

Preliminary explorations of indigenous perspectives of educational management

The evolving Malaysian experience

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Examination of theoretical and conceptual frameworks

To bring comparison in sharper focus, while discussing seven theories of human nature, Stevenson examines Christianity and each important thinker (Freud, Lorenz, Marx, Sartre, Skinner and Plato) on four points – his background assumption, his theory of the nature of man, his diagnosis of what goes wrong, and his prescription on how to put it right[1]. One similar scholarly analysis in the field of social psychology was by James A. Schellenberg who explored the lives of Freud, Mead, Lewin and Skinner in order to understand more profoundly the main viewpoints of psychoanalysis, symbolic interactionism, field theory, and operant behaviourism[2]. In the same way, in order to put our understanding of educational management in greater focus we can raise several important questions regarding educational management:

- How do we manage schools better?
- What core competences must educational administrators possess?
- What is the most important theory of educational administration/management?
- What are the universalities and the particularities of educational management in different cultures?

Because of the diversity of national contexts and differing national conditions, a great range of practical and theoretical problems of the ways of knowing emerge and have to be addressed by the educational leaders in their particular contexts[3]. The issues of centralization and decentralization, for instance, are played out within the pervasive influence of politics, community aspirations and social pressures, national development goals and disproportionate resources, human, financial, material, time to catch up with population increase and social demands. Just the building of classrooms and other infrastructure works and the provision of basic amenities raise enormous practical, financial and theoretical problems in policy making and management. Everywhere there is concern for the training of educational administrators at all levels of the system, specifically, the training of educational “system” managers, institutional leaders, educational support staff, other educational

and community leaders who influence educational policies, administration and management.

Just as there is the re-examination of our notion of “intelligence” with the current insights regarding the frames of mind and multiple intelligences, there needs to be a re-examination of the assumption that a body of theory and principles exist that provide the touchstone for efficient and effective administrative and managerial action in organizations[4]. While researchers and theorists debate on whether there is a science of educational administration and relevant corpus of strong, valid knowledge, those engaged with training have to act to provide a relevant curriculum to enable administrators to perform their challenging tasks to the best of their abilities. Most (educational) administrators neither are interested nor have the education or time to engage in academic discourses on the sciences of administration. In most administrative training programmes, the applied managerial skills, flexible cognitive competence training and “best practices” examples are given emphasis and precedence over content knowledge and theories. Notwithstanding diversities in disciplinary approaches or national stages of development, there are nevertheless, general principles and widely shared issues which apply to the professional development of educational administrators.

One such relevant general principle, for instance, the notion of “the learning organization” receives widely shared interest, and resonance across different kinds of organizations, different national contexts and concerns[5]. Another notion which finds great interest and relevance is the notion of the “reflective practitioner”[6]. Administrators do need time to develop confidence in their ability to analyse their needs and the need for the development of their organizations or systems within their own unique national and cultural contexts.

To do this, they require tools of thought and professional and academic frameworks with which they can exercise creative cognitive processes. Autonomous personal mastery of these processes will enable them to make sense of their administrative, professional and personal existence and provide “the purpose of the story” of why they do what they do in the educational administration field. The purpose of their story can be at once parochial, indigenous and universal. The same is true of the linguistic and cognitive tools that they use to assign meanings to generative administrative acts and to essentially culture and context specific acts. Such subtle and profound development can only occur if they acquire the generic intellectual cognitive skills, and the specialized language and tools and frameworks pertinent to educational management.

Some of the major concepts and great ideas in management include the following: productivity, specialization, job satisfaction, job analysis, work-flow chart, time and motion study, fatigue study, skills study, primary work group, collegiality, recognition, ownership, reward, competence and self-esteem, functional group, participation and involvement, commitment, autonomy,

incentive schemes, intelligent, humane and competent, diverse interests, differences, collective responsibility, power and authority, leadership, the power of interaction, motivation, vision, decision making, functionality, corporate strategy, command/guidance and co-ordination, management audit, effectiveness and efficiency, management counselling, clarity and accuracy of decision making, problem solving, staff training and development, encouraging initiative and acceptance of responsibility, ensuring the general interest/general good is above individual interest, prevention of overregulation, red tape and excessive paperwork, leadership by example, *esprit de corps*, fostering challenging work, friendship in workplaces, recognition of individual uniqueness, fostering of social conscience, workers unions/organizations, appeals procedures, the right to question, rights and privileges, rule-governed organizations, standard operation procedures, planning, organizing, selecting, directing, co-ordinating, reporting, financing, matching man to structure, specialization, division of labour, delegation, limits of control, human dignity, human needs (physical, security, love, recognition), self-actualization, trust, self-improvement, perfectibility, work attitudes, democratic relations, assumptions regarding human nature, team building, bases of power, legitimate, expertise, charismatic, reward, coercive, communication, work groups, management by objectives, innovation, creativity, lateral thinking and strategic thinking[7]. While this listing is for the general management field, the key ideas are also applied in the managerial skills development training of educational managers.

Building an indigenous corpus of knowledge in educational management

The efforts to build an indigenous corpus of knowledge on educational management are under way in many national contexts. The motive is neither necessarily political nor intellectual arrogance but emerges from the desire to find meaning and relevance in the complex processes of defining individual and national intellectual and professional identities.

