
Pilot Study on Effective School Leadership Behaviours and Practices for Improving Student's Achievements in Rural Secondary School

*Jude James¹, Rosy Talin¹ and Soon Singh Bikar¹

¹Faculty of Psychology and Education
University Malaysia Sabah,
88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Corresponding Author Email: *jude6119@gmail.com

Abstract

Effective school leadership behaviours and practices can help students learn and improve their achievement in rural secondary schools. This study examines the instrument's capability to gather data and familiarise the interviewer with the interview process. This interview also identifies a common code that might arise from the study. A principal, a teacher, and one ex-student are interviewed from one secondary school in rural secondary school for this pilot study. The data was obtained through interviews. The quantity of data in the form of codes is rich and high, indicating that the instrument is able to collect the intended data. The data was then analysed using NVIVO 12 Version 2020. The findings showed that Responsibility, School direction, and Student's Development codes were frequently collected during the pilot phase.

Keywords : *Leadership theories, Pilot Study, Rural Secondary School, School leadership*

I. INTRODUCTION

Effective school leadership is crucial to enhancing the effectiveness and equality of education because it serves as the primary link between the classroom, the individual school, and the education system as a whole. By influencing the environment and culture in which teaching and learning take place, leadership within each specific school can help to enhance student learning [29]. School leadership had small but statistically significant associations with student achievement as per the latest study therefore this warrants an urgent need to study it especially in rural context to predicated on its potential to directly influence quality teaching and learning [15],[28]. However, leadership is a complex phenomenon that necessitates the use of an appropriate methodology to capture its complexities. The research utilised qualitative dispositions that are believed to explain much more complex and subtle aspects of leadership. Qualitative researchers frequently conduct qualitative studies in the absence of a theory or when an existing theory falls short of adequately describing a phenomenon [26]. On the type of methodology utilised, the case study approach is found suitable to study this kind of phenomenon as this method able to capture the uniqueness of the situation for individuals based on their experiences as a leader in specific contexts or places. Many researchers before this found that type of approach is beneficial to study programs or people, especially within a bounded system [27], [32].

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Qualitative Paradigm

A qualitative research design is employed for this study. A qualitative method consists of five research designs: Narrative Research, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, and Case Study. The nature of the research determined the choice of qualitative methods. Creswell states that qualitative research is best suited for addressing research problems in which the variables are unknown and must be explored [8]. Due to this, this study exploits a single case study approach by making use of interviews, observation, and content analysis [9], [27], [32], [35]. The selection of methodology, which is a case study is compatible with the pragmatist worldview. A pragmatist demands that a situation, in this case, the data must be viewed and collected in various arrangements [9]. It had previously been strongly recommended by a number of researchers, as it was suggested that a pragmatist worldview could make use of the full range of qualitative research methods and procedures. A pragmatic approach to a case study is suggested for the sake of flexibility, as a case study is defined as a detailed, intensive examination of a particular contextual and bounded phenomenon conducted in real-world situations [35].

B. Participants Background

Three informants were interviewed based on the informant profile during the data collection phase. One principal, one teacher, and one ex-student were interviewed to test out the questionnaires during the pilot study. Altogether, one informant is below the age of 25 years old, one informant is between the age of 27 to 55, and one is 55 years old. Their educational background includes having high school certificate and two master's degrees. The following table is the summary details of the background of informants.

Table 1: Informant Profile

*Note: Age based on the year of 2021, PCP1= Principle, TCT1= Teacher, EST1= Ex-student

Profile	Age	Education Background	Remarks
PCP1	55	Master Degree	Principal
TCT1	49	Master Degree	Teacher
EST1	25	High School Certificate	Ex-Student

C. Research Site

The research is primarily focused on the principals, teachers, and students of a selected public secondary school in the interior area of Sabah, Malaysia, which is considered a rural area. The research posits that the principal's leadership factor may carry greater weight for students' achievement in interior areas. A principal in public secondary school in that school is selected as the participant due to having more experience in leading their organisation, having a few more years in service before retiring. The slight lower GPS(Average School Grade) for the selected district if compared to other districts in the states is also the main criteria for the site suitability. Public secondary school in the interior were chosen because not many similar researches have been conducted in that area so far, thus this study tried to enriching study from the said area with hope it can act as a spring board for future studies. Third reason, it was selected because of its proximity to the location of the researcher working's place therefore reducing cost to conduct this study. This research aims to explore the leadership behaviour and practice of the principal in selected public secondary school in that district and relate it to student's achievements.

