

## Schools as a Learning Organization: From the Perspective of Teachers and Administrator

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### Abstract

The changes taking place in the landscape of the educational environment have demanded the key human resources serving in the school, namely teachers, to implement an efficient response and best practices in all aspects to achieve a balance with a dynamic environment. Efficient responses can only be carried out through the continuous learning process carried out by human sources. This study aims to identify the variation in perceptions regarding workgroups on implementing the practice of learning organizations in school organizations. This study uses a quantitative design and a survey study involving questionnaires developed based on the Learning Organization Practices Profile Model. Questionnaires were distributed to 500 respondents consisting of teachers serving in thirteen secondary schools located in Melaka Tengah, Melaka. The sample of this study was selected using cluster and simple random sampling. The data of this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics involving the mean calculation and inferential statistics involving T-test analysis. The findings of this study showed that the administrator working group recorded higher mean readings for all aspects of the implementation of learning organization practices and the implementation of learning organization practices as a whole compared to the teacher working group. The T-Test analysis showed significant differences in the perceptions between the working groups on the three aspects of the learning organization and the implementation of learning organization practices as a whole. This study contributes to empirical data that measure the stages of implementing the practice of learning organizations in school organizations and examines the variation in perceptions between administrators and teachers. Further studies involving comparisons of different types of schools are reserved for looking at the stage of implementing the overall practice of the learning organization.

**Keywords:** *Learning Organisation Practices Profile, Secondary School, Educational Transformation, Administrator, Human Resources.*

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## Introduction

The rapid development in the economic field driven by the 4.0 industrial revolution and advances in technology, communication, and information have greatly impacted the Malaysian education system. In line with the rapid growth of industry and technology, the Ministry of Education Malaysia is committed to elevating the education system in Malaysia to be comparable to the education system owned by developed countries in the world in ensuring the national education system can produce competitive and reliable human capital. The MOE introduced various reforms and transformations by implementing the Malaysian Education Blueprint (MEB) from 2013-2025. Among the reforms introduced by MOE is the introduction of the Secondary School Science Curriculum (KSSM), Primary School Science Curriculum (KSSR) and Classroom-Based Assessment. KPM also announced the abolition of the Primary School Assessment Test (UPSR) recently and raised School-Based Assessment as a new form of holistic and comprehensive assessment and plays a role in developing non-academic talents and potential at an early age.

The prevailing changes in the national education landscape require school organizations to implement the necessary changes and adapt to strike a balance with changing environments. The consistent changes in the educational landscape can result in school organizations at risk of becoming backwards and losing influence and less relevant if the school organization fails to manage the change efficiently (Savas et al., 2013). The school organization needs to carry out an appropriate and efficient response against the prevailing stimuli of change, and the learning process among human resources devoted to the organization, namely the teacher, is seen as the most brilliant solution.

Most scholars in management agree that implementing the learning organizations' practice in a school organization is seen as the pithiest solution because these practices will create the best work atmosphere (Sayed & Edgar, 2019). Learning organization p because this practice is a paradigm shift that can help school organizations cope with changes in the environment. This practice promotes learning and provides a foundation that can support transformation, progress and produce excellent and distinguished organizational performance results (Marquardt, 2002).

This practice will also be a motivation and a driving factor for human resources devoted to developing and expanding their abilities to produce the desired achievements. In a school organization that implements the practice of learning organizations, human resources will foster new and more widespread patterns of thinking, and collective aspirations can be spread in teams and all human resources committed to carry out the learning process continuously (Sayed & Edgar, 2019).

The school organization is required to implement the learning organization practices that make the process long-lasting even though it is subject to various challenges of change, seeing the school as a learning organization having the capability and ability to carry out the learning process to develop innovative results and services, to become more competitive. Henceforth, able to form a school organization of value to all stakeholders (Mababu Mukiur & García Revilla, 2016). The demand for school organizations to immediately transform into a learning organization because, in a learning organization, new knowledge will be successfully created consistently, spread the knowledge that is owned to the entire organization and strive to increase innovation in the school organization so that it becomes a superior competitor (Mababu Mukiur & García Revilla, 2016).

