



## **Exploration of Leadership Development Challenges Among Mara College Lecturers**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The educational change in the 21st Century has resulted in more dynamic leadership among educators. Thus, the issue of challenges in terms of leadership among educators becomes the focus of the present study. The purpose of this study is to explore the challenges faced by MARA College lecturers in an effort to improve their leadership level. The research design uses a qualitative method involving two instruments, namely an open-ended questionnaire and a face-to-face structured interview. A total of 37 lecturers from four MARA colleges, consisting of 9 males and 28 females participated in this study. The findings identified several factors that hinder the development of leadership among the lecturers at MARA College. It was discovered that factors such as time constraints, an unsupportive environment, and the level of lecturers' readiness became obstacles for the lecturers at MARA College to conduct action research related to T&L activity. Furthermore, feeling insecure and being negative are the internal factors, in addition to negative reactions from peers around, that also prevent the lecturers of MARA College from carrying out their knowledge-sharing activities. Thus, the management and lecturers at MARA College are advised to collectively evaluate and pay attention to action research activities that address local problems so that the learning atmosphere among lecturers can be strengthened and this can subsequently empower leadership among lecturers at MARA College.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The roles of an educator, as stated in the Continuous Professionalism Development Plan (CPDP), include being a "Holistic and Creative Thinker., Strategic Thinker..., Leader of Change..., Guide and Mentor..., T&L Quality Mover... and Executor of effective teaching and facilitator of student learning" (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014, p. 9). Guided by these diverse roles, CPDP has introduced the slogan "...to transform the practice of developing professionalism continuously to improve the quality of teachers and school leaders and empower the teaching profession" (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2014, p. 4) to recognize the involvement of these teachers. It is well known that the influence of leadership on an educational institution is often focused on the power of the person who leads the institution (Nora Misdi et al., 2019; Norashikin Abu Bakar et al., 2015; Hailan Salamun et al., 2012). However, there are studies that focus on the scope of leadership among educators, such as those of Hailan Salamun et al. (2012) and Rahimah Ahmad (2005), which have stated that this leadership scope can also be used as an alternative to improve the management and administration system of an educational institution.

An educator is a leader when they can influence others around them through their daily activities (Khuzaimah, 2012). Therefore, the structure of the educational organization should be directed towards improving the work environment that encourages the work culture of guiding colleagues, improving professional values by sharing the activities of best practices, and increasing the sense of responsibility towards colleagues and duties to achieve quality teaching professional standards (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). The career of an educator can be expanded to the responsibility of a leader when the influence of this educator is not only limited to the classroom, but it also extends outside the classroom, such as guiding and inviting peers to improve T&L activities, as well as gaining support and trust from their superiors (Noriati et al., 2010). Thus, the focus of this case study is to explain the exploration of the factors that hinder educators (MARA College lecturers) from playing their role as a leader.

### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

It is widely acknowledged that the group of educators constitutes the majority of professionals in an educational institution, and they are also the ones who are often in direct contact with students compared to the group of management professionals. Therefore, leadership within this group of educators will significantly influence any planned changes. The findings of a study by Hailan Salamun et al. (2012) have shown that only a small number of religious high school principals encourage the development of leadership abilities among teachers, and the majority of principals do not provide an atmosphere that can foster teachers' leadership potential. However, the studies conducted by Muhammad Faizal and Abd. Khalil (2015) and Lieberman and Miller (2011) claim that educators need to be exposed or involved in continuous learning activities that are local, such as conducting improvement studies in their teaching practices. Activities like these will create opportunities for them to enhance their leadership levels. Therefore, studies related to the aspects of leadership development among educators should be explored more extensively in order to identify the obstacles or challenges that they are facing.

### **1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS**

This study aims to explore the factors that hinder the development of leadership among MARA College lecturers. Therefore, the research question designed to achieve this objective is: "What are the factors

that impede the development of leadership among MARA College lecturers, according to the perspective of the lecturers themselves?"

### **1.3 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The findings of this case study concentrate on the leadership of lecturers at one of the MARA Educational Institutions (IPMa), specifically MARA College. This focus is justified as studies within the IPMa structure are limited in comparison to the numerous studies conducted involving the public schools across Malaysia. For instance, Norashikin et al.'s study (2015) covered the schools in the southern zone (Johor), Zuraidah Juliana et al.'s study (2014) focused on the schools in the northern zone (Kedah), and Hailan et al.'s study (2013) involved the public schools throughout Malaysia. Besides, Azhar Harun et al.'s study (2016) was concerned with 12 SBT and non-SBT schools in the eastern zone of Peninsular Malaysia. Therefore, the findings of the present study can contribute valuable insights into educational leadership within the MARA organization, specifically MARA College to enrich the body of knowledge in literature. The conclusions presented in this study are anticipated to further expand research focusing on empowering leadership among MARA College lecturers.