D. Samplings

The number of subjects selected for this case study is one principal, one teacher, and one ex-student. In her book, Yin himself did not specifically define the sample size for data collection for a qualitative study. However, he opines that instances in a qualitative study are used to extract the maximum amount of information possible from a rich site without the need to generalising the findings to a larger population [35]. While other research accepts a smaller sample size, such as a single unit, as long as it is contained within a bounded system, a case demonstrates that there is no "choice" at all [26]. Since two of the experts in the field of qualitative are almost in unison about the sample size, I felt it is not totally wrong if this research is to follow their recommendation. However, it is well understood that a smaller sample size might invoke problems in trustworthiness and rigour. However, this issue is addressed further within this article. For example, how to reduce the effect of bias and increase trustworthiness and rigour. Regardless, since this is only to test the instrumentation, reaching the point of data saturation is not required.

The principal was picked using a purposive sampling method, which is best employed with small groups of people or persons [19], [25]. As the data showed only one potential candidate in the whole district making it sensible to adopt this strategy. From principal to teacher, the selection of the next participant, a teacher, was based on snowballing technique, which is the recommendation of the principal himself. The student selection was based on the teacher's recommendation. This process was known as snowballing technique. It is beneficial in exploratory qualitative research and has limitations in terms of resources [13]. It is also a non-probability technique that involves the conscious selection by the researcher of certain people to include in a study. Due to this, all participants must have experienced the phenomenon that is being studied [9]. Typically, participants are chosen because they exhibit particular characteristics that interest the researcher, in this matter, "a case" [26]. That specific characteristic in the study is the homogeneity or "sameness" of student schooling in that particular school with other schools in the vicinity of the district. The objective or reason for choosing a specific sample is to ensure that those selected will yield the most pertinent, rich data and ample information per the study's purpose [35]. Balyer [1] further indicates that it is best suited to understanding human perceptions, problems, needs, behaviours, and contexts, which are the primary justification for qualitative research.

E. Instrumentation

Interviews are used as the primary instrumentation in this research first, with the principal, second with teachers, and finally with students if the data is not yet saturated. In this study, data is collected on three levels: first from the principal's own perspectives, second from the teacher's perspectives, and thirdly from the student's viewpoints. This is to see whether the data agree with each other and, hence, improve triangulation [26], [27]. These three tiers of data collection level are well supported in numerous studies before [12], [17], [20], [22]. Prior to data mining, the semi-structured question was checked by an expert in the field to ensure its trustworthiness. The outcomes are dynamically compared to others' results, such as currently trending in the academic sphere. Contents analysis also carried out at the end of the interview and followed by retrospective observation to ascertain and confirm the authenticity of the truthfulness of the finding.

C. Pilot Study

The instrument was pilot tested in one of the schools in rural area. The school was selected due to easy access from major towns in terms of logistics, ease of communication, and most importantly, it has similar characteristics to the intended real field. Pilot studies are used to evaluate and refine various aspects of a final study, including the design, fieldwork procedures, data collection instruments, and analysis plans. In this regard, the pilot study offers an excellent opportunity for practise prior to the start of the actual data collection. The information gathered during a pilot study can range from logistical to substantive, such as refining the instrument that will be used in the field [35]. All this information can be used to improve the study.

