



**INFORMAL LEADERSHIP LEARNING
ON THE JOURNEY TO HEADSHIP: A
CASE STUDY OF NATIONAL
PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION FOR
HEADSHIP PARTICIPANTS IN
MALAYSIA**

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Background

- NPQH – National Professional Qualification for Headship (1999) – IAB, MOE
- One year fulltime headship preparatory training programme
- Aims to create effective school leaders
- This study is part of a larger doctoral study
- Now known as NPQEL – National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (5 months – since July 2011)

Context

- Graduates of NPQH are posted back to their positions while waiting for promotion
- Leadership learning continues from the time of graduation to assuming the headship post
- This study looks at the informal leadership learning from the period of graduation to their appointment as school heads
- Qualitative study involving 10 incumbent secondary school principals

Research question

- What are the principals' perceptions of informal leadership learning that has taken place between their graduation from NPQH and their headship, in the following contexts:
 - (i) Professional learning in school;
 - (ii) Professional learning outside of school;
 - (iii) Learning outside of the professional context

Findings...

- 1) **Informal leadership learning in the Professional Setting in school**
 - All 10 principals reported that they learned a great deal.
 - Some learn from emulating the good in their leaders
 - Some observed the negatives, reflected on the negatives and tried avoiding it in their own leadership as heads

...Findings...

- 2) **Informal leadership learning in the Professional Setting outside of school**
 - 8 principals – learning through involvement with various bodies or associations (eg. Senior Assistants Association, PTA)
 - Some learn from emulating the good in their leaders
 - Some observed the negatives, reflected on the negatives and tried avoiding it in their own leadership as heads

...Findings

- 3) Informal leadership learning outside of Professional Setting
 - 7 principals – involved in youth organisations (n=3), local housing and neighbourhood associations (n=3) and NGO (n=1).
 - All of them admitted that their involvement outside the professional setting was limited by the fact that they were already busy with their professional work and could not devote any more time than they already had.

Discussion...

- Findings indicate that informal learning in the school is an important aspect in the development of a future leader.
- However, learning is not only by emulating the practices of superiors but followed the judgment of the respondents who reflected against the repertoire of knowledge they had about effective leadership

...Discussion...

- Learning in the professional setting outside of school seems to be derived by experiencing a more active role in the professional bodies.
- This gave them the opportunity to lead and learn directly from their own experiences.
- Study found that respondents did not acquire much leadership learning outside the professional setting – not active due to lack of time

Implication of study

- This study recommends that the NPQH course should incorporate learning from the formal course as well as learning on the job at the participants' workplace.
- Blended learning approach is the way forward
- Formalising informal leadership learning
- Give graduates opportunity to hold a senior management post before their headship – good opportunity for leadership learning

THANK YOU

Singh, G.S.B. (2018). Informal Leadership Learning on the Journey to Headship: A Case Study of National Professional Qualification for Headship Participants in Malaysia. *Pertanika J. Soc. Sci. & Hum.* 26 (2): 1215 – 1226.