

Tun Dr Mahathir's Leadership Patterns and the Success Story of Malaysia

Mashitah Mohd Udin¹, Rusdi Omar², Kamarul Azman Khamis³,
Kamarul Zaman Hj Yusoff⁴

^{1,3,4}Senior Lecturers, ²Associate Professor

School of International Studies, Universiti Utara Malaysia

¹mashitah@uum.edu.my

Article Info

Volume 82

Page Number: 10290- 10302

Publication Issue:

January-February 2020

Abstract

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad came into power as the Prime Minister of Malaysia for the second time in May 2018. At 92, he was the eldest Head of Government in the world. His first term in Office was from 1981 to 2003, after which he resigned and handed the post to his deputy, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. This paper focuses on his leadership patterns and how they influenced Malaysia's development programmes and her foreign policy. Generally, leadership patterns refer to the leaders' behavioral patterns, and how these leaders construct their vision, mission and ideas for the development of their country apart from how to attract their followers. Good and honest leaders with high integrity are highly demanded in developing countries like Malaysia. Past research findings show that a country's leadership has strong influence on the country's socioeconomic progress and development. Tun Dr Mahathir's wisdom, high intellectual powers, leadership and management skills as well as his ways of doing things have impressed Malaysians, allowing them to trust and follow his instructions. He is a unique person with charismatic and effective leadership styles, apart from being an international relations expert. The writers feel that the Traits Theory is a suitable approach to explain the leadership patterns shown by Tun Dr Mahathir. Some writers feel that personality is part of the traits concept that describes a person who has natural similarities with the traits. The personality of an individual can actually be expressed in many ways, such as the gestures, physical activities, emotions, feelings, attitudes that can be seen over a period of time. As a leader, Tun Dr Mahathir feels that he must make decisions for his people, the results of these decisions will benefit all Malaysians at large. Many of Malaysian mega projects such as North-South Highway, Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Petronas Twin Towers, and the construction of Putrajaya, Cyberjaya and Kuala Lumpur International Airport and many other projects were initiated and completed during his era. Under his second term, Tun Dr Mahathir takes a more liberal and friendly approach to managing Malaysia's foreign policy. As trading nation, he wants Malaysia to be friendly to all, and enemy to none. He gives top priority to Malaysia's security to ensure that Malaysia's multiracial society can live in peace and harmony. After addressing the United Nations Assembly in 2018, he visited the United Kingdom. Tun Dr Mahathir later made visits to China, Japan, Russia and Pakistan. In ASEAN region, he made official visits to Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam and Singapore to discuss trade and bilateral relationships. Malaysia and Singapore are actually very close neighbors, linked by a causeway and a bridge. Singapore gets much of its fresh water from Malaysia and many Malaysians work in Singapore. Tun Dr Mahathir knows this and handles such bilateral relationship wisely with high diplomacy where Malaysia-Singapore differences were settled through negotiations.

Keywords: Traits Theory, Mahathirisme, Leadership, Foreign Policy

Article History

Article Received: 18 May 2019

Revised: 14 July 2019

Accepted: 22 December 2019

Publication: 19 February 2020

1. Introduction

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (later will be referred to as Tun Dr Mahathir) came to power again as the Prime Minister of Malaysia in May 2018. At the age of 92, he is easily the oldest Head of Government in the world. He is even older than the Queen by one year. Tun Dr Mahathir was first appointed as the Prime Minister of Malaysia in 1981. After more than 22 years in power, Tun Dr Mahathir resigned from the office of Prime Minister of Malaysia and handed it over to his deputy, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi in October, 2003. Later, Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak replaced Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the Prime Minister of Malaysia in 2008.

The focus of this paper is to examine the leadership patterns of Tun Dr Mahathir and how his leadership patterns or characteristics have influenced Malaysian national developments and its foreign policies. Different leaders have different styles and approaches to managing a country. For example, the second Prime Minister of Malaysia Tun Abdul Razak would run Malaysia differently from his former boss, Tunku Abdul Rahman even both leaders were from the same party, the United Malay National Organization (UMNO). They have different leadership patterns, characteristics and personality.

Generally, leadership patterns of the leaders refer the behavior patterns of these leaders on how they construct their own vision, mission and ideas for the country or organizations to attract the people to be their followers, either in a political party or organization. The pattern of leadership can be seen through the various behaviors of the leaders, a skill or ability to attract people or followers to them. Honest and good leaders are always required for national development. Such leaders are key players in nation building as they always play important roles to ensure the development projects are implemented, the country's socioeconomic sectors and government machinery are well managed to ensure the country achieve its economic growth and prosperity. Against such background, Malaysia would become a developed nation by the year 2020. Past research findings show that a country's leadership has a strong influence on the country's socioeconomic progress and development.

According to DePree (1989), "Leadership is a complex, multidimensional phenomena (DePree, 1989).

The writer totally agrees with the view expressed by DePree. Leadership is a very complex matter and can be viewed from different angles and perspectives. In other words, leadership can also be seen through the person's behavior or the leader himself, like Tun Dr Mahathir, who came to power as the Prime Minister of Malaysia at the age of 92, in May 2018. As mentioned above, the behaviors of a person, his wisdom, his intellectual powers, his skills and his ways of doing things can impress the people at large, which in turn will influence them to trust and follow his instructions. Tun Dr Mahathir is a classic example of such leaders.

