

Transforming Head of Panel Leadership in Malaysian Primary Schools: Strategies and Implications for Educational Effectiveness

Zaliza Md Yasin¹, Dr. Muhammad Faizal A. Ghani^{2*} and Dr. Norfariza Mohd Radzi³

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The transformation of leadership among Heads of Panels (HoPs) in Malaysian primary schools is vital for strengthening educational effectiveness. This study examines leadership succession strategies and their impact on school performance, teacher professional growth and student achievement. In an increasingly dynamic educational landscape, effective HoP leadership catalyzes fostering collaborative learning environments and sustaining academic excellence. A well-designed succession plan ensures leadership continuity, minimizes disruptions in instructional management and promotes sustained capacity building among educators. This study identifies critical factors influencing the transformation of HoP leadership, including targeted training, structured mentorship programs and active stakeholder engagement. The findings reveal that systematic leadership preparation enhances the adaptive capacity of HoPs, equipping them to navigate both pedagogical and administrative challenges more effectively. Moreover, stakeholder involvement particularly from teachers, parents and local communities, fortifies leadership implementation and ensures alignment between educational policies and school-level needs. The study highlights the pressing need for policy interventions to institutionalise leadership development and succession planning in Malaysia's primary education system. By integrating comprehensive leadership training programmes and promoting inclusive school governance, education policymakers can build a sustainable leadership framework that enhances resilience and instructional quality at the school level. This study contributes to the scholarly discourse on educational leadership by emphasising the pivotal role of HoPs in driving school transformation. Future research is encouraged to adopt longitudinal approaches to evaluate the sustained effectiveness of leadership strategies and to promote continuous advancement in leadership practices.

Keywords: Leadership transformation, head of panel, primary school, leadership succession, educational effectiveness.

¹ Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Management Planning and Policy, University of Malaya, Malaysia, zalizayasin@gmail.com

^{2*} Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Management Planning and Policy, University of Malaya, Malaysia, mdfaizal@um.edu.my

³ Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Management Planning and Policy, University of Malaya, Malaysia, norfariza@um.edu.my

1. INTRODUCTION

Educational leadership is an essential element in the improvement of teaching and learning (T&L) especially at the primary school level as it determines both the success of T&L processes, students' achievements and schools development (Bush et al., 2018; Kemethofer et al., 2022; Khalip Musa & Rofidah Mohd Nasir, 2018; Leithwood et al., 2020). In Malaysia, leadership at the primary school level is normally referred to as the principal or headmaster (Adawati Suhaili et al., 2021; Norliza Samad et al., 2022; Sukor Beram et al., 2022). Yet, as school administration becomes ever more complex distributed leadership has become the prevailing approach to school management with Heads of Panels (HoPs) directly assisting in supporting teachers and managing pedagogy and promoting professional learning communities (Edwards-Groves et al., 2016, 2019; Koh, 2018; Thorpe & Tran, 2015; Tournier et al., 2023). Moving up the hierarchy then, HoP is a middle leader (ML) between senior leadership and classroom teachers and are accountable for a more coherent approach in both curriculum delivery and teaching effectiveness (Bennett et al., 2007; Edwards-Groves et al., 2019; Edwards-Groves & Grootenboer, 2021; Grootenboer et al., 2019; Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Kahila et al., 2020; Zaliza Md Yasin et al., 2024). The leadership capacity of HoPs is important to sustain a high-performing education system, but there are very few examples of progress or impact on their development.

One very important part of stable school governance is the ability to plan for leadership succession. Furthermore, an effective leadership transition promotes minimal disruptions and institutional stability which in turn resulted for the continuity of educational reforms (Fusarelli et al., 2018). Yet the process of investing HoPs in Malaysian primary schools is underdeveloped and many educators accede to leadership positions without being prepared for them or provided structured mentorship (Armugam et al., 2019; Fusarelli et al., 2018). Indeed, from the findings of this research professional development programs focusing on HoPs are warranted to develop the core capabilities in leadership such as instruction supervision, teacher mentoring and working collaboratively with stakeholders (Bush, 2008; Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Kim Peng et al., 2020; Tapala, 2019). Without this foundation, it can hinder the ability of HoPs to implement school policies effectively as instructional quality and professional development initiatives may be inconsistent (Norliza Samad et al., 2022). It posits that effective transformation of leadership in the HoP will depend on a more strategic training period, organized career progression and policy nudges to ensure professional development requirements are built into educational systems.

Furthermore, one of the key roles that HoPs play is in pushing school improvement agendas. The available studies suggest that effective middle leadership is associated with increased teacher engagement more favorable student outcomes and enhanced organizational coherence (Esquer, 2022; Highfield et al., 2024; Highfield & Rubie-Davies, 2022). HoPs should not be “policy-police” but operate beyond administration further, to mentoring novice teachers, leading professional learning networks and championing a culture of continuous improvement (Bush, 2023; De Nobile et al., 2024; Héreginé Nagy et al., 2024; Joshua, 2007; Koh, 2018; Tang et al., 2023). This leads to the ambiguity of their roles as HoPs face difficulty in balancing between instructional leadership and administration duties (De Nobile, 2017; Kamrulshahrizat Muhamad Razali & Khalip Musa, 2024; Norliza Samad et al., 2022; Paul Nwati et al., 2020; Sukor Beram et al., 2022). Systemic targeted leadership training and professional learning opportunities for HoPs can enable education authorities to develop and maintain capable HoP instructional leaders, enhancing the overall school leadership capacity.

This study investigates leadership succession in the middle tier of a hierarchical school system in Malaysia and thereby draws implications for instructional leadership to improve educational effectiveness. Based on the examination of authorities in relation to best practice in leadership development and succession planning, this paper offers an insight what should primary schools do

further in Malaysia, as far as leadership is concern, towards sustaining leadership, develop a learning organisational culture therefore increasing performance. The discussion will focus on what it takes for policymakers and education practitioners to work together in support of leadership transformation, including professional development investments, mentoring models and stakeholder buy in. This study has therefore added value to the wider debate on educational leadership by analysing it in a comprehensive manner, focusing particularly on middle level of leadership which constitutes pivotal layer for shaping the future of primary education in Malaysia.

