**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

*EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AMONG COMMITTEE
MEMBERS OF NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS IN
A MALAYSIAN MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY*

**MADINAH MOHAMAD**

**FPP 2012 20**

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## MADINAH MOHAMAD

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
## UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

## 2012

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**By**

**MADINAH MOHAMAD**

**Thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**May 2012**

## DEDICATION

TO MY LOVING FAMILY

&

IN MEMORY OF MY LATE FATHER,
MOHAMAD BIN KASBAN

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the partial requirement of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AMONG COMMITTEE
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**May 2012**

**Chair: Professor Abu Daud Silong, PhD**
**Faculty: Educational Studies**

How can a Neighborhood Committee Member become a more effective community leader? This is a qualitative research that examines effective leadership in the context of a Malaysian community. Effective leadership is explained through various theories such as traits, behavioral, situational and emerging leadership theories. In the contexts of this study, effective leadership is linked to community development, where leaders play the critical role in improving the community economically, socially, culturally and spiritually. In answering the main research question, data are gathered qualitatively through focus group interviews and also in-depth interviews. The focus interviews involved six groups of committee members of the Malaysian Neighborhood Associations or locally known as *Rukun Tetangga* in the Klang Valley area while the in-depth interviews include eight selected Chairmen of the Neighborhood Associations in the state of Penang. The data from both interviews were recorded, coded and analyzed using the qualitative method. Some of the major findings of the research are: (1) The respondents became community leaders because of a strong desire to serve the

community, a strong motivation to want to do something, a strong interest in becoming community leaders, a great interest in participating in voluntary activities and good support from family members and friends; (2) The community leaders performed various leadership roles such as being a change agent, problem solver, manager, communicator, negotiator and resource-linker and leading a multiracial society; (3) In leading a community, the participative leadership style is considered more desirable. In performing their roles as leaders, there is a strong need to involve others in the process. Involvement of people such as the committee members of the association, members of the community and other relevant parties will ensure better results. (4) The research has identified various competencies required by community leaders in Malaysia that include problem-solving skills, living skills in a multi-racial community, communication and interpersonal skills, decision-making skills, skills in bringing about change, skills related to conflict resolution, team-work skills, social and volunteer work skills, skills in acquiring funds and resources, skills in conducting programs for the community, skills in developing good values and leadership practices and ICT skills. The competencies are not very different from competencies identified for leaders in other situations such as public and private organizations. These are some competencies that are common to all leaders in most situations such as the abilities to communicate effectively, work in teams, manage, bring change, develop others, build and maintain relationships, lead diversity and differences and develop good values and leadership practices. The only major difference is the context of leadership, and in this study it focuses on community leadership in a multi-racial society. Hence the main role of leadership is to build a strong, peaceful and united community and thus competencies related to leading diversity and differences is one of the keys to the success of community leadership.

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Based on the findings of the study, community leadership effectiveness can be improved through systematic training and development of leaders.

Abstrak thesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi sebahagian keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

## KEPIMPINAN BERKESAN DI KALANGAN AHLI JAWATANKUASA RUKUN TETANGGA DALAM MASYARAKAT PELBAGAI BUDAYA MALAYSIA

**Oleh**

**MADINAH MOHAMAD**

**Mei 2012**

**Pengerusi: Profesor Abu Daud Silong, PhD**

**Fakulti: Pengajian Pendidikan**

Bagaimanakah Ahli Jawatankuasa Rukun Tetangga (AJK RT) dapat menjadi seorang pemimpin masyarakat yang lebih berkesan? Ini merupakan satu penyelidikan kualitatif yang meneliti kepimpinan dalam konteks masyarakat Malaysia. Kepimpinan berkesan diterangkan melalui beberapa teori seperti tret, tingkah laku, situasi dan teori kepimpinan yang baru muncul. Dalam konteks kajian ini, kepimpinan berkesan dihubungkaitkan dengan pembangunan masyarakat, di mana pemimpin memainkan peranan yang kritikal dalam memperbaikki masyarakat dari segi ekonomi, sosial, budaya dan kerohanian. Dalam menjawab soalan utama kajian, data dikumpul melalui temubual fokus berkumpulan dan temubual secara mendalam. Temubual berfokus melibat enam kumpulan yang terdiri dari AJK RT manakala temubual secara mendalam melibatkan lapan orang pengerusi RT. Data dari kedua-dua temubual direkod, dikod dan dianalisis menggunakan kaedah kualitatif. Antara penemuan utama kajian termasuklah: (1) Responden menjadi pemimpin masyarakat kerana mempunyai keinginan yang tinggi untuk berkhidmat dengan masyarakat, motivasi yang tinggi untuk membuat sesuatu, minat yang tinggi dan mempunyai keupayaan untuk menjadi pemimpin masyarakat,