Like many leaders in the past, Tun Dr Mahathir too has his own leadership patterns and styles, which may vary from time to time and according to the situations or environments. Many would agree with the writer to say that Tun Dr Mahathir is a unique person, an effective leader, a great administrator as well as a competent person in international relations. To many world leaders, Tun Dr Mahathir is a brave and outspoken leader from the ASEAN Region. When he came to power in May 2018, Tun Dr Mahathir is also the oldest Head of State in the world.

2. Leadership Pattern of Tun Dr Mahathir

The leadership patterns or characteristics of Tun Dr Mahathir will be viewed and discussed against the existing theories of leadership. As in the past, it is the characteristics of a person that are important in order to define what kind of leadership patterns he has in dealing with his followers, friends or enemies in his daily situations. For example, a good leader requires rational decisions, optimism, hope, resilience and strong emotional aspects to influence and attract his followers. At the same time, such leaders should be able to set up goals and objectives for the country to achieve its short and medium terms objectives as measured against the long term objectives of Vision 2020 as in the case of Malaysia.

The writer feels that Traits Theory is a suitable approach to explain the leadership patterns or characteristics as shown by Tun Dr Mahathir. Generally, traits theorists believe that "personality can be understood by positing that all people have certain traits, or characteristic ways of behaving". (Boundless Psychology, 2015). According to Kanosia & Sacher (2016), "Traits consistent and

habitual patterns of thoughts, feelings, behaviors, emotions or actions that distinguish one individual from another distinctive ways across situations and over time” (Kanodia & Sacher, 2016).

Leaders like Tun Dr Mahathir have ability to manage or able to behave without any difficulty at times or situations. Tun Dr Mahathir is able become a sociable person, in which he is able to affect other people’s emotions and feelings in a direct manner. By so doing, he is able to learn something new about the conditions or new experiences, and easier for him later to control or resolve the problems when arise. Traits are not fixed. They can be shown as the foundation tendencies whereby it remain stable, yet, the characteristics and behavioral features can change occasionally and it depends on the situation, also on how the leader faces the problem.

A person’s behavior is related to the traits which a person possesses (spirit, emotions or skills) in order to face circumstances or issues. Personality is a part of the traits concept that describes a person who has the nature similarities with the traits. The personality of an individual that can be expressed in many things such as the gestures, physical activities, emotions, feelings, attitudes that can be seen over a period of time. According to Kanodia & Sacher (2016), “personality is the typical pattern of thinking, feelings, and behaviours that make a person unique and is considered as the character attributes and behavioural traits., human life can influence their route which investigates individual differences”. (Kanodia & Sacher, 2016). It is important to note that personality traits play a significant role in an individual’s development and growth. It is the ability to get along in adult situations. It also refers to a person’s type of action, reaction, opinion and mood, (Nazri Latiff Azmi, 2013). Thus, Tun Dr Mahathir as a leader, would have his emotions and feelings in stable condition in order to avoid any negative views of the people on him. In this way, his followers in Parti Bumiputera Bersatu Malaysia (BERSATU) and the people of Malaysia at large will believe in his leadership.

3. Tun Dr Mahathir’s Leadership and the People of Malaysia

In the political arena, a leader like Tun Dr Mahathir needs to hear the views and cries of his people, the ordinary people of Malaysia. It is indeed very important for the leaders in Malaysia hear or know

the different views and opinions of people at the grassroots level, as each of the opinions is different and unique according to various locations and sectors of the population. In politics, Tun Dr Mahathir has to be seen as doing his duty and being fair, and also being seen as making rational decisions in handling every problem and issue raised. On this count, personality traits approach plays an important role in various situations in order for Tun Dr Mahathir to manage and resolve various problems of the Malaysian people. In writer’s opinion, traits theories have strong effect on leadership patterns. It is to be noted that traits theories are focused on the leader’s characters, such as self-confidence, integrity, intelligence, and the patterns of thoughts, a desire to lead and others. According to O’Boyle & Murray (2015), leaders traits are considered as “the flow integration of personality characteristics that are consistent with a pattern of leadership’s performance across a variety of group and the organization’s situations..., the characteristics reflecting on a range of individual differences, personality, temperament, motive and skill” (O’Boyle & Murray 2015).

4. Leadership Patterns of Tun Dr Mahathir

Tun Dr Mahathir’s rise to power again after May 2018 General Election in Malaysia has caught many people by surprise. None of the UMNO ruling party leaders have expected them to loose in the May 2018 general election. Using the traits theories, the writer would like to discuss the leadership patterns of Tun Dr Mahathir, the newly appointed Prime Minister of Malaysia, and the world’s oldest head of State.

For a start, what kind of leadership patterns is exhibited by Tun Dr Mahathir during his first tenure as Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1981 to 2003? And the second question: what is his current leadership patterns after winning the general election in May 2018 and be appointed as the Prime Minister of Malaysia for the second time?

In many ways, Tun Dr Mahathir has his own style of leadership since taking office as the Prime Minister of Malaysia for the first time in 1981. A man with a vision, Tun Dr Mahathir wanted to develop Malaysia and modernize the Malay society so that Malaysia can achieve a developed nation status by the year 2020. Since Tun Dr Mahathir was appointed as the Prime Minister of Malaysia in

1981, he has proved to be a capable leader of great integrity, a nation builder and a skilled diplomat in Malaysian foreign affairs. He led the government machinery with confidence, improving and modernize various administrative systems on the way. Tun Dr Mahathir introduced many new administrative reforms into the government machinery, demonstrated by his hands-on approach to problems and issues in dealing with administrative matters. He led the Malaysian government machinery with confidence, knowledge, skills and integrity. Tun Dr Mahathir is a man of great vision, in which he initiated and introduced Vision 2020 for Malaysia back in 1981.