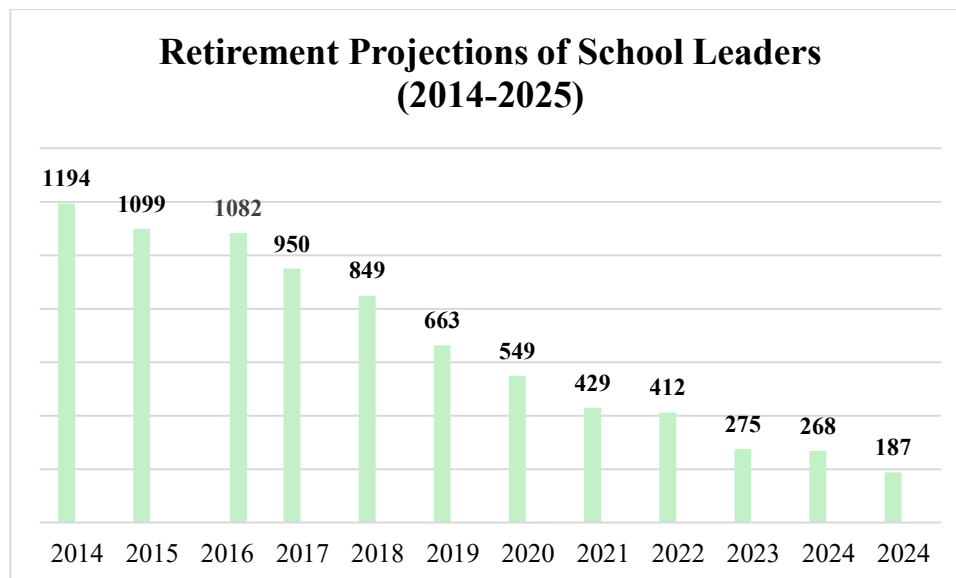
2. THE CRITICAL NEED FOR SUCCESSION PLANNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

Sustainable school governance means that school business is conducted in such a way as to give schools and their educational programs, including leadership succession, stability even when individual personnel may change (Aravena, 2022; Fusarelli et al., 2018; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Ritchie, 2020). Traditionally, succession planning in Malaysia has centred on principals and senior administrators (Roselena Mansor & Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah, 2015). MLs such as HoPs have often been overlooked (Kim Peng et al., 2020; Norliza Samad et al., 2022). Given the expanded roles of HoPs to oversee curriculum implementation, teacher supervision and instructional quality, it is essential that a succession strategy be implemented which prepares them for changes in leadership (Rothwell, 2015).

Moreover, a well-constructed and sustainable system of succession planning for school leaders guarantees continuity, avoids disruptions in the management practices of a school and elevates educational proficiency (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2006). Similar studies indicate that schools taking a proactive stance in leadership succession planning show greater teacher motivation, student outcomes and organizational coherence (Fusarelli et al., 2018; Karen, 2023). Lack of formal leadership pathways can result in uncertainty about roles, poor leader judgment and loss of organizational effect performance (Baker et al., 2019; Linscott, 2011).

In line with this, the Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013–2025 particularly highlights the National Professional Qualification for Educational Leaders (NPQEL), as well as other structured professional development programs that can espouse leadership preparedness in presence of ambitious and customized demands on leaders themselves to support this change (MoE, 2013). The focus of these programs is on pre-service principals, but HoP leadership preparation programmes have yet to be developed in a systemic way (Kavanagh, 2020; Kavanagh et al., 2021; Koh, 2018; Lárusdóttir & O'Connor, 2017; Lipscombe et al., 2021). HoPs act as the instructional leaders of their schools, therefore developing HoP leadership capacity is crucial for systemic educational leadership to be effective and sustainable (Grootenboer, 2018).

Figure 1: Retirement Projections of School Leaders (2014-2025)



Source: Modified The Malaysia Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013–2025

As shown in **Figure 1**, more than 7,957 school leaders in Malaysia will be retiring by 2025 (MoE, 2013). A succession plan to install good leaders is necessary for effective and continued leadership (Roselena Mansor & Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah, 2015). Additionally, this process should consider HoPs to a leadership pipeline, equipped with added responsibilities. Collins (2013), Roselena Mansor and Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah (2015) and Zaliza Md Yasin and Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah (2017), noted that rarity in qualified candidates is a big challenge faced by the modern day leader appointing entities today. Only 55% of school leaders have had any kind of preparation or induction training in their first three years in these roles (MoE, 2013), which is hardly conducive to the challenges that leadership brings. This means that HoPs need bespoke leadership training if they want to progress to leadership roles higher up in their department.

According to Rhodes and Brundrett (2006), a notable number of countries have school leader shortages with the difficulties of leading schools largely affecting Canada, Australia, New Zealand and United States. These challenges, are well documented but overlooked solutions. Hargreaves et al. (2003) similarly argued that insufficient research remains about school systems' planning and management of leadership transitions. This gap raises concerns because strong leadership in schools has been shown to affect student outcomes, teacher effectiveness, and school working conditions (Daniëls et al., 2019; Harris et al., 2019; Robinson et al., 2008; Youngs, 2011).

Yet studies also indicate that the roles of school leaders including HoPs evolve to more complex and demanding level (Adawati Suhaili et al., 2021; Boyce & Bowers, 2016; Ghamrawi, 2010; Koh et al., 2011; Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018) which subsequently causes a decrease would-be HoP candidates (Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018; Zepeda et al., 2012). Given the increasing concern for school leadership quality, it is essential to examine the policies and practices of replacing leaders (Rothwell, 2010) and managing succession capacity effectively (Zepeda et al., 2012). This planning process should include pathways to prepare HoPs for the support they will provide new school leaders. Bassett (2016), Malinga et al. (2021), Ng and Chan (2014), Nurnazahiah Abas and Ramli Basri (2019) as well as Roselena Mansor (2015) also reiterated the option of preparing formal new school leaders should be considered to address some of these adaptation challenges as those potential leadership may improve with systematic preparation programs which will aid in building their knowledge, skills of practice and attributes necessary for effective leadership.

