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Title

University leadership in crisis : the need for effective leadership positioning in Malaysia / Morshidi

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Abstract

This paper examines the nature of the leadership crisis in Malaysia's public universities. Our main concern is about the leadership at the top levels of university management, and the administrative hierarchy as perceived by both outsiders and insiders. Critics have lamented that Malaysia lacks people with international stature to lead its public universities to greater heights; however, they stop short of outlining good, feasible leadership plans for public universities. This paper contends that the primary reason for the malaise underlying the Malaysian university leadership crisis is that there is no proper system in place to appoint the most able, talented, authoritative and respected scholars to lead Malaysia's public universities. This paper also argues that the current provision in the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971, regarding the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor, is obsolete and not aligned with the aspiration of treating universities as independent, trustworthy and autonomous entities. It is contrary to international best practices of selecting university leaders through an extremely competitive and rigorous search. Arguably, Malaysian universities need leaders ?

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academics (in the first instance) cum administrators ? who are inspirational, visionary, respected for their scholarship, and progressive in their approach. The leadership crisis in Malaysia's public universities is approaching such a critical stage that nothing less than a total reform has to be instituted, not only of the law in relation to appointments, but also of the practices and cultures, which currently do not promote meritocracy. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)