In many ways, Tun Dr Mahathir was known as “*Bapa Permodenan Malaysia*” owing to his many development projects, such as the North-South Highway, Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Petronas Twin Towers, Putrajaya, Cyberjaya and Kuala Lumpur International Airport. According to Boo Teik Khoo (2003), “Tun Dr Mahathir was introducing new policies in 1982., the mission and goals are clearly made, allowing him to modernize systems within the Malaysian public sector directly, and brought the matters into behavior changes among public service, civil servants and the structure”. (Boo Teik Khoo 2003). All these administrative reforms carried out by Tun Dr Mahathir reflected the positive side of Tun Dr Mahathir’s leadership patterns.

In fact, many of Tun Dr Mahathir’s actions and unique behavior patterns have resulted in great development and economic growth for Malaysia. Generally, one could say that, there are two main characteristics that could be seen in his leadership patterns. First, Tun Dr Mahathir was able to develop or turn Malaysia from an agriculture country into a modern and industrialized nation. He believes that through his strong and positive leadership style, he could develop and modernize Malaysia to be one of the “Asian Tigers” along with Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. To Tun Dr Mahathir, a good leader must think ahead and find ways to solve the various problems faced by his country and her people.

5. Democracy, Leadership And Tun Dr Mahathir’s Achievements

Algasari (1994) in *the awakening*, feels that Tun Dr Mahathir’s view of democratic leadership was a bit

unique and different in comparison to the basic principles of democracy. Democracy has its origins from the Greeks, specifically referred to *demos* “the people” and *kratos* as “power”. Therefore, the meaning of democracy can be taken to mean “the power of the people” (Ober, 2007). In short, democracy can also mean, the rule by the people or the power of people. It can also mean the freedom of the people to decide their own ruler. According to Sodaro Michael (2004), “the essential idea of democracy is that the people have the right to determine who governs them” (Sodaro Michael, 2004). This simply means the democratic desire of the people to have a leader that follows the voices of the majority of the people. But unfortunately, this idea of democracy differs from those principles of democracy as practiced by Tun Dr Mahathir.

Regarding democracy and leadership characteristics, Tun Dr Mahahir feels that those leaders who are obeying the voice of the people are known as “coward leaders” not confident to make their own decisions about the people and their country. Therefore, Tun Dr Mahathir feels that, as a leader and Prime Minister of Malaysia, he must make decisions for the people, and the results of these decisions will benefit Malaysians at large. For example, the construction of the North-South Highway, Kuala Lumpur City Centre and the Petronas Twin Towers and the creation of Putrajaya as the national capital of Malaysia, the construction of Kuala Lumpur International Airport as an airport for the future for Malaysia. There are many other projects for Malaysia which were initiated and completed by Tun Dr Mahathir for the people of Malaysia. Tun Dr Mahathir feels that Malaysia should have good and honest leaders with high integrity, committed to working for the country and people who have voted them into power. To Tun Dr Mahathir, democracy should have an administrative system which is good, fair and smooth running to serve the people. The Malaysian government machinery should be run by committed and responsible leaders who want to develop the country and its people. It is interesting to note that, Tun Dr Mahathir still holds up with his development philosophy, in which he is confident that his administrative behaviors and policies are still relevant and according to the needs of the people and the country. Bennis and Nanus (1997) said that, leaders must have a great vision for his country or

organization, and they must have a strong passion to follow it through their vision and achieve the long term goals of that vision, which will benefit the country and the people.

The second leadership characteristic of Tun Dr Mahathir's leadership patterns is that, he has incredible ideas of how to implement the policies and run the administration machinery of Malaysia, a multiracial country of three major races: Malays, Chinese and Indians. Tun Dr. Mahathir believes that a good leader must be intelligent, with a diversity of ideas and knowledge, backed up with great experience in politics, governing and administration matters, including diplomatic relations with other countries. To Tun Dr Mahathir, a leader must also be innovative with great ideas, and be creative in certain ways to solve some problems that others could not do. In many ways, the development of Malaysia from 1981 to 2003 and beyond was due to the creative thinking and smart administration of Tun Dr Mahathir. The success of development projects in Malaysia, the rise of Malaysia as an economic power in the ASEAN region as well as Malaysia's smooth foreign relations with other countries between 1981 and 2003 were due to Tun Dr Mahathir's smart thinking and wise management of the country.

To name a few of these great achievements, Tun Dr Mahathir has introduced the "Look East Policy", where Malaysians are encouraged to follow the work ethics of the Japanese and the Koreans. He also implemented the Privatization Policy and State Industrial Policy where private sector must work together with the public sector for economic development of Malaysia. Tun Dr Mahathir initiated and implemented several mega projects in the country to boost economic activities. He built the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) as a multipurpose development in Central Kuala Lumpur. For the future of Malaysia, Tun Dr Mahathir introduced Vision 2020, which aimed at making Malaysia a developed nation by the year 2020. In short, Tun Dr Mahathir's Vision 2020 aims at creating Malaysia as a united, progressive and developed country by 2020, having good moral and ethical values where the three main races are living peacefully. It is well known that Tun Dr Mahathir is a wise, intelligent and capable leader, able to initiate, create and

implement a variety of projects for the people of Malaysia.