In Malaysia, for instance, educators work for the most part in the Malay language with clientele socialized in the local cultures. There is the urgent need to inspire, motivate and work with relevant and meaningful concepts that the locals are at home and familiar with. When new ideas are introduced which are acceptable with their a priori understandings of local realities, such ideas are acquired quickly without unnecessary cognitive dissonance. Take the idea of "excellence". If within the local cultures there are historical traditions of excellence and concepts which resonate with their cognitive and affective structures and behaviours, critical scholars ask why should new foreign words and epistemology, often with alien cultural undertones, replace local knowledge and realities?

The process of educational management corpus building is similar to the process of language building in the Malaysian context. Language building is not only a Malaysian effort but it is the collaborative effort of the countries in

the ASEAN region, principally, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Singapore[8] (see also [9,10]). While there are overlaps in the processes and the efforts of content and substance of the knowledge corpus with the language corpus, the activities require different kinds of expertise[11]. The substantive aspect of building the language corpus requires linguistic expertise while the substantive aspect of building the knowledge corpus requires expertise in the particular area of subject specialization, particularly, management.

Corpus building in the knowledge area requires reflection, observation, research and explanation beyond “word deep” translations. Among the management concepts which are receiving wide and popular usage are the following: consultation (*musyawarah*), collaboration (*gotong royong*), excellence (*al falah*), personal refinements (*adab*), accountability (*amanah*), etc.[12]. Many of the concepts being explored are indigenous concepts but Islamic in origin. This is because Malay culture is essentially Islamic and the Malay language itself has a large number of “loan words” from the Arabic language in matters pertaining to history, philosophy and spirituality. Likewise, in the domain of the sciences and technology, the Malay language expands its terminology by incorporating “loan words” from the English language or from Greek and Latin roots. Indigenous contributions to corpus building in the management sciences is mainly in the area of worldview, *weltanschauung* and values.

The Islamic worldview is fostered primarily by three principles. These principles are, *tawhid* (unity), *khalifah* (vicegerent) and *al 'Adl* (justice). Universal values held by Islam and considered to be applicable in all situations and in all societies include the following[13]:

- every act should be accompanied by intention (*niyat*);
- conscientiousness and knowledgeable in all endeavours (*itqan*);
- proficiency and efficiency (*ihsan*);
- sincerity (*ikhlas*);
- passion for excellence (*al falah*);
- continuous self-examination;
- forever mindful of the almighty – piety (*taqwa*);
- Justice (*'Adl*); truthfulness (*amanah*);
- patience (*sabar*);
- moderation;
- promise keeping;
- accountability;
- dedication;
- gratefulness;
- cleanliness;

- consistency;
- discipline; and
- co-operation.

An example of a collaborative indigenous effort to identify the sets of relevant values to be upheld by civil servants and Malaysians as a society, is what is known as the “Twelve Pillars”. Seminar participants and experts and other knowledge and opinion leaders have come together and identified values worth knowing and disseminating. After a series of seminars and discussions the Twelve Pillars were accepted and widely distributed nationally to encourage individuals to emulate such values so that the organizations they serve in will be productive and uphold high ideals. The Twelve Pillars[14] are:

- (1) the value of time;
- (2) the success of perseverance;
- (3) the pleasure/joy of working;
- (4) the dignity of simplicity;
- (5) the importance/worth of character;
- (6) the power of kindness;
- (7) the influence of positive examples;
- (8) the obligation of duty;
- (9) the wisdom of economy;
- (10) the virtue of patience;
- (11) the improvement of talent; and
- (12) the joy of creativity/invention/origination.

Another example of indigenous corpus building in the field of education is the formulation of the Malaysian Philosophy of Education and the Philosophy of Teacher Education. More significant was the formulation and nationwide dissemination of a set of ideas known as the “educational vision”. These ideas[15] include the ideas of national unity, educational leadership and management style, a caring education service, caring schools, empowerment, the monitoring system, knowledge culture and a culture of excellence.

Each of these ideas was explained clearly with examples in the education sector. The intention of disseminating these ideas together with such other notions as “zero defect” was to ensure that educational managers at all levels share a collective managerial memory to achieve the goals of providing educational services that are excellent and of world-class quality. In the formulation of these ideas, generic concepts are drawn from the literature and from examples elsewhere but are then adapted and made relevant to the Malaysian situation. Such examples which found Malaysian expressions are the notions of “empowerment”, “caring schools”, “caring education service”.

The notion of a knowledge culture is derived from Islamic civilization and made relevant to the contemporary challenges by creating the self-fulfilling myth to ensure that Malaysia becomes one of the Pacific Rim Countries which could contribute importantly to knowledge culture[16]. The rapid pace of globalization ignited the goal of internationalizing Malaysian education and establishing centres of excellence in the country. The meaning, purpose, means and ends of internationalization of education is still being debated in Malaysia as well as elsewhere[17]. The point being made here is that the indigenous agenda does have international implications in the processes of national and educational development. In the indigenization experience, local and foreign ideas are synthesized to constitute the form, substance and strategy for new paradigms harmonious with local cultures.