In addition, by implementing the practice of learning organizations in a school organization, various valuable benefits will be obtained by school organizations such as increasing the ability of the organization to be more adaptive and able to adapt, striving for innovation, increasing achievement and creating human resources that are more professional and able to contribute to increasing organizational performance (Reese, 2014). Schools as a learning organization also have efforts to implement, update and maintain the energy for the organization to adapt to environmental challenges that are experiencing changes consistently (Vijayabanu et al., 2015). Although much has been said about the benefits that will be obtained by school organizations when successfully implementing LO practices, empirical studies that examine the level of implementation of learning organization practices in school organizations are still lacking and resulting in the implementation of LO practices is in a state of vague (Stoll & Kools, 2017). The concept of LO itself is seen as still new and requires a deeper understanding of education-based organizations such as school organizations (Rosnah Ishak et al., 2014). Thus, this study is necessary to fill the gaps of empirical studies that measure the level of

implementation of learning organization practices in school organizations and measure the variation of perceptions between two different working groups that serve in schools, namely administrators and teachers.

## **Literature Review**

### **Learning Organization Concept**

The concept of LO was first introduced by Garrat in 1987 but began to gain a place in organizational management when Senge popularized the concept in 1990. At the beginning of introducing this concept, LO practices gained more place among profit-based organizations such as business organizations. However, seeing the success of LO practices in providing valuable benefits to organizations, education-based organizations such as school organizations are now showing a keen interest in transforming into an LO to address the challenges of change and transformation to produce effective education improving performance. student (Berkowitz et al., 2013).

LO practice refers to a practice committed to providing awareness to all human resources of the potential of the self-possessed and encouraging human resources to implement change through a learning process that is implemented continuously (H.Khaerul Hadi, Tina Juniawati, 2018). In addition, LO practice also refers to a practice that enables human resources in the organization to acquire new knowledge and skills relevant to the tasks performed through the individual learning process and then disseminate new knowledge and skills among human resources in the organization to achieve vision and goals together effectively and efficiently (Al-dhuwaihi et al., 2020). Dissemination of new knowledge and skills held in the teams will increase organizational knowledge and give the organization a competitive advantage. The practice of LO also emphasizes the concept of collaboration or cooperation among human resources and the ranks of administrators that give birth to a system that is complementary and interdependent (Prelipcean, 2016).

### **Characteristics of a Learning Organization**

For a school to succeed as a LO, the school organization needs to identify the characteristics needed for the school to be a genuine LO. Schools as LO need to constantly create a culture of learning among human resources to balance an environment that is dynamic and changes consistently. A learning culture in an organization refers to the impression of synergy produced through the formation and cultivation of a set of interconnected atmosphere and always encourages learning as a professional way of life in human resources (Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2017). Schools as LO must always ensure that learning activities and dissemination of information are constantly enhanced as these two aspects are key to the success of learning organization practices in a school organization (Raj & Srivastava, 2013). Through a simplified learning process in a school organization, human resources will be motivated to implement innovations in daily tasks such as providing teaching aids that are efficient in improving student comprehension, providing appropriate assessments, and measuring student mastery levels. The implementation of LO practices in school organizations will facilitate innovation among human resources (Santa, 2015).

LO practices in school organizations also emphasize building and developing constructive relationships and encouraging consultation motivation among human resources (Ghadermarzi et al., 2020). The line of administrators and colleagues will always appreciate human resources who dare to try and explore new alternatives and possibilities in the daily work process. Success in every attempt undertaken will be given due recognition and reinforcement. In addition, in a school that adopts the practice of LO, the human resources who serve in it will not be punished if they make a mistake; instead, every mistake made will be studied collectively every weakness that exists to be overcome jointly. Mistakes made are not considered disappointing failures; instead, they are considered valuable learning opportunities to human resources (Odor, 2018).

In addition, the school as a learning organization is constantly exploring and implementing different strategies and initiatives to ensure that human resources are capable of facing the inevitable challenges of change (Sowath Rana Alexandre Ardichvili Daiane Polesello, 2016). In LO, human resources depend on the leader's instructions in performing daily tasks but are more likely to make a transition of human capital from top to bottom. Human resources serving in the organization will strive to change consistently and improve

capabilities in terms of behaviour through effective communication processes in the organization. Every experience gained by continuing the work process will add knowledge and confidence of human resources to solve issues and problems that arise in the work process all day.

School as a learning organization also promotes norms where all human resources are committed to continuous learning and collaboratively working together to strive for continuous improvement (Sinclair, 2017). The culture of collaboration and cooperation that exists among all stakeholders involving administrators, teachers and parents in the process of sharing opinions in decision making, the formation of staff development committees and the promotion of innovation and creativity among human resources are among the key elements that guarantee successful implementation of LO practices (Yunus, 2020).