Studies show that effective schools require school leaders to participate in multiple leadership training programs before they take up their posts (Male, 2006; Ng & Szeto, 2016). HoPs should also get such kind of knowledge sharing and trainings so that they are capable to effectively contribute and support lead transition. For example, succession planning regarding school leaders is a necessary condition for delivering quality education and can extend to HoPs (Bush, 2008; Male, 2006; Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018). The changing workforce trends also highlight the importance of succession planning and management for school leaders whose roles have been extended to include more instructional leadership, whilst managing functions continue within school management (Peters-Hawkins et al., 2018; Pounder & Merrill, 2001; Zaliza Md Yasin & Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah, 2017). In particular, they have prioritised HoPs who play a critical role in supporting school leaders to provide continuity of leadership and uphold educational outcomes.

Boyce and Bowers (2016), Fuller and Young (2009) and Rangel (2018) found that low retention rates among school leaders can be attributed to several factors, including accountability pressure, the increasing complexity of the role, lack of support from educational centers and insufficient compensation. Gates et al. (2006) and Wahlstrom et al. (2010) found that schools experience frequent leadership turnover, with a new leader every three to four years on average. This frequent turnover adversely impacts school culture and student achievement. In the United States, the average tenure of school leaders ranges from 3.5 to 5 years (Fuller & Young, 2009; Torres, 2020). Therefore, it is important that organisations have succession planning strategies in place to ensure new leaders are able competent in their new roles and to continue with what the former leaders started (Rothwell, 2010). HoPs have a role to play in this, supporting the transition of leadership and mentoring new school leaders.

Elaborating further on the shortage of school leaders, Collins (2013), Earley (2002), Gunter (2012) and Kaparou and Bush (2015), highlighted that the National College for School Leadership's succession planning strategy in England was crafted to deal with this issue. And this is one that underscores the importance of educational organizations carefully planning and managing how they choose to place people in leadership positions. The diminishing supply of skilled school leaders means the quality and longevity of leadership is critical. Given this, leadership transformation among HoP should be a part of all future leadership succession plans to enable them to help and carry out new educational policies in an effective way.

3. ROTHWELL'S THEORY (2010) AND ITS APPLICATION IN HEAD OF PANEL LEADERSHIP TRANSFORMATION

Effective leadership succession is a critical component in sustaining educational effectiveness, particularly in the context of Malaysian primary schools. Rothwell's Theory (2010) describes three core components of succession planning as forward identification, systematic competency development and ongoing mentoring support. These are the principles to guide transformation in HoP leadership ensures school leadership continues to be adaptive and responsive to educational imperatives.

A systematic framework must underpin any strategic approach HoP leadership succession. There are various key strategies that schools need to be implementing like:

1. **Identify Potential Candidates:** Recognition of top performing educators through performance-based evaluations and leadership assessments that demonstrated strong instructional leadership skills.
2. **Define Training Programs:** Create professional learning systems with targeted leadership competencies, such as conflict resolution, instructional leadership, and advanced teacher evaluation training.
3. **Cadre Networks for Mentorship and Coaching:** Creating a formal cadre mentoring program led by seasoned Heads of Procurement who help educate new or future leaders while passing down lessons learned on leadership.

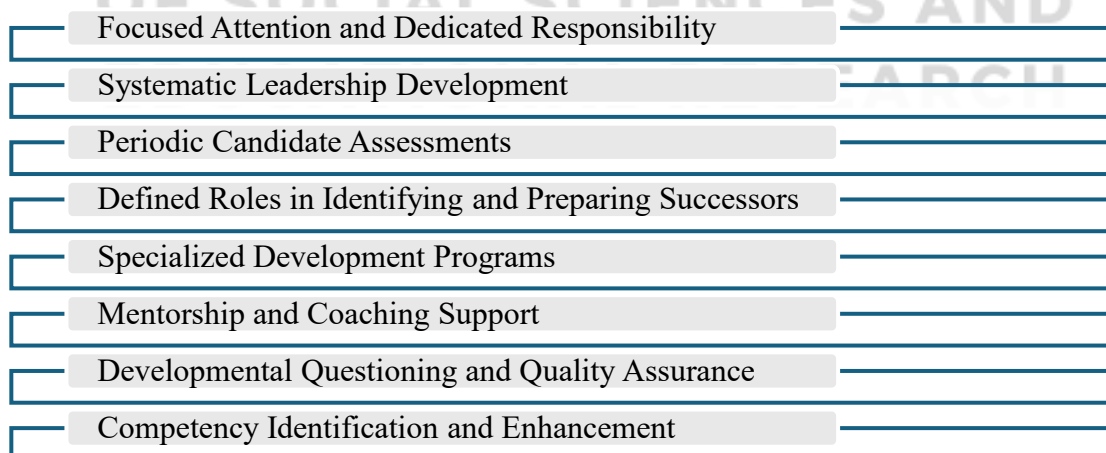
4. **Collaborative Leadership Models:** Promoting examples of collaborative decision-making structures which offer opportunities for HoPs to participate in the formation of school-wide policies and educational enhancement.

In leadership transitions, the Rothwell (2010) mid-level theory of succession planning and management has been used extensively in studying leadership transitions across sectors including education. This illustrates a valuable framework for developing and managing HoPs cognitive leadership succession programs in the primary school level (Zepeda et al., 2012). Succession planning is critical to minimizing disruption of the ongoing school operations and reducing uncertainty in light of transitioned leadership.

Central to this theory is the participation of top management support in the leadership succession process. School leadership teams and policy makers should detect these mistakes, then seek out and develop future HoPs who will be fully supported by their institution so they can do the job properly. If succession planning does not have the strong backing of senior leaders, then it may lack the sustainability necessary for leadership development.