The world of ideas and applications to educational administration

Currently many ideas are disseminated by thinkers whose ideas are widely received across national boundaries. To the extent that such ideas become international currency, they are “universal” and not culture or context specific. Such ideas include, the borderless world, the global village, information technology, management information system, total quality management, the learning organization. On a different level of conceptualization, are the ideas of restructuring, reorganizing, downsizing, reinventing and re-engineering.

These ideas constitute the form of interventions or designs for national, organizational or institutional development. There may be cultural and context specific differences in the substantive or content changes brought about in the organizations. Also, the processes of bringing about any changes will entail context and culture specific learnings, usually enlightened and understood by managers especially by case studies and local metaphors[18].

Senge suggests five components of the learning organization, namely:

- (1) systems thinking;
- (2) personal mastery;
- (3) mental models;
- (4) building shared visions; and
- (5) team building.

These five “disciplines”, on face value, are innocuous and seemingly “universal”[5]. However, when these disciplines are filled in by the new cognitive, linguistic capacities (including connotative meanings), new action rules and new values and assumptions, they have a life and reality of their own in a particular context.

A popular example is the fast food franchises which have different styles and norms of service provision and service acceptance of standards. In addition, the demands of culturally conditioned taste buds create uniqueness within the general organization and management commonalities. The case of the classroom is particularly instructive. While classrooms everywhere seem to be

similar, the styles of teaching and learning will vary, not merely from subject to subject but the norms of classroom interactions vary from culture to culture. Nevertheless, within the cultural variations there are identifiable universal characteristics or structures. The problem of determining what is indigenous and unique to a particular context or culture depends both on the levels and units of analysis employed to analyse a particular phenomenon.

The Islamization of knowledge as an indigenous perspective

There is a growing body of literature on Islamic perspectives of management (see e.g. [19,20], also compare [21,22] with [23,24]). This corpus is a complementary segment of the vast literature on Islamic perspectives of academic disciplines and analysis of phenomena. This dynamic renewal of redefinitions of existing, re-emerging and newly emerging subjects has been inspired and directed by the Islamization of knowledge agenda[25]. Much of the literature is necessarily prescriptive and normative, not descriptive, because of the primary approach from the perspective of Faith and Revealed Truths. Analysis of phenomena is carried out primarily by reference to Revealed Verses from the Quran or references to the Hadiths and Traditions of the Prophet. There is the unconditional acceptance of Revealed Truth[26].

Contributions by scholars to the various fields of human knowledge are further criticized and enlightened by interpretations and commentaries. This religious tradition is, of course, similar to other religious traditions, in particular the Hebrew and Christian religious traditions. Typically, scholars trained in academia in the traditional and evolving academic disciplines will attempt to make academic references, to the latest empirical research, whether experimental or non-experimental. Typically too, traditional religious scholars (*ulamas*) will refer to the Holy Quran and Prophetic Traditions without referring to any research works or findings, whether seminal or lesser works.

The current knowledge explosion and the processes of the democratization of education have led to the expansion of the mass media industries, both print and electronic. There are also new and expanding professions of journalism, think-tank agencies and non-governmental agencies. Collectively these changes have expanded the number of periodicals, newspapers and columns, mass media programmes and the number of reporters, journalists and academic writers, and researchers writing on Islam. While most of the writings are lesser works, several are becoming seminal in the field. Whether seminal or lesser, such works from the Islamic perspective have provided an alternative *weltanschauung* from the indigenous Islamic perspective. Even this indigenous perspective indicates different nuances, focus and perspective of changes over political cultures and time[27-29].

The alternative *weltanschauung* has helped to change values, epistemology, aspirations and identities. While these efforts may have freed the minds from the mind-forged manacles of Western generated categories, they may at the same time create local mind-forged manacles which may be equally "mindless"[30]. This may occur if the motive and means for the mindset

changes are not in quest of truth but are more as a reaction to some form of foreign intellectual domination. These new traditions of inquiry from the indigenous perspective are at once from a civilizational perspective and an indigenous perspective[31-34]. It is clear then, that the new perspectives are both methodological and substantive. In the field of education and educational management, current developments have created institutions and organizations, produced new publications and generated numerous works. In addition, various programmes are conceptualized, developed and run both to create interest and to meet the needs and interests for deeper meanings and understandings from the Islamic perspective.

The Incas Learning Consultancy Group, for instance, provides regular management training programmes focusing on such topics as conflict management from the Islamic perspective and the leadership of Umar Ibnu Al-Khattab (see [35,36]). Generally, in such programmes, examples are drawn from historical Islam, especially from the times of the Prophet and the Companions, and also complementarily from the achievements of Islamic scholars, scientists and military heroes. The novel perspective search inquiry generates relevant God's Commandments and injunctions and prophetic advice on various aspects of leadership, followership, management principles, daily life habits and practices. To elaborate, enhance, enrich and inspire, the thoughts and insights of Muslim, the works and references to scholars from all civilizations and various era are also drawn on.

Together, this corpus constitutes a veritable collection of explanation of phenomena, wisdom, how-to guidance and theoretical assumptions which are not any less significant or relevant than many of the findings and recommendations of empirical research works. In fact, in many instances, the insights gathered from revealed knowledge and the supportive interpretations and commentaries are more profound compared to those insights from the "scientific" research traditions. However, there is as yet no contemporary body of seminal literature on Islamic educational management[37,38]. This particular paper constitutes one of the first explorative analysis on the subject. The new indigenous perspectives are more at the stage of formulating criticisms of the intellectual domination by foreign cultures than at the stage of building new local knowledge corpus.

