

SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP PRACTICES AMONG PRINCIPALS IN TS25 EXCELLENT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The Ministry of Education's makes intensive plans and puts forth tremendous efforts to improve the academic and extracurricular performance of students by implementing The School Transformation Programme 2025. One of the goals are seen through crucial components is strengthening school leadership. How far do the principals practice sustainable leadership to meet the demands of the TS25 program? The main focus of this research is to examine how teachers at Excellent Secondary Schools rate their principals' implementation of the TS25 based on Seven-factor Sustainable Leadership Theory developed by Hargreaves and Fink. A total of 404 educators from 10 premier secondary schools in the Southern Zone of Peninsular Malaysia participated. Data were collected using a 6-point Likert-scale questionnaire, with responses analyzed via descriptive statistics. Findings indicate three items which are 'Promote diversity of knowledge and experience sharing among members of the organization (M = 5.080, SD = 0.889), Focus on progress of the school around (M=5.122, SD=0.753), Develop and share leadership to others (M=5.080, SD= 0.808) were rated Very High Level on the school principals in demonstrate a strong practice in sustainable leadership. Thus, it is hoping that this research will contribute significantly to assist improving academic performance as part of TS25, Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013–2025, and the Malaysia Development Programme 2030 and beyond.

Keywords: best practices, principals' practice, sustainable leadership, School Transformation Programme 2025.

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Education Malaysia launched TS25 programme in 2015 as a major agenda in transforming schools in Malaysia. It is part of the MOE's transformation initiative for the Malaysian education system in increasing the success rate of Malaysian students and producing

quality schools (Zubaidah & Kamarul, 2018). Efforts can be seen through the application of good administration practices and leadership in the teaching and learning process in accordance with Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 in transforming education in Malaysia towards a better system (Raamani & Arumugam, 2018). According to Hashim and Sharin (2018) schools and leadership effectiveness shows that increasingly complex school organizations need a shift in practice and adaptation from a leadership perspective. In line with the purpose of implementing the TS25 Programme which is to strengthen school leadership, then one of the leaderships that meets the demands of the TS25 Programme is Sustainable Leadership. School principals need to be able to create a conducive school environment with a combination of energy from all staff in the school. Therefore, sustainable leadership can be used as a basis, guide and practice among school leaders in order to maintain a superior school throughout the ages. Through sustainable leadership, schools can produce dynamic leaders and then achieve the excellence of schools for the continuity of our country's educational excellence.

In order to achieve school excellence, it depends on how principals can apply authoritative leadership styles as sustainable leadership. Schools' principals must always be at a dynamic and innovative level to meet the hopes and challenges of the community for the future of the country. This can be attributed to, the expectation of today's society places higher expectation on the ability of schools to educate their children academically. Besides, every school leader should play a more proactive role in ensuring the best quality of education to meet the needs of society. Thus, how far do the principals practice sustainable leadership to meet the demands of the TS25 program? Given that, the main objective of this study is to examine the best practice of sustainable leadership by schools' principals. Therefore, the value of this study arises from the limited research on sustainable leadership in Malaysia, despite it being a well-established leadership model introduced by educational leadership scholars and widely explored in Western schools. In line with this, the study aims to examine the current sustainable leadership practices among school leaders in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The School Transformation Programme 2025 (TS25) is part of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) efforts to enhance the quality of students and schools by implementing best practices in administration and leadership, as well as pedagogy in teaching and learning. The goals of the TS25 Programme are seen through important aspects namely leadership, quality of teaching and learning and community involvement. In terms of leadership through the TS25 Program, MOE intends to further strengthen school leadership (MOE, 2019).

According to Hargreaves and Fink (2004) sustainable leadership is significant, generative, and enduring in its impact. It constitutes a collective responsibility that minimizes the depletion of human and financial resources while safeguarding the broader educational and community context from adverse effects. Such leadership engages proactively with the external and internal forces that influence it and cultivates an educational environment characterized by organizational diversity, thereby facilitating the cross-fertilization of innovative ideas and effective practices within communities committed to shared learning and continuous development.