### **1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In general, this study has certain limitations that have, to some extent, influenced and introduced errors to the findings, results, and final conclusions of its case study. Firstly, the research data were collected exclusively from the study setting, which is within the educational organization of MARA College. This study is confined to four MARA Colleges only, as there are only four MARA Colleges in Peninsular Malaysia. Additionally, since this study refers to the teacher leadership model highlighted by Western scholars, the level of understanding of the study's sample regarding the items employed is also a limitation. This limitation arises due to the differences in the interpretation of dimensions as a result of variations in cultural and religious backgrounds.

### **1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Leadership Development for Teachers Model (LDT), as presented by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), has been adapted in the context of this study. In this model, an educator as a leader is defined as someone who can lead both inside and outside the classroom. This educator supports colleagues in learning from one another, leading each other, and influencing one another to collaboratively enhance the quality of their teaching. The Teacher Leadership Development Model consists of seven (7) dimensions that reflect a teacher's leadership capabilities: i) Having high self-awareness, ii) Initiating positive changes, iii) Communicating effectively, iv) Possessing a diverse personality, v) Being proficient in teaching, vi) Presenting continuous improvements, and vii) Exhibiting effective self-management. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) have emphasized the actionable structure required by an ordinary teacher when acting as a leader to facilitate the development of teacher leadership. Therefore, this model is suitable for adaptation as it aligns with the context of the present study.

The leadership concept in this model begins with an individual who possesses self-awareness of their strengths and potential. They employ effective strategies to initiate a positive change by acting as a leader inside and outside the classroom. Additionally, they excel in effective communication when faced with an atmosphere of diverse beliefs or opinions. Furthermore, they are capable of being a leader who manages actions effectively, consistently working diligently to realize planned actions for collective improvements in collaboration with all stakeholders, including management and fellow teachers. Using their skills and knowledge, they can create an effective learning environment for their students and

colleagues. This model delineates a clear understanding which asserts that the role and responsibility of an educator can be developed; it goes beyond the traditional role of a skilled teacher in the classroom, extending to functioning as a leader outside the classroom. This broader role involves willingly assuming trust and responsibility and influencing other colleagues to collaborate in efforts to improve themselves.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of teacher leadership, as introduced by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), encompasses three levels. It commences with recognizing one's strengths and potential when assuming a leadership role, whether inside or outside the classroom. Subsequently, it involves collaboration with fellow colleagues to create a community that engages in cooperative learning. At this level, the teacher's leadership garners recognition, support, and trust from all groups of college community. The final stage involves developing an action plan and implementing leadership skills, including influencing students, fellow teachers, and college management, to collectively execute planned initiatives. Teachers, at this stage, become exemplary leaders with a strong, charismatic personality, admired by all members of the college community. According to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), a teacher's ability to influence the environment does not necessarily depend on a formal position but instead is a process of influencing peers, students, and the management line, facilitated by an attitude accepted by all members of college community.

According to Hailan et al. (2012), the dimension of teacher leadership related to a teacher's high self-awareness involves influencing fellow teachers to participate willingly, sharing equal responsibility in developing professionalism, and enhancing their respective PDP skills. Confidence and awareness to instigate positive changes, as demonstrated by a teacher, can influence their colleagues. The studies by Akert and Martin (2012) and Yahya Buntat and Lailinanita Ahamad (2012) indicate that most teachers feel motivated and satisfied when they can share their expertise and skills with one another. Self-awareness, encompassing values such as high motivation (Akert & Martin, 2012), competence in teaching and learning (Mohd Azuan & Zuraidah, 2007), a high level of readiness and commitment (Habib Mat Som & Syed Kamaruzaman Syed Ali, 2011), and the courage to make individual or group changes (Faizah Abd Wahab & Ruhizan M. Yasin, 2022) are fundamental to fostering a leadership role. Referring to the findings of a study by Yahya Buntat and Lailinanita Ahamad (2012) on 40 technical teachers, although innovation activity in T&L among these technical teachers is at a high level, some respondents face problems implementing it due to a lack of preparedness to present opinions or innovative ideas. A qualitative study by Nazrod Abd Rahman (2020) involving five religious school teachers discovered that teachers encounter problems carrying out innovation projects due to time constraints, being burdened with additional school tasks, and perceiving innovation in T&L as challenging, leading to a lack of interest in activities related to improving teaching practices. Additionally, Faizah Abd Wahab and Ruhizan M. Yasin (2022) revealed that teachers need time to implement changes, face time constraint problems, and have lack of confidence in their skills.