One of the fundamental premises of Rothwell's Theory (2010) is that succession planning should be done to meet an organisation's key leadership needs efficiently. This emphasizes the need to pre-identify potential HoPs in trade schools and provide them with targeted professional development well before taking on roles as school leaders (Merenkov et al., 2019; Roselena Mansor, 2015; Youngs, 2011). When vacancies occur, transitions should be seamless to prevent leadership vacuums from negatively affecting school performance. While relating to the development of HoP leadership, all eight characteristics detailed as effective succession planning by Rothwell (2010) in **Figure 2** are represented.

Figure 2: Characteristics of Effective Succession Planning



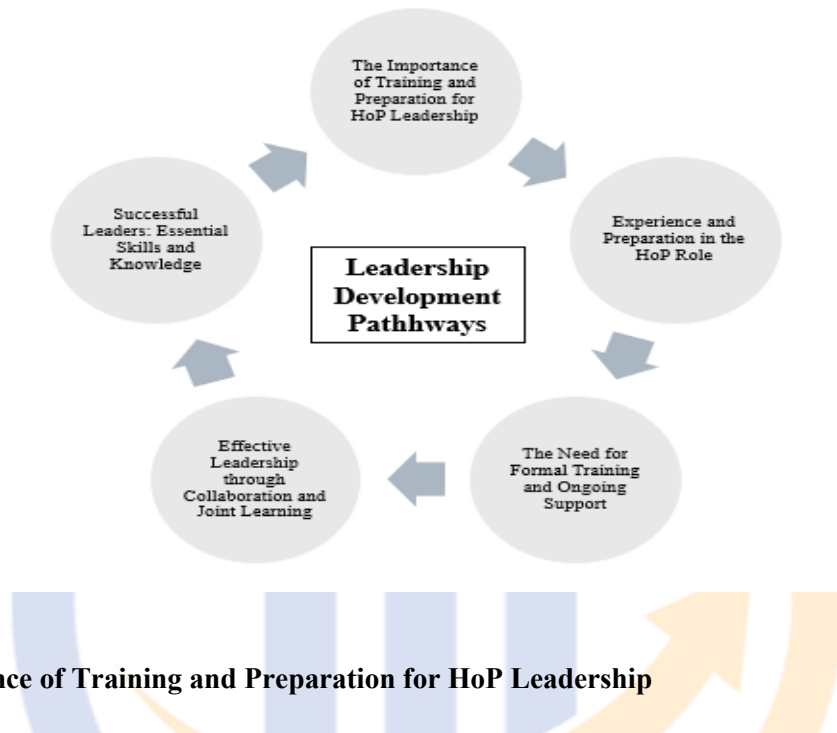
1. **Focused Attention and Dedicated Responsibility:** HoPs should be given clear roles and responsibilities in succession planning, ensuring that leadership transitions are well-managed and aligned with school goals.
2. **Systematic Leadership Development:** A structured approach to leadership training is essential to prepare HoPs for higher leadership responsibilities when necessary.
3. **Periodic Candidate Assessments:** Regular evaluations of leadership competencies ensure that HoPs are meeting expectations and are adequately prepared for advancement.
4. **Defined Roles in Identifying and Preparing Successors:** HoPs should actively participate in mentoring and training emerging leaders within the school system.
5. **Specialized Development Programs:** Leadership training should include workshops, professional learning communities, and knowledge-sharing sessions to enhance leadership competencies.
6. **Mentorship and Coaching Support:** Strong mentorship structures provide ongoing guidance and support, allowing HoPs to navigate leadership challenges effectively.
7. **Developmental Questioning and Quality Assurance:** Encouraging reflective leadership practices and maintaining high standards in leadership performance contribute to continuous improvement.
8. **Competency Identification and Enhancement:** Regular competency assessments help identify areas for improvement, guiding professional development initiatives that strengthen HoP leadership effectiveness.

A well-developed HoP succession strategy can contribute to the synergistic delivery of primary school leadership more generally. Strategic planning and implementation of leadership transitions help to ensure consistency in educational leadership while strengthening teacher learning opportunities and student outcomes. In addition, with a proactive approach to leadership development in place, a school can create an ethos of ongoing personal improvement that marks out HoPs as major architects of pedagogy and whole-school improvement.

Changing HoP leadership in Malaysian primary schools requires a research-based Approach Rothwell's Theory (2010) offers a strong model for creating leadership succession plans that are designed to prepare prospective HoPs so they are properly equipped to adapt in the ever changing landscape of school leadership. Through proactive leadership development, formalized training and ongoing mentorship, schools can develop a deep pipeline of effective leaders, strengthening educational excellence and institutional sustainability for years to come.

4. TRANSITION AND CHALLENGES IN HEAD OF PANEL LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

This transition in leadership roles and the challenges faced by HoP in Malaysian primary school are central to the School Leadership Replacement Plan. The movement into leadership occurs in an essentially disabling way, as Bridges (2009) has indicated. HoPs coming into post have to manage the transition from teaching to management, begin their role in the frontline of institutional leadership and take ultimate responsibility for everything, including success or failure. This shift of roles, supported by Teunissen and Westerman (2011) and the stressing adaptation also considering greater responsibilities, contributes to perfecting leaders. A study by Paese and Mitchell (2006) in Europe, Asia, North America and South America discovered that the improvement of executives is expected based on scarce early preparation for their upcoming tasks. Therefore, they advocate that HoPs receive formal induction and leadership development to better equip them for such rigours. This preparation is essential as the role of the HoP, according to the below **Figure 3**, is at the heart of receiving leadership effectively and making sure pedagogical practices in primary schools sustain.