On management thought and the growth of educational management corpus

Management thought has been shaped by scholars from different disciplines. A survey of the renowned management thinkers illustrate the following profiles:

- Mary Follet – political scientist;
- Elton Mayo – psychologist/ sociologist;
- Henri Fayol and Chester Barnard – administrator practitioner;
- Herbert Simon – economist and statistician;
- Peter Drucker – management consultant.

As there are different experts with different disciplinary backgrounds, there are therefore various different perspectives which fall under several schools of thoughts. Among the various main trends in management thoughts are the following:

- management process;
- research based;
- human behaviour;
- social system;
- accuracy target theory;
- scientific management approach.

Within these general trends and schools are specific approaches, theories, with their particular philosophical and theoretical assumptions.

The growth of the quality movement, brings to the fore several quality management gurus who work on the same theme but are characterized by the main focus of their approach. Crosby fosters company-wide motivation, Deming focuses on statistical process control, Feigenbaum on systems management and Juran on project management[39,40]. It is interesting to note that while many of the insights have been elicited from company, context and culture specific environments, these do have universal applications. However, when these principles, methods and techniques are transferred to a different context and organization, the recipient organization has to live through and thoughtfully adapt management principles and innovations to their own realities while learning from the lessons of the others. It is likely that the same patterns of necessary adaptations exist in the sectoral knowledge transfer to public service and educational management. In the domain of school improvement there are Ron Edmonds[41] and Peter Mortimer[42].

In the growing field of educational management, while there are several renowned scholars, there are no clear schools of thought which clearly makes the discipline on par with the traditional disciplines in the social sciences. James Lipham, Eric Hoyle, Colin Moyle, W.G. Walker, A. Ross Thomas, Richard Bates, Peter Ribbins, Bill Mulford have all contributed importantly to the field from their own unique disciplinary perspectives. Douglas J. Thom has noted the key contributors to the educational administration literature over the years[43, p. 97]. While the list is helpful, there are of course omissions, because of the problem of determining criteria and because of the contributions of newcomers and those writing in other languages. Stuart Crainer has listed 56 management thinkers[44, pp. 231-43].

It is interesting to note that while many of those in the educational management field will recognize the management thinkers, those in the general management field may not recognize the works and contributions of educational management thinkers. This may be because of the specialization of the field or because of the low impact of the contributors to the general

management field or because of some other flaw in the mode of the dissemination and marketing of educational management knowledge either in academic circles or in the consultancy domain. The lists recognize the contributions by those writing in the English language. There certainly is a need for seminal works in languages other than English to be identified and translated into English and vice versa. In fact, detailed analyses are required on the works of the major contributors to the field in order to develop a taxonomy of culture specific or culture free terminology, concepts and generalizations.

Indigenous perspectives within professional and academic disciplines

The works of researchers and scholars on the biography of military leaders, for instance, provide instruction on leadership and organization from particular indigenous perspectives. Edwin P. Hoyt, a military historian explores the biographies of Heihachiro Togo, Isoroku Yamamoto and Tomoyuki Yamashita, three Japanese military leaders. Noting cultural and contextual differences Edwin P. Hoyt observes:

Although Japan learned army organization from the Europeans, particularly the Germans, the Japanese army from the outset developed its own traditions, chief among them a spartan existence derived from the samurai tradition military. Two of its manifestations were the winter and summer marches, in which the army units prided themselves on building character and developing the ability to withstand hardships to a degree not practiced by other armies[45].

Context specific or organization specific principles can have universal applications. Donnithorne's book outlining the West Point way of leadership is as relevant to corporate, political and educational leadership as it is to military leadership. The author points out that:

The differences that exist between military and civilian leadership are differences in degree, not in kind... [46, p. 6].

I would argue that executive styles are not important. The roots of sound leadership – be it civilian or military – are in ideals: moral principles (such as justice and beneficence), high-minded values (loyalty, integrity, consideration for others), and selfless service. ...But these values hold no power unless they are practiced[46, p. 32].

Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching (How Things Work)* was originally addressed to the sage, the wise political rulers of the fifth century BC. He set down the laws of effective leadership he had discovered after years of meditation and careful observation. Lao Tzu's principles have been adapted for today's leaders by providing insights for understanding self and others, enhancing creativity and handling conflict[47]. Bob Messing's contribution is also another interesting and popular perspective from the Taoist perspective[48].

National and indigenous perspectives

One of the most important texts on history and political science on Malaysia was authored by Gullick, entitled *Indigenous Political Systems of Western*

Malaya. Among other matters, the book discusses the origins of the indigenous political system and the influence of the matrilineal and patrilineal systems in the various Malayan states and communities[49].

In the case of Malaysia, the overriding national concern is national unity among the diverse racial, linguistic, religious groups in the pluralistic composition of the country. In the education sector the primary concern from the early years of independence was to formulate and implement a common curriculum using a common language, the Malay language as the national language. After over three decades of independence, the country developed its own network of values expressed as core values in the school curriculum and expressed as the Twelve Pillars in the public service system. Malaysia articulated and implemented a series of policy initiatives fostering such values as leadership by example, competence, honesty, accountability. Vision 2020 became Malaysia's most important long-term agenda to build the country to become a developed nation based on its own definition of progress and cherishing its own indigenous values[50,51].