### **Human Resources as Knowledge Asset**

Changes in the landscape of national education have had a major impact on the main human source serving in schools, namely teachers. The MOE's hope to elevate the teaching profession as a profession of choice has made teachers nowadays called 'highly knowledgeable workers'. Teachers today are urged to constantly improve their professional knowledge through a learning process that is consistently and continuously improving their profession (Prenger et al., 2019).

To ensure that the role of teachers as an important pillar in ensuring the success of the student learning process remains relevant, teachers need to constantly develop their professionalism and abilities throughout the teacher's career (Admiraal et al., 2016). Teachers should rely on the knowledge acquired during teacher training but must constantly update the knowledge acquired through the learning process, either formally or informally, in the daily work process. The learning process that applies to teachers in the workplace may involve formal learning process such as advocating workshops and seminars or informally that includes the process of acquiring knowledge, skills and abilities to carry on the professional experience of fellow workers and carry out an in-depth reflection on the work process carried out all day. The reflection that is carried out will allow the teacher to identify the strengths and weaknesses that manifest to carry out improvement and continue to develop.

In addition, teachers also need to constantly get feedback on the work performed from each stakeholder regularly to ensure the effectiveness of the work process implemented and plan and implement strategies and corrective actions if there are weaknesses (Bhaskar & Mishra, 2017). There is no doubt that teachers usually face time constraints to be allocated for professional development, and it is a challenge for teachers to allocate time to make observations and reflections on teaching methods practised by fellow teachers (van Driel et al., 2012). Apart from time constraints, work conditions and lack of training in collaboration between teachers are among the factors that hinder teacher professional development programs. Therefore, the school organization's line must ensure an effective system that supports and facilitates the learning process implemented among human resources. The workplace space needs to be structured to promote informal interactions in human resources that can encourage human resources to share problems and experiences and try to think about solutions and steps to enhance improvement collectively because of the tendency of teachers to communicate and get support from fellow workers who have something in common with them (Lecat, 2019).

The role of the main human resource, namely teachers, in determining the success of the school organization can no longer be denied (Ghademarzi et al., 2020). Teachers are required to ensure that improvements are implemented daily consistently (Adams & Khojasteh, 2018). Human resources in organizations need to instil a high spirit of inquiry, instil initiative and a willingness to experiment and explore new ideas, alternatives and possibilities (Stoll & Kools, 2017). The knowledge gained by human resources will be disseminated throughout the organization and see the change from tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge. Teachers need to positively see the stimuli of change in the educational landscape and carry out the learning process to continue to increase efforts to be adaptive and achieve harmony with the environment. The resistance to the change process is the main enemy in achieving positive change in the school organization. When human resources serving in a school organization strive to improve the ability to learn individually, these human resources will improve the organization's overall ability to learn collectively. The ability to carry out learning collectively in a school organization will continue to be empowered while the school organization has a

culture and climate supporting learning activities carried out in the school organization (Yang, B., Watkins, K. E., & Marsick, 2004).

### **Research Objective**

The objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify the perception of human resources towards implementing the learning organization practices based on two workgroups, namely administrators and teachers.
2. Identify the variation in perceptions between the workgroups regarding implementing the practice of learning organizations in the schools studied.

### **Research Hypothesis**

There are four research hypotheses to be tested in this study:

- H<sub>01</sub>:** There were no significant differences in terms of perceptions on the implementation of LO in the school organizations studied from leadership between the working groups of administrators and teachers.
- H<sub>02</sub>:** There were no significant differences in terms of perceptions on the implementation of LO in the school organizations studied from the aspect of work system and structure between the working groups of administrators and teachers.
- H<sub>03</sub>:** There were no significant differences in terms of perceptions on the implementation of LO in the school organizations studied from staff performance and development between the working groups of administrators and teachers.
- H<sub>04</sub>:** There were no significant differences in terms of perceptions on the implementation of LO in the school organizations studied between the working groups of administrators and teachers.