All three instruments are pilot studied during the course of one weeks. Each for the principal of the school, teacher, and ex-student. The process is similar to the actual data collection. After identifying potential participants, an agreement on when the interview is carried out is set. The day set for the principal and the teacher interview is the next day, while the ex-student is two days after the first one. During the day of the interview, a place with less noise was then chosen. This is for the ex-student's interview. As for the principal and the teacher, they insist that the interview to be carried out in their respective room. On the day of interview, a voice recorder was used and as a backup to use handphone as a secondary tool to record the conversation. The first step of the interview process is to read the informed consent form, make them understand the content, and to ask them to sign it as

a sign of agreement. Then the interview is continued as per the sequence in the prepared semi-structured questionnaire. The response that is recorded was then transcribed verbatim to writing, and this process took about one week. During the time, I sometimes had frustration with the sound quality. This is due to the incorrect location of the audio capturing device. As an improvement, for the real interview, make sure to put the recorder on top of something soft to reduce sound reflection that reduce the quality of sound.

After finishing the transcribing process, the analysed transcript is undergoing the process of member checking to ascertain that their meaning is justified and true to the participant's intention. This is done by sending the written transcript back to the respective participant and asking them to correct anything that is incorrect. After completing this process for each of the transcripts, it was then translated from Bahasa Melayu to English using back-to-back translation method. The translated transcript was then sent to a language expert to check for translation accuracy. The process took about another week. Once completing the data preparation, it is then feed into NVIVO for analysis. Everything is analysed into codes with the help of NVIVO as a tool to ease up the process. The transcript of the interview is examined to see whether the questions used in the instrument are able to capture what the question intended to achieve. Based on this, the final form of instruments, whether to change, drop or add more questions, is finalised before the data collection procedure is executed from the actual field.

D. Data analysis, Coding, Constant Comparative Method and the point of Saturation

Once the data is collected, the first action is to arrange it systematically order so that analysis can be performed on the raw data. Qualitative data, which is typically expressed in words rather than numbers, provides well-supported, detailed descriptions and explanations of processes in identified local contexts. Serendipitous findings and innovative integrations with previous studies are more likely to result from good qualitative data. Next course of action is to display an organised, compressed and assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action by creating a code, a meaningful name that indicates the idea or concept [28]. During this stage, any parts of the data that are related to the code are coded with appropriate labels. This is referred to as "open coding," and it occurs when events, actions, and interactions are compared and the appropriate conceptual labels are assigned. Thus, conceptually

related events, actions, and interactions are grouped into categories and subcategories [7]. Coding involves close reading of text or close inspection of the video or image and this was carried out until all the portion of data have been analyses completely. Throughout the duration of the study, the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data contained in written field notes or transcriptions is carried out continuously. This is referred to as data reduction [28]. Before immerse into another round of data collection, it is advisable to finish the earlier data analysis to avoid making the tasks into a giant, sometimes overwhelming, that might demotivate the researcher and reduce the quality of the work produced. It is a major error to commit primary efforts to data gathering for weeks, months, or even years before leaving the field to process the findings, as this eliminates the potential of collecting new data to fill in the gaps or test new ideas that may emerge during analysis [28].

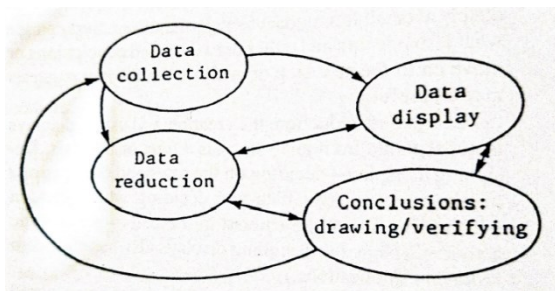


Figure 1 : Data Analysis

Source : Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M.(1994)