The education system, through its curriculum, ensures that the values cherished by the society, although defined by the elites, are disseminated widely and coherently. The values so disseminated through the education system are reinforced by the agencies of government and other societal mechanisms. Likewise, the education system reinforces the values that are expressed in the public sector and in the society at large. In all aspects of Malaysian life attempts are made to identify indigenous values which are cherished by the people. These values are then elaborated, particularly through the speeches of national leaders in all types of leadership roles. When crucial and necessary, these various values are articulated as policies, for instance, Malaysia Incorporated and Privatization Policies, the Look East Policy or the policy of a Caring Civil Society[52].

In order to consolidate the central ideas of the educational vision and relate these to Vision 2020 and the national development agenda, a plethora of ideas are analysed and made popular parlance among educators nationwide. Such ideas include:

- technical rationality and reflective rationality;
- paradigm shifts;
- reinventing;
- re-engineering;
- restructuring;
- recreating the educational enterprise;
- educating for the borderless world, privacy;
- leadership, rights and privileges;
- worldview, gender patriarchal/ matrilineal;

- social class; and
- stages of development.

The substance of indigenous thought and aspiration is at the stage of policy articulation and elaboration. Much work has to be done to formulate and develop valid and authentic local concepts, metaphors and examples with anecdotes and documented cases.

Values in educational administration: awakening the indigenous quest for meaning

In exploring the philosophic contributions to educational administration, Willower discussed the three areas of ideas and methods of educational administration, communication and verification within the field and values and the normative side of educational administration. In the practice of educational administration values, perceptions and reality come together. Practitioners continuously choose among competing and contending values to make decisions for action to achieve particular goals. Willower explains that:

A conception of values that would abet advancement in educational administration should have two main characteristics. First, it should furnish broad visions of what human beings and schools might become at their best. Second, it should speak realistically to the problem of concrete moral choice that is such a salient feature of administrative life... Visions and ideals can inspire, confer a sense of direction, and motivate action. They are necessary, but by themselves they are not sufficient for a conception of values that would further advancement in educational administration. Whether we are talking about schools or nations, solutions to the ethical issues of modern times require more than vision and more even than good intentions... The reason for this is the complex contexts of moral choices and the difficulties of implementing those choices[53].

A framework for the analysis of values in any given polity or cultural context can be a useful guide to differentiate experience and meaning regarding change and continuity, the universal from the parochial, the sacred from the secular, and operational. The theoretical model provided by Lipham and Hoeh, explains the foundational principles in US education derived from sacred values[54]. The relatively stable and basic ideals and beliefs include democracy, individualism, equality and human perfectibility.

These core values receive expression in constitutional and charter provisions, laws and ordinances, judicial decisions and interpretations by the courts, and executive decisions in the form of orders, board and administrative regulations. The model also describes the shifts in secular values in US culture, from traditional to emergent to post-emergent. Hence, in the 1960s, for instance, hard-work achievement ethic is seen to have given way to antimaterialistic ethic of sociability, and the traditional orientation of self-denial and delayed gratification is seen to be replaced by present-time ethic of self-indulgence.

Using a similar framework it is possible to analyse the sacred, core and operational values in a particular indigenous context and make sense of why people make their peculiaristic decisions in the educational context. In terms of the notion of "accountability", political and educational decision makers in

Malaysia make it compulsory for every student to obtain a pass in Islamic religious knowledge in the public examinations because of the sacred value that they hold regarding their sense of “accountability” to God[55]. However the decision is viewed from a different cultural or contextual perspective, the reality is that in the Malaysian polity teachers, administrators, parents and students will focus their energies and resources to ensure that students acquire the knowledge considered worth knowing within that culture.

An example of cross-cultural relevance of management ideas is when William G. Ouchi’s ideas of Theory Z were received positively and US companies began “drawing upon but not mimicking the Japanese success”[56] (see also [57]). In the education context, the goals of establishing “quality education” are seen in terms of the school improvement and effective schools agenda[58]. Hopkins acknowledges that:

There is, of course, a great deal of similarity between the notions of effective schools and school improvement. The effective schools literature, is, as seen above, concerned to develop criteria that characterize the effective school. The school improvement studies, however, tend to be action and developmentally-oriented. They embody the long-term goal of moving towards the vision of “problem solving” or “thinking” or “relatively autonomous” school and are committed to promoting and evaluating school improvement strategies...[59].

The eight “organization” factors identified which characterize effective schools are the following:

- (1) curriculum-focused leadership;
- (2) supportive climate within the school;
- (3) emphasis on curriculum and teaching;
- (4) clear goals and high expectations for students;
- (5) a system for monitoring performance and achievement;
- (6) ongoing staff development and in-service training;
- (7) parental involvement and support; and
- (8) local education authority support.

The four additional factors which “infuse meaning and life into the process of improvement within the school” include the following:

- (1) a feel for the process of leadership;
- (2) a guiding value system;
- (3) intense interaction and communication; and
- (4) collaborative planning and implementation.