Hargreaves and Fink (2004) develop seven principles of modern leadership theory that can be practiced by administrators to administer and lead schools. Sustainable Leadership

theory is viewed as a long-term renewable leadership approach for maintaining school effectiveness and improving student success performance (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). According to Shabita (2015), the seven principles are: a) Promote lifelong learning. b) Form succession leader in school. c) Focus on the progress of the school around. d) Develop and distribute leadership to others. e) Promote diversity of knowledge and experience sharing among members of the organization. f) Conservation. g) Identify and utilize resources to perform task to succeed.

Based on the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2015, the principal's ability to establish a school atmosphere favourable to teaching and learning, as well as continuously shaping pupils into first-class human capital for the Malaysian workforce, demonstrates the principal's caliber. Preserving the legacy of a good principle is the best way to ensure that organizational goals are met over a long and lasting period of time. Therefore, in order to meet the requirements of the TS25 Programme that the MOE (2019) wishes to implement, principals must enhance their capacities in order to remain current with society's demands.

Promote Lifelong Learning

Hargreaves and Fink (2006) admitted that the prime responsibility of all school leaders is to sustain lifelong learning. School leaders are obligatory to place teaching and learning at the center of planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating towards school excellence. School principals need to emphasize on efforts to encourage students and teachers to focus on producing long-term learning. The sustainable leadership dimension states that administrators should encourage their schools to develop students who can explore information, skills, and intellectual concepts in addition to focusing on academic performance. The objective is to help build a community that values knowledge and acts ethically, as well as to contribute to a society that is literate in both (Al-Zawahreh et al., 2019).

Form Succession Leader in School

Salleh (2022) highlighted that each teacher is an expert in their field. A wise principal may use a teacher's expertise appropriately and effectively. Schools, as an institution, undoubtedly require expert assistance in a variety of areas. Teachers' expertise should be valued as a school asset by principals and nurtured accordingly. It is also the responsibility of the principal to win over the hearts of the teaching staff and to ensure that everyone in the school receives appropriate rewards. In addition, more people need to be made aware of teachers' expertise so that it can be shared, and the competence can distribute knowledge for mutual benefit. According to Hargreaves and Fink (2006), sustainable leadership provides intrinsic and extrinsic incentives that attract and retain the best and brightest of the leadership pool, as well as time and opportunity for leaders to network, learn, and support one another.

Moreover, sustainable leadership is modest without being cheap. Instead of lavishing awards on a handful of already-proven stars, it prudently invests in the development of the skills of all of its educators. The concept of sustainable leadership places an emphasis on the principal's responsibility to devote primary attention to the motivation of teachers in order to decrease teacher dissatisfaction and 'burn-out'. This is due to the fact that instructors are

regarded as a valuable asset in determining the success of a program as they serve as the leading workforce in the production of skilled citizens (Salleh, 2022).

Focus on the Progress of the School Around

In this dimension, Hargreaves and Fink (2006) stated increased standardization and examination concentration will cause schools to focus solely on excellent students in academics. Since the focus and objectives of the school are solely on students who perform exceptionally well on examinations, the teachers' efforts are likewise concentrated on test preparation strategies. Consequently, students who are not academically gifted will feel overwhelmed and bored. Therefore, principals must intensify their efforts to cultivate a spiritually, emotionally, and physically well-rounded individual for future employment.

This was supported by Raamani and Arumugam (2018), which stated principals need to set clear goals, vision and mission of the school towards producing school people as quality human capital. The human capital referred here is the individual who practices the concept of lifelong learning, practicing pure and ethical values of socially, emotionally and intellectually. Establish a clear vision and goals that are set by the school principals creates a shared sense of purpose motivates teachers and students toward a common goal. This is because school principals are responsible for setting the overall vision and direction for the schools they lead, creating and maintaining a school culture conducive to learning, developing teachers, evaluating teacher performance, managing the school's resources, and building relationships with parents and the community (Tshabalala & Faremi, 2024).

Develop and Distribute Leadership to Others

Tahir (2009) defines, the concept of leadership as a combination of skills between principals and teachers will further strengthen school management and administration. Through the leadership distribution dimension, communication between principals and teachers is open. As a result, teachers will feel appreciated, thereby increasing their dedication and earnestness in carrying out their obligations. Shabita and Norhaini (2015) further explain that, in the face of increasingly complex contemporary challenges, leadership can no longer be concentrated in a single individual. School excellence is not solely dependent on the principal; rather, it emerges from the collective efforts and quality leadership demonstrated by teachers and other members of the school community.

