

The Leadership Factor in Administrative Reform in Malaysia, with a Specific Study on the Leadership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia

AHMAD ATORY BIN HUSSAIN
Department of Political Science
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
43600 Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia

Keywords: leadership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, public administration, public management administrative science, administrative reform, management science, development administration, reorganisation, administrative strategy, administrative politics, politics and administration, political leadership, bureaucratic politics

ABSTRAK

Dalam banyak usaha, kepimpinan merupakan suatu unsur yang penting untuk mencapai kejayaan. Dalam hal ini, pembaharuan-pembaharuan yang dinamik yang sedang dan terus berlaku dalam perkhidmatan awam Malaysia banyak bergantung kepada kepimpinan Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. Ini merupakan suatu hujah yang utama bagi perubahan-perubahan dinamik yang berlaku dalam birokrasi Malaysia. Ia boleh dilihat daripada banyak program-program yang diperkenalkan yang mana secara umumnya telah diterima dengan baik oleh pihak sektor awam dan juga swasta. Justeru itu, objektif rencana ini ialah untuk memberi tumpuan ke atas kepimpinan Dr. Mahathir Mohamad sebagai seorang yang dianggap "pemangkin" atau "penggerak" dalam pelaksanaan usaha-usaha pembaharuan pentadbiran. Ia juga mempamerkan kepimpinan yang dinamis dan ke arah berorientasi masa depan beliau dalam memainkan kejayaan gerakan pembaharuan tersebut.

ABSTRACT

In many reform efforts, leadership is an important element in ensuring that the plan succeeds. In this respect, dynamic reforms which are continuing to take place in the Malaysian public service owe much to the leadership provided by Dr. Mahathir Mohamad. This can be seen from the numerous programmes he has introduced which have generally been well received by both the public and private sectors. The objective of this article is to focus on Dr. Mahathir Mohamad as a prime mover or catalyst in the implementation of the administrative reform efforts in Malaysia. It highlights the leadership dynamism and forward-orientation of Dr. Mahathir thus far, in playing a central role to ensure the success of the reform movement.

INTRODUCTION

Many factors have contributed to the success of administrative reforms in Malaysia since the 1970s. These include better socio-economic conditions conducive to administrative reform, political stability, leadership support, bureaucratic support and the public demand for reform. In a survey conducted by the writer on reform efforts under Mahathir since 1981, he concluded that many programmes and policies in the administrative reforms have achieved their target, and generally been successful (though more could have been done) in changing attitudes of civil servants towards the goals of efficiency,

effectiveness and productivity. However, one has to bear in mind that the leadership factor is of paramount importance in ensuring the success of the reforms.

This article is not a detailed analysis of every single reform effort conducted in Malaysia during Mahathir's era, nor does it analyse his leadership role in the UMNO/Malaysian politics, nor make comprehensive comparisons with past prime ministers. However, for background purposes, brief examples of structural, procedural and behavioural reforms are given as a backdrop to the analysis of Mahathir's leadership role in the administrative reform.

Therefore, this article is divided into two major parts, the first covering the definition of administrative reforms, and the second detailing the contribution of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad.

Most of the data used in the first section was obtained from survey and secondary sources, while data used in the second section is mostly based on personal interviews with several former top civil servants. Several selected criteria are used to analyse Mahathir's leadership, such as his style of leadership, his attitude towards the bureaucracy, his strategies in managing the public sector, his personal characteristics in the bureaucracy. By examining Mahathir's leadership role in administrative reform programmes it is hoped to contribute to a further understanding of the concept of leadership, or the way leadership operates, in administrative science.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM IN MALAYSIA: THEORY AND PRACTICE, PAST AND PRESENT

Definition of Administrative Reform

The concept of administrative reforms means different things to different people, which is echoed by Caiden in following words: "to all improvements in administration...to general administrative overhauls in difficult circumstances...to specific remedies for administration...to any suggestion for better government...and to intentions of self-styled administrative reformers" (Caiden 1969: 43).

In Malaysia, administrative reform is defined on the lines of contemporary Western thinking. In Western public bureaucracy, administrative reform, or 'reorganisation' in a contemporary context, usually encompasses changes in the internal practices along with structure and procedures of organisations. Therefore, this article defines administrative reform as 'a systematic and integrated effort to bring about fundamental changes in public administration to enhance public administrative capability to achieve national development goals' (Hanh 1970: 78). The definition is also designed to accommodate: (1) organisational improvements (both structural and procedural), and (2) improvements in the behaviour of civil servants.

Background to Administrative Reform

In Malaysia, administrative reform was undertaken even during the colonial period in response to the political changes in the country

as a result of the freedom movement. When Malaysia achieved independence in 1957, she inherited the British colonial administration. The organisational set-up of the government machinery then was seen as no longer suitable for the aspirations of the newly independent state. Therefore, the Malaysian government took immediate steps to reform the civil service. Various measures were introduced, such as launching the Malayisation process, reorganisation of administrative machinery, restructuring of work in central agencies and ministries, and the establishment of the Public Service Commission. These measures met with limited success as the pace of development was slow due to limited resources.

The period of restructuring of government machinery extended over a decade and a half, i.e., 1966-1981. The administrative reforms based on the Montgomery-Esman proposal of the United States played a role in the restructuring exercise. The creation of the Development Administration Unit (DAU) in 1966 represented a very important institutional reform in administrative development in Malaysia. The main thrust of reforms during the 1966-81 period was geared towards increasing efficiency, productivity and development orientation, especially in land and district administration. Since rural development planning was also heavily emphasised, the recommendations of DAU obviously represented the desire on the part of the Prime Minister (Tun Abdul Razak) to gain greater control of the bureaucracy.

The beginning of a more rigorous effort in administrative reform in Malaysia began in 1970, when the New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced. Since then the institution-building approach has been employed, leading to the setting up of a dozen public corporations and statutory bodies. This has resulted in a huge number of new recruits into those agencies. During the six-year period of Hussein Onn's administration (1976-1981), there were important administrative reform efforts, particularly in institution building such as the formation of the Malaysian Administrative and Manpower Planning Unit (MAMPU) in 1977 as a new administrative reform agency. It was established at what was considered a propitious time to focus on the efficiency and the effectiveness of civil servants. Another significant reform effort was the introduction of a code of ethics for civil

servants. At the end of Hussein Onn's administration, there was an expansion of the civil service (*Operasi Isipenuh*), but this was subsequently aborted at the beginning of the Mahathir era to reduce the size of the public sector. The reform efforts undertaken by the government under MAMPU can be considered as the beginning of the series of reforms that continued into the Mahathir administration. The previous reforms, which stressed mostly structural and procedural changes and institution-building during the Razak era, have shifted away to de-institutionalisation during the Mahathir administration. Since 1981, the establishment of public corporations, statutory bodies and institutions has been sharply reduced. However, a certain number of new ministries and government agencies have been set up during the Mahathir administration to meet the objectives of expediting development plans due to heightened economic development. Dr. Mahathir has attempted to infuse new values and behavioural characteristics among civil servants. In other words, the beginning of the 1980s saw the introduction of a new direction in administrative reform. Since Dr. Mahathir came to power, he has issued many policy statements, introduced new concepts, and implemented new techniques and styles of management. Some of these directions were directed towards the larger society, others were geared towards changing Malay society, but most were targeted at shaping the public bureaucracy into an efficient, dynamic and productive instrument for the modernisation of Malaysia. While it is sometimes difficult to disaggregate the target audiences of Dr. Mahathir's reforms, it is the writer's view that the thrust of Mahathir's reforms has been to change the behaviour, attitudes and values of the employees in the civil service.