What are the country and system specific experiences in the building of the corpus of relevant scientific knowledge? Are there any cognitive dissonances or cultural or intellectual hiatus and research findings gaps in the processes of knowledge transfers?

The International School Improvement Project (ISIP) is an example of international collaboration which fosters cross-cultural transfers and definitions of the “universally” relevant cultural and contextual factors providing cross-cultural insights into our understanding of the multi-dimensional and multidisciplinary nature of educational administration. Evidently those who benefit most from the ISIP were those who participated.

They became aware of their own cultural limits and boundaries and how difficult it is to understand, or accept the reasons why another country is doing something different. They also became aware of the limits of their own solutions. The questioning of their solutions by other ISIP people was the beginning of deeper insights into the dynamics of their own situation. Sometimes, it resulted in a change of approach, theory or concept. It always resulted in an enrichment of our own experience[59, p. 181].

In reflecting on the utilization of school effectiveness knowledge, Hopkins notes that knowledge is of little consequence if it does not influence practitioners or policy makers. To be of consequence such knowledge should have characteristics such as craft legitimization, compatibility, accessibility, observability/imagery, adaptability and inspiration. Key conditions deemed necessary before a user can take some action congruent with the knowledge include, the following: clarity, relevance, action images, will and skill. It seems clear that the acquisition of cognitive structures would enhance deeper understanding and may enliven insights from existing cognitive structures. These new cognitive structures which are elicited from the research literature may foster a professional language of educational administration which cuts across disciplinary, cultural and contextual boundaries[60].

The discourse on the theory and practice of educational administration does not seem to be widely and deeply enriched by contributions from cultures outside the Greco-Roman, Christian, Western intellectual traditions. This may be because there is a dearth of contributions from other traditions, or because there are no translations of such works into English or less likely, because such works are deliberately ignored because of the intellectual cultural distance. As there are schools and educational systems in all countries and communities, there are people who engage daily in making decisional choices in educational policies, administration and all kinds of processes. Most of these people may be exemplary or poor educational leaders without engaging in or taking philosophical positions regarding theory or practice. Most would go on meeting their daily challenges without recourse to intellectual or practical critical theory, phenomenology and without having any conscious allegiance to any viewpoints.

Three major incompatible viewpoints have been suggested by Burlingame. These are: the behavioural science viewpoint, the symbolic viewpoint and the critical viewpoint. Each of these viewpoints has its own disciples, making claims about the nature of knowledge, the relation between knowledge and practice and the nature of practice. Because of the complexity of the enterprise of educational management, and the eclectic orientation of educational practitioners, Burlingame suggests the field of educational administration can

be enriched, “if we continue to vex our peers from a viewpoint, if we take seriously the role of stories for practitioners, and if we acknowledge the value of stories for resolving conflict in practice”[61].

One of the ways of vexing our peers and understanding the richness of stories and metaphors is by paying attention to indigenous perspectives with their as yet unexplored theories, methodologies, stories and viewpoints. Each community has its own version of worthwhile knowledge and educative activities shared formally for over 15,000 hours[62,63]. Each parent, student, teacher and administrator has his/her own story to tell regarding schooling in their own indigenous context. The challenge for the scholar is to make sense of all these stories with their particularistic meanings, whether assigned or inherent and elicit “universal” principles, insights and instruction. Brieschke’s study, for instance, demonstrates clearly how fiction and the interpretation of literature can be a form of critical inquiry into administrative processes[64]. Bajunid’s contribution illustrates the normative effort in training to not only expand the general knowledge and cultural literacy of administrators but also to foster the development of the reflective practitioner with self-knowledge and knowledge of others and within this framework to foster the creation of high personal culture and indigenous traditions[65,66].

The training of educational administrators: knowledge and indigenous corpus

The training of educational administrators provides important insights regarding the substantive or content knowledge base deemed worthwhile to be mastered by potential or practicing educational administrators. Because staff development is seen as a necessity and not a privilege it becomes a continuous responsibility. While in the area of professional training there is much commonality in the substantive content and competences identified to be mastered, there are differences in focus of the content.

To a great extent, depending on the stage of development of a training institution with its attendant supportive training materials, the training approaches, methodologies and techniques will differ. In a culture where general management and, specifically, educational case studies have not been written, the case study method will be absent in the training. Also, if there are no relevant literary works related to education or educational administration, it is unlikely that innovative and interesting approaches in using fiction to analyse the administrative dilemma will be used. For instance, one country specific indigenous model of training in educational administration is explained by McLean[67].

Rofitah Hashim and Harold Boles provide a process model of the development of educational administrators[68]. Mulford’s contribution focuses on the learners, the setting and the content in the training of educational administrators[69]. Bajunid explains the indigenous focus of training based both on formal needs assessment studies and the normative notional curriculum developed as prescribed by the educational leaders. The training

curriculum focuses on the newly formulated statement of the Malaysian philosophy of education, the country's Vision 2020, the Educational Vision, the Public Service Administrative Modernization and Development Circulars[70] (see also [71]).