In addition, according to Creemers et al. (2022), distributed leadership corresponds with the complex and evolving demands of contemporary educational settings. It is founded on the understanding that no individual leader can encompass the full range of knowledge and competencies necessary to navigate the diverse challenges faced by schools. By drawing on the expertise and capacities of multiple members of the school community, distributed leadership enables a more holistic, adaptive, and effective approach to school development and improvement. Galdames (2023) clarified distributed leadership is a social practice because it is based on the idea that leadership does not reside in just one person or a small group of people but is distributed among all members of a school. This allows both principals and teacher leaders to contribute and make decisions in a more active and meaningful way, which, in turn, can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their organizations. As a result, teachers will

feel appreciated, thereby increasing their dedication and earnestness in carrying out their obligations.

Promotes Diversity of Knowledge and Experience Sharing Among Members of Organization

Community, and particularly the parents, will provide significant support for the school if they are also involved in policies concerning their children (Hargreaves & Fink, 2006). Leadership in a school is more than just a single leader. Leadership in schools is a system and a culture. As stated by Sulehan (2013), principals are encouraged by to investigate a variety of resources in preparation for school leadership. As the primary leader of the school, the principal should have a robust network of resources to ensure that the school's judgments and ideas are consistent with contemporary demands.

The rapid development of information technology today necessitates that principals establish close contacts with the community and other principals so that their leadership is more consistent, and they can lead their schools more successfully. Schools should be led by principals, teachers, students, and parents. This is the essence of the holistic approach to sustainable leadership, in which leadership was viewed as a culture of integrated attributes as opposed to a mere collection of common traits (Al-Zawahreh et al., 2019). For instance, the importance of collaborative leadership, can create a system of support that enhance learning experience for students (Alkaabi, 2022). This shows that, a strong, positive relationship between school principals and teachers enhances the effective running of a school, as it allows them to collaborate and jointly plan for the school's development (Mthanti et al., 2023).

Conservation

To enhance the standard of education across the board and adhere to the principle of mutual benefit, individual schools collaborate to find solutions to common challenges and share new teaching strategies. Sustainable leadership not only seeks ongoing change, but also instills principals with a sense of duty to build people capital that will become future leaders (Fullan, 2002). In this aspect of sustainable leadership, Avery and Bergsteiner (2011), emphasizes that every action, decision, and plan undertaken by the leader should consider the advantages to everybody. Every decision and action of the principal has a great impact on other individuals, especially school personnel. Sustainable leadership promotes the concept of cooperation not just between administrators and teachers but also partnerships between schools and communities and other schools.

Then, Bergesteine (2011) stress that, sustainable leadership involves actions and practices that create enduring value for all stakeholders, including society, the environment, and generations to come. According to Khalip (2016) sustainable leadership as a key driver of competitive advantage that boosts organizational performance. Beyond this, it offers opportunities for innovation, ongoing improvement, long-term competitiveness, and lasting success. Therefore, principals who embrace sustainable leadership consistently strive to keep their schools operating at an optimal level, ensuring continuity and resilience even in the face of challenges or crises (Rahim et al., 2023). It is essential for school leaders to apply sustainable leadership practices so that the core values and philosophy of education are upheld, ultimately enhancing school performance and overall success.

Identify and Utilize Resources to Perform Tasks to Success

Salleh (2022) recognized shared leadership between teachers and principals as one of the major characteristics of sustainable leadership. All choices are based not just on the principal's authority, but also on dialogue and mutual understanding between the school principal and the teacher. This dimension shows that in the absence of school principals on many matters or demands, those who have been trained by the principal are able to manage the school well and effectively. Salleh (2022) acknowledged that one component of generating successive leaders in schools is accomplished by principals through the discussion of goals with teachers and the even more collaborative process of constructing school choices and policies. Through this aspect, the administrative burden of the principal can also be reduced. In addition, with the participation of the principal's management, teachers are able to expand their understanding of school administration. This is a crucial facet, as it ensures the proper operation of the school's everyday operations even when the principal is absent. Thus, school principals are expected to possess a clear professional vision, which demonstrate a strong commitment to diligent and sustained effort. In order to deliver high-quality services and uphold rigorous standards of professional discipline (Rahim et al., 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed using descriptive research method approach. The method used in this study is a quantitative method survey using a questionnaire instrument. According to Gall and Borg (1989) descriptive studies are intended to discover "what is". Therefore, for collecting descriptive data survey methods are frequently being used. In addition, Ghanad (2023) stated the advantage of the descriptive method is that it allows the study to be performed in the respondent's natural context that not only certifies high-quality data but also represents data collection from a large population. Data were collected through a survey using a structured questionnaire based on Hargreaves and Fink's seven principles of Sustainable Leadership. The data were obtained from 404 teachers, which were conducted at ten excellent secondary schools in Southern Zone of Peninsular Malaysia. Utilizing a questionnaire on a 6-point scale, the researchers measured the respondents' perceptions. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 26.0 was used to analyse the data (Huck, 2012).