Tun Dr Mahathir is a wise and smart leader who was able to overcome the 1989 financial crisis without Malaysia getting the help of the World Bank. In order to avoid Malaysia falling into the said financial crisis, Tun Dr Mahathir has applied a few elements of leadership theories in his management and administration. He was able to successfully overcome Malaysian worst financial crisis. Shuib, Keling & Ajis (2009) coined the term, 'Mahathiriskonomisme', in which they referred to the way Tun Dr Mahathir managed to pull Malaysia through the said financial crisis. Tun Dr Mahathir's leadership style was unique and at times, practical when he was able to save Malaysia from the 1989 financial crisis.

As a leader, Tun Dr Mahathir is very open-minded and very positive to feedback he gets from the people, locally or overseas. For example, when he introduced the "Look East Policy" in 1982, where he wanted Malaysians to emulate the work culture of the Koreans and Japanese.

According to Suhana Saad & Kartini Aboo Talib@Khalid (2015), Tun Dr Mahathir's Look East Policy was to follow the ways and behavior of Japanese workers in their organizations with strong integrity and high work discipline. Tun Dr Mahathir's patterns of leadership can be seen everywhere in the administration of Malaysia during his era as the Prime Minister from 1981 to 2003. In theory, the ideas and behaviors of the leaders are important in order to attract the followers so that their followers could give full support to the leaders to achieve the agreed goals. Tun Dr Mahathir as a leader, was able to bring all Malaysians together and live in a peaceful and harmonious manner.

It is also interesting to point out that, Tun Dr Mahathir was able to change the minds and thoughts of the Malays, in which he has emphasized many times, that the Malays should not be too dependent on government aids and helps. He strongly believes that the Malays are equally good and at par with other races in Malaysia. The Malays should be given equal opportunities and a level playing field in doing business in Malaysia and in the pursuit of higher education. The Malays, after getting independence from the British in 1957, should have strong faith in their abilities and be self-confident in dealings with other races at home or at the international level.

Ahmad Atory (1997) said that the success of administrative reforms in Malaysia was largely due to efforts, leadership and strong commitment of Tun Dr Mahathir. According to Tun Dr Mahathir, *"To be a great leader, one needs to have good strategies, be knowledgeable and able to predict the future"* (Lujain, 2011). The leadership patterns of Tun Dr Mahathir was unique and personal, only belonging to him alone. He has received praises from other leaders of the world. His Vision 2020 were well received and having widespread praises from the international arena. (The World Bank, 1997).

To assure that Malaysia have quality workers, Tun Dr Mahathir has introduced many administrative reforms into the Malaysian Public Service. Among his more popular initiatives were the introduction of the Punch Card System (PCS), Modified Budgeting System (MBS), Quality Circle Control (QCC) and the Total Quality Management (TQM). The main purpose of these administrative reforms is to ensure that Malaysia's public sector has quality officers and workers for its industrial developments and nation building projects. Tun Dr Mahathir's E-Government initiatives within Malaysian public service are meant to create better and more efficient service to government's clients and the people of Malaysia. According to Mohd Yusof & Muhammad Abkari Omar (2006), all dealings that are related to electronic operations can be done without using any papers. They are done by using online applications through various channels and systems. Research findings show that, E-Government applications could also produce new channels for the people of Malaysia to air their views. E-Government can allow all Malaysians to be active participants in the administration and management of the country.

The intellectual capacity, high spirit and energy of Tun Dr Mahathir has allowed him to travel to many parts of the nation to perform various functions and activities when he is the Prime Minister of Malaysia. Tun Dr Mahathir feels that as a leader, he should be knowledgeable, have plans and strategies with excellent time management in order to perform his duties and commitments successfully.

6. Tun Dr Mahathir and Malaysian Foreign Policy

According to Smith & Hadfield (2008), foreign policy can be defined as the strategy or approach chosen by the national government to achieve its goals in its relations with external entities. This means that Malaysian foreign policy is very much influenced by the decision making process in the executive part of the current Malaysian government. It is important to note that the current Malaysian government is now headed by Tun Dr Mahathir of Pakatan Harapan (consisting of four opposition parties: *DAP, KEADILAN, AMANAH and BERSATU*). Pakatan Harapan came to power in the May 2018 general election. The more established "United Malays National Organization" (UMNO) and its allies in Barisan Nasional (BN) lost badly to Pakatan Harapan (PH) in the May 2018 general election in Malaysia. The May 2018 general election changed the history of Malaysia with the appointment of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed as the new Prime Minister of Malaysia, replacing Dato' Seri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, leader of UMNO and Barisan Nasional which has controlled and dominated Malaysian politics for the past 62 years.

Under Tun Dr Mahathir's current leadership, Malaysia takes a more liberal and friendly approach to managing its foreign policy. As a great trading nation, Tun Dr Mahathir wants Malaysia to be friendly to all countries and enemy to none.

In its relations with foreign countries, Malaysia should give top priority to its security to ensure that all Malaysians can live in peace and harmony. During his earlier administration (1981-2003), Tun Dr Mahathir's foreign policies were very tight, but very friendly to all nations as Malaysia wants be a great trading nation. Even during early years, Tun Dr Mahathir wanted Malaysia to be friends to all, and enemy to none in keeping peace and security as Malaysia is an independent nation.