Administrative Reforms under Dr. Mahathir

Nevertheless, reform efforts introduced in the early days of the Mahathir administration were targeted at all Malaysians, in order to change their thinking and influence them to be progressive, enterprising, hardworking, productive, and efficient. It seems that a 'holistic' approach has been adopted to affect the reform efforts. Various programmes have been introduced in order to upgrade the leadership quality, efficiency, effectiveness and productivity among the civil servants. Some of these

programmes are: (1) Improving Work System and Procedures; (2) Improving Services to the Public; (3) Changing Attitudes of the Civil Servants; (4) Inculcating Work Ethics; (5) Privatisation Policy; (6) Utilisation of Automation and New Technology; and (7) Budgetary Reform and Improving Financial Management System. The Mahathir administration has also provided training opportunities for all levels of civil servants; better terms of service, promotion prospects, and other fringe benefits, both extrinsic and intrinsic, such as opportunities for postgraduate studies and sabbatical leave, and job rotation, in order to give civil servants wider exposure to the various operations of their respective departments. Another major reform has been to reduce the size of the public sector; this was initiated in 1982 in order to control the number of employees in the public service at an appropriate and optimum level. This unprecedented move was also aimed at improving the capability of the public service and as a cost-saving measure to reduce the operating expenditure of the public sector.

In addition to the above reform programmes, Dr. Mahathir has also launched several concepts or slogans such as the Look East Policy which was aimed at looking at the Japanese and Korean styles of management and the fields of technical training, research development and industry. 'Clean, Efficient and Trustworthy Government' is another concept which is very much in line with the behavioural or cultural psychological perspective aimed at the propagation of ethics and moral values (Mohd. Rais 1988: 62).

Dr. Mahathir was concerned with instilling a set of ethics among civil servants in addition to the procedural codes of the General Orders that was established long ago by the colonial government (Mohd. Rais 1988: 62). The emphasis is on moral values and the attitude of civil servants, while the General Orders were concerned more with general work procedures. The guidelines of the new work ethics are about the attitudes that civil servants should possess such as being 'clean, efficient and trustworthy'. Increase in efficiency and effectiveness of the public service through administrative reform has been an important feature of the Mahathir administration. Empirical data dealing with Mahathir's reform efforts confirm that his administration has attempted to use structural and behavioural strategies to reform bureaucracy

and increase efficiency and effectiveness of the public service. However, not all the reforms introduced have met success. This can be deduced from the analysis of survey data which polled opinions of civil servants directly involved in the reform exercises carried out from 1981.

Objective of opinion survey. The purpose of the survey was to bring into focus the opinions and perspective of those most affected by Mahathir's reforms, namely administrative officials in government departments. The opinion survey was concerned with the following questions: To what extent has there been an increase in efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in the public bureaucracy since the introduction of various reform programmes in 1981? How are the types of reform related to the success or failure of administrative reform?

Descriptive data. Questionnaires were mailed to 980 senior civil servants, but only 433 (44.3%)

TABLE 1

Distribution of respondents		(N:433)
Central Agency	Response No.	Percentage
PM's Department	114	26.32
Finance Ministry	45	10.39
State Secretariats	44	10.16
Ministry		
Education	23	5.31
Agriculture	22	5.08
Health	20	4.61
Transport	18	4.15
Rural Development	16	3.69
International Trade	12	2.70
Human Resources	12	2.77
Land & Cooperative	11	2.54
Primary Industry	10	2.30
Housing & Local Gov't	10	2.30
Home Affairs	10	2.30
Domestic Trade	9	2.07
Information	8	1.84
Welfare and Unity	8	1.84
Telecoms, Post & Energy	7	1.61
Defence	6	1.38
Science and Environ.	5	1.15
Public Works	5	1.15
Public Enterprise	5	1.15
Youth & Sport	4	0.92
Culture, Arts & Tourism	4	0.92
Foreign Affairs	3	0.69
Justice	2	0.46
Total	433	100.00

Source: Survey data

completed questionnaires were returned. The questionnaires were sent randomly to government departments and agencies; the number ranged from 10 to 20, depending on the importance of the ministry or agency. It was, thus, a purposive sampling. Table 1 presents a ministry-by-ministry response rate—ranging from a high of 26.32% from the Prime Minister's Department to a low of 0.46% from the Ministry of Justice. Overall, the response sample is representative of the Malaysian civil service.

Discussion. Generally, there is evidence to suggest that there is an overall improvement in the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity among civil servants and in the public bureaucracy as a result of the introduction of various forms of administrative reform. There is abundant evidence of the public's general satisfaction with the reduced time it now takes to apply for or renew passports, road tax discs and driving licences. In government hospitals, waiting time for patients seeking treatment has also been generally reduced.

The findings from the survey conducted among civil servants seem to confirm this general trend, that there is a general overall improvement among civil servants and in the public bureaucracy. However, there are differences in the degree to which there have been improvements in efficiency, effectiveness and productivity in one government department or agency compared to another, or between individual civil servants.

Because the administrative officers are closely associated with both the implementation of programmes and the application of administrative reforms, they were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of eight categories of procedures and techniques: improving work systems and procedures; improving service to the public; improving attitudes of civil servants; inculcating work ethics; effectiveness of privatisation objectives; effectiveness of utilisation of automation and new technology; effectiveness of budgetary reform; effectiveness of financial control. Individual comments are also analysed, since they better represent the true nature of the grievances of respondents.

As indicated in Table 2, of the nine work procedures and techniques that have been introduced in the public service since 1981, only two have not been favourably evaluated, namely quality control circle (QCC) and productivity

TABLE 2
Effectiveness of work systems and procedures (N=433)

Work Systems & Procedures	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative Evaluation	
	Extremely Effective	Quite Effective	Neutral	Quite Ineffective	Extremely Ineffective
Punch card	33.0	58.1	2.6	6.3	.
Name tag	39.4	51.2	3.2	5.8	0.5
Quality control circle (QCC)	5.6	35.0	31.9	22.8	4.7
Open-space & office layout	8.7	44.0	18.2	25.5	3.5
Work procedures	16.4	54.7	13.6	13.3	2.6
Deskfile system	14.1	54.1	13.6	15.0	3.3
Postal correspondence	9.3	54.4	27.8	7.1	1.4
Management thru meeting	22.8	57.0	10.0	9.3	0.9
Productivity measurement programme	7.3	38.5	30.3	18.5	5.4

Source: Survey data

measurement programme (PMP). Perhaps more time is needed before their benefits become obvious and, hence, their acceptance. Table 3 indicates a positive evaluation of one-stop payment, service and licence centres. This may indicate a great improvement in productivity and efficiency. However, one written comment on a questionnaire said that improvement of the one-stop centre was only in the form of physical facilities while actual delivery of service is still slow.

One of the main thrusts of reform under the Mahathir administration is the behavioural modification of civil servants. Towards this end, various slogans, such as 'clean, efficient and

trustworthy government', 'leadership by example' and 'Malaysia Incorporated' were unveiled. An excellent service award was also created in order to reinforce adoption of various desirable values that the government has identified (Table 4). In line with the good intentions of these strategies, survey data showed that the majority of the respondents thought that they were effective in instilling a more positive outlook among their staff. This positive view was also extended to programmes for inculcating work ethics (Table 5). For example, none of the 16 measures introduced was seen as not being effective in instilling better work ethics among

TABLE 3
Effectiveness of services to the public (N=433)

Services	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative Evaluation	
	Extremely Effective	Quite Effective	Neutral	Quite Ineffective	Extremely Ineffective
One-stop payment centre	53.1	30.4	14.7	1.6	0.3
One-stop service centre	39.5	38.7	19.7	1.8	0.3
One-stop licence centre	32.4	34.9	29.9	2.5	0.3
Suggestion box	6.5	35.5	24.9	27.1	6.0
GIRO	17.1	39.2	34.5	7.5	1.7
Efficient and courteous counter service	20.3	56.9	14.7	7.1	1.0

Source: Survey data

TABLE 4
Effectiveness of improving attitudes of civil servants (N=433)

Administrative/ Behavioural Techniques	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative	
	Extremely Effective	Effective	Neutral	Quite Ineffective	Extremely Ineffective
Clean, efficient & trustworthy	16.6	55.2	16.1	10.0	2.1
Leadership by example	19.7	49.7	15.5	11.6	3.5
Excellent service award	16.8	48.6	18.2	14.5	1.9
Malaysia Incorporated	10.5	47.5	31.0	9.5	1.4