During second round of data collection, the next set of raw data is then analyses, as the first one. If there is any similarity, the data is grouped under the same coding. New collected data will always be constantly compared to the analysed data before. If a description from the data does not quite fit into the existing code, a new code is created. This process is called constant comparative. Constant comparison indicates that the researcher is constantly collecting additional data, analysing it, comparing it to previous analyses, and then collecting and analysing additional data in order to clarify an emerging theoretical relationship between variables [28]. It enables investigators to break through subjectivity and bias [7]. The process is continued on the next set of data until no more new code emerges from the data. If this is achieved, it can be said that the data is already saturated. It happens when the researcher reaches a stage when he or she begin to see or hear the same things over and over again, and no new information surfaces as he or she collect more data,

or perhaps fresh data no longer sparks new theoretical when gathering fresh insights, nor reveals new properties of core theoretical categories [5], [26]. Once saturation is achieved, collecting data from participants can cease. After open coding has been completed, a code list is available. The second phase in data analysis is axial coding, sometimes also known as categorising. The process is carried out by clustering together similar codes and identifying redundant codes. The goal is to condense a lengthy list of codes into a manageable number. Axial coding's objectives are to sort, synthesise, and organise large amounts of data, to reassemble them in novel ways following open coding, and to capture the essence of the data in more abstract terms than open codes. The widespread and frequent use of key terms illustrates their utility as conceptual categories [4], [5], [8].

The final phase or the of coding consists of selective coding. In this process, a researcher will look for categorises that cut cross the codes and this is followed by assigning a thematic to it. Selective coding is the process of bringing all of the categories together around a single "core" category [7]. The researcher then constructs a thematic from the interrelationships of the categories in the axial coding model through selective coding. At the most fundamental level, this topic provides an overview of the research process. It's the process of combining and fine-tuning the theme [8]. The selected themes should be able to answer the study's research questions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Codes Generated from the Study

Three files were produced from the pilot study, which resulted in the creation of one hundred three codes. After removing codes with less than three instances that are considered not significant, we are left with twenty-eight codes categorised into High, Moderate, and Low. Very High mean it is mentioned seven times and above during the interview. Moderate when there are four to six instances, if it less than four, it is categorised as low.

Table 2: Results of pilot study using prepared semi-structured interview

Codes	Instances
1 : Responsibility	High
2 : School's Direction	High
3 : Student's Development	High
4 : Specific Teacher	Medium
5 : Spontaneous Approach	Medium
6 : Student Evaluation	Medium

7 : Meeting	Medium
8 : Know Student Well	Medium
9 : Knowledgeable	Medium
10 : Looking at teacher Ability and Skills	Medium
11 : MMI	Medium
12 : Reference	Medium
13 : Self Improving	Medium
14 : Target	Medium
15 : Working experience	Medium
16 : Academic Achievement	Low
17 : Adaptability	Low
18 : Area of Expertise	Low
19 : Communication	Low
20 : Discussion	Low
21 : Do it ourselves	Low
22 : Experience Factors	Low
23 : External Involvement	Low
24 : Future Consideration	Low
25 : One Leader	Low
26 : Open Views	Low
27 : Set by Examples	Low
28 : Teacher-Proactive	Low

B. Graphics Representation of Codes

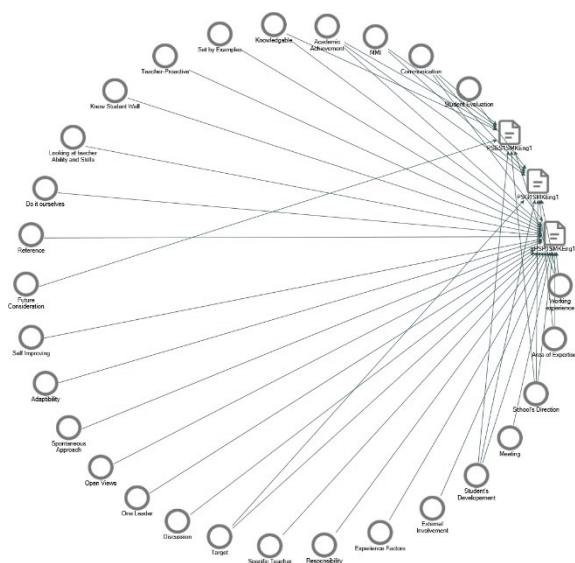


Figure 1: Codes that are generated during the pilot study

Those are categorised as high is Responsibility, imply that a good leader must be perceived responsible and able to instil the sense of responsibility on teachers and students about the importance of academic achievement. Secondly, School Direction is a view that a leader must know where the school head, for example, understand the vision and mission of the school and how to lead the school effectively [15]. Thirdly, Student Development means that the leader must at least

understand how to develop students practically, not just academically but also on the overall aspect.