Figure 3: Leadership Development Pathways

i. The Importance of Training and Preparation for HoP Leadership

HoPs are new to leadership, so effective training is a necessity. Training “is a planned effort by an organization to facilitate employees' learning of job-related competencies,” according to Noe (2008). This is absolutely critical for HoPs who need to be able to manage, lead and also have the greatest level of subject knowledge about their area. A number of HoPs face obstacles to operate well if not prepared properly (Bush & Jackson, 2002; Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018; Kamrulshahrizat Muhamad Razali & Khalip Musa, 2024; Kim Peng et al., 2020). Research by Rosenfeld et al. (2009) in Australia and Murphy (2011) in New Zealand suggested that the training needs to be tailored for HoPs when they are newly appointed in order to complete leadership tasks in a proficient manner. But there is often very few formal training opportunities for HoPs and as a result they are generally not well prepared to manage the very complex dimensions of management such posts (Adawati Suhaili et al., 2020; Bassett & Shaw, 2018; Norliza Samad et al., 2022; Zaliza Md Yasin et al., 2024). Consequently, the HoP leadership will not be successful and there will be no smooth change for primary school in leading without a structured training framework.

ii. Experience and Preparation in the HoP Role

Bassett and Shaw (2018) noted that in some cases, HoP experience as an assistant to the head enabled them to better prepare for their roles. Yet, a lack of formality or depth in the preparation may limit them from performing at their full potential. In South Africa, for example, there is no formal training or preparation programs available to many HoPs before assuming their roles (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2018; Jaca, 2018). Several educators inevitably also depend on prior teaching experience or graduate assistant positions. This underlines the importance of a structured, thorough training plan to ensure that HoPs are trained to subsequently support and navigate the leadership succession.

iii. The Need for Formal Training and Ongoing Support

Ng and Chan (2014) in Hong Kong also consider HoPs, and not the least inadequately trained ones, as these are leant upon for their management and leadership competencies. Equally, Ribbins (2007) and Thorpe and Bennett-Powell (2014) in the UK counter the impression that great teaching equals good leadership. And while some HoPs may shine in a teaching role, they can also be disastrous when it comes to managing due to the simple fact that no one trained them how. It is, thus, important to ensure a structured input in the form of a planned and comprehensive longitudinal training of all HoPs designed to equip them with appropriate leadership skills which will enable them implement school leader succession plan effectively.

iv. Effective Leadership through Collaboration and Joint Learning

Leadership development is about one thing such as working with others, leaning on them for support and then rising to meet the challenge. Murphy (2011) explores HoPs in New Zealand and reveals that many of them work to be good leaders by taking professional development courses, by seeking out mentorship from more senior HoPs or HODs and working within clusters of schools in order to network with one another. Such a learning community is crucial for strengthening our HoP leadership, and it will help support and provide stability in the school leadership succession plan.

v. Successful Leaders: Essential Skills and Knowledge

To be an effective HoP, it is critical to possess a blend of leadership, management and subject-specific expertise. Research evidence shows that HoPs who manage to overcome leadership challenges mainly do so by demonstrating capacity in the managerial dimension of their roles, and subject expertise (Floyd, 2009; Irvine, 2017; Irvine & Brundrett, 2019; Jaca, 2018). HoPs possessing the correct skill set and understanding is crucial not only for their personal success but also in the wider context of a school leadership replacement plan.

5. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MALAYSIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM FROM THE PLANNING ASPECT

The process of strategizing a plan to hand over primary school heads in Malaysia has profound implications on the ethos of the country's education system. The leadership HoP, in this context, is vitally important in effectively and efficiently managing the processes by which leadership transition strategies are brought in play within schools. The HoP is not just a deputy to principal but as one who is the change agent in leading teacher and student centered pedagogical changes. Having strong leadership skills suggests that the HoP would therefore guarantee continuity and sustainability in school leadership, strengthening the status of primary education as the foundation on which educational transformation was built in Malaysia.

To have an impactful school-based leadership succession plan, one incorporates veteran wisdom that validates developmental models of school leadership; however, balanced with expert perspectives to also prepare leaders for the future trends in education today. In this regard, the Institute Aminuddin Baki (IAB) should cooperate aggressively with universities locally and abroad to uplift-admin schools leaders. Making available specialized courses at various top line institutions will proof read the HoPs with depth of knowledge and basic competencies of leadership. Building academic-industry partnerships are important not only to hone the leadership skills of HoPs but also to empower them with better institutional backing for the school principals.

Continuous review and the identification of aspiring leaders is therefore imperative to create a proactive and agile school leadership succession strategy. This approach is also itself built on the fact that instead of post-event (reactive) appointments, we systematically train school leaders for the job so all are prepared when they arrive. MoE and IAB to organize stringent selection exercises on the qualifications, experience and quality of leadership among educators. Furthermore, collaboration between the Malaysian School Principals Council and MoE through structured forums, leadership workshops, and policy dialogues is crucial recognized as the avenues for insights sharing of experienced school leaders. The engagement of HoPs in such professional development work would enrich the range and quality of the ideas that they bring to school leadership succession planning, together with their much-needed critical voices.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a forward-looking and well-organised school leadership succession system is essential to ensuring the future education leaders in Malaysia companies mainstreaming knowledge of leading schools. This succession framework will succeed if the leadership of HoPs in primary schools is assured, as they are leveraged to contributes to institutional change, cultural enhancement and academic excellence. When the District Education Office, State and Ministry of Education, Institute of Teacher Education align towards a unified purpose to conduct such operations in in effect school leadership succession planning a sustainable systematic approach. This in return will sustain a quality and sustainable education system for Malaysia. To succeed in the long term and to consolidate its position as a regional leader in educational quality, Malaysia must invest heavily in HoP leadership development.