Source: Survey data

TABLE 5
Inculcation of work ethics (N=433)

Values	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative Evaluation	
	Highly Improved	Improved	Neutral	Somewhat Improved	Not Improved
Accountability	13.3	65.7	7.7	11.0	1.9
Self-management	4.7	57.9	19.1	15.8	2.6
Co-operation	13.3	64.7	5.8	14.0	2.1
Self-development	5.3	47.3	20.2	23.2	3.5
Diligence	8.2	63.6	9.6	16.1	2.6
Intellectual	7.5	47.3	24.6	16.9	3.7
Team spirit	15.5	59.1	8.1	14.9	2.1
Thrift	2.4	46.5	29.6	16.7	4.8
Innovativeness	6.1	52.0	20.0	18.4	3.5
Positive attitude	10.7	55.1	17.1	14.7	2.1
Integrity	10.7	55.1	17.1	14.7	2.3
Responsiveness	11.8	56.5	14.1	16.2	1.4
Self-disciplined	7.9	59.7	12.6	17.5	2.3
Client-oriented	13.3	57.6	10.5	15.7	2.9
High performance oriented	9.1	48.9	21.1	18.5	2.3
Professionalism	11.8	52.2	3.9	9.1	3.1
Enterprising	4.3	39.9	30.6	20.0	5.2

Source: Survey data

the public employees. Survey data showed that the opinion of the majority of the senior civil servants interviewed was generally positive with regard to the behavioural approach in reform. However, their opinions were more favourable towards the effectiveness of the structural and procedural methods of reform. This can be seen from the positive evaluation by the civil servants of the effectiveness of privatisation objectives (Table 6), utilisation of automation and new technology (Tables 7 and 8), and improvement

of the budgetary and financial management systems (Tables 9 and 10).

Reform strategy. Analysis of the survey data found little difference among the three strategies (procedural, structural and behavioural) in terms of effect on increased efficiency, effectiveness and productivity among civil servants. Table 11 shows that all three types of reform are all highly effective, but the procedural programmes appear to be the most effective of the three approaches.

TABLE 6
Effectiveness of privatisation objectives (N=433)

Purpose or Motive	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative Evaluation	
	Extremely Effective	Quite Effective	Neutral	Quite Ineffective	Extremely Ineffective
To spur economic growth	25.1	51.6	16.9	5.5	1.0
Relieving financial and administrative burden	30.5	47.7	11.7	7.4	2.4
To promote competition, efficiency & productivity	16.9	47.9	20.0	11.0	4.3
To stimulate entrepreneurship	16.5	49.3	24.6	7.9	1.7
To reduce the size of public sector	34.9	40.4	12.2	9.8	2.6
Meeting objectives of NEP	14.4	42.8	27.8	11.2	3.8

Source: Survey data

TABLE 7
Impact of privatisation on organisation (N=433)

Purpose	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative Evaluation	
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The fear of privatisation improved work discipline	3.1	21.2	2.9	48.2	12.6
Privatisation: more conscious about efficiency	7.8	44.2	16.1	26.0	5.9
Privatisation improved service delivery	7.7	50.5	11.5	26.5	3.8
Privatisation promotes entrepreneurship & investment	16.5	49.3	24.6	7.9	1.7
Privatisation: more conscious about public accountability	7.1	45.8	15.6	27.4	4.2
Privatisation: more conscious about productivity	12.7	58.7	7.0	18.1	3.5
Privatisation-led job insecurity	2.1	11.6	13.2	58.3	14.9

Source: Survey Data

For instance, the name tag identification and the punch card system were the most positively evaluated by the respondents (see Table 12).

Overall improvement. Table 11 shows the distribution of opinions of civil servants on the overall state of improvement in efficiency and capability in the public service. Respondents were asked to indicate how much they thought the civil service has improved in efficiency and capability since 1981. Responses were categorised

by percentages, beginning with category 10% and increasing by a constant of 5%. To sum up, reform procedural measures undertaken by the Mahathir administration have been able to increase efficiency and productivity in the civil service by about 62% (see Table 11). However, more effort is still needed, especially in re-examining the set target.

Summary of findings. Civil servants appeared to be generally satisfied with the reform efforts

TABLE 8
Effectiveness of the utilisation of automation and technology (N=433)

Purpose	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative Evaluation	
	Extremely Effective	Quite Effective	Neutral	Quite Ineffective	Extremely Ineffective
Greater speed in policy & decisions	17.5	54.0	15.2	9.1	4.2
Improvement in accuracy, standardisation, consistency & co-ordination	26.6	58.7	11.9	6.3	0.5
Greater efficiency in counter service	29.1	56.3	11.1	3.3	0.2
Efficiency in correspondence	21.2	53.7	16.7	7.7	0.7
Efficiency in project implementation	13.8	54.4	22.0	9.1	0.7
Speedier programme evaluation	17.3	53.3	18.9	8.9	1.6

Source: Survey data

TABLE 9
Effectiveness of budgetary reform (N=433)

Purpose	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative Evaluation	
	Extremely Effective	Quite Effective	Neutral	Quite Ineffective	Extremely Ineffective
Budgeting is now more programme & performance oriented	18.2	63.1	11.5	6.1	1.2
Better evaluation of the cost & benefits	12.2	60.8	16.7	8.5	1.9
Ensure greater financial accountability	16.2	61.2	12.9	7.0	2.1
More rationality in the budget process	12.5	59.2	18.4	7.3	2.6

Source: Survey data

undertaken by the Mahathir administration. But there are also many weaknesses that still require serious attention. This can be seen from the comments and suggestions given in response to several questions in the survey. Some civil servants are still sceptical of some reform programmes, particularly those related to behavioural aspects which are regarded as 'slogan shouting' and political gimmicks. Reform efforts pertaining to instilling positive values and work ethics continue to be externally driven, not internally directed. Therefore, these have been less successful in

bringing about any significant change in attitudes. Some reforms are taking place too fast. Therefore, the effect of their institutionalisation cannot be accurately assessed. In this respect, one senior officer claimed that some efforts are more of a protocol and ceremonial nature rather than having real substance.

From the survey, it also appears that there is still some degree of dissatisfaction among civil servants regarding various aspects, such as promotion opportunities, salary schemes,

TABLE 10
Effectiveness of financial management control (N=433)

Purpose	Percentage Positive Evaluation			Percentage Negative Evaluation	
	Extremely Effective	Quite Effective	Neutral	Quite Ineffective	Extremely Ineffective
Led to more consciousness	15.2	65.5	12.4	5.1	1.9
More efficient, effective in financial accountability utilisation of financial resources	13.2	65.5	12.1	7.5	1.6
More emphasis on upgrading skills	12.1	63.4	16.1	7.0	1.6
Improvement in financial procedure	10.0	64.4	16.6	7.2	1.6
More active role of the PAC	17.6	53.4	20.4	7.0	1.6
More active role of the ACA	14.3	49.5	23.4	10.0	2.8

Source: Survey data

TABLE 11

Overall improvement of administration reform

Percentage Rate of Improvement	Percentage Evaluation	Number of Respondents
10	1.5	6
15	0.7	3
20	3.4	14
25	6.8	28
35	1.5	6
40	5.1	21
45	1.7	7
50	7.0	29
55	2.4	10
60	12.9	53
65	6.6	27
70	16.0	66
75	5.8	24
80	18.4	76
85	2.4	10
90	3.9	16
85	2.4	10
90	3.9	16
95	0.5	2
100	2.4	10
No Response	4.8	21

Source: Survey Data

neutrality of the civil service in politics, values and motivation of civil servants, especially the Malaysian Civil Service (MCS) officers' tight control of other branches of the civil service. These are ongoing issues to which a solution has

yet to be found. There are likely to be adverse effects on the efficiency in the service unless these are properly addressed by the leadership.

