FCACMs: An Appraisal of Four Management Models Among Educational Leaders in Malaysia

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Abstract: **Efficient and proactive leadership within educational institutions is paramount for enhancing employee satisfaction, productivity, and alignment with the educational objectives of Malaysian schools. This study delves into four foundational theoretical management models—formal, collegial, ambiguity, and cultural (FCACMs)— that significantly influence educational leadership. The formal model emphasises hierarchical structures and clearly defined performance indicators, fostering motivation and collaboration through explicit delineation of roles and responsibilities. Conversely, the collegial model emphasises collaborative decision-making and shared accountability, empowering educators and reinforcing their professional dedication. The ambiguity model advocates for adaptable leadership styles in educational environments to effectively navigate uncertainties with agility. Simultaneously, the cultural model underscores the importance of shared values and norms in harmonising staff behaviours with the institution's mission, thereby enhancing team performance. Educational leaders can adopt a holistic and adaptable approach by integrating FCACMs, harnessing the unique strengths of each model to tackle a diverse array of challenges. This integrated strategy cultivates a cohesive, forward-looking, and inclusive school environment, ultimately boosting employee motivation, team efficacy, and student success.**

Keywords: **ambiguity model, collegial model, cultural model, formal model, FCACMs, leadership dynamics, management models.**

I. OVERVIEW

Educational leaders' task in schools is to effectively inspire employees and improve the team's overall performance (Day *et al*., 2016). Murphy (2020) asserts that leadership plays a crucial role in creating and executing performance appraisal systems in organisations that work in teams. This paper examines four management models, or FCACMs, including the formal model, the collegial model, the ambiguity model, and the cultural model, that can guide educational leaders in addressing this challenge in Malaysia. The formal model highlights the hierarchical arrangement of the organisation, in which the school principal or administrator possesses formal authority and is accountable for establishing explicit goals, policies, and procedures (Mincu, 2024). The model described by Maisyaroh *et al*. (2019) can enhance employee motivation and promote team unity by establishing clear roles and expectations. On the other hand, the Collegial Model prioritises collective decision-making and cooperation among school administrators, educators, and other personnel (Hallinger, 2003). This model acknowledges the proficiency and independence of teachers, motivating them to assume responsibility for their work and make valuable contributions to the overall achievement of the school in Malaysia. The Ambiguity Model recognises the intricate and uncertain nature of educational organisations, where objectives may lack clarity and decision-making processes are frequently ambiguous (Hallinger, 2011). Within this particular framework, educational leaders must possess the skill to effectively navigate uncertain situations, adjust their leadership approach

according to the circumstances, and encourage employees to proactively take action (Maisyaroh *et al*., 2019). Finally, the Cultural Model emphasises the significance of collective values, beliefs, and norms within the school community (Hallinger, 2011). Through the cultivation of a robust organisational culture, educational leaders have the ability to synchronise employee actions with the school's mission and vision, thereby augmenting team performance (Khan *et al*., 2020). Each of these FCACMs provides a distinct viewpoint on how educational leaders can inspire employees and enhance team performance. The model selection will depend on the school's specific circumstances and requirements, as well as the educational leader's leadership approach and competencies in Malaysia. Competent leaders must possess the ability to evaluate the merits and shortcomings of each model and adjust their approach accordingly (Bolden, 2003).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An extensive secondary research analysis of the formal model, collegial model, ambiguity model, and cultural model, or FCACMs, has provided valuable insights into the intricate relationship between leadership. This thorough analysis has not only enhanced understanding of the ambiguity model, collegial model, cultural model, and formal model but also highlighted the complex nature of educational leadership management models. This literature review examines four prominent models of educational leadership management (FCACMs): formal, collegial, ambiguity, and cultural, emphasizing their distinct contributions and the complex nature of leadership in educational contexts. The formal model, which prioritises hierarchical structures and well-defined roles, fosters stability and accountability but may hinder innovation. The collegial model promotes collaboration and shared decision-making, which improves professional engagement while necessitating trust and communication at elevated levels. The ambiguity model promotes flexible and adaptive leadership in education, acknowledging the intricacies and uncertainties of the field. It encourages innovation but also requires a willingness to accept ambiguity and take risks. The cultural model emphasises the importance of common values and norms in order to align the behaviour of staff members with the mission of the institution, ultimately improving team performance. However, managing this model can be difficult in diverse environments. By integrating FCACMs, educational leaders can adopt a comprehensive and adaptable approach that utilises the strengths of each model to address various challenges. This fosters a cohesive, innovative, and inclusive school environment that promotes continuous improvement and student achievement.