7. REFERENCES

- Adawati Suhaili, Kamisah Osman, & Mohd Effendi @ Ewan Mohd Matore. (2020). Issues and Challenges of Subject Leadership Competency for Malaysian Head of Science Panels (HoSP). *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 9(2), 229–241. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v9-i2/7296>
- Adawati Suhaili, Kamisah Osman, & Mohd Effendi Mohd Matore. (2021). Issues and Problems of Leadership Competencies among Head of Science Panels in Sarawak. *XV: International Conference on Servant Leadership and Accountability, Proceeding ICSLA 2021*, 144–148.
- Aravena, F. (2022). Principal succession in schools: A literature review (2003–2019). *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 50(3), 354–370. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220940331>
- Armugam, B., Arshad, M. M., Ismail, I. A., & Hamzah, S. R. (2019). Investigating the link between transformational leadership style on succession planning program in national secondary schools in Seremban District, Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 8(4), 201214. <https://doi.org/10.6007/ijarped/v8-i4/6489>
- Baker, V. L., Lunsford, L. G., & Pifer, M. J. (2019). Patching up the “leaking leadership pipeline”: Fostering mid-career faculty succession management. *Research in Higher Education*, 60(6), 823–843. <https://doi.org/10.2307/48703696>
- Bassett, M. (2016). The role of middle leaders in New Zealand secondary schools: Expectations and challenges. *Waikato Journal of Education*, 21(1), 97–108. <https://doi.org/10.15663/wje.v21i1.194>
- Bassett, M., & Shaw, N. (2018). Building the confidence of first-time middle leaders in New Zealand primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(5), 749–

760. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-05-2017-0101>
- Bennett, N., Woods, P., Wise, C., & Newton, W. (2007). Understandings of middle leadership in secondary schools: A review of empirical research. *School Leadership and Management*, 27(5), 453–470. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430701606137>
- Boyce, J., & Bowers, A. J. (2016). Principal turnover: Are there different types of principals who move from or leave their schools? A latent class analysis of the 2007–2008 schools and staffing survey and the 2008–2009 principal follow-up survey. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 15(3), 237–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2015.1047033>
- Bridges, W. (2009). *Managing transitions: Making the most of change*. Da Capo Press.
- Bush, T. (2008). *Leadership and management development in education*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Bush, T. (2023). The importance of middle leadership for school improvement. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 51(2), 267–269. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432221144628>
- Bush, T., & Jackson, D. (2002). A preparation for school leadership international perspectives. *Educational Management and Administration and Leadership*, 30(4), 417–429.
- Bush, T., Suriani, A. H., Ng, A., & Kaparou, M. (2018). School leadership theories and the Malaysia Education Blueprint: Findings from a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(7), 1245–1265. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-06-2017-0158>
- Collins, M. (2013). Local Solutions for National Challenges? Exploring Local Solutions Through the Case of a National Succession Planning Strategy. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(5), 658–673. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213488378>
- Daniëls, E., Hondeghem, A., & Dochy, F. (2019). A review on leadership and leadership development in educational settings. *Educational Research Review*, 27, 110–125. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2019.02.003>
- De Nobile, J. (2017). Towards a theoretical model of middle leadership in schools. *School Leadership and Management*, 38(4). <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2017.1411902>
- De Nobile, J., Lipscombe, K., Tindall-Ford, S., & Grice, C. (2024). Investigating the roles of middle leaders in New South Wales public schools: Factor analyses of the Middle Leadership Roles Questionnaire. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432241231871>
- Du Plessis, A., & Eberlein, E. (2018). The role of heads of department in the professional development of educators: A distributed leadership perspective. *Africa Education Review*, 15(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18146627.2016.1224583>
- Earley, P. (2002). *Establishing the current state of school leadership in England*. Department for Education and Skills.
- Edwards-Groves, C., & Grootenboer, P. (2021). Conceptualising five dimensions of relational trust: implications for middle leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 41(3), 260–283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2021.1915761>
- Edwards-Groves, C., Grootenboer, P., Hardy, I., & Rönnerman, K. (2019). Driving change from ‘the middle’: middle leading for site based educational development. *School Leadership and Management*, 39(3–4), 315–333. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2018.1525700>
- Edwards-Groves, C., Grootenboer, P., & Ronnerman, K. (2016). Facilitating a culture of relational trust in school-based action research: Recognising the role of middle leaders. *Educational Action Research*, 24(3), 369–386. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2015.1131175>
- Esquer, M. E. (2022). *Leading from the Middle: Building Partnership and a Coherent Learning Organization*. University of California.

- Floyd, A. (2009). *Life Histories of Academics who become Heads of Department: Socialisation, Identity and Career Trajectory*.
- Fuller, E., & Young, M. (2009). *Tenure and Retention of Newly Hired Principals in Texas*. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228660740>
- Fusarelli, B. C., Fusarelli, L. D., & Riddick, F. (2018). Planning for the future: Leadership development and succession planning in education. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education*, 13(3), 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1942775118771671>
- Gates, S. M., Ringel, J. S., Santibañez, L., Guarino, C., Ghosh-Dastidar, B., & Brown, A. (2006). Mobility and turnover among school principals. *Economics of Education Review*, 25(3), 289–302. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2005.01.008>
- Ghamrawi, N. (2010). No teacher left behind: Subject leadership that promotes teacher leadership. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 38(3), 304–320. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143209359713>
- Grootenboer, P. (2018). *The practices of school middle leadership: Leading professional learning*. Springer.
- Grootenboer, P., Edwards-Groves, C., & Rönnerman, K. (2019). Understanding middle leadership: practices and policies. *School Leadership and Management*, 39(3–4), 251–254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2019.1611712>
- Gunter, H. (2012). *Leadership and the reform of education*. Policy Press.
- Gurr, D., & Drysdale, L. (2013). Middle-level secondary school leaders: Potential, constraints and implications for leadership preparation and development. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 51(1), 55–71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231311291431>
- Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (2006). *Sustainable Leadership*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA.
- Hargreaves, A., Moore, S., Fink, D., Brayman, C., & White, R. (2003). *Succeeding Leaders? A Study Principal Succession and Sustainability*. Boston College.
- Harris, A., Jones, M., Adams, D., & Cheah, K. (2019). Instructional leadership in Malaysia: a review of the contemporary literature*. *School Leadership and Management*, 39(1), 76–95. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2018.1453794>
- Héreginé Nagy, M., Lénárd, S., Horváth, L., & Rapos, N. (2024). The organisational context of middle management role behaviour in Hungarian schools. *School Leadership and Management*, 44(4), 389–412. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2024.2318435>
- Highfield, C., & Rubie-Davies, C. (2022). Middle leadership practices in secondary schools associated with improved student outcomes. *School Leadership and Management*, 42(5), 543–564. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2022.2137126>
- Highfield, C., Webber, M., & Woods, R. (2024). Culturally responsive middle leadership for equitable student outcomes. *Education Sciences*, 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14030327>
- Irvine, P. A. (2017). *Effective support mechanisms for those in the formative stages of middle leadership: A case study in the secondary independent education sector*. Liverpool John Moores University. Tesis Doktor Falsafah (tidak diterbitkan).
- Irvine, P. A., & Brundrett, M. (2019). Negotiating the next step: The part that experience plays with middle leaders' development as they move into their new role. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 47(1), 74–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143217720457>
- Jaca, N. I. (2018). *Investigating experiences of transition from a teacher to the head of department*. University of Pretoria. Tesis Doktor Falsafah (tidak diterbitkan).
- Joshua, N. . (2007). *Leading from the middle: An analysis of the role and impact of academic middle leaders in the Kenyan Secondary School*. University of Leicester.
- Kahila, S., Heikka, J., & Sajaniemi, N. (2020). Teacher leadership in the context of early childhood education: Concept
- Kahila, S., Heikka, J., & Sajaniemi, N. (2020). Teacher leadership in the context of early childhood education: Concepts, characteristics and