LEADERSHIP IN MALAYSIA'S ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM: EVALUATING THE CONTRIBUTION OF DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

Mahathir Style of Leadership

In Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir's leadership is one of the important administrative reform agents. His political leadership role is an important external factor responsible for successful administrative reforms. In fact, his leadership has proven to be the most dynamic as well as controversial in Malaysia's history (Noraini 1989: 155). When Dr. Mahathir took office in 1981, his leadership signalled the rise of a new dimension in Malaysian socio-economic and political developments. Amidst a sense of change and rapid development, his administration embarked on a series of policies and actions that immediately distinguished it from previous administrations.

Administrative reform is most likely to be successful if it is done through the initiative of the top leadership (Montgomery 1969: 427-471; Dror 1970: 19-35). This opinion concurs with Crozier, who argued that:

'Change in the bureaucratic organisation must come from the top down and must be

TABLE 12
Highest evaluation of selected reforms by strategies

Strategy	Type of programme	Effective %	Neutral %	Ineffective %
Structure	Privatisation: Stimulate economic growth	77	17	7
	Relieve financial burden of government	78	12	10
Procedure	System and procedures: Punch card system	91	3	6
	Name tag	90	6	6
	Services: One-stop payment centre	84	15	2
	Utilisation of technology; Improvement in accuracy, standardisation, consistency & co-ordination	81	12	7
	Improvement in efficiency in counter service	85	11	4
	Budget reform: Progress & performance -oriented	81	12	7
	More comprehensive budgeting	78	6	8
	Financial management control, Consciousness of financial accountability	81	12	7
	Utilisation of financial resources	79	12	9
	Behaviour	Improvement of attitude: Leadership by example	69	16
Clean, efficient & trustworthy		72	16	12
Work ethics: Accountability		79	8	13
Co-operation		78	6	16

Source: survey data

universalistic, i.e. encompass the whole organisation en bloc.' (Crozier 1964: 196)

Improvement in the output capacity of the bureaucracy in Malaysia could only be done through intensifying administrative reform via direct political influence. As Mavis Puthuchery argued, 'Political and administrative developments must take place side by side if there is to be a reform necessary to achieve administrative efficiency and public accountability.' (Puthuchery 1978: 119).

Mahathir's administration began to undertake changes almost immediately upon assuming office. The targets of his reforms are wide ranging, for example, civil servants, businessmen, the public and the ruling élite, including ministers and members of royalty. One

respondent suggested that given the opportunity and the right political support, the public sector can accept the challenges of change and reform. The administrative reform movement of the 1980s and the present economic/business management era have shown that administrative reform and political leadership priorities are inter-supportive and complementary (*Asiaweek* 19 March 1976: 12).

Some major reforms undertaken have been encouraged by the present top leadership. For example, the government began to liaise with the private sector under the concept of Malaysia Incorporated. This means that Malaysia should be viewed as a company in which the government and the private sector are both owners and co-workers. Mahathir also believes firmly in

'leadership by example', which has become the slogan of his administration. Another drastic change in his administration was the Look East Policy. Under this policy, the people of Malaysia were encouraged to change their traditional views of Western countries as role models and to look instead towards Japan and Korea as the Asean blueprint for economic success.

The 'clean, efficient and trustworthy' concept of government emerged from the Look East Policy. Under this slogan, new systems, techniques and procedures of administration were introduced in search of increasing efficiency and effectiveness in the public service. Matters for re-examination included diligence and discipline at work, loyalty to the nation and to the enterprise or business where the worker is employed, emphasis on quality, productivity, and management systems which concentrate on long-term achievement rather than short-term increases in dividends.

The management of the nation was geared towards more efficiency so as to achieve political stability and development. Work manuals and deskfiles were introduced. Civil servants were encouraged to be more punctual and efficient. All civil servants were required to wear name tags to make them more personally accountable to the general public. Time clocks were installed in every government office to ensure that the stated working hours were strictly adhered to. The shift in attitude towards the East was accompanied by a greater emphasis on Islamic values within the administration itself (Tilman and Tilman 1977: 143). A fresh move against corruption and mismanagement was launched, and steps were taken to weed out officials who were either known or suspected to be corrupt. Some civil servants resigned immediately on hearing that the new Prime Minister was planning to winkle them out of office (Tilman and Tilman 1977: 143).

In each of the areas of reform, Mahathir has shown his interest and commitment to achieve the desired goals of his policies. Nevertheless, as administrative reform is a continuing process,

political leadership is vital in determining the fate of any reform at any given time. In the absence of strong leadership traits such as political skills, vision, philosophy or managerial mind to engineer and reinforce continual commitment to results, administrative reforms are often doomed to failure.

Thus, it is suggested here that in the absence of strong administrative leadership to initiate major reforms, Mahathir emerged in the midst of bureaucratic inertia and exerted his leadership capability authoritatively in his policy reforms. Emphatically, Mahathir's leadership has been important in ensuring the fate of many reforms. But we should bear in the mind that besides factors like his leadership qualities, reform policies and executive power, other favourable factors have enabled him to undertake administrative reform efforts. These include the style of his leadership—characterised as transactional and charismatic leadership—bureaucratic support, political stability, good timing as well as integrity in the eyes of the people of different races. All these favourable factors have encouraged administrative reforms with minimum obstacles (*Asiaweek* 30 January 1976: 11). Mahathir's administration has been able to forge a coalition of participating élite such as bureaucrats, military, politicians and businessmen to share rather than monopolise power for the development process.

Attitude towards the Bureaucracy

Mahathir's political attitude started when he was still at school. His forthright way can be traced back to his early writings beginning in 1949. He wrote on political subjects under the pseudonym of C.H.E. Det (*Adshead* 1989: 25-26). According to two former top civil servants, one reason why Mahathir is critical of civil servants (Mehden 1981: 214), especially in the early days of his premiership, was due to his bad experience as a government doctor on Langkawi Island, the most backward area in Kedah State during the late 1950s. At that time, he was also conducting part-time business in real estate.¹ Therefore, he was

1. This point was described by Datuk Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad, Former Director General of MAMPU and Secretary General of Public Enterprises Ministry. Retired in 1988; in 1989 was appointed Petronas Vice President. The interview was held on 24 December 1989 and 4 September 1992. In 1977, Dr. Mahathir called Datuk Abdullah to his office together with the then Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdullah Salleh and another senior civil servant to discuss the administrative reform efforts in the public service.

used to dealing with civil servants; he saw that the civil service was so slow to react to what he claimed to be inefficiency in delivering services to the public.²

Therefore, besides being a general practitioner, he also had a little administrative experience before becoming Minister of Education in 1974. However, before being appointed to the Cabinet, he had proven his administrative capability as Chairman of Food Industries of Malaysia (FIMA). He was said to be able to take on heavy responsibility. This can be seen in a comment made by *Asiaweek*:

'His boundless energy makes up for that. He knows what he wants, and he is quick to make decisions. He is a stickler for decisions and his strong convictions sometimes make him look more uncompromising than he really is. Since becoming Education Minister, he had tried to live down his reputation. "I will try to do a good job - for all Malaysians" he promised on taking up that job in 1974.' (*Asiaweek* 19 March 1976: 8).