The results of the study were reported in terms of mean, standard deviation, and rank for the Sustainable Leadership practise of principals in the School Transformation Programme 2025 (TS25) of the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE, 2019). Principals' Sustainable Leadership practices were measured on a 6-point scale as follows: 1.00 to 2.00 for Very Low, 2.01 to 3.00 for Low, 3.01 to 4.00 for Medium, 4.01 to 5.00 for High, and 5.01 to 6.00 for Very High (Salleh, 2022).

FINDINGS

The following section provides an analysis of the study on principals' Sustainable Leadership practice in the School Transformation Programme 2025 (TS25) of the Malaysian Ministry of Education based on teachers' perspectives.

Table 1. Principals practice of promote lifelong learning in TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools: Teachers Perceptions (N=404)

No.	Items	M	SD	Rank	*Level
1.	Principal provides and encourages lifelong learning to students	4.802	0.977	4	High
2.	Principal prioritizes mastery of knowledge not to pass the exam alone	4.812	0.964	3	High
3.	Principal makes learning the paramount priority in school	5.257	0.742	2	Very High
4.	Although the principal is an administrator, he also cares about the learning aspect	5.258	0.741	1	Very High
5.	Principal gives views / advice to students to choose the field of interest	4.752	0.778	5	High
Total-Average		4.978	0.681		High

The items ‘Principal makes learning the paramount priority in school’ (Mean=5.257, Standard Deviation=0.742) and ‘Although the principal is an administrator, he also cares about the learning aspect’ (Mean=5.258, Standard Deviation=0.741) achieve a Very High level of practices among principals in the TS25 Program to encourage lifelong learning. As a result, the total average of principals’ practices in promoting lifelong learning in the TS25 Program was 4.978 (SD=0.681), placing it at a High level. This indicates that while principals strongly emphasize learning priorities, there is slightly less consistency in practices related to student guidance and support for mastery over exams.

Table 2. Principals practice of form succession leader in school in TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools: Teachers Perceptions (N=404)

No.	Items	M	SD	Rank	*Level
1.	Principal distribute leadership assignments to other teachers	4.847	0.957	4	High
2.	Principal regularly conduct training related to leadership in an effort to apply teacher leadership skills	5.257	0.742	1	Very High
3.	Principal does not encourage teachers to be obsessed (believe wholeheartedly) with his leadership	4.386	1.055	5	High
4.	Principal intends to see his successor have better leadership qualities than he does	5.015	0.861	2	Very High
5.	Principal strives to ensure that his successor is able to take on leadership	5.010	0.864	3	Very High
Total-Average		4.974	0.683		High

Table 2 reveals that the highest-rated item in principals’ practice of producing school succession leaders in the TS25 Program was ‘Principal consistently conduct leadership training in an effort to apply teacher leadership skills,’ with a mean of 5.25 and a standard deviation (SD) of 0.75. The second-highest item, ‘Principal wants his successor to have higher leadership abilities than he does,’ achieve a mean of 5.12 (SD = 0.866), followed by ‘Principal attempts to prepare his successor for leadership’ with a mean of 5.10 (SD = 0.86). All three items were

rated at a Very High level, reflecting strong emphasis on leadership development and succession planning. The total average score for principals' practices in producing school succession leaders, as perceived by teachers, was 4.974 (SD = 0.67), placing the practice at a High level. This suggests that while individual items show very high performance, the overall practice across all measured aspects is slightly lower, indicating some variation in consistency of succession-related initiatives.