- enactment. *Southeast Asia Early Childhood J. Southeast Asia Early Childhood Journal*, 9(1), 28–43. <http://ejournal.upsi.edu.my/index.php/SAECJ>
- Kamrulshahrizat Muhamad Razali, & Khalip Musa. (2024). Cabaran Pemimpin Pertengahan Di Sekolah Serta Solusi Pengamalan Kepimpinan Guru. *Jurnal Dunia Pendidikan*. <https://doi.org/10.55057/jdpc.2024.6.2.2>
- Kaparou, M., & Bush, T. (2015). Instructional leadership in centralised systems: Evidence from Greek high-performing secondary schools. *School Leadership and Management*, 35(3), 321–345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2015.1041489>
- Karen, L. A. (2023). *Succession planning and development* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Kavanagh, S. (2020). *The professional development needs of appointed middle leaders in education and training board, post-primary schools*. Dublin City University.
- Kavanagh, S., Sexton, P., & Fitzsimons, S. (2021). Transforming middle leadership in education and training board post-primary schools in Ireland. *International Journal for Transformative Research*, 8(1), 20–32. <https://doi.org/10.2478/ijtr-2021-0003>
- Kemethofer, D., Helm, C., & Warwas, J. (2022). Does educational leadership enhance instructional quality and student achievement? The case of Austrian primary school leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2021.2021294>
- Khalip Musa, & Rofidah Mohd Nasir. (2018). Teacher leadership practices among primary school teachers in Bagan Datuk District, Perak. *Management Research Journal*, 8(1), 100–116.
- Kim Peng, T., Faridah Mohamad, Jamilah Jaafar, Rusli Wahab, & Kalidass Machappan. (2020). Kompetensi pemimpin pertengahan bagi alaf revolusi industri 4.0: Satu kerangka konseptual. *Jurnal Pengurusan Dan Kepimpinan Pendidikan*, 33(1), 57–68. http://eprints.iab.edu.my/v2/1111/1/JURNAL33_BIL1.2020_%2820Dis2020%29_Artikel6.pdf
- Koh, H. H. (2018). *The leadership role of middle leaders in six selected primary schools in Singapore* (Issue February).
- Koh, H. H., Gurr, D., Drysdale, L., & Ang, L. L. (2011). How school leaders perceive the leadership role of middle leaders in Singapore primary schools? *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 12(4), 609–620. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-011-9161-1>
- Lárusdóttir, S. H., & O'Connor, E. (2017). Distributed leadership and middle leadership practice in schools: a disconnect? *Irish Educational Studies*, 36(4), 423–438. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2017.1333444>
- Leithwood, K., Sun, J., & Schumacker, R. (2020). How school leadership influences student learning: A test of “The Four Paths Model.” *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 56(4), 570–599. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X19878772>
- Linscott, K. G. (2011). Filling the leadership pipeline: Driving forces and their effect on the next generation of nonprofit leaders. *SPNHA Review*, 7(1), 31–50.
- Lipscombe, K., Tndall-Ford, S., & Lamanna, J. (2021). School middle leadership: A systematic review. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220983328>
- Male, T. (2006). Being an effective headteacher. In *Being an Effective Headteacher*. Paul Chapman Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446213285>
- Malinga, C. B., Jita, L. C., & Bada, A. A. (2021). Middle Management and Instructional Leadership: The Case of Natural Sciences’ Heads of Departments in South Africa. *Journal of Education, Teaching, and Learning*, 6, 119–137.
- Merenkov, A. V., Antonova, N. L., & Popova, N. G. (2019). Leadership potential of professional teacher associations in Russia: Formation of middle leaders. *Journal of Language and Education*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.17323/jle.2019.9934>
- Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2013). *Malaysia Education Blueprint, Putrajaya, Ministry of*

Education.