Codes that are considered moderate in the study are Specific Teacher, this is where a leader know how to place his “best” teacher to optimise their capability. Spontaneous Approach is the ability of a leader to “play by ear” any given situation to lead the school successfully. Student Evaluation is a leader's tendency to use a method that is accessible to him or her, for example, public examination outcomes to improve the student, While Meeting implies that a leader tends to emphasise meeting as a place to make any decisions. Know Student Well mean being a leader whose recognise their student’s weakness and strength. Knowledgeable is understanding and know-how to find solution if stumble upon issues. Looking at teacher ability and skills is a leader's ability to discern their teacher attributes and place them according to their strength. MMI means the leader will try to protect instructional time from outside disturbances as much as possible. Reference is the ability of the leader to know who can be the primary reference or player, related to specific activities in school. Self-Improving explains how a leader tends to see how he can improve from the current level. Target is whether the leader understands what to achieve and how far it can go deeper in any given activities to achieve objectives. Working Experience indicates whether a leader consider has a good working background experience. The findings are in line with other Southeast Asian studies on how principals influence teaching quality and student achievement [34].

For those in the lower rank, which is Academic Achievement, Adaptability, Area of Expertise, Communication, Discussion, Do it ourselves, Experience Factors, External Involvement, Future Consideration, One Leader, Open views, Set by Examples, and Teacher-Proactive will not be discussed unless it repeated emerge in the real data collection. As these are only the initial codes, it does look many; however, this list will definitely become much smaller once combined with other codes when performing categorising and the thematic analysis later.

The implementation of the pilot study helps boost the researcher’s confidence by obtaining initial exposure to the prospects of the study and building initial relationships with the parties involved for actual data collection. Additionally, the pilot study also allows the researcher to gain valuable experience in conducting interviews and consulting the study finding with the participant. In practice, the researchers also have the opportunity to discuss the study’s findings with the supervisory committee. The process of transcribing and analysing pilot study interviews allows researchers to gain valuable experience managing and interpreting data. Experience from pilot studies also

will enable researchers to devise better questioning strategies before moving on to the actual data collection phase. Overall, a pilot study can improve researchers' data extraction from participants.

C. Trustworthiness and Rigor

One of the difficulties with qualitative research is its inability to generate valid and reliable knowledge ethically. It's because, human beings are the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, and we are much closer to influencing these parameters than we would be if data collection were intercalated between us and the participants thus provide bias [27]. To ensure trustworthiness and rigour stand believable and credible, this study employ strategies to promote the matters based on parallel criteria of trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. Credibility is just an analog to internal validity, transferability as an analog to external validity, dependability as an analogue to reliability and conformability as an analog to objectivity. Collectivity is known as trustworthiness and parallel to rigor [23].

Credibility refers to the researcher's conviction that the research findings are true. It is quantitative research's equivalent of internal validity and is concerned with truth-value [23]. To improve credibility, this research employ triangulation by using three data collection methods: interviews, observations assisted by checklists, and content analysis. First the data from the principal collected, then followed by collecting data from teachers and students. That mean this study adopt methods and source type of triangulation. Triangulation is defined as the practise of collecting and analysing data using multiple methods in order to increase the reliability and validity of qualitative research [26]. This is basically achieved by corroborating evidence from principals, teacher and student and using different method to gain data by the way of interviewing, observation and content analysis. To scrutinise each source of information for evidence that supports a theme. This step is necessary to ensure the study's accuracy, as the data is derived from multiple sources, individuals, or processes. This prompts the researcher to produce an accurate and credible report [8]. According to Yin [35], triangulation is a way of strengthening the credibility of a study, it would be beneficial from applying the principle of triangulation throughout the study. Therefore, one should ceaselessly look for chances to triangulate the means all times. Secondly, researchers also check their findings with participants in the study to determine if their findings are accurate according to their perception. Sometimes this process is known as member checking or participant validation [26], [27]. This check entails returning the findings to participants

and inquiring about the report's accuracy, as well as whether it corresponds to their experience, in writing or via an interview transcript [8]. The authors advocated for member checking as a way to improve the rigour of qualitative research, arguing that credibility is inherent in accurate descriptions or interpretations of phenomena [3], [14]. This is to ensure that the verbatim was read and confirmed by the participant as a fair account of the conversation [2].