III. METHODOLOGY

The conceptual paper's primary goal was to conduct a literature review of previous studies on the formal model, collegial model, ambiguity model, and cultural model (FCACMs) and their relationship to leadership among Malaysian educational leaders. The study encompassed the systematic examination of diverse databases, such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ResearchGate. The primary search terms included "ambiguity model," "collegial model," "cultural model," "formal model," "FCACMs," and "leadership management models."

IV. MANAGEMENT MODELS

The four management models provide educational leaders in Malaysia with a variety of strategies to inspire employees and enhance team productivity. The formal model stands out due to its hierarchical structure and reliance on rules, which create a stable environment by clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes. Consequently, it enhances both motivation and performance. The collegial model emphasizes the importance of making decisions collectively and working together, acknowledging teachers' knowledge and independence while fostering a sense of shared responsibility and ownership. The ambiguity model addresses the complex and unpredictable nature of educational organisations, requiring leaders to skilfully handle uncertainty and foster proactive employee initiative, thereby encouraging creativity and adaptability. The cultural model highlights the significance of shared values and norms to ensure that employee behaviours are in line with the school's mission and vision, thereby improving performance. By understanding the benefits and limitations of each model, educational leaders can adapt their strategies to meet the specific needs of their schools, fostering a more involved and successful staff. In order to achieve effective educational leadership in Malaysia, it is essential to adopt a sophisticated and adaptable strategy that integrates the formal, collegial, ambiguous, and cultural models. This approach aims to motivate employees, enhance performance, and promote continuous improvement and student achievement. The subsequent section will provide a more detailed explanation of these components.

A. The Formal Model

The formal model highlights the hierarchical arrangement of the organisation, in which the school principal or administrator possesses formal authority and is accountable for establishing explicit goals, policies, and procedures (Mincu, 2024; Bryant & Walker. 2024). By establishing distinct responsibilities and explicit performance standards, this framework has the potential to enhance employee motivation and promote harmonious collaboration among team members (Luria & Berson, 2013). Within the formal model, the Malaysian school principal assumes a pivotal role in establishing the organization's trajectory and ensuring that all staff members are actively pursuing shared objectives. The top-down approach is highly effective in situations that require quick decision-making or when the organisation is under significant external pressures. A precise demarcation of authority and responsibility distinguishes the formal model. The principal, or school administrator, possesses the supreme authority to make decisions and establish the strategic course for the school (Fathurrochman *et al.*, 2021). This model is highly dependent on well-established policies and procedures, which serve as a structure for making consistent decisions and achieving operational efficiency. Establishing clear expectations, monitoring performance, and ensuring staff accountability for their duties are all part of the principal's role. An important benefit of the formal model is its capacity to establish a stable and predictable environment. The model can effectively mitigate ambiguity by establishing clear roles and responsibilities, the model can effectively mitigate ambiguity and ensure a comprehensive understanding among staff members regarding their duties and the impact of their work on the school's objectives. Enhancing job satisfaction and motivation, clarity provides employees with a distinct sense of purpose and direction (Ahmed *et al.*, 2022). Nevertheless, the formal model does possess certain limitations. It has the potential to result in an inflexible and hierarchical organisational framework, which could impede creativity and innovation. Strict rules and procedures can limit employees' autonomy and decrease their motivation. Furthermore, employees may become disengaged and resist change if they perceive the principal's decisions as excessively autocratic or disconnected from the practical aspects of daily operations. The model may encounter difficulties in adjusting to the ever-changing and intricate characteristics of educational organisations, where the ability to be flexible and adaptable is often crucial for achieving success (Boylan & Turner, 2017).