Table 3. Principals practice of focus on the progress of the school around in school in TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools: Teachers Perceptions (N=404)

No.	Items	M	SD	Rank	*Level
1.	Principal encourage teachers to learn from other more senior teachers	5.136	0.765	3	Very High
2.	Principal encourage teachers to share information and information on aspects of learning	5.039	0.784	4	Very High
3.	Principal encourage ongoing cooperation between teachers even if they are not from the same school	5.031	0.786	5	Very High
4.	Principal regularly organize in-house training for teachers	5.148	0.649	2	Very High
5.	Principal prioritize team concepts among teachers when they perform an assignment	5.257	0.780	1	Very High
	Total-Average	5.122	0.753		V. High

Table 3 results show all five elements of the principal practice of focusing on the success of the school around in the TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools scored Very High. The item 'Principal priorities team concepts among instructors when completing an assignment' was the highest among others with mean of 5.257 and a standard deviation of 0.780. As a result, the TS25 Program's primary practise of focusing on the advancement of the school around in exceptional secondary schools obtained a total-average of mean 5.122 and standard deviation 0.753 at a Very High level

Table 4. Principal practice of develop and distribute leadership to others in TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools: Teachers Perceptions (N=404)

No.	Items	M	SD	Rank	*Level
1.	Principal help the school administration when faced with a problem.	5.117	0.821	1	Very High
2.	Principal are close friends with school administrators to enhance school excellence	5.109	0.833	3	Very High
3.	Principal are willing to contribute their existing expertise for the purpose of improving performance in schools	5.039	0.781	4	Very High
4.	Principal share the expertise available in schools for the purpose of improving the overall performance of the state / district	5.112	0.821	2	Very High

5.	Principal are responsible for assisting the line of administrators in schools who face management problems	5.027	0.788	5	Very High
	Total-Average	5.080	0.808		V. High

It is interesting to note that in table 4, all five items of the principal practice of developing and distributing leadership to others were rated at a Very High level. The highest-rated item achieved a mean of 5.117 (SD= 0.821), which was “Principal aids the school administration when faced with a difficulty.” In contrast, the lowest-rated item was “Principal is responsible for assisting the line of administrators in schools who face management problems,” which obtained a mean of 5.027 (SD= 0.788). The difference between these two items is 0.09, indicating only a small variation in respondents’ perceptions, yet both items still fall within the Very High category. Furthermore, Table 4 shows that the overall practice of developing and distributing leadership to others in the TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools achieved a total average mean of 5.080 with a standard deviation of 0.788, also at a Very High level.

Table 5. Principal practice of promote diversity of knowledge and experience sharing among members of the organization in TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools:
 Teachers Perceptions (N=404)

No.	Items	M	SD	Rank	*Level
1.	Principal build guidelines that can serve as a platform for the sharing of school values and goals	5.089	0.748	2	Very High
2.	Principal encourage teachers to have diversity in all aspects of expertise even when not required by the school	4.980	0.834	5	High
3.	Principal are open to all ideas, views and creativity given by teachers	5.013	0.961	3	Very High
4.	Principal can be flexible to the changes that take place outside of school	5.000	0.967	4	Very High
5.	Principal respect teachers who can solve management problems in schools without their help	5.102	0.938	1	Very High
	Total-Average	5.037	0.890		V. High

Based on table 5, four of five items of principals practiced of promote diversity of knowledge and experience sharing among members of the organization in the TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools achieved at a Very High level. The highest item was ‘Principal respect teachers who can solve management difficulties in schools without their help’ achieved mean value of 5.102 (SD=0.938). In contrast, the only item rated at a high level was "Principal encourage teachers to have diversity in all areas of competence, even when it is not needed by the school," which obtain a mean of 4.98 and a standard deviation of 0.83. Although these two items differ in their mean scores, the overall average for principals’ practice of promoting diversity of knowledge and experience sharing among organizational members in the TS25 Program was 5.0368, with a standard deviation of 0.8896, indicating performance at a Very High level.