Therefore, his critical view of the bureaucracy had its roots long before he became a politician. His perception towards the civil service was somewhat different from that of his predecessors, particularly Tun Abdul Razak (the second Prime Minister). His perception is coloured by his Kedah experience. While in his clinic, he saw that the civil servants were more relaxed than those in the medical service.³ So when he became Prime Minister, he undertook to upgrade bureaucrats in order to be more dynamic, efficient and productive.⁴ He knew the bureaucracy is a strong pillar for the Malays and that the country's economy could be improved if the bureaucracy was revitalised with more efficient civil servants.⁵

More active interaction with the Malaysian bureaucracy began during his deputy prime ministership (1976-1981). Mahathir held frequent meetings and dialogues with all top civil servants and was critical about bureaucratic inertia in the public service. In these numerous meetings with the top civil servants, he would ask question such as: What was the planning division at EPU (Economic Planning Unit), ICU (Implementation and Co-ordination Unit), PSD (Public Service Department) doing? What about the manpower planning and productivity level of the public servants? Why were there so many grievances arising from the public regarding bureaucratic inefficiency, absenteeism and 'colonial type of bureaucrat'.⁶

Mahathir was concerned about administrative problems, particularly at district level throughout the country. One problem was the delay in project implementation at the district level. Among the problems identified were inadequate facilities in most of the district offices such as the lack of computers, inefficient management system, poor inventory and financial systems and low quality of leadership of the officers. Mahathir directed that a Cabinet paper be prepared to formulate strategies for modernising the district offices.⁷ The establishment of MAMPU was aimed at working to modernise the district administration. Since Mahathir took office as Prime Minister in 1981, MAMPU has expanded its role to modernise the whole machinery of the civil service in response to the urgent need to expedite the implementation of development plans.⁸

During his deputy prime ministership, Mahathir could not start a comprehensive administrative reform plan because he was second in command.⁹ Due to his subordinate position

2. Interview in 29 August 1992 with Datuk Alwi Jantan, a former State Secretary of Selangor, Director-General Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department; Director-General Public Service Department. He retired in 1990. This is also supported by Tan Radin Soenarno Alhaj, former State Secretary of Perak, Secretary-General Ministry of Lands and Regional Development, Director-General of Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister Department. He retired in 1987.
3. According to Alwi Jantan, before Mahathir joined politics, he saw the MCS officers were more relaxed than a medical doctor. They had ample time to play golf, to attend parties or gatherings. So, this gave him a different perception about the MCS officers.
4. Interview with Alwi Jantan.
5. Interview with Radin Soenarno on 20 August 1992.
6. Interview with Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad on 4 September 1992.
7. Interview with Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad.
8. Interview with Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad on 4 September 1992.
9. Interview with Alwi Jantan on 29 August 1992.

to Tun Hussein Onn (the third Prime Minister), Mahathir could not function as effectively as he had wanted.¹⁰ When he came to power, problems were already mounting. His immediate thought on taking office as the fourth Prime Minister on 16 July 1981 was to find ways to improve the efficiency of the government machinery (Adshead 1989: 74).

Mahathir differs from his predecessors, particularly in his relationship with civil servants. Unlike Tun Razak, Mahathir was not an MCS (Malaysian Civil Service) officer and was considered an 'outsider' by the bureaucracy. In the early days of his prime ministership, Mahathir's relations with civil servants were not as close as Tun Razak's had been. As a former government officer, Tun Razak was considered as one of themselves by the civil servants. Tun Razak was also more comfortable dealing with civil servants than politicians, especially at the implementation level. Although he was a Prime Minister, 'he was like a top administrator at the same time'.¹¹ In other words, Tun Razak relied on the civil servants to carry out his policy, especially in the rural development projects because he knew the psyche of the civil servants, in terms of their ethos, tradition and sub-culture, and he expected to refer to civil servants (Doh 1981: 64). He knew the boundary between the civil servants and politicians. To Tun Razak, success in the implementation of development projects was a function of a leadership with the right attitude and dedication (Doh 1981: 64). This was partly because, during Razak's era, the public sector occupied a major role in the country's economic development. Unlike Tun Razak, Mahathir was less appreciative of the roles played by MCS officers, especially in the early days of his premiership.¹² This was because

the private sector played a significant role in the country's economy.

According to one senior civil servant interviewed, Mahathir was initially indifferent with regard to the role of the MCS because he believed that 'everybody can do a job in the public service'.¹³ This belief was reinforced when he asked opinions of non-civil servants like business and technical people to assist him in formulating economic policies or in implementing certain projects. A typical example is the privatisation policy which manifests his entrepreneurial thinking.¹⁴

Unlike Tun Razak, Mahathir did not place much faith in civil servants. This could be seen in a tussle between Mahathir and the bureaucrats in influencing public policy during the first three years of his premiership. Relations between Mahathir and the civil servants became strained.¹⁵ Mahathir criticised civil servants openly in public and upset a good number of them.¹⁶ He attacked civil servants for inefficiency and ineffectiveness, delays, red tape, mismanagement and absenteeism. His criticisms were published in the national newspapers and mass media.¹⁷ Another agency which had attracted his attention was the administration of Kuala Lumpur City. While some of Mahathir's criticisms might have some elements of truth and were justifiable, civil servants thought that such criticisms should not have been made publicly, but instead should have been communicated diplomatically.¹⁸

As criticism of civil servants became increasingly apparent, an open dialogue was held in early 1984 between the Prime Minister and members of the Association of Malaysian Civil Servants to discuss the matter. The latter expressed their disappointment and grievances over the open criticism fielded by the Prime

10. Interview with Alwi Jantan. This view was also expressed by Ahmad Mustafa Hassan during an interview with the writer on 8 October 1992. He is Chairman of Namfa Corporation, former Kedah state civil servant, Political Secretary to Minister of Information (1965-1969), Press Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister Tun Razak 1970-1976, Tun Hussein Onn 1976-1980, and General Manager of Bernama (National News Agency of Malaysia).

11. This point is supported by Alwi Jantan.

12. Opinion of Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad.

13. Statement made by Radin Soenarno.

14. Statement made by Alwi Jantan.

15. Statement made by Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad.

16. This is the view of Alwi Jantan and is also supported by Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad.

17. Statement made by Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad.

18. Opinion of Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad.

Minister and other politicians. During the dialogue, the Prime Minister was told that the Malaysian civil servants had contributed a lot to the nation since independence. They even claimed that civil servants had done remarkably well so far, had played their role in implementing the development policy of the government, had helped assist the setting-up of the various government programmes such as rural development projects, Operation Room Technique, DAU (Development Administration Unit), Red Book Plan and MAMPU. Thus, in the view of the MCS Association, they had done their part and they should not be blamed totally for all discrepancies in the public bureaucracy.¹⁹

It was said that after the dialogue, the relationship between the Prime Minister and civil servants began to improve.²⁰ Amidst a leadership crisis in UMNO (the ruling party—United Malays National Organisation) in 1987, Dr. Mahathir sought the support of the bureaucrats, partly to strengthen his political position.

Initially, a number of administrative reform efforts introduced by the Mahathir administration reflected a new dimension in the bureaucracy. In the beginning, the civil service was wary of the many policies he introduced (Adshead 1989: 166), particularly those that might affect their routine life styles. It was apparent that senior staff were more worried than their junior or lower level counterparts about Mahathir's reform efforts (Adshead 1989: 166).

Strategies in Managing the Public Sector: Executive Dominance

Since 1981, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad has been keen to adopt administrative reforms in the implementation of development plans vis-à-vis

policy implementation. Various administrative techniques²¹ and reform efforts have been introduced to implement policy developments. In addition, two distinct strategies in managing the public sector have probably characterised Mahathir's style of management, namely transactional (Chee 1991: 15) and transforming or charismatic leadership.

Transactional versus transforming leadership.

According to Burns, leadership 'is an aspect of power'. Thus, leadership may be interpreted 'as leader inducing followers to go for certain goals that represent the values, motivations, aspirations and expectations of both leaders and followers' (Burns 1978: 8-9). From this leader-follower interaction, Burns identifies two fundamental types of leadership, namely transactional and transforming leadership. In the developmental state, leadership acts are increasingly in the nature of transactions, bargaining or exchange relationships between individuals, groups and larger collectivities. Because of the instrumental nature of transactions, transactional leadership tends to depend on the availability of exchange of values (Chee 1991: 1-5). One of the essential values for the transactional or functional leadership is dependency on the bureaucracy, which occupies a functional role in the society. Such dependency stems from the fact that the phase of development in the 1980s and 1990s is seen as the era of bureaucracy or technocracy rather than charismatic or personified relationship as characterised in the transforming leadership (Chee 1991: 1-5). Transforming or charismatic leadership is characterised by a personified relationship between the leader and the bureaucracy.

19. Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad.

20. Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad. A sign of positively amicable relationship was expressed in his speech during the UMNO meeting with the Division Heads in 1985 where he complimented the civil servants. Among other things Mahathir advised the politicians and UMNO members not to criticise the civil servants too openly as they also had contributed to the country's development.