Khadijah Khalid (2009) described Malaysian foreign policy under Tun Dr Mahathir in his earlier years (1981-2003) as independent, active, liberal and pragmatic (Khadijah Khalid, 2009). On certain international issues, Tun Dr Mahathir would like to take a confrontational approach over certain countries in order to maintain and get support from Malaysians of different races. It is to be noted that Malaysia had benefited tremendously from its active participation and growing prominence in the international arena during Tun Dr Mahathir's

leadership as the Prime Minister from 1981 to 2003. (Khadijah Khalid, 2009). In many ways, Tun Dr Mahathir is a man of high integrity, practical and a strong intellectual person. His thoughts were the symbolism of political thought. To some scholars, Tun Dr Mahathir's political thoughts were collectively known as '*Mahathirisme*'.

During his first tenure as the Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir wanted Malaysia play an active role in world politics, especially in the ASEAN Region. He wanted Malaysia to be an independent nation, with a desire to make Malaysia a developed nation by the year 2020. He was very open and willing to listen to different views to resolve local and international issues and problems. According to Ab Wahab (1998), Tun Dr. Mahathir's foreign policies aimed at having good relationship with other countries, without any doubt feelings as long as the issue does not interfere with the State's affairs in Malaysia. Most of Malaysian foreign policies during his 1981-2003 era were successfully implemented as he has strong influence in the international arena on matters relating to Malaysia. Based on research findings, Tun Dr Mahathir has full power to decide and implement Malaysian foreign policies in order to protect national interests and to tighten Malaysian porous borders and to ensure national safety and security.

At the same time, Tun Dr Mahathir wanted to fulfill his personal interest and ego within the world's political hierarchy that he is a world class leader. In many cases, it was proved that Tun Dr Mahathir is a dominant leader who has strong influence on the people of his country. He also wanted to improve the conditions and efficiency of Malaysian diplomats so that Malaysian foreign policies and machinery are run smoothly and effectively. Along this line, Tun Dr Mahathir has initiated the formation of the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations, or better known as IDFR on 1 July 1991. This institute offers various training programs for the Ministry's officers and also, officers from other government agencies (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, 2014). At the same time, another goal or function of IDF is to offer training programs to international participants from developing countries under various Malaysian aids programs such as, Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP), also for participants from the ASEAN countries, the Colombo Plan member

countries as well as from the Commonwealth countries (Institute of Diplomacy & Foreign Relations, 2014).

Many would say that Tun Dr Mahathir is a wise and firm person in managing Malaysian foreign affairs. As an effective political leader, he was known to be selfish with power. However, his many achievements for Malaysia speak volumes of his ability, integrity and effectiveness as a leader of Malaysia. Even at the age of 92, Tun Dr Mahathir still managed to lead a new party called "Pakatan Harapan" to beat the United Malay National Organization and its allies in Barisan Nasional in the May 2018 General Election in Malaysia.

7. Malaysian Foreign Policies with the Asian Countries

Tun Dr Mahathir's leadership pattern and style will certainly leave its mark in historical record and national politics. In many ways, Tun Dr Mahathir is known as a pragmatic leader, who is very concerned with welfare of the people and the economic progress of the country. This is clearly illustrated in his speech in the United Nations in 2018 and his recent visits to China to meet the Chinese leaders on bilateral relations and some mega projects involving the Chinese companies in Malaysia. Tun Dr Mahathir would ensure that various requirements and political stability are closely monitored and achieved to ensure that approved projects are properly implemented so as to achieve the required goals and economic growth. Within the past one year, Tun Dr Mahathir has made several visits to the Asian countries such as Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand and Pakistan, to meet their leaders and discuss matters on bilateral relationships and trade between Malaysia and their counties.

Tun Dr Mahathir believes that stability and peaceful conditions within the ASEAN Region will allow Malaysia to implement all its planned development projects, in order to achieve the required progress and advancement in its economic sectors. It is to be noted that ASEAN countries play really important roles to stabilize the Southeast Asia region. Tun Dr Mahathir realized that without peace and stability within the ASEAN region, it is impossible for Malaysia to carry out its proposed nation building programs. Malaysia is one of the smaller states in the ASEAN region. However, it has strategic geographical position in relation to South

China Sea and the Strait of Malacca. Because of this, Malaysia has to cope up with many issues and problems related to overlapping borders matters with these countries, especially with Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei. During his early days as the Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir thought that the ASEAN countries are very important components in stabilizing political situations and ensuring peace and security for Malaysia.

ASEAN, a regional grouping was established in 1967 with the main aim of accelerating economic growth, social progress and cultural development among the member countries as well as to promote regional peace and stability. (Rizal Sukma, 2010). With the establishment of ASEAN, the problems and issues facing Malaysia could be overcome. During the confrontation years, there was tension between Malaysia and Indonesia. Through negotiations, ASEAN was able to control that particular issue and successfully reduce the tension between the two countries. There are examples of how Tun Dr Mahathir smartly managed Malaysian foreign policies with its ASEAN neighbours. The overlapping border issues between Malaysia and Thailand and between Malaysia and Singapore were settled through negotiations and not war, in the good spirits of the ASEAN brotherhood. Such understanding and cooperation between the ASEAN member states is very important to Malaysia and the ASEAN region as a whole. Tun Dr Mahathir's foreign policies with strong focus on the ASEAN region are very important for political stability and economic growth in Malaysia. To Tun Dr Mahathir, national interests and national goals were the key drivers of his foreign policies, in which he wants to make sure that Malaysia will gain the most and Malaysia will achieve the national goals and aspirations.