The studies by Habib Mat Som and Syed Kamaruzaman Syed Ali (2012) and Nazroh Abd Rahman (2020) shed light on how management support contributes to creating an environment conducive to activities aimed at improving T&L practices. The findings of the studies by Habib Mat Som and Syed Kamaruzaman Syed Ali (2011) revealed the need for management support in establishing an atmosphere that can encourage the implementation of action research activities. The study also emphasizes that management consistently strives to create a conducive situation and plan activities tailored to the needs of the surrounding conditions.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research design**

This article adopted a qualitative approach in its research design, employing open-ended questionnaires and face-to-face structured interviews for data collection. The combination of open-ended questionnaires and interviews aims to delve into, comprehend, and identify research issues in-depth (Weller et al., 2018). A stratified purposive sampling technique was used to select the study's respondents to complete the open-ended questionnaire and to participate in the interview. The decided criteria required the study's participants to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience and to have held a position as the head or coordinator of a college program. Such criteria were determined to guarantee that the study sample possesses relevant knowledge aligned with the study's issues. Table 1 presents the number of study samples based on the type of instrument.

**TABLE 1:** Study samples based on the type of instrument used.

<b>Research instrument</b>	<b>Number of study samples</b>
Open-ended item questionnaire	37 respondents
Face-to-face structured interview	8 interviewees

The study's participants were lecturers from four departments: the Department of Science, the Department of Mathematics, the Department of Languages, and the Department of Social Sciences. The study included a total of 28 female lecturers and 9 male lecturers.

#### **Research instrument**

In general, the process of constructing open-ended items involved selecting models or theories from reference sources that were appropriate and met the need to achieve the objectives of this case study. Therefore, the open-ended items used in this case study's questionnaire were based on the Leadership Development for Teachers Model (LDT) introduced by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001). The open-ended item questionnaire contained 13 items related to the seven dimensions of leadership. Furthermore, the face-to-face structured interview protocol included follow-up questions related to the written answers provided by the study's participants in the questionnaire. The number of follow-up questions representing leadership was determined based on the feedback from the written answers, aiming to elaborate on the responses and strengthen their meanings as provided by the study's participants.

#### **Data analysis**

The process of reporting findings from data analysis involved combining statements from the open-ended item responses and interview transcripts, and then transforming the data into themes as evidence of findings. The analysis process for open-ended item responses and interview transcripts of research participants involved using ATLAS.ti 9.0 software. The analysis focused on building themes from the collected data (Marican, 2012; Merriam, 2009), which included classifying and categorising keywords identified in the open-ended item responses and interview transcripts to describe the obstacles faced by MARA College lecturers. The results of the analysis of the open-ended item responses were presented in a table showing the frequency of responses from the study's participants according to the identified themes. Meanwhile, the excerpts from the original statements in the interview transcripts were displayed according to what the study's participants stated to explain or support the constructed themes. According to Saldaña (2013), Attribute Coding is a method of labelling data that demonstrates the basic information of study participants. Therefore, Attribute Coding system was used to label the

participants and data sources cited. In this study, each statement using the coding system 'IT' represents an Open-ended Item, and 'TT' represents an Interview Transcript; followed by '/' and the study sample code. This labelling system was employed to protect the confidentiality and information of the study sample (Creswell, 2014; Zainudin Awang, 2012) and to ensure the protection of the dignity and personal rights of the study sample (Chua, 2016; Marican, 2012). A certificate of involvement as the study's participants was given to each participant of the study's sample for signing to guarantee confidentiality. Therefore, the identity of the sample's participants and the actual location of the study are not disclosed in the reporting of findings and the discussion of the study results.