Table 6. Principal practice of conservation in TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools: Teachers Perceptions (N=404)

No.	Items	M	SD	Rank	*Level
1.	The principal leads the school based on his experience as an administrator at another school	5.259	0.695	1	Very High
2.	The principal uses the problems faced in the past as a guide to him in order to lead the school more effectively	5.136	0.689	2	Very High
3.	Principal make decisions about schools based on data obtained last year	5.119	0.713	3	Very High
4.	Principal improve the school's vision if it has been able to be realized	4.748	0.924	4	High
5.	Principal take drastic measures such as changing the duties of teachers who do not perform the assigned tasks	4.693	0.985	5	High
	Total-Average	4.99	0.80		High

Table 6 shows a distinct difference between the Very High and High levels of principals' practice of conservation in the TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools. three items rated at a Very High level all recorded mean scores above 5.10, indicating strong and consistent agreement among respondents. The highest-rated item, 'The principal leads the school based on his expertise as an administrator at another school,' achieved the highest overall mean 5.259, followed by 'The principal uses issues faced in the past as a guide to manage the school more effectively' mean of 5.136 and 'Principal makes judgments about the school based on data obtained the previous year' mean of 5.119. Meanwhile, two items only achieve at a 'High' level score, with mean value from to 4.693 to 4.78.

As a results, even though three items indicate very strong practices, the comparatively lower achievement of the remaining items reduces the total average mean to 4.9910 and standard deviation of 0.8012, placing overall practice at High Level only. This suggests that principals' conservation practices are generally strong but may be less robust when it comes to implementing significant changes or re-evaluating school direction.

Table 7. Principal practice of identify and utilize resources to perform task to succeed in TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools: Teachers Perceptions (N=404)

No.	Items	M	SD	Rank	*Level
1.	Principal strongly believe in the skills possessed by teachers	4.851	1.141	2	High
2.	Principal allow teachers to study leave despite the shortage of teachers	4.425	1.068	5	High
3.	Principal will respect their teachers if they have done their best for the school	4.852	1.137	1	High
4.	The principal will admit if he makes a mistake in the interest of the school	4.654	0.972	4	High
5.	The principal encourages teachers to be involved in the school leadership process because he is confident of their abilities	4.850	1.138	3	High

Total-Average	4.73	1.09	High
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A comparison of the items in Table 7 indicates that all five items, which measure principals' practice of identifying and utilizing resources to perform tasks for success in the TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools, were rated at a 'High' level. Although all items fall within the same category, there are clear differences in the degree of agreement across the statements. Item no 1,3, and 5 achieved a very similar means scores total of 4.85, reflecting strong consistency in teachers' perceptions. In comparison, the remaining two items obtained slightly lower ratings but still remained within the High category. Item four, 'The principal will admit if he makes a mistake in the interest of the school,' achieve a mean of 4.654 and a standard deviation of 0.972. The lowest item was 'Principal permits teachers to take study leave despite the teacher shortage,' achieved a mean of 4.425 and a standard deviation of 0.972.

The overall results in table 7 shows that, principals' practice of identifying and utilizing resources to complete tasks in order to succeed in the TS25 Program was rated at a High level, with an overall mean of 4.7265 and a standard deviation of 1.0912.

Table 8. Principal practice of Sustainable Leadership by Dimension in TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools: Teachers Perceptions (N=404)

Dimensions of Sustainable Leadership	M	SD	Rank	Level
Promote lifelong learning	4.978	0.681	5	<i>High</i>
Form succession leader in school	4.974	0.683	6	High
Focus on progress of the school around	5.122	0.753	2	Very High
Develop and distribute leadership to others	5.080	0.808	3	Very High
Promote diversity of knowledge and experience sharing among members of the organization	5.368	0.889	1	Very High
Conservation	4.991	0.801	4	High
Identify and utilize resources in order to perform task to success	4.726	1.091	7	High
Overall Average	5.03	0.82		Very High

Table 8 presents the evaluation of principals' practices in Sustainable Leadership across seven dimensions within the TS25 Program at excellent secondary schools. Based on this, three dimensions were rated at a Very High level, while the remaining four dimensions attained a 'High' level of practice. Illustrate a balanced but differentiated pattern of leadership strengths. In this table the highest 'Very High' level score was Promote diversity of knowledge and experience exchange among members of the organisation', achieved a mean of 5.368 and a standard deviation 0.889, followed by 'Focus on progress of the school around' with a mean of 5.122 and standard deviation of 0.753, and 'Develop and distribute leadership to others' had a mean of 5.080 and standard deviation 0.808. These results indicate strong practices in collaboration, school improvement, and shared leadership.