Another key and essential development in Malaysian foreign policy during Tun Dr Mahathir's 1981-2003 era was his close association with the Northeast Asia, namely Japan and South Korea. More importantly, these two countries are manifested in the implementation of Tun Dr Mahathir's "Look East Policy". By nature, Tun Dr Mahathir has a strong personal admiration for the Japanese and Korean people, especially their systematic work culture. According to Suhana Saad, Kartini Aboo Talib@Khalid (2015), The "Look East Policy" was introduced in 1982 by Tun Dr Mahathir.

The main aim of this policy is to emulate the work culture of the Japanese and the Koreans. Tun Dr Mahathir was fascinated and attracted to the rapid development of these two countries after World War II. He felt that, it important for Malaysians to adopt Japanese or Korean work culture.

The "Look East Policy" is closely associated with Tun Dr Mahathir's efforts to modernize the Malaysian society, improve the management machinery and develop Malaysian economic sectors. In a way, the "Look East Policy" was to encourage a paradigm shift in the minds of Malaysians, to change their traditional perception of "looking west" to look towards the east as a role model. With this policy, the key values adopted by the Japanese or Korean companies be adopted and used as a model in the Malaysian work environment. In Tun Dr. Mahathir's views, the Look East Policy will foster good values among Malaysian workforce.

8. Malaysia-Singapore Relationship During Tun Dr Mahathir Era

The fact is Malaysia and Singapore are very close neighbors, linked by a causeway and a bridge. Singapore gets much of its fresh water from Malaysia and many Malaysians work in Singapore. The leaders of both countries know about this and therefore treat their bilateral relationship of high priority.

There were certain issues and problems that have been raised by the two countries during Tun Dr Mahathir's tenure as the Prime Minister. As a political leader and head of government, it is important for Tun Dr Mahathir to lead country forward to achieve national goals, while maintaining peace and harmony within the country and at the same time, having good relationship with its neighbors, especially with Singapore. During his 1981-2003 era, Tun Dr Mahathir was able to control and settle many issues and problems raised between Malaysia and Singapore. In dealing with Singapore, Tun Dr Mahathir wears his wise and intellectual hat, and tries to negotiate with his Singaporean counterparts. It is to be noted that Tun Dr Mahathir was educated and trained in Singapore, and he is familiar with Singapore culture and the ways of doing things in Singapore. On that score, Tun Dr Mahathir would have an open-minded approach and negotiate for a win-win situation.

One of the outstanding issues between Malaysia and Singapore during Tun Dr Mahathir's 1981-2003 era was the issue of Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih). It needed mediation in order to resolve the Pedra Branca issue and certainly, this issue took a long time to settle. Being the closest neighbor to Malaysia, bilateral relationship between Malaysia and Singapore has been carefully charted and established owing to various factors, such as geographical, historical, socio-political and ideological factors. Leaders from both sides of Selat Tebrau were trying to solve these outstanding issues in a very wise amicable manner, acceptable to both parties. Both Lee Kuan Yew and Tun Dr Mahathir were great friends and leaders in their own ways, each wanting to do the best for their country. For example, both leaders liked the Look East Policy initiated by Tun Dr Mahathir. Lee Kuan Yew wanted the Singaporeans too to learn about Japanese values and work ethics. Tun Dr Mahathir has a unique and practical approach when dealing with the Singaporean leaders. He has to bring them to the negotiating table. He feels it is totally unwise to fight the Singaporeans as they are more powerful in terms of economic and military powers. Tun Dr Mahathir who was known as a great political strategist would choose a flexible approach and be open minded when discussing Malaysian bilateral issues with the Singaporean leaders.

Even at international level, Tun Di Mahathir is known as stern and outspoken third world leader. On the other hand, his counterpart in Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew was known as a great and smart politician and statesman of Singapore, equally smart and intellectual as Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed. In many ways, the two leaders share many common and similar characteristics, with very few differences between them. Hence, both leaders are still using negotiation and cooperation approach in dealing with their bilateral issues and problems so as to avoid any tension between the two countries. Nathan (2002) noted that the two countries have been characterized by competition in economic and social matters, but as major trading partners and their geographical proximity, both Malaysia and Singapore got to be good neighbors, helping and cooperate with each other in the fields of trade, security and economic prosperity.

Actually there were many issues arising from Malaysia-Singapore bilateral relationship during

Tun Dr Mahathir's 1981-2003 era. One of them is Pedra Branca or *Pulau Batu Puteh* issue. Both countries wanted Pedra Branca because of its strategic location controlling the eastern entrance to the Straits of Singapore. Indeed, Singapore has occupied and exercised its full sovereignty over Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih) for more than 130 years since the 1840s without any protest from Malaysia (Rusdi Omar, 2006). The oldest feature on the island is the Horsburgh Lighthouse, built by the British between 1847 and 1851. Singapore government has been maintaining the Horsburgh Lighthouse and other facilities on the island in order to make it easier for ships to navigate with safely into Singapore Port. Singapore lodged a formal protest with Malaysia in early 1980, to assert that Pedra Branca belonged to Singapore (Kadir Mohamad, 2009).