### **Methodology**

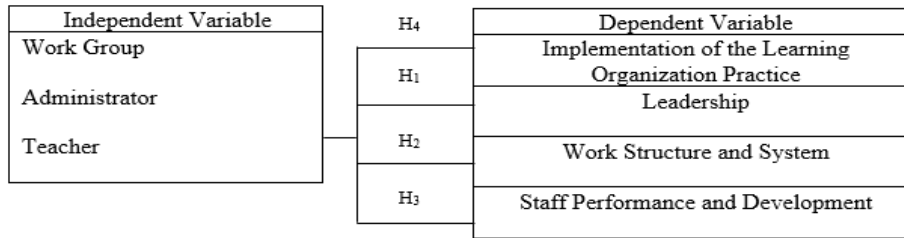
This study is quantitative and uses a survey method. The survey method is the researcher's choice because the survey method is suitable for obtaining feedback from a large number of respondents (Marican, 2006). Quantitative data of this study were analyzed using descriptive statistics that involve the calculation of mean and inferential statistics that involve T-Test analysis. This study was conducted in the district of Central Melaka, Melaka. Cluster and simple random sampling methods were used to select the respondents involved in this study. This study involved 500 secondary school teachers who serve in the area of Central Melaka, Melaka. The respondents of this study were categorized into two main working groups, namely administrators consisting of principals, senior assistant teachers and head of department and teacher working groups. This study uses a questionnaire adapted from the Learning Organisation Practices Profile (LOPP) model developed by O'Brien (1994).

### **Research Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study has been developed based on the LOPP model developed by O'Brien (1994). Based on the LOPP model, implementing the learning organizations practices includes three main aspects: leadership, work systems and structures, and staff performance and development. This study aims to identify the level of learning organization implementation according to the perception of different workgroups and variations in perceptions between the administrative and teacher workgroups of three aspects of learning organizations practice and the implementation of the learning organizations practice as a whole.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Framework*



**Data Analysis**

The researcher used descriptive statistics involving the mean calculation and inferential statistics involving T-test analysis in this study.

**Findings**

**Variations in human resource perceptions in terms of different workgroups on the four components of leadership**

**Table 1**

*Mean Reading and T-Test Analysis of the Variation in Perceptions of Two Different Workgroups on the Aspect of Leadership*

Leadership Component	Work Groups	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Sig. Level
1 Vision and Strategy	Teacher	419	4.03	0.43	- 4.32	0.00
	Administrator	81	4.25	0.42		
2 Executive Practices	Teacher	419	4.10	0.47	- 6.32	0.00
	Administrator	81	4.43	0.42		
3 Management Practices	Teacher	419	3.90	0.49	- 5.65	0.00
	Administrator	81	4.23	0.44		
4 Organizational Climate	Teacher	419	4.12	0.45	- 4.53	0.00
	Administrator	81	4.36	0.42		
<b>Overall Leadership</b>	<b>Teacher</b>	419	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.39</b>	<b>- 6.25</b>	<b>0.00</b>
	<b>Administrator</b>	81	<b>4.32</b>	<b>0.36</b>		

In Table 1, the mean values recorded for the overall leadership component are distributed between 4.04 for the teacher working group and 4.32 for the administrator working group. High mean readings for the administrative working group indicate that the administrative working group has higher confidence in implementing leadership aspects in implementing LO practices in the school organizations studied. The P-value recorded is 0.00, which is lower at the level of  $p = 0.05$ . There are significant differences in the perceptions of the teachers and administrators working groups for the overall leadership aspect. Then  $H_01$  is rejected.

## Variations in the perception of human resources in terms of different workgroups on the four components of the work structure and system

**Table 2**

*Mean Reading and Analysis of the T-Test of the Variation in Perceptions of Two Different Workgroups on Aspects of the Work Structure and System*

	Work Structure and System Aspect	Work Groups	No	Mean	SD	t-value	Sig. Level
1	Work System and Organization	Teacher	419	3.97	0.46	- 4.60	0.00
		Administrator	81	4.22	0.43		
2	Information Flow	Teacher	419	4.12	0.41	- 4.44	0.00
		Administrator	81	4.34	0.40		
3	Individual and Group Practices	Teacher	419	4.05	0.39	- 4.27	0.00
		Administrator	81	4.25	0.32		
4	Work Processes	Teacher	419	4.02	0.36	- 4.21	0.00
		Administrator	81	4.23	0.40		
<b>Overall Work Structure and System Aspect</b>		<b>Teacher</b>	419	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.36</b>	<b>- 5.11</b>	<b>0.00</b>
		<b>Administrator</b>	81	<b>4.26</b>	<b>0.34</b>		

In Table 2, the mean values recorded for the overall component of system components are distributed between 4.04 for the teacher working group and 4.26 for the administrator working group. The high mean readings for the administrator working group indicate that the administrator working group has higher confidence in the implementation of work structure and system aspect in the implementation of LO practices in the school organizations studied. The P-value recorded is 0.00, which is lower at the level of  $p = 0.05$ . There are significant differences in the perceptions of the teachers 'and administrators' workgroups for aspects of the overall work system and structure. Therefore,  $H_0$  is rejected.