- Murphy, K. (2011). *The complexity of pastoral care middle leadership in New Zealand secondary schools*. Unitec Institute of Technology. Masters' dissertation.
- Ng, S. W., & Chan, T. M. K. (2014). Continuing professional development for middle leaders in primary schools in Hong Kong. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 52(6), 869–886. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-07-2013-0077>
- Ng, S. W., & Szeto, S. ying E. (2016). Preparing school leaders: The professional development needs of newly appointed principals. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 44(4), 540–557. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143214564766>
- Noe, R. A. (2008). *Employee training and development*. McGraw-Hill/Irwin .
- Norliza Samad, Mohd Asri Mohd Noor, & Mahaliza Mansor. (2022). Dilema penolong kanan di sekolah rendah: kajian keperluan kepada pembangunan model kompetensi. *Isu Dalam Pendidikan*, 44, 39–49.
- Nurnazahiah Abas, & Ramli Basri. (2019). Relationship between the dimensions of senior subject teachers' (GKMP) instructional leadership and the learning organisation at schools. *International Research Journal of Education and Sciences (IRJES)*, 3(1), 12–17.
- Paese, M., & Mitchell, S. (2006). *Leaders in transition: Stepping up, not off*. DDI .
- Paul Nwati, M., Maria, T., & Jita, L. C. (2020). School heads of departments' roles in advancing science and mathematics through the distributed leadership framework. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 19(9), 39–57. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.19.9.3>
- Peters-Hawkins, A. L., Reed, L. C., & Kingsberry, F. (2018). Dynamic Leadership Succession: Strengthening Urban Principal Succession Planning. *Urban Education*, 53(1), 26–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916682575>
- Pounder, D. ., & Merrill, R. . (2001). Job desirability of the high school principalship: A job choice theory perspective. *Educational Administrative Quarterly*, 37(1), 27–57.
- Rangel, V. S. (2018). A review of the literature on principal turnover. *Review of Educational Research*, 88(1), 87–124. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654317743197>
- Rhodes, C. ., & Brundrett, M. (2006). The identification, development, succession and retention of leadership. Talent in contextually different primary schools: A case study located within the English West Midlands,. *School Leadership And Management*, 26(3), 269–287.
- Ribbins, P. (2007). Middle leadership in schools in the UK: Improving design - A subject leader's history. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 10(1), 13–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603120600934061>
- Ritchie, M. (2020). Succession planning for successful leadership: Why we need to talk about succession planning! *Management in Education*, 34(1), 33–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020619881044>
- Robinson, V. M. ., Lloyd, C. ., & Rowe, K. . (2008). The impact of leadership on student outcomes: An analysis of the differential effects of leadership types. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44(5), 635–674.
- Roselena Mansor. (2015). *Pelaksanaan pelan penggantian kepimpinan Kolej Profesional Mara*. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Tesis Doktor Falsafah (tidak diterbitkan).
- Roselena Mansor, & Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah. (2015). Kepimpinan Berkualiti: Perspektif mengenai Kompetensi yang diperlukan untuk memimpin dengan berkesan. *Jurnal Pengurusan*, 45, 143–154.
- Rosenfeld, P., Ehrich, L. C., & Cranston, N. (2009). Changing roles of heads of department: A Queensland case. *Proceedings of the Australian Association for Research in Education (AARE) 2008 International Research Conference*, 1–17. <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/19129/>
- Rothwell, W. . (2015). *Effective succession planning: Ensuring leadership continuity and building talent from within* (5th ed.). American Management Association.
- Rothwell, W. J. (2010). *Effective Succession Planning: Ensuring Leadership Continuity and*

- Building Talent from Within* (4th ed). American Management Association.
- Sukor Beram, Marinah Awang, Ramlee Ismail, Norzalina Noor, Kumaran Gengatharan, & Dayang Rafidah Syariff M. Fuad. (2022). Personal leadership competencies of Malaysian Matriculation College middle leaders. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 11(3), 1617–1624. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v11i3.22387>
- Tang, J., Bryant, D. A., & Walker, A. D. (2023). In search of the middle influence: how middle leaders support teachers' professional learning. *Educational Research*, 65(4), 444–461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2023.2261127>
- Tapala, T. T. (2019). *Curriculum Leadership Training Programme for Heads of Departments in Secondary Schools*. Doctoral Thesis. North-West University.
- Teunissen, P. W., & Westerman, M. (2011). Opportunity or threat: The ambiguity of the consequences of transitions in medical education. *Medical Education*, 45(1), 51–59. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2923.2010.03755.x>
- Thorpe, A., & Bennett-Powell, G. (2014). The perceptions of secondary school middle leaders regarding their needs following a middle leadership development programme. *Management in Education*, 28(2), 52–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020614529808>
- Thorpe, A., & Tran, D. T. H. (2015). Understandings of the role of subject leaders in the professional development of beginning teachers within a school department: A Vietnamese perspective. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 71, 108–117. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2015.04.006>
- Torres, A. C. (2020). Push, Pull, Tap and Switch: Understanding the Career Decisions of Charter School Leaders. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 19(2), 171–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2018.1513155>
- Tournier, B., Chimier, C., & Jones, C. (2023). *Leading teaching and learning together The role of the middle tier*. Education Development Trust and UNESCO 2023. www.ecnu.edu.cn/info/1094/15035.htm.
- Wahlstrom, K. ., Louis, K. ., Leithwood, K., & Anderson, S. . (2010). *Investigating the Links to Improved Student Learning*.
- Youngs, H. (2011). The school leadership and student outcomes best evidence synthesis: Potential challenges for policy makers, practitioners and researchers. *Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice*, 26(1), 16–27. <https://doi.org/10.3316/informit.271477686655860>
- Zaliza Md Yasin, & Mohd Izham Mohd Hamzah. (2017). Strategi pengurusan pelan penggantian pengetua. *Seminar Pendidikan Serantau Ke-VIII, UKM*, 979–987.
- Zaliza Md Yasin, Muhammad Faizal A.Ghani, Norfariza, M. R., & Nurhanani, M. F. (2024). A Comprehensive Review of Research on Head of Panel Leadership in Malaysian Primary Schools. *Journal of Social Research and Behavioral Sciences*, 10(22), 107–126. <https://doi.org/10.52096/jsrbs.10.22.07>
- Zepeda, S. J., Bengtson, E., & Parylo, O. (2012). Examining the planning and management of principal succession. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 50(2), 136–158. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09578231211210512>