional management behavior of principals, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) by Hallinger (1982) is used. The PIMRS provides a profile of principal performance on 10 instructional leadership job functions associated with principal leadership in effective schools and they are as shown in Table 1-1. Each of the 10 job functions has 5 items and the total 50 items which refer to specific principal behaviors are listed in detail in Chapter 3.

However, by only relying on instructional leadership is not sufficient considering the fact that leadership and followership are of the same continuum and leaders can lead only if the followers are ready to follow. As such, Leithwood and Jantzi (1993) have pointed out that transformational leadership is becoming an important approach of principal leadership style in schools today. Together with transformational leadership, is transactional leadership and they compliment each other. The former is leadership that leads followers to higher level while the latter is based on the basis of exchange. This form of principal transformational and transactional leadership is appraised by using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1995). The MLQ contained 12 job descriptions as shown in Table 1-1. Both the questionnaires are responded by the teachers and the principals. This variety of perspective gives what is called a "360 degree" picture of the leaders.

Besides these two leadership approaches, several other approaches are also identified which the principals appeared to have practiced. The other leadership approaches are as shown in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Leadership Approaches

Instructional Leadership (Hallinger, 1982)	Transformational & Transactional Leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1995)	Other Leadership Approaches
1.Framing the school goal 2.Communicate the school goal 3.Supervise and evaluate instruction 4.Coordinate the curriculum 5. Monitor student progress 6. Protect instructional time 7. Maintain high visibility 8.Provide incentives for teachers 9.Promote professional development 10.Provide incentives for Learning	<u>Transformational Leadership</u> 1.Idealized Influence (Attributed) 2.Idealized Influence (Behavior) 3.Inspirational Motivation 4.Intellectual Stimulation 5.Individual Consideration <u>Transactional Leadership</u> 6.Contingent Reward 7.Management-by-Exception (Active) 8.Management-by-Exception (Passive) 9.Laissez-faire <u>Outcome Variables</u> 10.Extra effort 11.Effectiveness 12.Satisfaction	1.Moral Leadership (Sergiovanni, 1992b) 2.Participative Leadership (Yukl,1998) 3.Managerial Leadership (Deal & Kennedy, 1982) 4.Cultural Leadership (Sarason, 1996) 5.Contingent Leadership (Cunningham & Cordeiro, 2003) 6.Constructivist Leadership (Lambert et, al., 2002) 7.Idea-based Leadership (Sergiovanni, 2003) 8.Teacher Leadership (Harris, 2003) 9.Visionary Leadership (Nanus,1992)

1.8.2 Cultural Context of Schools

There has been a great deal of research on leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Bass & Avolio, 1995; Sashkin & Rosenbach, 1998) and most scholars agreed that leadership makes some difference. This was supported by the 'effective schools' literature (Edmonds, 1979; Purkey & Smith, 1983) which consistently showed that effective schools had one thing in common, that is, a principal who is "a strong programmatic leader" (Bossert, 1985, p. 39). This in turn had spurred further studies on the role of principals (Sheive & Schoenheit, 1987; Sergiovanni, 1987; Sashkin, 1988) and found that effective school leaders were "culture builders" (Sashkin & Sashkin, 1998). Studies carried out (Sashkin & Sashkin, 1990; 1993; Sashkin, 1996; Sashkin & Resenbach, 1998) have shown that there were many

significant relationships between various school leadership measures and the measures of school culture. Deal and Peterson's (1990) analysis of case studies of effective culture building by school leaders by drawing from the work of Schein (1985) and others showed school leaders definitely were influenced by school culture and if school leaders were to affect any changes could only do it by changing the school cultures. This is reflected by what Schein (1985) has said "the only important thing leaders do may well be constructing culture" (cited in Rosenbach & Taylor, 1998, p.73). Thus, it follows that when leadership is studied, it would be relevant that the school cultural context should also be studied.