minat yang tinggi untuk terlibat dalam kerja sukarelawan dan mendapat sokongan yang baik dari anggota keluarga dan kawan; (2) Pemimpin masyarakat mengendalikan beberapa peranan kepimpinan masyarakat seperti sebagai seorang agen perubahan, penyelesai masalah, pengurus, ahli komunikasi, orang tengah, penghubung sumber dan memimpin masyarakat pelbagai kaum; (3) Dalam memimpin masyarakat, gaya kepimpinan partisipatif merupakan yang terbaik. Dalam melaksanakan peranan mereka sebagai pemimpin, penglibatan orang ramai amat diperlukan. Penglibatan orang ramai seperti Ahli Jawatankuasa Persatuan, anggota masyarakat dan juga pihak yang berkenaan akan memberi hasil yang lebih baik; (4) Penyelidikan telah mengenal pasti beberapa kompetensi yang diperlukan oleh pemimpin masyarakat di Malaysia yang meliputi kemahiran menyelesaikan masalah, kemahiran hidup dalam masyarakat pelbagai kaum, kemahiran komunikasi dan antara perseorangan, kemahiran membuat keputusan, kemahiran membawa perubahan, kemahiran menyelesaikan konflik, kemahiran kerja berpasukan, kemahiran kerja sosial dan kesukarelawanan, kemahiran mendapatkan sumber kewangan, kemahiran melaksanakan program masyarakat, kemahiran membangunkan nilai murni dan amalan kepimpinan dan kemahiran ICT. Kompetensi tersebut tidak jauh berbeza dari kompetensi yang dikenal pasti untuk pemimpin dalam situasi yang berlainan seperti organisasi swasta dan awam. Kompetensi ini merupakan yang umum untuk semua pemimpin seperti kebolehan berkomunikasi secara berkesan, bekerja dalam kumpulan, mengurus, membawa perubahan dan membangunkan nilai murni dan amalan kepimpinan yang baik. Apa yang berbeza ialah konteks sesuatu kepimpinan, dan dalam penyelidikan ini, ia memfokuskan kepada kepimpinan masyarakat pelbagai kaum. Dengan itu peranan kepimpinan ialah untuk membangunkan sebuah masyarakat yang kukuh, aman dan bersatu padu dan dengan itu

kompetensi berkait dengan memimpin dalam konteks yang berbeza merupakan kunci kejayaan pemimpin komuniti. Satu lagi aspek yang penting ditekankan dalam kajian ini ialah tentang kerja kesukarelawanan. Berdasarkan penemuan kajian, keberkesanan kepimpinan masyarakat boleh diperbaiki melalui latihan dan pembangunan pemimpin secara sistematik.

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The opportunity first came to further my studies at Universiti Putra Malaysia under a Public Service Department (locally known in short as JPA) scholarship way back in 2001 to which I owe my gratitude to the Government of Malaysia. With a Master Science Degree in Human Resource in 2004, the passion for continuous learning was stoked by Professor Dr Abu Daud Silong, who was and is still my mentor and ardent believer in my leadership potential. Without his continuous support and wisdom, I truly believe that I would not have made it this far because he inspired me and played a major role in what I am today.

With that support and guidance, I embarked on a long and arduous journey to acquire not only a PhD degree but one that brought fulfilment to my life in every sense of the word. While I continued to climb the career ladder to eventually become the Secretary General of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI), I never abandoned my quest and thirst for knowledge, though the path I chose toward achieving this dream was fraught with challenges that sometimes seemed insurmountable.

It is with utmost gratitude and respect that I owe a special mention to the former Director General of Public Service, Tan Sri Ismail Adam and the present Chief Secretary to the Government, Tan Sri Sidek Hassan, who were both my inspiration and whom I revere as iconic leaders, for their magnanimity in their encouragement of this pursuit of lifelong learning.

I owe it also to my mother and my late father for their undying love and support in holding steadfast with words of encouragement and comfort during my tribulations

and frequent absences and focus on the family in an attempt to balance between work and study. My appreciation also goes to my husband, Datuk Rizuan Ab Hamid, who has always believed in my intellect and leadership qualities.

Above all, I am ever grateful to Allah SWT who gave me the courage, determination, good health and tenacity to forge ahead despite the myriad of challenges and obstacles that have often brought me to the brink of despair.

Finally, to my lecturers and professors in UPM, especially Assoc. Prof. Azizan Asmuni and Prof. Azimi Hamzah, colleagues and friends that are too numerous to mention, I profess my deepest appreciation for your friendship, guidance and tutelage.

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012 to conduct the final examination of Madinah Mohamad on her thesis entitled "Effective Leadership among Committee Members of Neighborhood Associations in a Malaysian Multicultural Community" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

Zaidatol Akmaliah Lope Pihie, PhD
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 SEOW HENG FONG, PhD
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Date:

This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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**Azizan Asmuni, PhD**
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**BUJANG BIN KIM HUAT, PhD**
Professor and Dean
School of Graduate Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia

Date:

# DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or any other institution.

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**MADINAH MOHAMAD**

Date: 25 May 2012

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