21. Administrative is borrowed from Benze's concept, which forms the basis of presidential management in the United States. The concept is broadly used to explain various reform efforts in American public bureaucracy such as reorganisation and civil service reforms. An increased focus on personnel (both political executive and career civil servants), an increased use of presidential staff in oversight and implementation capacities, and attempts to control the federal budget making process through PPBS, MBO and ZBB (see Benze 1980). Perhaps, owing to the broad concept of administrative technique, the term could also resemble the term administrative reform. By using administrative technique vis-à-vis administrative reform, the presidential objective has been to obtain centralised control over the implementation of policy (Rose 1976: 15; Benze 1980; Chalmers 1982: 355; 1987: 136-164).

In general, transactional leadership is more appropriate to describe Mahathir's leadership style in energising administrative reform. However, it is slightly difficult to characterise Mahathir's leadership as either one or the other. He is probably characterised by both leadership styles, transactional and charismatic. One example of him as a transactional leader is that since becoming Prime Minister, he has been able to show himself to be a dominant actor by introducing the privatisation concept as one of his development policies acceptable to both the bureaucrats as well as private entrepreneurs. In other words, being a good politician, Mahathir has been able to forge an alliance between contending élites within the bureaucracy and the private sector to accept his numerous administrative reforms.

Mahathir has also brought his own orientation towards affecting administrative reforms. As the ensuing discussion will show, Mahathir plays a central role in formulating public policies pertaining to administrative reform. Thus, due to this dominant views, Mahathir has brought a new kind of charismatic or 'transforming' leadership into the public sector to change the attitudes of civil servants towards more dynamism, competency and productivity. Because he is a transforming leader, Mahathir has brought the bureaucracy under his dominant control.

Leadership qualities, policy statements and executive power. In the Mahathir administration,

administrative reforms have been used in an effort to modernise the civil service. His intention is to reform the bureaucracy which he thinks has not been able to implement development policies efficiently and effectively. In this case, two management techniques have been employed by Mahathir. The first is the 'policy statement' technique characterised by administrative reform policies such as personnel improvements, scaling down the size of the public sector, improving services to the public, Look East Policy, Malaysia Incorporated, privatisation and financial management in order to increase his ability to control the implementation of policy.

The second is the 'leadership quality' technique²² such as the collection of personal and political skills, philosophy, motivation mission, vision, courage, self-confidence, flexibility, managerial mind, and also what he perceives to be important administrative problems and how administrative or reform techniques can be applied to solve these problems. Thus, Mahathir felt that if the bureaucracy is left on its own to implement the development policies, they might not be carried out according to his plans. Therefore, he has to impose some control by providing administrative reform policies in the public sector in order to change, innovate, move or create vision in public organisations.²³

Apart from being characterised as a transactional and charismatic or transforming leader, two other additional variables, 'reform policies' and 'leadership qualities', are also

22. Leadership quality can also be termed 'internal dimension of power' as developed by Benze, to show that successful management depends not only on the application of administrative reform/techniques (the external dimension of power). Instead, the success of administrative reforms has been shown to depend on the use of leadership qualities or skills like a number of presidential personal characteristics (courage, intelligence, vision and self-confidence) and political skills (ability to relate to Congress, ability to assess political realities, skills in timing, issue positions, ability to maintain the public trust, and the ability to sell programmes). The extent to which a president has these skills and is able to use them effectively may determine the success of his administrative programmes or reform. (Summarised from Benze 1980; 194-195). While reform policy could be termed 'external dimension of power', which is used to explain the implementation of presidential power, e.g. reorganisation plans, civil service reform and forth (see Benze 1980: 106-117. Another scholar, James E. Skok equates the term administrative technique vis-à-vis administrative reform as 'strategic management' in the public sector which can effectively resolve administrative problems. Following his definition, strategic management is best understood as purposive action through which agencies identify and realise organisation's objectives within their operating environments. Strategic management for public agencies, therefore, should be seen as process designed to develop desired relationships with other participants in competitive situations in order to advance a preferred policy outcome and effectiveness. (Summarised from Skok 1989; 136-137.)

23. Personal interview with Tan Sri Zainal Mahmood, former Secretary General, Home Affairs Ministry, 5 October 1992 Executive Chairman of Pos Malaysia.

helpful in understanding Mahathir's leadership style. As prime ministerial power is of utmost importance to ensure the fate of reform efforts in the bureaucracy, it is natural that the leadership qualities of his personal skills as the prime minister, especially his skills necessary for interacting with other élite and to reform policies, would form an important prime ministerial power and thus his management style.²⁴

Although these skills (leadership qualities, reform policies and executive power) are considered to be important components of the prime ministerial power, it is obvious that different prime ministers will have these skills in different degrees and will employ them in different fashions.²⁵ Mahathir is seen as displaying all of these three elements of power—reform policies, leadership qualities and executive power—over legislature, budget, information and technical personnel (Samonte and Hahn 1970: 89). This triad of elements is a synergism which describes different types of force moving together to become a movement of power of the Prime Minister to push for successive administrative reforms. Such concepts of prime ministerial power are listed in *Fig. 1*.

Perhaps such a conceptual framework should therefore be closely watched for verification of Mahathir's style of administration. As seen in *Fig. 1*, Dr. Mahathir has strong, decisive and charismatic leadership, both in the political arena and inside the bureaucracy. As such, he compelled the bureaucracy to implement his development policy—in other words, he is a transactional leader. Having identified Mahathir as being both a transactional and transforming leader, the other three characteristics of power necessary for his remarkable success of administrative reforms are reform policies, leadership qualities and executive power. These elements move together for the Prime Minister to push for successive administrative reforms.

Mahathir's personal characteristics in the bureaucracy and general strategy of development. First, it is necessary to analyse the leadership qualities (the collection of attributes such as personal skills, attitudes, perception and philosophy) that Mahathir brings into the process of governing. Several scholars and senior civil servants concurred with the opinion that basically

Executive Power	Reform Policies	Leadership Qualities
Over Parliament	Privatisation	Political and electoral skills
Budget/funding information	Leadership by example	Philosophy
Technical personnel	Personnel improvements	Political and burcaucratic support
Security	Malaysia Incorporated	Managerial mind
Budget reform	Control, etc.	Courage
Financial management		Mission
		Flexibility
		Motivation
		Vision

Fig. 1 Triad elements of power or management style of the prime minister

24. This view is adapted from Clayton and Lammers (1978). The specific skills that Clayton and Lammers found are important and are quite relevant to this study where the leadership support in administrative reform has essential perimeters.
 25. It is beyond the writer's intention to compare a continuum of administrative styles of previous ministers in detail. However, for Mahathir's leadership, in the words of Tan Sri Sallehuddin Mohamad: 'No doubt, Mahathir is dynamic, has strong conception of power. He is also a thinker and implementer.'

Mahathir has vision, sophistication, passion and the ability to formulate goals.²⁶

His philosophy of development strategy is quite different from that of previous Prime Ministers. For example, Tun Razak placed more emphasis on rural development in his efforts to upgrade the Malay economy.²⁷ Dr. Mahathir, on other hand, emphasises the close relationship between the public and private sectors, which is a more business-oriented policy. Therefore, the Malays have to change their notions about progress so that they can be more successful and competitive. The campaigns on such themes as cleanliness, skill acquisition, honesty and discipline are attempts to change the value system of the Malaysian community in order that they become more progressive and successful.

Mahathir has an eye for detail. When he conceptualises projects, he expects everything to get done properly. In the implementation of a project, he takes a keen interest, makes personal visits and gives his finishing touch.²⁸ This is quite different from Tun Razak, who would only inspect a project when it had been completed and looked more into the account of procedures and regulations or allocations. By the same token, Tun Razak knew exactly what was needed to be done because he was formerly an MCS officer.²⁹ In contrast, Mahathir carries a reputation for wanting pragmatism. This tendency might have been inherited from his career as a medical doctor when quick decisions are necessary in emergencies; 'sometimes one has to act first and explain later' (Adshead 1989: 166).