### **Qualitative data collection process**

The data collection process commenced after obtaining official permission from the Faculty of Education at the University of Malaya, the Innovation and Research Unit of MARA, and the guards of the concerned MARA College. The activities for data collection began by identifying the study's participants who met the criteria decided to represent the four MARA Colleges. A total of 37 study participants who were lecturers at MARA College provided their feedback on all the open-ended items presented. Each study participant was allocated two days to complete the open-ended item questionnaire, allowing ample time for thoughtful and comprehensive responses to each item. After collecting the open-ended item questionnaire, the written responses were analysed. The data collection process proceeded with the implementation of a face-to-face structured interview. The purpose of the interview session was to obtain a more in-depth explanation from the selected study participants. The follow-up questions in the interview session were formulated based on the written answers from the open-ended item questionnaire that required a more detailed and comprehensive explanation. For the context of this study, a sub-sample of eight lecturers was interviewed, a number deemed sufficient to meet the requirements for gathering in-depth and meaningful information. The duration allocated for each interview session ranged between 60 and 190 minutes.

### **Pre-test the validity of open-ended item content**

The content validity of the open-ended items is associated with evaluating the objectives, research content scope, and the difficulty level of the questions presented (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, each constructed open-ended item underwent a review phase which involved receiving feedback from some experts in the field of study, English experts, and Bahasa Malaysia experts including reviews from the pilot study's sample. The refinement process which was based on the comments and suggestions from the experts was used to ensure the accuracy of face validity and content validity, while the pilot study sample was utilised to test the level of understanding of the study's sample regarding the requirements of each item presented. Additionally, a copy of the interview transcript was provided to the study's participants for confirmation and consent. The verification from the study's participants was intended to correct, add, or reject any information in the transcript reported to be inaccurate or misleading. This process was aimed to meet the requirements of data reliability, specifically respondent verification (Bryman, 2012), and to enhance data reliability in terms of the accuracy of each reported statement. Besides, a consent form for the list of coding themes by the selected experts was utilized to enable the examination and verification of the coded themes. The level of agreement from three experts resulted in an average Cohen Kappa value of 0.927, exceeding 0.9. This demonstrates that the coding and classification of themes possess high validity and reliability.



#### **4. RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The data analysis of open-ended item feedback related to action research activities successfully identified 28 response frequencies from the study's participants that could potentially reflect the factors hindering them from conducting research activities in their respective teaching practices. Table 2 presents the themes and frequencies of the answers from the open-ended item responses provided by the study's participants. The data analysis identified three main themes: 1) Time constraints (15 frequencies), 2) An environment that does not support action research activities (7 frequencies), and 3) Lecturers' willingness to engage in action research (6 frequencies).

**TABLE 2 :** Themes and frequency of responses of research participants as a barrier factor to make teaching practice a research material.

<b>Bil</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
1	Time constraints	15
2	An environment that does not support action research activities to occurs	7
3	Lecturer's willingness to do action research	6
Total frequency		28

A total of 15 research participants from MARA College used the same keyword, "time constraints," to describe the challenges that make it difficult for them to integrate their teaching practices into their action research. The interview responses from participant CP3 supported the notion of time constraints as a significant obstacle. In the following statements, CP3 explained the challenges faced in conducting action research activities at his college:

*"...the lecturers here, ... they are very busy with doing internal assessment exploration for all topics... we feel like we are unable and don't have enough time..."* (TT/CP3).

and:

*"... there is .... I would say about 20% ..., the lecturers who are involved in the innovation committee... Those who are involved in this committee are a few. Because most of them have to focus on student assessment and students' coursework. That is what burdens the lecturers here."* (TT/CP3)

CP3's statements depict a scenario where only a small number of lecturers are engaged in action research activities, creating an environment that does not actively encourage such initiatives among MARA College lecturers. Furthermore, open-ended item responses revealed additional keywords describing an unsupportive environment for research activities, including "lack of support from the administration" (IT/BP5 & IT/DP9), "insufficient infrastructure" (IT/CP1), "colleagues who don't care have weakened one's morale" (IT/CP2), "allocation constraints & insufficient facilities" (IT/DP4), and "voluntary members are difficult to obtain" (IT/DP6).

In contrast, AP4 participant identified "teacher readiness" (IT/AP4) as a barrier, and based on CP3's feedback, it reinforced this issue. Participant CP3 stated that the hindering factor "... depends on their respective 'mental block'" (TT/CP3). Other keywords found explaining the theme of internal readiness caused by this "mental block" included "non-open attitude" (IT/BP2), "bad old habits" (IT/BP4), and "self-attitude that is lazy and comfortable" (IT/CP8).