## Variations in the perception of human resources in terms of different workgroups on the four components of staff performance and development

**Table 3**

*Mean Reading and Analysis of the T-Test Variations in Perceptions of Two Different Workgroups on Aspects of Staff Performance and Development*

	Staff Performance and Development	Work Groups	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1	Performance Goals and Feedback	Teacher	419	3.96	0.42	- 3.30	0.00
		Administrator	81	4.12	0.35		
2	Training and Education	Teacher	419	3.99	0.39	- 3.98	0.00
		Administrator	81	4.17	0.36		
3	Rewards and Recognition	Teacher	419	3.90	0.50	- 4.07	0.00
		Administrator	81	4.14	0.40		
4	Individual and Group Development	Teacher	419	4.03	0.41	- 3.24	0.00
		Administrator	81	4.19	0.38		
<b>Overall Staff Performance and development</b>		<b>Teacher</b>	419	<b>4.00</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>-4.36</b>	<b>0.00</b>
		<b>Administrator</b>	81	<b>4.18</b>	<b>0.33</b>		

In Table 3, the mean values recorded for the overall staff performance and development component are distributed between 4.00 for the teacher working group and 4.18 for the administrator working group. The high mean readings for the administrator working group indicate that the administrator working group has higher confidence in the implementation of system aspects and work structure in the implementation of LO

practices in the school organizations studied. The P-value recorded is 0.00, which is lower at the level of  $p = 0.05$ . There are significant differences in the perceptions of the working group of teachers and administrators for overall staff performance and development. Therefore,  $H_{03}$  is rejected.

**Variations in the perception of human resources in terms of different workgroups on the four implementations of the overall learning organization practice**

**Table 4**

*Mean Reading and Analysis of the T-Test Variations in Perceptions of Two Different Workgroups on the Implementation of Learning Organization*

Implementation of LO	Work Groups	No	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Significance Level
1 Leadership	Teacher	419	4.04	0.39	- 6.25	0.00
	Administrator	81	4.32	0.36		
2 Work Structure and System	Teacher	419	4.04	0.36	- 5.11	0.00
	Administrator	81	4.26	0.34		
3 Staff Performance and Development	Teacher	419	4.00	0.34	- 4.36	0.00
	Administrator	81	4.18	0.33		
<b>Overall Implementation of LO</b>	Teacher	419	<b>4.03</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>- 5.56</b>	<b>0.00</b>
	Administrator	81	<b>4.25</b>	<b>0.33</b>		

Table 4 shows the mean readings for human resource perceptions and T-Test analysis in terms of the two working groups on implementing learning organization practices as a whole.

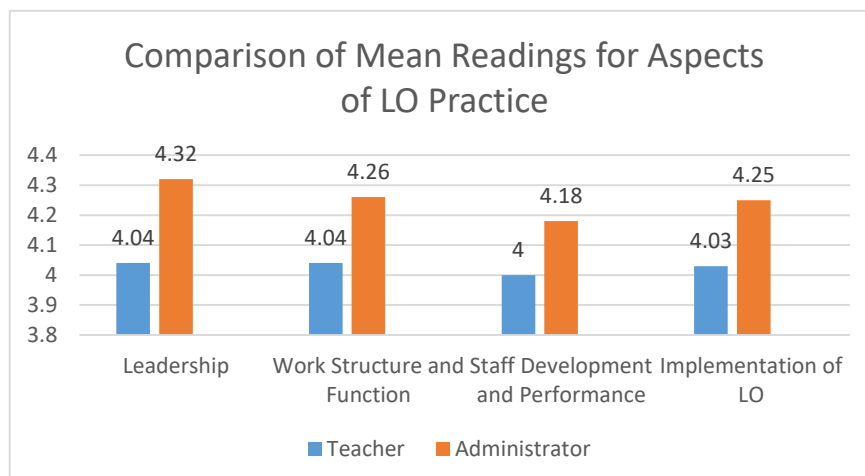
In Table 4, the mean scores recorded for the overall practice of learning organizations are scattered between 4.03 for the teacher workgroup and 4.25 for the administrator workgroup. The high mean readings for the administrator working group indicated that the administrator working group had higher confidence in implementing LO practices as a whole in the school organizations studied. The P-value recorded is 0.00, which is lower at the level of  $p = 0.05$ . There are significant differences in the perceptions of teachers 'and administrators' working groups for the implementation of overall LO practices. Therefore,  $H_{04}$  is rejected.