Mahathir is a visionary leader and at the same time pragmatic, dynamic and highly intelligent.³⁰ While Tun Razak was a 'problem-

oriented' leader, Mahathir is 'policy-oriented', tending to look at programmes as means for long-term results. As a leader Mahathir not only knows what has to be done 'to make a policy', but also knows how to get it done, 'to have programme or guidance' to go by.³¹

It is perceived that Tun Razak did not have a long-term vision and the pragmatism needed to keep up with changing times. Thus, in one speech he stressed, 'The time has come in our present phase of development for the Alliance Government to produce immediate and quick results in all fields of development' (Doh 1981: 64). This led to programmes focusing on rural development, which accounted for the emphasis on the building of schools, roads, health centres, mosques, community halls, the digging of wells, the provision of utilities, the opening of land and so on (Doh 1981: 64). People were more loyal to him, admired and loved him as a leader rather than his ideas.³² Thus, Tun Razak's leadership style exhibited characteristics of a transforming or a charismatic leader. This is an example of how leadership can make a system work. The famous Operation Room and Red Book Systems became successful, especially in monitoring the physical process of development projects, owing largely to his personal drive and efforts in the form of unscheduled visits to operations rooms at state and district levels, on the spot checks and exhortations to officers to change their attitude, to co-ordinate their work and to speed up the implementations of the development projects (Doh 1981: 65).

Mahathir is imaginative in the way he uses the government officers. To ensure the bureaucracy's support for his policies, he placed

26. This observed pattern of behaviour is based on the writer's view when undertaking research entitled 'The Split in UMNO Politics: A Study on the Leadership Crisis after 24th April 1987', sponsored by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi 1988. The writer first had an informal talk Dr. Mahathir on 24 September 1977. See also Ahmad Atory (1987a, b). Several books have been written by authors who relatively praise Mahathir's standing as being the most capable leader in Malaysia such as Abu Hassan (1985); Nasarudin (1985); Hassan (1990); Aziz Zaria (1990); Idris (1990); Zakri (1990). In spite of the praise and acknowledgement of his standing, there has also been no less criticism by many writers, for example, Jomo (1994a, b); The most recent literature on Mahathir is Khoo (1994). Among its contents is the dynamism of Mahathir's leadership since he came to power in 1981 towards more liberal policies on politics, economy and social issues for Malaysia's economic development.

27. Opinion of Abdullah Sanusi.

28. Opinion of Radin Soenarno.

29. This point is made by Abdullah Sanusi and Alwi Jantan.

30. Statement made by Radin Soenarno, Also the opinion of Tan Sri Sallehuddin Mohamad.

31. Opinion of Sallehuddin Mohamad. Interview held on 13th October 1992. Tan Sri Sallehuddin was Chief Secretary to the Government 1985-1990. From 1990, the Employees Provident Fund's Executive Chairman.

32. Statement by Radin Soenarno.

his men in the strategic agencies of the government. He retained some Chief Secretaries of the Government, reassigned others among various ministries and took a personal interest in those who share his views. Mahathir also chooses to rely on professionals outside the civil service to assist him in formulating his policies in matters such as privatisation or industrialisation. For example, he takes the initiative to bring consultants from the private sector to give lectures and seminars to civil servants on business, management and entrepreneurship.³³

As Chief Executive, Mahathir provides leadership to the civil servants and is regarded as a proactive leader in formulating administrative reform efforts. In turn, the civil servants respond to his ideas because they can stand up with him. Thus, most of the reform efforts have been inspired and influenced by him; bureaucrats simply carry out the policies. They respect him as well as help him implement his policies. According to a former senior civil servant, Radin Soenarno, Mahathir really discusses ideas first with the civil servants before introducing programmes (especially in the early days of his premiership such as Look East Policy, Malaysia Incorporated or Leadership by Example). But when the Prime Minister realises that not all of them are able to think intellectually as they rarely give their views, even though some might have master's or doctorate degrees, he would then make his presentation simple for them to understand.³⁴ If a suggestion or a new idea is put forward by a civil servant, he/she is expected to convince the Prime Minister of his/her plan. Otherwise, it might be turned down. Mahathir is also firm in the sense that when he agrees to certain things, he adheres to them.³⁵

However, it is doubtful whether two-way communication and flexibility exist between him and civil servants in most major public policy-making processes because there is evidence to suggest that there has been little pondering among civil servants as a result of assertiveness.

Dr. Mahathir always believes that, to be worthwhile, an idea must be implemented, or at least personally supervised, by its originator. Only the originator knows exactly what is required and needs to be done to achieve the set objective. As an example of his keenness to remain involved, he always carries a small notebook on his frequent trips within the capital and around the country, in which he details things he has seen that appear to him to be wrong (Adshead 1989: 166).

To make leadership by example a reality, he himself sets examples even though they look simple. For instance, when he introduced the punch card and clock-in system in the public bureaucracy, he himself set the example by leaving his office between 6.30 and 7.00 pm, well after the 4.30 pm clock-out time. In his attempt to encourage civil servants to save energy, he sets an example by switching on the lights in his office himself and switching them off when he goes out for lunch or leaves for home. He never allows his office assistant to switch on the lights. Another example is that he himself gets involved in undertaking efforts to beautify Kuala Lumpur. He makes frequent trips around the city in an effort to make Kuala Lumpur the most beautiful and clean city—a city of lights. He even decides the most suitable shady trees and flower plants to be planted along the major streets and sidewalks within the city. He also encourages and takes the initiative in the building of fountains at the major roundabouts within the city (Adshead 1989: 166).³⁶

He is a keen reader of management books, and asks his Cabinet members to do the same for the benefit of their organisation. Because he is a workaholic, well read and has many new ideas, he expects his administrative staff to follow his example.³⁷ Thus, he wants to see new things and not just stick to old and obsolete ones.³⁸ Because of his impatience in undertaking development projects, there is a great possibility of delay at the implementation level due to

33. Statement by Abdullah Sanusi Ahmad.

34. Statement by Radin Soenarno.

35. Statement by Radin Soenarno.

36. Statement by Radin Soenarno. Also the opinion of Ahmad Mustafa Hassan.

37. Opinion of Zainal Mahmood.

38. Opinion of Zainal Mahmood.

inadequate manpower. For example, Dr. Mahathir always queries or expresses doubt over red tape or delay in project implementation.³⁹

His wide knowledge also stems from his frequent interaction with people of all walks of life. People come in and out of his office and they also write to him personally, not only for official purposes but sometimes just to give ideas and information. All these inputs certainly make him well-read and a knowledgeable person, so much so he is well versed and up-to-date on many subjects such as technology, management, international politics, agriculture and environment.⁴⁰

In UMNO politics, Dr. Mahathir is in direct contrast to the past UMNO presidents/prime ministers, especially Tun Hussein Onn. Dr. Mahathir revels in the rough and tumble of political intrigue. Tun Hussein Onn seemed to prefer to be reticent and withdrawn, but Mahathir has the courage to change things and dares to take risks.⁴¹ Hussein Onn was quite aloof, a military type and formal leader.⁴² He was straightforward, did not go around to get detailed information, but instead, the information had to be brought to him.⁴³ Given these differences, it is small wonder that Dr. Mahathir has a different attitude towards governing than Tun Hussein Onn had.

Although quite unpopular among civil servants in the beginning, Mahathir has managed to get strong support from heads of government departments, particularly the support of the then Chief Secretary to the Government and the then Director-General of the Public Service Department.⁴⁴ His direct involvement in the public policy-making process is clearly seen when he sends personal letters to the implementing Ministries or Agencies instructing them to carry out the reform efforts that were introduced.

Therefore, his use of administrative reform as a mean of gaining control over the civil service represents a genuine strategy in the application of policy implementation. This is further supported by written comments accompanying the questionnaire, which suggested that major policies on establishments, salaries and allowances of the public service are decided by a Cabinet-level committee chaired by the Prime Minister himself.⁴⁵ His involvement in the policy-making process has further enhanced him as a charismatic leader.

Mahathir's strategy of development is different from his predecessors. His greatest contribution is 'moving beyond'—both inward- and outward-looking perspectives of development. The outward-looking aspect of Mahathir's approach to development can be seen in terms of imitating selectively the good points, examples and experiences of other countries such as Japan and Korea.