Furthermore, this case study discovered other factors hindering MARA College lecturers' ability to lead and influence their peers in tasks such as improving teaching quality through knowledge-sharing activities. Table 3 provides a summary of the themes and keywords identified as barriers to enhancing the level of leadership among MARA College lecturers.

**TABLE 3:** Themes and frequency of participants' answers for factors that prevent MARA College lecturers from sharing knowledge

No	Theme	Frequency
1	Individual self factor (Feeling unsure)	5
2	Individual self factor (Problems being negative)	3
3	External factors (Negative reactions from friends)	3
Total		11

The analysis of the responses to the open-ended items revealed a total of 11 frequencies in the participants' answers, producing three main themes describing the factors hindering lecturers from developing their leadership through knowledge-sharing activities. The three themes are: 1) Lack of self-confidence (5 frequencies), 2) Personal factors, specifically the issue of being negative (3 frequencies), and 3) External factors which encompass negative responses from peers (3 frequencies). The first two themes, identified as hindering factors, emanate from within which involve having a lack of self-confidence and negativity. The lack of confidence in oneself is attributed to "feeling unworthy" (IT/AP5), "lack of skills" (IT/AP9), "no self-confidence" (IT/BP1), and "lack of knowledge about new information" (IT/BP2). Besides, the theme of negativity is evident in the open-ended item responses provided by participants AL1, AL8, and DL8 who stated, "lack of interest in acquiring knowledge" (IT/AL1), "irresponsibility" (IT/AL8), and "lazy attitude & irresponsibility" (IT/DL8). AP7 participant further supported this theme of negativity stating:

*"Sometimes I observe it is happening with some lecturers, even though the head has warned them many times, but they still persist with the same behaviour."* (TT/AP7)

According to BP7 participant, the negative behaviour he referred to was the lecturers' attitude of repeatedly feeling dissatisfied as explained below:

*"... for those who don't stand out, when I make the rounds (check), they remain quiet, but there are things they are dissatisfied with, and they even like to protest..."* (TT/BP7)

Furthermore, negative reactions as external factors also hinder MARA College lecturers from encouraging their colleagues to participate in achieving the college's mission and vision. Negative reactions from peers, such as "senior peers who resist new changes" (IT/BP7) and "peers who criticize to put people down" (TT/BL9) become external hindering factors, particularly for young lecturers. Additionally, DL8 participant shared an experience when faced with a friend who displayed a negative reaction during an activity. According to DL8: "...lecturer A refused to share information and told me that when he first started teaching, there was no one to teach him, and he had to learn by himself, so he asked me to find out myself." (TT/DL8)

## 5. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Factors that are an obstacle to the development of the leadership of the lecturers of MARA College

Generally, the findings of this case study discover that lecturers at MARA College face challenges in promoting action research activities and knowledge sharing among themselves. Both of these activities represent examples of continuous and effective learning which are part of the essential dimensions of leadership that should be cultivated to elevate the leadership level of MARA College lecturers. This finding deviates from the teacher leadership dimension outlined in the Teacher Leadership Development Model by Katzenmeyer and Moler (2001), which emphasises educators acting as leaders



should encourage action research as one of the methods to create an effective learning atmosphere among themselves. According to Berestova et al., (2020) as a leader, one needs to be able to promote an effective learning atmosphere among their colleagues and subsequently form a community of quality professional leaders. To elucidate the obstacles hindering leadership development among MARA College lecturers in creating an effective learning environment, the analysis focuses on identifying the themes derived from two data sources: open-ended item feedback and interview.

The findings of the study identified several hindering factors that can impede MARA College lecturers from conducting research activities in their T&L practices for the purpose of collectively improving the quality of their teaching, and the challenges in influencing their peers in knowledge-sharing activities. These hindering factors will indirectly limit MARA College lecturers to practice their leadership. Time constraints, an unsupportive environment, and the readiness levels of lecturers are identified as the primary obstacles to conducting action research in their T&L practices. These findings align with the issues presented in the studies of Nazroh Abd Rahman (2020) and Yahya Buntat and Lailanita Ahamad (2012), where teachers are faced with challenges in managing numerous responsibilities, leading to difficulties in time management.