Hofstede (1991) defined culture as the collective mental programming of the people in an environment. Culture is not a characteristic of individuals but encompasses a number of people who are conditioned by the same education and life experiences. It not only exists in the minds of the people, but when it is shared by a number of people, it becomes crystallized in the institution these people have built together and in this case the school. This is supported by other researchers such as Trompenaars (1993) who considers that culture is the way in which a group of people solve problems and that problems that people regularly solve disappear from consciousness and becomes basic assumption, an underlying premise. In 1997, Hofstede further suggests that cultures vary in essential patterns of thinking, feeling and acting and that the patterns are established in childhood and relatively stable over time. Marcus and Gould (2000) note some form of cultural relativism is unavoidable as it is difficult to establish absolute criteria of what is right and what is wrong. As a result cultural bias is inescapable because all people develop values based on their environment and upbringing. Thus, this study explores the cultural context of the ethnic Malay-majority school and the ethnic Chinese-majority school and links it to the principal's leadership style and management behavior by using Hofstede's (1991) five dimensions.

Hofstede (1997) identified five cultural dimensions. Hofstede's cultural dimensions are as follows:

- Power – Distance Dimension
- Collectivism versus Individualism
- Femininity versus Masculinity
- Uncertainty Avoidance
- Long-term versus Short-term Time Orientation

Power – Distance Dimension

Power-distance refers to the extent to which less powerful members expect and accept unequal power distribution within a culture. A high power-distance culture is inclined to have centralized power with hierarchies in a school and large differences in salaries and status between individual teachers. The subordinate-teachers are expected to do as they are told and teachers who hold high positions are believed to possess wisdom and are automatically held in high esteem.

A low-power distance culture views the subordinate-teachers and the administrative-teachers as being closer together with flatter hierarchies in the school organization and less differences in status. Teachers and students too view themselves as equals though not as identical.

It is possible to surmise that this dimension will influence perceptions about the leadership style and management behavior and who should be involved in the decision-making process. It will influence therefore how frequently teachers from the low-power distance culture compared to the teachers from the high-power distance culture would seek out their principals to give suggestions and the extent they are involved in determining school affairs. If this resistance to be involved is overcome then how the leadership style and management behavior is affected will be important.

Collectivism versus Individualism

A culture that is inclined to collectivism would see that people are integrated into a strong cohesive group that provides protection. In exchange for the protection the group expects loyalty from their members. A collectivist culture values harmony more than the truth, silence more than speaking out and the emphasis is on the saving of 'face'. Shame is used to achieve the behavior that is desired. In school, the emphasis is placed on collective socio-economic interests over the interests of the individual teachers. The interest of an individual is sacrificed for the benefit of the group.

A culture that is inclined to individualism would see that the ties to others are loose and that everyone is expected to look after themselves. An individualistic culture values freedom and personal time, challenges and material rewards as motivators for work. Honesty and truth are valued and there is an emphasis on self-respect. Guilt is used to achieve the behavior that is desired. In school, the emphasis is placed on socio-economic goals of individual teachers over those of the group.

It is possible to surmise that this dimension will influence perceptions about leadership style and management behavior from the aspect that the rights of the individual teacher compared to the rights of the group to be rewarded for jobs done and therefore the idea that if it is not available to all then maybe it should not be made available to any. It would affect the willingness by the teachers to be singled out as an individual and therefore to be differentiated from the group and on the other hand, it would also affect whether the principal would want to single out a teacher to be praised and could in the event make others unhappy. It also affects the prominence given to youth and action compared to experienced and older teachers and whether the emphasis is on truth or relationships.

Femininity versus Masculinity

Femininity and masculinity does not refer to the female or male physical characteristics but to the gender roles. A feminine role of orientation is towards home, children, people and relationships. In a feminine culture, both women and men can exhibit caring and tenderness and show concern for the quality of life and material success.

A masculine role of orientation is towards assertiveness, competition and being tough. Masculine culture tends to maintain the distinction between the roles while the feminine culture tends to collapse the distinction.

It is possible to surmise that a high masculine-feminine dimension in the school context would influence the perception about leadership style and management behavior because it would emphasize different things in different context. The feminine culture would place importance on cooperation, nurturing, exchange and support while the masculine culture would place importance on competition, work tasks and utilitarian purposes.

Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance refers to the extent one values predictability. It focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within a school. A culture with low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity would need rules, regulations and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. A culture with high tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity will be more tolerant to a variety of opinions and as a result the school with high tolerance would be more willing to accept change, and takes more and greater risks.

It is possible to surmise that this dimension will influence perceptions about leadership style and management behavior because it affects the amount of choice available. It affects the tolerance of not having all the answers and not completing the tasks given to the teachers as expected.

Long-term versus Short-term Time Orientation

Long-term versus short-term time orientation focuses on the degree the school embraces or does not embrace long-term devotion to traditional values. High long-term orientation ranking indicates the school prescribes to the values of long-term commitments and respect, support a strong work ethic where long-term rewards are expected as a result of today's hard work. Such a culture shares the belief that older people have more authority than younger people. It also means that in school, teachers should try to acquire skills and an education, be hard working, frugal, patient and persevering. On the other hand, a low long-term orientation ranking indicates a school which does not have long-term planning and things were done to satisfy immediate needs.

It is possible to surmise that this dimension will influence perceptions of leadership style and management behavior about context of the school with long-term time orientation focusing on practice and practical values, about school being a center of learning and a source of information rather than about relationships and about the desire of results and achievement of goals.

Although Hofstede's (1997) five dimensions were used to describe national cultures, they can be used in this study to describe broadly the cultural context of the two schools of different ethnic background. Different ethnic groups have different thoughts about risk, reward, opportunity and what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. Although observations based on Hofstede's (1997) five dimensions are

important, they need addition. It is important to define the values of each school cultural context and how this concept relates to the behavior of teachers of the respective school. Culture is very closely linked to the concepts of values. Values bear a great influence on the way teachers in a school think, behave and relate with other people and how they perform their daily tasks. Current thinking (Westwood, 1990; Schein, 1992; Asma, 1993) is that values drive the people. The school's values and what the teachers believe in are important to the school's success and these have implications on its principal's leadership style and management behavior. Taken together they give the school its character and in turn the school gives recognition to actualizing the values through stated practices.

As a result, to frame this study of principal's leadership style and management behavior in the local context, common local values are also used besides Hofstede's (1997) five dimensions. The common local values of the two mainstream schools are broadly named, the 'we' orientation, face, modesty and harmony. These are also values found by Asma (1993) to reflect the culture and values of the Malaysian workforce. These values are interpreted into the following typology:

1. A value of non-assertiveness.
2. A value of respect for senior/elderly people and preserving face.
3. A value of loyalty, respect for authority.
4. A value of collectivism-group orientation.
5. A value of harmony.
6. A value of preserving face.
7. A value of respect for hierarchy.
8. A value of trust and relationship building.
9. A value of third party and preserving face.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations involved in this study. The existence of a halo effect cannot be ruled out. Teachers were asked to describe their perceptions of their principals who led them (Green, 1994). This was likely to occur if teachers

perceived their principals to be charismatic. On the other hand, perception of the effectiveness of the principal in directing the teachers in their day-to-day job might be subjected to a teacher's personal biases or personal likes and dislikes of the principal for reasons not associated with his/her leadership behavior. Consideration must also be given to the fact that the people involved in this study were telling stories of their own that were subjective in nature. Consciously or unconsciously these stories could have been "faked".

The generalizability of results from a small sampling is recognized as another limitation. However, this study was carried out from a comparative perspective, therefore it was important to limit the number of schools. It was also necessary because the study was based on two mainstream schools in Malaysia. Besides, to develop descriptions of principal's leadership and management behavior, there was no choice but to keep the number of principals small. However, it is not the intention of this study to make precise generalizations to the other population. This study is exploratory and concerned with providing in-depth information and data concerning leadership style and management behavior of principals and this meant to be informative and illuminating. Each study has its unique characteristics and able to repeat the result is not important in a naturalistic enquiry.

It must also be remembered that this is a study that is characterized by its' situation as it existed during the time the study was being carried out. As such, any changes in educational policy and economic or political situations in the future might give a different result. For the same reason, results may differ in other types of schools within the same district and also schools of other districts.

Another limitation is subjectivity bias of the researcher. The possibility of interviewer bias due to the use of qualitative research technique (Lincoln and Guba,