Second, transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a research study are applicable to other contexts or settings. It is comparable to the quantitative research term "external validity." To facilitate this, a detailed description or narrative of the context is developed so that others may make judgments about the degree of fit or similarity and apply all or part of the findings elsewhere [23], [24]. This is basically providing a thick description of the participants and the research process, to enable the reader to assess whatever the findings are transferable to their own setting, a process known as transferability judgment [21]. This study is achieved by writing a comprehensive report so that any future reader can relate the study to their own. Thus, making it easier to be adapted to their own works.

Thirdly, conformability is the degree of neutrality in the research study's findings and how another research could confirm the study. In other words, the finding must be derived from data and not the figments of the inquirer's imagination. The finding must be based on participants' true responses and not due to any potential bias or personal motivations [21]. This was carried out by providing audit trails, which highlights every step of data analysis made to provide a rationale for the decisions that was made [27]. The audit trails transparently document the research process from the start of a project to the development and reporting of the findings. Throughout the study, records of the research path are kept [21]. Audit trails can be started once the proposal approved. Practically the researcher will use a logbook to record the activities done chronological or in this study google form was used to keep record. An online log is much accessible anytime at anyplace compared to traditional logbook. The record can be accessed by the supervisor or any relevant parties online or in-cloud, if the need arises.

Finally, dependability is defined as the extent that other researchers could repeat the study and that the findings would be consistent. This is actually about the stability of findings over time [21]. An inquiry audit, which requires an outside person to assess and examine the research process and data analysis in order to confirm that the findings are consistent and repeatable, can be used to further increase research dependability [23]. This is the process by which the details are gathered

during the audit trial are submitted to the external auditor in the form of a comprehensive set of notes on the research process, research team meetings, reflective thoughts, sampling, research material used, emergence of the findings, and data management information. This enables the external auditor to evaluate the research's transparency [21]. A third-party external auditor is engaged to conduct the audit. Before any research-related data can be used, it is forwarded to him for verification.

D. Peer debriefing

In this research to establish credibility further, the study employs peer debriefing process for all the instruments used to collect data. This can be extended to include the initial finding and analysis. It is the process of disclosing to a disinterested peer information about the study's methodology, the congruence of emerging findings with the raw data, and tentative interpretations [23], [27]. This process requires the researcher to collaborate with one or more colleagues who have objective perspectives on the study in a manner similar to an analytic session and to explore aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain implicit in the inquirer's mind in order to improve the account's accuracy [23]. This strategy-involving an interpretation beyond the researcher and invested in another person adds validity to an account [10].

The researcher's interview questions and general technique are scrutinised by the peers. Following that, feedback is given to increase confidence and assure validity. Peers may notice the following issues in the research during the investigation: overemphasised or underemphasised points; imprecise descriptions; general mistakes in the data; and researcher biases or preconceptions. Peer debriefing helps ensure that the findings and interpretations are worthwhile, accurate, and credible. In this way, it is complementary to other strategies used with qualitative research such as member checks, audit trail, thick description, and triangulation [33]. The researcher will also become more conscious of his own perspectives on the data as a result of the peer debriefing. He or she can provide researchers with written feedback or simply act as a sounding board for ideas. By enlisting the assistance of a peer debriefer, researchers increase the study's credibility [11]. To begin, the process provides an exploratory opportunity to test any working hypotheses that may emerge in the mind of the inquirer. Hypotheses that appear perfectly reasonable to an isolated investigator desperate for closure may appear absurd to an uninvolved debriefer. If the inquirer is unable to justify the path his or her mind is taking, he or she will be questioned. The researcher may wish to reconsider his or her position. Second, peer debriefing enables the development and preliminary testing of next

steps in the emerging methodological design. Indeed, the debriefer's role is to encourage the inquirer to take these steps, possibly by suggesting some or inquiring whether certain ones have been considered [23], [24].