Geographically, Pedra Branca (Pulau Batu Putih) is located 15 km from the *Teluk Romania* at southeast tip of Johor, one of the States in Malaysia. The island of Pedro Branca was claimed by both Singapore and Malaysia. The point is that, the island of Pedro Branca is closer to Malaysia than to Singapore. Therefore Malaysia government said that, it belongs to Malayssia. On the other hand, Singapore claims it as it is strategically located at the entrance to the port of Singapore. Singapore has built a lighthouse on the island, and maintained it for the past 130 years. Malaysia claims the island based on the border agreement previously made between the Sultanate of Johor and the British government. (Ab Wahab, 1998). By using historical facts and past treaties as protect the claim on Pedra Branca, Singapore pointed out that the Horsburgh Lighthouse was being under control of Singapore government since 1850. Malaysian government map still marked Pedra Branca as Singapore's territory as late as 1974. Only in 1979, Malaysia has made changes on the map of Malaysia to include the island of Pedra Branca as its territory. (Rosdi Omar, 2009). The Pedra Branca case was later brought to International Court of Justice (ICJ) as the two parties failed to resolve the matter through bilateral negotiations. Singapore first proposed submitting the dispute to the ICJ in 1989. Malaysia accepted this proposal in 1994 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). Any issue arises in the bilateral relationship between Malaysia and Singapore could be overcome with a good way in order to avoid any conflict

between the neighboring countries. Any arm conflict between the two countries will bring disadvantages and will act as detrimental to the interests of both countries.

It is to be noted that, the Prime Minister of Malaysia plays very important role in conducting foreign relations between Malaysia and other countries. Tun Dr Mahathir is very involved in all important discussions on issues relating Malaysian-Singapore bilateral relationship. Tun Dr Mahathir can be described as a great leader, a wise and experienced Prime Minister who is able to manage Malaysian foreign policies affectively and efficiency for a win-win situation.

9. Conclusion

“Malaysia and Singapore are devoid of ideologies...Singapore also pragmatic in its approach to problems. Singapore also can be accommodating. In all these things there are similarities with Malaysia... Malaysia is pragmatic and accommodating. Malaysia and Singapore can become close friends, partners in trade and possibly allies in peace and war” (Dr. Mahathir, 1995).

The above view reflects clearly the personality of Tun Dr Mahathir as a great leader, a very pragmatic and intellectual person with his top priority is on the progress and advancement of all Malaysians, especially the Bumiputera groups in Malaysia. Tun Dr Mahathir as the newly elected Prime Minister of Malaysia is a capable and confident leader based on his past experience as the Prime Minister of Malaysia for over 22 years.

Tun Dr Mahathir believes that good leadership is a very important factor in the progress and development of a nation. Tun Dr Mahathir's leadership patterns indicate that he has high ambition and high intellectual power, able to establish long term vision and mission for Malaysia. He is creative and innovative with many good ideas on how to develop the country and modernize the Malaysian society, such as by adopting the Japanese work culture. Tun Dr Mahathir even introduced Look East Policy, heavy industry policy and privatization policy, which were quite successful. Tun Dr Mahathir also introduced administration reforms into the Malaysian public service with online systems and applications. He even moved the national capital from Kuala Lumpur to Putrajaya, a newly created township south of Kuala Lumpur.

Tun Dr Mahathir was very conscious on the importance of sound foreign policies in accelerating Malaysian economic growth, especially with the ASEAN countries for national security and political stability in the region, and also with China, Japan, Pakistan and other countries for trading matters. Under Tun Dr Mahathir's administration, the bilateral relationship between Malaysia and Singapore has become much better and improving. As leaders, both Tun Dr Mahathir and Lim Kuan Yew shared many similarities in their leadership patterns and styles. Both leaders are men of high intellectual capability and very outspoken, but they know that both Malaysia and Singapore are inseparable and good neighbors. They need each other in terms of security, trade and economic progress and advancement.

Tun Dr Mahathir who came to power again in May 2018 as the Prime Minister of Malaysia for the second time is indeed a great leader with high intellectual capability and wise, able to lead Malaysia out of the kleptocracy problem, and emerged as a respected and independent nation again. As the new leader of Malaysia, Tun Dr Mahathir was able to handle the issues wisely and chart a new future for all Malaysians. Tun Dr Mahathir cares, and he wants Malaysia to be a developed nation with progressive and productive Malaysian society, practicing high moral and ethical values in their everyday life. It is Tun Dr Mahathir's dream to have the three major races in Malaysia (Malays, Chinese and Indians) live peacefully and harmoniously, sharing fairly the enlarged economic cake of the country, the fruits of his leadership, dedication and hard work.

References

- [1] Abdullah Badawi. (2006). Singapore- Malaysia relations. *Singapore: Institute of Politics Studies*.
- [2] Ab Wahab. (1998). Dr. Mahathir dan dasar luar Malaysia:kajian kepimpinannya dalam mengurus isu-isu hubungan Malaysia-Singapura. Universiti Malaya. Thesis Masters.
- [3] Ahmad Atory. (1997). The leadership factor in administrative reform in Malaysia with specific study on the leadership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia. *Universiti Putra Malaysia Press*, 5(2), 103-123.