Apart from being burdened with side duties, participant CP3 also stated that every year the lecturers at her college are burdened with their main duties. The lecturers have to focus on the process of evaluating a lot of students' coursework and this is a significant time-consuming responsibility. This causes them not to have enough time to meet and discuss the initiation of a research project. An environment that does not support action research activities to be conducted among MARA College lecturers is another prominent factor stated by the study's participants. Negative reactions from colleagues further contribute to an unsupportive atmosphere, hindering positive changes. For participant BP7, such external negative factors impede a lecturer's efforts to influence others, diminishing their motivation to make a change. Colleagues exhibiting resistance are often entrenched in their comfort zones and resist a change (Nazroh Abd Rahman, 2020).

To address this issue, the management should involve lecturers in research program/activity planning (Nazroh Abd Rahman, 2020) to enhance lecturer participation and togetherness in research activities related to innovation in teaching. Involving lecturers in a jointly planned activity will result in the lecturers trying to perform such activity according to their ability and at the same time they will not feel that it burdens them. This also aligns with the study of Habib Mat Som and Syed Kamaruzaman Syed Ali (2011) which suggests that the management should create a continuously conducive environment and plan training or activities that are more practical, focused and oriented to the needs of the actual situations.

In addition, the findings of the present study also reveal that the internal readiness among MARA college lecturers in conducting action research is also a factor that inhibits the lecturers from developing their leadership. This factor was claimed by AP4 and CP3 participants. The results of the present study are also in line with the findings of Nazroh Abd Rahman's study (2020) which highlight that teachers are not prepared for action research because they feel that a research activity is difficult to perform. Besides, the internal factors of lecturers who are not confident and are negative also limit the opportunity for the lecturers to conduct knowledge sharing sessions such as sharing ideas to find the techniques to improve the quality of their teaching. However, the findings of this study are considered to be different from the findings of the studies by Faizah Abd Wahab and Ruhizan M.Yasin (2022) and Akert and Martin (2012) since the findings demonstrated that the teachers studied had a high level of confidence which resulted in them being brave to initiate changes either individually or collectively. Most of these teachers had high motivation derived from within themselves and their own self-satisfaction when they shared

their expertise and skills with each other. DP3 participant shared some ideas on how to become more confident as they stated that lecturers should be given the opportunity and should participate in any appropriate training deemed appropriate for skill knowledge improvement. This suggestion is in line with the notion of Faizah Abd Wahab and Ruhizan M. Yasin (2022) who propose that teachers need to be provided with training and innovation skills.

Moreover, according to Habib Mat Som and Syed Kamaruzaman Syed Ali (2011), educators focusing on the impact are perceived as individuals with high self-confidence in executing their assigned tasks. The focus on the impact is for the purpose of highlighting the importance of understanding how the changes made can influence student learning outcomes. Yahya Buntat and Lailanita Ahamad (2012) stress the significance of teachers demonstrating interest, commitment, and a strong belief that innovation can enhance student performance in the aspect of teaching and learning. As a solution to the obstacles faced by MARA College lecturers, a paradigm shift from a lecturer to a leader should be proposed where lecturers should exhibit an attitude of influencing others, taking collective responsibility for enhancing teaching and learning skills through action research activities. Also, the lecturers should have a high level of confidence and continuous motivation, coupled with positive attitudes such as knowledge and expertise sharing which is essential for this transition.

For future studies, a follow-up investigation could refine and expand the current findings for a more comprehensive understanding. Given the limitations of this study such as involving only four MARA Colleges in Peninsular Malaysia, subsequent researchers could conduct similar studies including other IPMa institutions, namely, MARA Professional Colleges or the MARA Skills Institute. By including additional IPMa institutions, future studies can compare diverse challenges faced by the studied participants in different locations.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

In summary, this study concludes that time constraints, an unsupportive environment, and the readiness level of lecturers pose significant obstacles to the implementation of action research related to their teaching and learning at MARA College. Additionally, internal factors such as lack of confidence and negative attitudes along with external factors like negative reactions from peers, hinder the initiation of knowledge-sharing activities among MARA College lecturers. These identified obstacles have evidently impeded the leadership development of MARA College lecturers. Nevertheless, these challenges can be transformed into opportunities that strengthen the leadership capabilities of MARA College lecturers if addressed appropriately. The present study recommends that the administration engage in thorough and meaningful bilateral discussions with lecturers to better understand their needs and challenges. Sensitivity to these obstacles will enable the administration to plan and implement measures that empower leadership among MARA College lecturers effectively.

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