As a general rule, there is no formula for conducting a debriefing session, just as there is no formula for conducting a psychoanalytic interview. It is obvious that the debriefer must be someone who is the inquirer's peer in every way, someone who is well-versed in both the topic of inquiry and methodological difficulties. The debriefer should not be a junior or a senior, and his or her comments should not be dismissed or interpreted as instructions. The debriefer should not hold an authoritative position over the inquirer (a matter of particular note in the case of a doctoral study, which should avoid using members of the research committee as debriefers). The debriefer should be someone who is prepared to take the task seriously and act as the devil's advocate, even if doing so clearly causes the inquirer distress. Both the inquirer and the debriefer should maintain written records of each contact, partly for the audit trail's sake and partly for the inquirer's future reference as he or she attempts to determine why the inquiry arose in the manner it did [23].

Peer review, on the other hand, has some drawbacks. The inquirer may develop a sense that their progress, judgments, or insights are falling short of expectations, resulting in diminished enthusiasm and energy. A thorough and empathic debriefer can go a long way toward avoiding that impression. There is a distinct possibility that the debriefer will exert a greater influence on the inquirer than is necessary, a tendency that is particularly likely if the debriefer operates too directly from a conventional framework and is overly demanding in terms of conventional criteria. To summarise, an excessive amount of feedback can be detrimental in the extreme. Despite these risks, debriefing is an extremely beneficial if sobering experience to which one should subject oneself; its utility, when conducted properly, is certain.

Peer debriefing was chosen as the preferred method for enhancing the research's quality in this study. It encourages authors to adhere to their discipline's established high standards and to exercise control over the dissemination of research data in order to avoid the publication of unsupported claims, unfavourable interpretations, or personal viewpoints without prior expert review [18].

IV. CONCLUSION

As the pilot study concludes, some improvements are made when doing actual data collection, including ensuring the audio quality is good; there is

also a need to prepare a backup question if the participant cannot understand the question. One must note is that the selection of participants must be based on the suggestion of primary participants; this technique is known as the snowball technique. This ensures that the data are streamlined by taking account of network boundaries, reducing selection bias and allowing for clustering of expert opinions based on their nomination network [6].




ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REFERENCES

- [1] Balyer, A. (2012). Transformational Leadership Behaviors of School Principals: A Qualitative Research Based on Teachers' Perceptions. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 4(3), 581–591. Retrieved from http://www.iojes.net/userfiles/article/iojes_949.pdf
- [2] Barker, B. (2007). The leadership paradox: Can school leaders transform student outcomes? *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 18(1), 21–43. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450601058618>
- [3] Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016). Member Checking: A Tool to Enhance Trustworthiness or Merely a Nod to Validation? *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(13), 1802–1811. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316654870>
- [4] Bowen, G. A. (2008). Naturalistic inquiry and the saturation concept: a research note. *Qualitative Research*, 8(1), 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794107085301>
- [5] Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Book (Vol. 10). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2007.11.003>
- [6] Christopoulos, D. (2009). Peer Esteem Snowballing: A methodology for expert surveys. *Eurostat Conference for New Techniques and Technologies for Statistics*, 171–179.
- [7] Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria. *Zeitschrift Fur Sociologie*, 19(6), 418–427. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00988593>
- [8] Creswell, J. . (2012). *Educational Research 4th Ed.*
- [9] Creswell, J. ., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Singapore: SAGE PuBLICATION Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd.
- [10] Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Approaches (3rd Edition)*. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1523157>
- [11] Creswell, J. W., Miller, D. L., Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2010). Determining Validity in Qualitative Inquiry, (October 2012), 37–41.
- [12] Dessalegn, F., Bekalu, F., & Frew, A. (2016). Principals perceived leadership effectiveness and its relationship with academic achievement among students in secondary school: The Ethiopian experience. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 11(12), 1129–1137. <https://doi.org/10.5897/ERR2015.2617>
- [13] Etikan, I. (2016). Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- [14] Golofshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597–607. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412985659>
- [15] Gümüş, S., Şükrü Bellibaş, M., Şen, S., & Hallinger, P. (2021). Finding the missing link: Do principal qualifications make a difference in student achievement?. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 17411432211051909.
- [16] Hallinger, P., Gümüş, S., & Bellibaş, M. Ş. (2020). “Are principals instructional leaders yet?” A science map of the knowledge base on instructional leadership, 1940–2018. *Scientometrics*, 122(3), 1629–1650. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03360-5>
- [17] Hulpia, H., & Devos, G. (2010). How distributed leadership can make a difference in teachers' organizational commitment? A qualitative study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(3), 565–575. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2009.08.006>
- [18] Kelly, J., Sadeghieh, T., & Adeli, K. (2014). Peer review in scientific publications: benefits, critiques & a survival guides. *The*