During Dr. Mahathir's era, initially the industrialisation policy was not well developed because of the narrow manufacturing base, the weakness of industrial linkages and the lack of bureaucratic-business interaction, not because of the lack of physical amenities such as roads, electricity and water supply. The manufacturing base was clearly lacking in terms of forward linkages such as business networks, markets and skilled labourers. This is evidenced from the many failures and reverses in industrial projects, such as Perwaja Steel. As the emphasis is on industrialisation, there was a need for heavy capitalisation which the government was then unable to provide. Like Tun Razak, Dr. Mahathir failed in his efforts to adopt the industrialisation policy because of lack of supportive infrastructure to attract a number of urban people to invest in the rural areas.

39. This statement was observed by the writer when undertaking research work entitled 'The Split in UMNO Politics' begun in 1988. Also the opinion of Radin Soenarno.

40. This statement is derived from Alwi Jantan.

41. Opinion of Zainal Mahmood. According to Ahmad Mustafa Hassan, Hussein's leadership was far behind Dr. Mahathir's. Hussein Onn was picked by Tun Razak to be deputy not because he could do the job but as a matter of destiny and being his brother-in-law; 'The only Prime Minister who goes to the office with a bundle of working papers.'

42. This view is from Radin Soenarno.

43. Opinion given in response to question on the influence of administrative reform outside the civil service.

44. This view is from Radin Soenarno.

45. Opinion given in response to question on the influence of administrative reform outside the civil service.

There are also differences in the method for generation of financial sources for development between the various prime ministers. For example, Tun Razak and Tun Hussein Onn used externally-generated money for development. On the other hand, Dr. Mahathir has sought financial sources locally. Joint ventures are one way Dr. Mahathir uses to generate capital for development. Tun Razak encouraged agro-based industry by providing incentives such as pioneer status to attract foreign investors. There was a huge flow of foreign capital during the era of Tun Razak and Tun Hussein. Unlike Tun Razak, Dr. Mahathir gives pioneer status and incentives to local instead of foreign investors, and encourages capital-intensive industries so that local people can get involved in the manufacturing sector.

Tun Razak and Tun Hussein Onn regarded 'control' as the main weapon to effect policy development. On the contrary, Dr. Mahathir regards 'accountability' as his main tool. For example, during the period of Tun Razak and Tun Hussein, the policy of awarding scholarships to students for tertiary education was aimed at attracting them to serve in the public sector and statutory bodies. Dr. Mahathir, on the other hand, regards scholarships as a tool to serve government policies such as the industrialisation policy. Government-sponsored students are now tied to either the public or private sectors. In other words, the most important factor to Dr. Mahathir is not the 'procedure' but the 'method' for effecting his policy development.

In conjunction with the above, Dr. Mahathir has brought about a 'mental revolution' in his efforts to change the attitudes of government servants towards entrepreneurship. Education has become the basis to change the orientation from the rural-urban development which was laid down by Tun Razak to a new orientation, that is a metropolis centred-development in the context of the industrialisation policy in which the emphasis is satellite production. Dr. Mahathir has not only a vision but also a future orientation, as seen in his Vision 2020.

In conclusion, it is observed that the reform programme has succeeded (though more could have been done) in making a substantial contribution to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of the Malaysian bureaucracy towards realising the pace of national development goals. Hence, Dr. Mahathir

leadership role is of paramount importance in effecting such administrative reforms in Malaysia.

REFERENCES

- ABU HASSAN ADAM. 1985. *Pimpinan Mahathir Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Warisan Publication.
- ADSHEAD, R. 1989. *Mahathir of Malaysia: Statesman and Leader*. Kuala Lumpur: Hibiscus Publishing.
- AHMAD ATORY HUSSAIN. 1987a. Delima rakyat. *Watan* 21-23 February: 7, 21.
- AHMAD ATORY HUSSAIN. 1987b. Pro dan kontra dasar-dasar Mahathir. *Watan* 7 March: 7, 24.
- AZIZ ZARIA AHMAD. 1990. *Dr. Mahathir: Phase One and Two*. Kuala Lumpur: Firma Malaysia Publishing.
- BENZE, J.D., Jr. 1980. Presidential management and presidential power: the bureaucratic perspective. Ph.D. dissertation, Purdue University, Michigan: U-M-I Dissertation Service, p. 9-10.
- BURNS, J.M. 1978. *Leadership*. New York: Harper and Row.
- CAIDEN, G.E. 1969. *Administrative Reform* Chicago: Aldine.
- CHALMERS, J. 1982. *MITI and the Japanese Miracle*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- CHALMERS, J. 1987. Political institutions and economic performance: The government-business relationship in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. In *The Political Economy of the New Asian Industrialism*, ed. Frederick C. Deyo, p.136-164. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- CHEE, S. 1991. *Leadership and Security in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: ISEAS.
- CLAYTON, R. and W. LAMMERS. 1978. Presidential leadership reconsidered: contemporary views of the top federal official. *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 8: 237-244.
- CROZIER, M. 1964. *The Bureaucratic Phenomenon*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- DOH JOON-CHIEN. 1981. *Eastern Intellectuals and Western Solutions: Follower Syndrome in Asia*. New Delhi: Vikas.
- DROR, Y. 1970-71. Strategies for administrative reform. *Development and Change* 2(2): 19-35.
- HAHN BEEN LEE. 1970. Application of innovation theory of the strategy of administrative reform in developing countries. *Policy Science* 1: 177-189.

- HASSAN HJ. HAMZAH. 1990. *Suka Duka Politik Dr. Mahathir*. Kuala Lumpur: Media Printax.
- IDRIUS TULUS. 1990. *Kearah Perpaduan: Dr. Mahathir dan Tunku Abdul Rahman*. Kuala Lumpur: Forari Industry and Consultant.
- JOMO SUNDRAM. 1984a. Malaysia-Incorporated and private limited: the government entertain private capitalist? *Seminar on Privatisation and Malaysia Incorporated*, UKM, February 1984.
- JOMO SUNDRAM. 1984b. Privatisation: carry on but alert. *Seminar on Privatisation and Malaysia Incorporated*, UKM, February 1984.
- KHOO BEE TEIK. 1994. *Paradoxes of Mahathirism*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- MEHDEN, F.R.V. 1981. Malaysia in 1981: Continuity and change. *Asian Survey* 22(2): 214.
- MOHD. RAIS Abd. KARIM. 1988. Administrative reforms and bureaucratic modernisation: The need for new strategies in productivity improvements within the public sector. *Intan Journal of Administration and Development* 3(1): 62.
- MONTGOMERY, J.D. 1969. Sources of bureaucratic reform: A typology, purpose and politics. In *Political and Administrative Development*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- NASARUDIN ARSHAD: 1985. Penswastaaan: Ia tidak menguntungkan rakyat. *Dewan Masyarakat* March.
- NORAINI ABDULLAH. 1989. Leadership in Malaysia: Security perceptions and policies. In *Leadership Perception and National Security: The Southeast Asian Experience*, p. 155. Singapore: ISEAS.
- PUTHUCHEARY, M. 1978. *The Politics of Administration: The Malaysian Experience*. London: Oxford University Press.
- ROSE, R. 1976. *Managing Presidential Objectives*. New York: Free Press. p. 15.
- SAMONTE, A.G. and HAHN BEEN LEE. 1970. Administrative reform and culture. In *Administrative Reform in Asia*, ed. A.G. Samonte and Hahn Been Lee, p. 8-9. Manila: EROPA.
- SKOK, J.E. 1989. Toward a definition of strategic management for public sector. *American Review of Public Administration* 19(2): 136-137.
- TILMAN, R. and J.H. TILMAN. 1977. Malaysia and Singapore 1976: A year of challenge, a year of change. *Asian Survey* 17(2): 143.
- ZAKRI ABADI. 1990. *Mahathir: Machiavelli Malaysia?* Kuala Lumpur: Sarjana Enterprise.

(Received 12 April 1996)