Andrew E. Dubin notes that the primary concern in most leadership or administrative programmes appears to be in the area of cognition. The more generic areas of concentration include leadership theory, curriculum frameworks analyses, instructional practices, planning and evaluation, observational techniques, computer work, research designs, personnel administration, state law and financial planning. The suggested change in training component process is to obtain the "genuine commitment of on-site administrators to work more closely with these practical candidates", and to use more videotaping to assist both the intellectual and experiential arena of administrative development[72].

An indigenous perspective in the training and certification of educational administrators is the case of Texas when, from 1987 all Texans wishing certification as principals, supervisors or superintendents must pass the Examination for Certification of Educators in Texas (ExCET). Subareas for the test include: foundations of education, organizational management, personnel management, curriculum, programme evaluation, educational governance, school community relations, student affairs and service and instructional management. The ExCET reflects many of the training programmes offered by universities across America and Commonwealth countries. Common programmes include: the common core courses in organizational theory, school finance, leadership, staff personnel, school law, curriculum and instruction, public relations, school community relations, programme evaluation, psychology, business management, demographics and collective bargaining[73].

In sum, the courses for the professional development of administrators are designed to create general administrative competence, in administration and practice, curriculum design, instructional management, school and education laws, programme evaluation and the administration of special and compensatory programmes. To improve education administration preparation Coleman and Achilles suggest that attention be given in professional development and training programmes to the following areas: general knowledge, education knowledge and administrative skill[74]. Debra Allcock suggests that administration skills cover 16 skills as follows: effective communication, assertiveness, customer care, working with management, handling appraisal, career development, time management, managing stress, project administration, coping with change, decision making and problem solving, balancing home and work, understanding basic finance, information technology and its impact on support staff, health and safety, setting up conferences and, meetings and exhibitions[75].

The changes facing managers and educational managers are significant and broad-ranging, affecting technology, organizations, individuals, society, governments, consumers and markets. The list of skills required for the new

world is daunting. Representative management competences include: information search; environmental scanning; conceptual flexibility – considering alternatives simultaneously; interpersonal search – exploring and understanding others’ viewpoints; managing interaction – involving others, building teams; and developmental orientation – helping others develop. The list of skills and competences central to management jobs require managers (including educational managers) to: manage on an international scale; manage cultural diversity; respond to multiple sources of authority; combine a variety of leadership and team roles, act strategically; utilize technology; communicate internally; communicate externally; establish; reinforce and develop values; act responsibly; distill complex flows of information; manage across functions; manage their own careers, as well as personal and professional development. John Weeks provides the experiential insights pertaining to the different stages and phases of development of various countries with their attendant issues and challenges. Weeks stresses that the needs of people and countries vary widely and that “there is no one method or theory that will provide the answers to these varied needs...”[76]. Anne Douglas notes that:

The western model may provide an ideal for organizational development, and its clinical use may help less developed countries (L.D.C.s) achieve goals they have set for themselves, but the model rests on certain normative assumptions about society, man, motivation and time not found in non-western societies...[77, p. 389].

In terms of personal loyalty, a member of a L.D.C. will be more likely to feel greater commitment to his or her superior than the organization which may remain an abstraction. Lack of loyalty is one impediment to the successful implementation of the participatory model in a L.D.C. where loyalty is traditionally directed towards personal goals, family, friends and cliques, in other words to small groups. In a developed country, the advantage of an organic model lies in the loyalty to the organization the model makes possible, not only formally, but more importantly through informal groups...[77, p. 374].

Anne Douglas further observes that:

Each country has a unique value system which is relevant to it alone; this places a premium on administrators who understand and accept the indigenous value system... It is nearly impossible to transfer cultural values without provoking inconsistencies in the environment into which they are introduced...[77, p. 375].

Trompenaars[29] suggests that:

Every culture distinguishes itself from others by the specific solutions it chooses to certain problems. It is convenient to look at these problems under three headings: those which arise from our relationships with other people; those which come from the passage of time; and those which relate to the environment. From the solutions different cultures have chosen to these universal problems, we can further identify seven fundamental dimensions of culture.

The seven dimensions of culture identified are:

- (1) universalism versus particularism;
- (2) individualism versus collectivism;
- (3) neutral or emotional;
- (4) specific versus diffuse;

- (5) achievement versus ascription;
- (6) attitudes to time; and
- (7) attitudes to the environment.

Hofstede notes that national cultures differ at least on the four criteria of power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism and masculinity-femininity[78-80]. Traditional status and authority bases also contribute to other differences in conceptual and operational definitions of participation, specialization and motivation. On another level, there are differences in epistemological, ontological and axiomatic definitions and explanations of educational metaphors[81].

Even within the intellectual and ideological traditions of Western society itself there are different assumptions regarding the nature of man and society[82]. In terms of training methodology, while training approaches and methods may seem “hygienic” or “clinical”, there are, nevertheless, cultural and religious assumptions.

Among Islamic workers engaged in training, distinctions are made over the notions of education, knowledge, pastoral care by such conceptualizations as “*fitrah*”, (*tarbiyah*, *ta’lim*, *ta’dib*, *iryshad*)[83]. While these concepts are indigenous, they are also civilizational in that they are derived from the Islamic educational and intellectual tradition. Every Islamic trainer is trained to take note of the “four distinct and concurrent levels of enlightened awareness. The first one is known as the ‘alam al ghayb’, the world of the unseen; the other three are ‘alam al shahadah’, the witnessed world”.

