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DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION OF A VALUES-BASED TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK FOR MIDDLE LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS THROUGH THE FUZZY DELPHI METHOD

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Abstract

Amid intensifying calls for ethical, visionary leadership in schools, the need for contextually grounded values-based frameworks for middle leadership has become increasingly urgent. Responding to this imperative, the present study develops and validates a visionary–inspirational values-based leadership framework for Middle Leadership Teams (MLTs) in Malaysian schools. Grounded in Transformational Leadership theory and informed by Al-Ghazali’s ethical philosophy, the framework integrates six core leadership values: Taqwa (God-conscious integrity), Hikmah (wisdom), Wibawa (moral authority), Ihsan (compassion), Basirah (foresight), and Shaja’ah (moral courage). Adopting Phase Two of Design and Development Research (DDR), the study employed the Fuzzy Delphi Method (FDM) to establish systematic expert consensus. The validation process involved eleven authoritative experts in educational leadership drawn from national leadership training institutions, together with scholars in Islamic and Moral Education possessing recognised expertise in leadership value interpretation. All items satisfied the prescribed threshold value ($d \leq 0.2$), achieved expert agreement exceeding 75%, and surpassed the α -cut value of 0.5, demonstrating a high level of consensus. The findings affirm the contextual relevance and conceptual robustness of the proposed framework. The study contributes theoretically by extending Transformational Leadership through explicit value-based dimensions, methodologically by evidencing rigorous FDM validation, and practically by offering a structured and holistic model for strengthening middle leadership development in Malaysian schools.

Keywords:

Values-Based Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Middle Leadership, Fuzzy Delphi Method, Design and Development Research