Meanwhile, there were a small difference among the remaining four High level dimensions, with a range of 0.265 between the highest and lowest items. 'Conservation' achieved the highest mean of 4.991, demonstrating consistent reflective and data-informed practices. 'Promote lifelong learning' with mean of 4.978 and standard deviation of 0.681, and 'Form succession leader in school' with mean of 4.974 and standard deviation of 0.683. The lowest rated item with mean of 4.726 and standard deviation of 1.091 was 'Identify and utilise resources to accomplish tasks successfully'. Despite the differences, all four dimensions remain at a 'High' level, demonstrating generally strong and consistent leadership practices.

As a result, the total-average mean across all seven dimensions was 5.0341 (SD = 0.8151), indicating that principals' Sustainable Leadership practices in the TS25 Program were at a Very High level. The finding of this study, conclude TS25 Programme could further strengthen school leadership competency, enhance quality of teaching and learning, and, actively sustain community involvement. The School Transformation Programme 2025 (TS25) is part of the efforts of the MOE towards improving the quality of students and quality schools by applying best practices in the implementation of management and leadership as well as pedagogy in teaching and learning of the 21st century.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the data collection confirm that excellent secondary schools in the TS25 School Transformation Programme 2025 are effectively practising sustainable leadership. Principals in these schools' place strong emphasis on three core dimensions of sustainable leadership: promoting diversity of knowledge and experience sharing, focusing on continuous school improvement, and developing distributed leadership.

With regard to diversity of knowledge and experience sharing, principals demonstrate inclusive and empowering practices. One notable aspect of this practice is the respect and trust afforded to teachers, enabling them to independently solve management problems. This reflects confidence in staff capabilities and fosters distributed leadership. Principals play a central role in addressing various school situations, including listening to teachers' needs and suggestions, providing a conducive environment for implementing educational activities, utilizing alternative teaching resources, and proposing solutions to challenges encountered during the teaching process (Outdat, 2021). Thus, school principals must have and understand a clear work vision, be able and willing to work hard, have a high work drive, be diligent and steadfast in their work, provide optimal services, and have strong work discipline (Winarsih et al., 2024).

Furthermore, school principals exhibit a clear and strong commitment to advancing school improvement and progress. They actively encourage teachers to learn from more experienced colleagues, facilitate knowledge sharing on various aspects of teaching and learning, and foster a collaborative professional culture. By assigning tasks through team-oriented approaches, they reinforce collective responsibility and teamwork practices that align with the concept of collegial supervision. In which, school principal's supervisory role is closely linked to the implementation of collegial supervision, wherein principals assume full responsibility for building commitment and collaboration among all school stakeholders (Sa'imah et al., 2023).

In addition, principals excel at developing and distributing leadership across the school. They guide and support administrative teams in addressing challenges, maintain close professional relationships with staff, and take ultimate responsibility for sustaining school success. As Garan (2022) notes, effective principals adopt a proactive leadership style and hold themselves accountable for all aspects of school performance, thereby ensuring long-term excellence. However, the study is limited to excellent secondary schools, which may constrain the generalizability of findings. Future research could explore sustainable leadership practices across schools with varying performance levels and examine strategies for improving resource management. Overall, the study demonstrates that structured leadership programs like TS25 can play a pivotal role in developing effective, sustainable, and transformative school leadership.

CONCLUSION

The principles of sustainable leadership within the TS25 Programme at excellent secondary schools can successfully achieve their objectives by effectively promoting diversity of knowledge and experience sharing among staff, maintaining a strong focus on continuous school improvement, and actively developing and distributing leadership across the organisation. By prioritizing distributed leadership and a culture of continuous learning, schools do more than just improve academic results; they institutionalize a resilient framework that mirrors the ethical pillars of Malaysia Madani and the economic goals of the Twelfth Malaysia Plan. Ultimately, the success of the Malaysia Education Blueprint depends on this shift from top-down management to a sustainable ecosystem where resources are optimized and leadership is shared. Thus, it is hoped that the findings of this study will offer valuable and practical insights to support principals and teachers in enhancing academic performance.

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