The *alam shahadah* include the universal, international and local levels. For the Islamic trainer and administrator the Faith must not vary with time and place but remain constant for all times and places. The Unseen is defined as belief in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, the Day of Judgement, and the divine Decree. The universe, including the cosmos, is for humans to use and derive benefits therefrom for man is the steward, the *khalifah*. The international is that borderless unbounded global entity where the *umma* is obligated to defend the truth and stand against falsehood everywhere. All Muslims are expected to possess common knowledge of the Unseen, Universal and International because these knowledge are “constants” for all in all places and for all times and generations.

The local level, however, is different. Knowledge of the local level is specific and variable for each country and its individuals. Muslims, and specifically educational administrators, are expected to solve the local educational problems according to the realities, readiness and capacities of the local situation, while being certain of the absolute frame of reference, specifically, the Quran and the Hadith/Sunnah and awareness of the Unseen, the Universal and the International[84].

Regardless of the distinction between managers and leaders, leadership in education continues to be one of the important areas of concern in the training of educators, especially those who are going to influence policymaking and

leading educational systems and institutions at all levels. Leadership thinking has moved into nine basic theories, namely, great man theory, trait theory, power and influence theory, behaviourist theory, situational theory, contingency theory, transactional theory, attribution theory transformational theory[85]. How these theories translate into all contexts of educational leadership is not fully understood by scholars or practitioners although much work has been done in this area[44]. As management thinkers explore the idea of leadership, they also explore the meaning and reality of organizations[86-88]. In the past, Halpin, and today other scholars on educational management, continue to explore and understand educational organizations, theoretical and applied problems of individuals and structure of social relations and of the challenges of training and educational organizations as distinction from the idea of the learning organizations[89] (see also [90]). Scholars continue to investigate the phenomena of leadership and the key characteristics of effective schools. There is the consensus that the school leaders are the single most important people who can influence the academic and other achievements of the school. While the "universalities" of characteristics of effective schools are widely acknowledged, there are, of course, "particularities" which are culture specific which relate to the cultural traditions, history and stage of development of the system of education in a particular national context.

Although the development of the idea of total quality began in the USA at the turn of the century it was not until the 1980s that total quality management became highly regarded by all kinds of organizations. Among the individuals recognized as the quality gurus are Frederick W. Taylor, Walter A. Shewhart, W. Edward Deming, Joseph M. Juran, Philip B. Crosby and Armand V. Feigenbaum. Although the approaches of the gurus differ in technique, emphasis and application, their objective is the same[91]. They promote continuous improvement of every output where product or service encourage customer focus, process improvement and total involvement (see also [92]). Total quality management in education manifested itself earlier through the quality control circles and is currently transformed and moving, in some cases, towards acquiring ISO 9000 certification[93]. Whether the interest is a "fad" is yet to be seen. With the forces of globalization, internationalization and competition, there is a trend to achieve world standards[94]. This aspiration for "world class standards" is casting new meaning towards the indigenization efforts. It is likely that such world standards criteria will be tempered and coloured by unique national and cultural local nuances. This unfolding of evolving national and international realities could provide interesting and exciting opportunities for further in-depth research regarding educational administration and management. Wiarda sums up this phenomena aptly by the following observation:

With the decline of western hegemony and the pretension to universalism of the intellectual constructs that are part and parcel of it, and concomitantly with the rise and new assertiveness of various non-western and Third World areas, has also come the demand for local, indigenous models of development. The critique of the Western model as particularistic,

parochial, Eurocentric, considerably less than universal, and hopelessly biased, as not only perpetuating our lack of understanding regarding these areas but also of wreaking downright harm upon them, seems devastating, persuasive, and perhaps, unchallengeable. The question is no longer whether the western model applies or whether it is salvageable but what is the precise nature of the models that have risen to take its place and whether these new models are functional and viable in terms of the Third World areas from which they are emerging[95].

These issues would seem to represent the next great frontier in the social sciences. Shorn of its romantic and nostalgic aspects, unfettered by the class or partisan biases that sometimes surround it, incorporating both national currents and international ones, taking account of practical realities, and not just intellectual constructs, cognizant of both the mixed sentiments of the local elites and the diversities of the societies studied – or at least recognizing these when they do occur the notion of a nonethnocentric theory of development is now on the front burner. The study of such local, indigenous, native cultural traditions and models...may well be the wave of the future for the social sciences[95, pp. 59-60].

That there is a need to develop indigenous perspectives in understanding various socio-cultural and psychological phenomena is obvious. To develop deep understanding there is the necessity to extricate the fundamental issues from the extraneous or peripheral issues. The fundamental issues are issues of epistemology, ontology and axiology and uniquely indigenous practices and realities. The issues which are not indigenous are those related to disciplinary assumptions and perspectives within a particular scholarly and cultural tradition. There are also issues and phenomena which are “relatively” universal and essentially not problematic in any way. Such issues involve constructs and processes which are agreed as “international standards” and “benchmarks”. Over such matters there should not be the unwitting or deliberate creation of the search for some hidden indigenous elements. To do so would be pretentious and would bring scholarship into non-scholarly domains at the whims and fancy of those who do not value the quest for scholarly truths.

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