B. The Collegial Model

Esterhazy *et al*. (2023) assert that the collegial model refers to a specific approach or framework that emphasises collaboration and equal participation among individuals within a group or organization. The collegial model prioritises collective decision-making and cooperation among school administrators, educators, and other personnel. This model acknowledges the proficiency and independence of teachers, motivating them to assume responsibility for their work and make valuable contributions to the overall achievement of the school. The collegial model involves educational leaders actively cultivating an environment characterised by trust, transparent communication, and shared accountability. Adopting this collaborative approach can enhance employee motivation by giving teachers the authority to influence the school's trajectory and contribute their distinct abilities and viewpoints. The collegial leadership model involves the distribution of leadership responsibilities among multiple stakeholders, such as teachers, administrators, and occasionally even students and parents. Decision-making is a collaborative process that involves soliciting input and feedback from all members of the school community (Musengamana *et al*., 2024). Adopting this all-encompassing strategy can lead to the development of more innovative solutions and a greater sense of responsibility and dedication among employees. The collegial model is most successful in schools that have a well-established culture of teacher leadership and a collective dedication to the school's mission. According to Nguyen & Ng (2022), it can cultivate a feeling of community and cooperation as teachers collaborate to accomplish shared objectives. By incorporating teachers into decision-making processes, the model can additionally improve professional development and foster the exchange of exemplary methods. However, the collegial model encounters obstacles. While establishing a high level of trust and open communication among staff is necessary, achieving it may not always be possible. The process of making decisions can be time-consuming and intricate, especially in large educational institutions with a diverse group of staff members (Freeman *et al.*, 2021). Consensus-driven decision-making carries the potential for compromises that may not adequately meet the needs of all stakeholders. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the collegial model presents a valuable strategy for schools aiming to utilise the combined expertise and dedication of their staff.

C. The Ambiguity Model

The ambiguity model recognises the intricate and uncertain nature of educational organisations, where objectives may lack clarity and decision-making procedures are frequently ambiguous (Levinthal & Rerup, 2021). Within this particular framework, educational leaders must possess the skill to effectively navigate uncertain or unclear situations, adjust their leadership approach according to the circumstances, and empower their employees to independently take action (Taylor *et al*., 2021). The ambiguity model acknowledges that in the dynamic and constantly evolving realm of education, leaders cannot depend on a solitary approach to inspire employees and enhance team performance. Instead, individuals must demonstrate a willingness to engage in experimentation, derive knowledge from their errors, and consistently adapt their approaches in response to the changing requirements of the school community (Bishara, 2019). The ambiguity model underscores the significance of flexibility and adaptability in leadership. Educational leaders must possess a high level of adaptability and the ability to make informed decisions even when faced with limited or contradictory information (Tran & Nghia, 2020). This necessitates a profound level of situational consciousness, as well as the ability to comprehend and react to changing circumstances. Leaders must also foster a culture of experimentation and learning, viewing errors as opportunities for growth and improvement. According to King & Zeithaml (2001), an advantage of the ambiguity model lies in its capacity to cultivate innovation and creativity. Leaders can foster an environment that values new ideas and approaches by embracing uncertainty and empowering employees to take initiative. This can result in enhanced problem-solving capabilities and an increased ability to address new challenges. The model is especially suitable for schools experiencing substantial changes or confronting intricate challenges, where conventional hierarchical approaches may prove ineffective. Nevertheless, the ambiguity model does have certain constraints. Staff members must possess a considerable amount of trust and confidence, along with a readiness to accept and take on risks and uncertainties. Some employees may not like this approach, which could lead to confusion and a lack of guidance. Leaders must possess the ability to effectively manage the delicate equilibrium between the requirement for adaptability and the requirement for well-defined objectives and expectations. Although there are difficulties, the ambiguity model provides a valuable structure for schools that want to navigate the intricacies and uncertainties of the educational environment (Myburgh, 2021).