**Comparison of Mean Readings for Learning Organization Aspect from Two Different Work Groups**

Based on the min value, the perception of human resources towards the implementation of LO practices in terms of two different workgroups is as in Diagram 2

**Figure 2**

*Comparison of Mean Readings of Aspects of Implementation of Learning Organization Practices from the Perspective of Two Different Working Groups*





In Figure 2, it can be seen that there is a mean difference in the three aspects of the implementation of learning organization practices, namely leadership, work structure and system and staff performance and development, as well as the implementation of learning organization practices as a whole. The administrator's workgroup shows a higher mean reading for the four aspects measured than the teacher's work group. The T-test analysis also showed significant differences between administrators and teachers' perceptions for all three aspects of learning organization practice and learning organization implementation as a whole.

## **Discussion**

This study shows strong empirical evidence on the level of implementation of learning organization practices in the district of Central Melaka, Melaka. The level of practice of the three aspects contained in the LO and the implementation of LO practice is at a high level according to the teachers and administrators' perception. The T-test analysis showed a significant difference between the perceptions of the administrator working group and the teacher working group. The administrator working group showed higher confidence in implementing learning organization practices than the teacher working group. The working group of administrators is the leaders who lead and navigate the school organization. Organizational leaders play an important role in successfully implementing LO practices in a school organization as organizational leaders play a role in creating a conducive environment to encourage innovation and learning processes among human resources in school (Chen et al., 2016). The findings of this study are in line with the opinion put forward by Haiyan, Walker and Xiaowei (2017), who also agreed that school leaders are responsible for building and nurturing a culture of learning among teachers in schools.

In addition, the school organization leaders also have a role in creating an effective communication system between all human resources to enable knowledge transfer effectively and smoothly (Gino et al., 2010). The organization's leaders should also encourage and motivate all human resources to push human resources beyond all possibilities in carrying out daily work processes. (Sivanathan & Cynthia Fekken, 2002). School leaders today are responsible for administrative matters and play a role in efforts to develop the potential of human resources in producing more creative and innovative human resources. (Arma et al., 2016). Organizational leaders need to identify the potential possessed by each human resource and strive to strengthen this potential by assigning tasks according to the talents and potentials possessed by human resources. Giving casual and not given full attention will reduce the sincerity and motivation of human resources to give their best in the tasks carried out.

School administrators also need to ensure a positive atmosphere and constructive relationships among human resources (Kennedy, 2018). The table arrangement in the teacher's room should allow human resources to interact and share opinions and experiences informally that can be utilized in the daily work process. The leadership style that is seen as suitable to be practised in implementing learning organization practices is the transformational leadership style. A leader who adopts a transformational leadership style has a high vision and always encourages human resources to work hard and serve as an agent of change that enables the organization to face change and address the uncertainties in the environmental landscape. (Yuesti & Sumantra, 2017). In conclusion, to successfully implement LO practices in a school organization, organizational leaders need to play a significant role in encouraging human resources to constantly implement learning and innovation processes to produce best practices in daily work processes and ultimately help produce impressive school performance.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

This study was conducted to examine the level of implementation of learning organization practices according to the working group of administrators and teachers in secondary school organizations. The findings of this study show that the mean readings recorded for both work groups are above 4.0 which indicates that both the working groups of administrators and teachers have high confidence in the implementation of learning organization practices. However, this study only involved secondary school teachers who served in Melaka Tengah district, Melaka which were chosen by random cluster and simple random sampling. The findings of this study could not be generalized to all secondary schools in Malaysia since this study only involves a small sample size and population.

Therefore, studies involving randomly selected schools throughout the country to get a clearer and broader picture of the level of implementation of LO practices according to teacher and administrator working groups are recommended to be carried out. moreover, comparative studies of different types of schools such as full boarding schools, cluster learning schools, regular daily schools and government-assisted religious schools are also recommended to be carried out as this study involves only ordinary daily secondary schools.

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