- Journal of the International Federation Od Clinical Chemistry and Laboratory Medicine*, 65(2), 198–199.
- [19] Khalifa, M. (2012). A Re-New-ed Paradigm in Successful Urban School Leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(3), 424–467. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11432922>
- [20] Klar, H. W., & Brewer, C. A. (2013). Successful Leadership in High-Needs Schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 49(5), 768–808. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X13482577>
- [21] Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. (2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 4: Trustworthiness and publishing. *European Journal of General Practice*, 0(0), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375092>
- [22] Leithwood, K., Louis, K. S., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *Review of research How leadership influences student learning. The Wallace Foundation Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education New York NY* (Vol. 2007). <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-2660-6>
- [23] Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry. In *Naturalistic Inquiry* (p. 416). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325006070288>
- [24] Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1986). But Is It Rigorous? Trustworthiness and Naturalistic Evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation*, 1986(30), 73–84. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ev.1427>
- [25] Marshall, B., Cardon, P., Poddar, A., & Fontenot, R. (2013). Does Sample Size Matter in Qualitative Research?: A Review of Qualitative Interviews in is Research. *Journal of Computer Information Systems*, 54(1), 11–22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08874417.2013.11645667>
- [26] Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation. Jossey-Bass*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004>
- [27] Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research : a guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley and Sons.
- [28] Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook. Evaluation and Program Planning* (2nd Editio, Vol. 19). Sage Publications, Inc. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0149-7189\(96\)88232-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0149-7189(96)88232-2)
- [29] Nelson, T. (2022). Exploring leadership-as-practice in the study of rural school leadership. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 25(2), 197-210.
- [30] Parry, K. W. (1998). Grounded theory and social process: A new direction for leadership research. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9(1), 85. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(98\)90043-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(98)90043-1)
- [31] Pont, B., Moorman, H., & Nusche, D. (2008). *Improving school leadership* (Vol. 1, pp. 1-199). Paris: OECD.
- [32] Stake, R. E. (2003). Case Studies. In *Strategies of Qualitative Analysis* (pp. 134–164). <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-385971-6.00008-7>
- [33] State, F. A. (1998). Emerging Operational Models Sharon Spall, 4(2), 280–292.
- [34] Walker, A., & Hallinger, P. (2015). A synthesis of reviews of research on principal leadership in East Asia. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 53(4), 554–570. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-05-2015-0038>
- [35] Yin, R. K. (2015). *Qualitative Research: From Start to Finish* (2nd Editio). The Guilford Publication.

AUTHOR'S INFORMATION

<p>First Author: Jude James</p> 	<p>Faculty of Psychology and Education University Malaysia Sabah, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia E-mail: jude6119@gmail.com</p>
<p>Second Author: Rosy Talin</p> 	<p>Faculty of Psychology and Education University Malaysia Sabah, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia E-mail: rostalin@gmail.com</p>
<p>Third Author: Soon Singh Bikar</p> 	<p>Faculty of Psychology and Education University Malaysia Sabah, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia E-mail: sohan4025@gmail.com</p>