D. The Cultural Model

The Cultural Model emphasises the significance of collective values, beliefs, and norms within the school community (Lubis & Hanum, 2020). Educational leaders can synchronize employee actions with the school's mission and vision by cultivating a robust organizational culture, thereby improving overall team performance. Within the cultural model, leaders strive to foster a collective understanding of purpose and identity among employees, thereby establishing a profound sense of affiliation and dedication to the school's mission. This entails the creation of common rituals, symbols, and language, along with the active promotion of the school's values and traditions. The Cultural Model highlights the significance of culture in influencing behaviour and performance (Chwialkowska *et al*., 2020). Educational leaders must possess the ability to effectively construct and maintain a favourable organisational culture that mirrors the values and objectives of the school. This can encompass a variety of tactics, ranging from formulating and conveying a distinct vision and mission to facilitating chances for employees to engage and cooperate. Leaders must also possess the ability to identify and resolve cultural issues that may emerge, such as clashes or discrepancies between personal and corporate principles. An advantage of the cultural model is its capacity to access the inherent motivations of employees (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022). Leaders can cultivate a sense of ownership and pride in their employees' work by ensuring that their behaviours align with the school's cultural norms. This can result in elevated levels of job satisfaction, engagement, and performance. The model is particularly effective in schools that are characterised by a strong sense of community and a collective commitment to student achievement. Nevertheless, the cultural model encounters obstacles. One must possess a profound comprehension of the school's culture and the capacity to exert influence and mould it in constructive manners. Managing this can pose a significant challenge in educational institutions that have a heterogeneous staff and student body, as there may be divergent values and perspectives. Leaders must possess the ability to effectively manage these disparities and construct a unified and all-encompassing environment (Williams, 2022). Furthermore, the cultural model may face difficulties adjusting to the requirement for swift change or innovation that may not correspond with the school's current cultural norms and traditions. In such instances, educational leaders must skillfully manage the conflicts between upholding a robust organisational culture and promoting the adaptability and receptiveness necessary to effectively address changing circumstances.

V. INTEGRATING MODELS FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Each of the four models possesses distinct strengths and perspectives, contributing to effective educational leadership in the Malaysian educational field. Frequently, an integrative approach is necessary, which involves combining elements from various models. Due to the intricate and varied nature of educational settings, it is not possible for one specific model to effectively tackle all the difficulties and possibilities that leaders may encounter. By leveraging the unique capabilities of each model, educational leaders can cultivate a more all-encompassing and adaptable approach to leadership. For instance, a principal could utilise the formal model to establish unambiguous policies and procedures that create a stable framework for the school. Simultaneously, they could integrate components of the Collegial Model by engaging teachers in decision-making processes and cultivating a culture of collaboration (Patrick, 2022). During times of uncertainty or change, the principal may employ tactics derived from the Ambiguity Model, which promote experimentation and the acquisition of knowledge. Ultimately, by placing a strong emphasis on the values and norms of the school community, they can utilise the cultural model to establish a robust sense of identity and dedication among the staff. The successful implementation of this integrative approach necessitates that the leader possess a significant level of self-awareness and adaptability. In order to effectively address the needs of their school, educators must possess the ability to evaluate and analyse the specific requirements and circumstances, and then choose the most suitable strategies and models accordingly (Munna & Kalam, 2021). This may require transitioning between various models as conditions evolve or integrating components from multiple models to develop a customised approach.

VI. CONCLUSION

To summarize, the four models (FCACMs) provide educational leaders with a variety of strategies to inspire employees and enhance team effectiveness in the Malaysian educational context. The formal model prioritises a hierarchical and rule-based methodology, which can establish a stable and predictable environment, particularly in extensive and intricate educational institutions. This model posits that through the establishment of clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes, educational leaders can cultivate employee motivation and enhance team performance by implementing consistent policies and procedures. The collegial model prioritises collective decision-making and cooperation, acknowledging teachers' knowledge and independence and motivating them to assume responsibility for their tasks and contribute to the school's overall achievement (Kilag *et al*., 2023). This model appreciates the contributions of all members of the school community and encourages a culture of shared responsibility and collective ownership. The ambiguity model recognises the intricate and uncertain nature of educational organisations, where objectives may lack clarity and decision-making procedures are frequently ambiguous. This model necessitates educational leaders who possess the skill to effectively navigate uncertain situations and empower their employees to proactively take action, thereby cultivating a culture that encourages creativity and flexibility. The cultural model emphasises the significance of collective values, beliefs, and norms within the school community. This enables educational leaders to synchronise employee behaviours with the school's mission and vision, thereby improving team performance. By understanding the advantages and constraints of each model, educational leaders can modify their approaches to suit the specific requirements and circumstances of their school communities, ultimately fostering a more involved and high-achieving workforce. To summarise, successful educational leadership in Malaysian schools necessitates a sophisticated and adaptable strategy that leverages the advantages of various models. By incorporating components from the formal, collegial, ambiguity, and cultural models, educational leaders can formulate a comprehensive approach to inspire employees and enhance team performance. This comprehensive approach not only addresses the various difficulties and opportunities that schools face, but also promotes a vibrant and all-encompassing school environment that encourages ongoing progress and student achievement.

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