- [4] Ahmad Faisal. (2008). The struggle for recognition in foreign policy: Malaysia under Mahathir 1981-2003. *ProQuest LLC*. United States.
- [5] Algasari, M. (1994). Mahathir: the awakening, Labuan: Uni-strength.
- [6] Asian One. (2008). Resolution of outstanding issues. Retrieved from <http://research.uwcsea.edu.sg/eastlibpri/G5WorkingTowardsPeace/disputedislands>
- [7] Azli Ayob. (2013). Kemegahan kereta nasional. Retrieved 20 May 2017, from https://library.perdanaorg.my/Digital_Content/Prominent_leaders/mahathir/news_1968-2004/2001-2005/nt2003ko/kemegahan%20keional.pdf
- [8] Bennis, W. G. & Nanus, B. (1997). Leaders: the strategies for taking charge. *HarperCollins*. New York.
- [9] Bnbcc. (2015). Malaysia-Singapore perkukuh kerjasama. Retrieved 24 August 2016, from <https://www.bnbcc.my/malaysiasingapuraperkukuhhubungankerjasama/>
- [10] Boundless Psychology. (2015). Allport's, cattell's, and eysenck's trait theories of personality. From https://www.ijstm.com/images/short_pdf/1480489811_537ijstm.pdf Boo Teik Khoo. (2003). Beyond Mahathir: Malaysian politics and its discontents. *Zed Books*.
- [11] Camroux, D. (1994). 'Looking east' and inwards: internal factors in Malaysian foreign relations during Mahathir era, 1981-1994. *Centre for the Study of Australia-Asia Relations*.
- [12] Chong, A., & Balakrishnan. (2016). Intellectual iconoclasm as modernizing foreign policy: the cases of Mahathir bin Mohamad and Lee Kuan Yew. *Journal of The Pacific Review*, 29. Retrieved 13 May 2017, from <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09512748.2015.1013496>
- [13] DePree, M. (1989). Leadership is an art. *Dell Publishing*. New York. Retrieved 13 May 2017, from <https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~13871sio/brpresentation/presentation13/tram>
- [14] Ganesan, N. (1999). Bilateral Tension in post-cold war ASEAN. *Pacific Strategic Papers*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS).
- [15] Haller-Trost, R. (1993). Historical legal claims: a study of disputed sovereignty over Pulau Batu Putih (Pedra Branca). *Maritime Briefing*, 1(1), 28.
- [16] Hooi Lai Wan. (2002). The impact of Japanese promotion practices on Malaysian enterprises. *Journal of Asia Pacific Business Review*, 9(1), 21-38.
- [17] Institute of Diplomacy & Foreign Relations. (2014). *A Diplomatic at the Malaysia*. Retrieved 13 April 2017, from <http://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/dd-idfr>
- [18] Kadir Mohamad. (2009). Malaysia's territorial disputes - two cases at the ICJ. *Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations (IDFR)*. From https://www.idfr.gov.my/images/stories/publication/2009/inside_pbp.pdf
- [19] Kanodia, A., & Sacher, A. (2016). Trait theories of leadership. *International Journal of Science Technology and Management*, 5(12). Retrieved 22 March 2017, from https://www.ijstm.com/images/short_pdf/1480489811_537ijstm.pdf
- [20] Khalid. & Kartini Aboo Talib. (2013). Assessing the look east policy: moving beyond work culture and ethic. *Article Journal of Asian Social Science*.
- [21] Khadijah Khalid. (2009). Malaysian Foreign Policy orientation and relations in the post-Mahathir years. *International Conference on Malaysia: Malaysia in Global Perspective*.
- [22] Khoo, B, T. (1995). Paradoxes of Mahathirism: An Intellectual Biography of Mahathir Mohamad. *Oxford University Press*.
- [23] Kian – Woon, K. (1995). Singapore: consolidating the new political economy. *Southeast Asian Affairs*, 291-308.
- [24] Lujain. (2011). Tun Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohamad: the legendary leader. *Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Website*. From <http://cronkitehhh.jmc.asu.edu/blog/2011/10/tun-dr-mahathir-bin-mohamad-the-legendary-leader/>
- [25] Mahathir Mohamad. (1991). Malaysian: the way forward (Vision2020). Retrieved 25 March 2016, from www.epu.jpm.my
- [26]

- [27] Mahathir Mohamad. (1995). The Malay Dilemma. *Times Book International*.
- [28] Mahathir Mohamad. (2004). Achieving True Globalisation. *Pelanduk Publications*, 7,
- [29] Mahathir Mohamad. (1982). Malaysia-Japan Relations: Explaining the Root Causes of the Pro-Japan Orientation of Malaysia in the Post-1981 Period. *The 5th Joint Annual Conference of MAJECA/JAMECA*, 4(1), 12.
- [30] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2014). *A diplomatic at the Malaysia*. From <http://www.kln.gov.my/web/guest/mfa-profile>
- [31] Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2017). International Court of Justice – Case concerning sovereignty over Pedra Branca, Middle Rocks and South Ledge. From https://www.mfa.gov.sg/content/mfa/media_centre/special_events/pedrabranc
- [32] Mohd Yusof. & Muhammad Abkari Omar. (2006). Pelaksanaan projek kerajaan elektronik (electronic government-EG) satu penilaian. *Public Sector ICT Management Review*, 1(1).
- [33] Morgan, G., & Smircich, L. (1982) 'Leadership: the Management of Meaning'. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 18(3).
- [34] Mutiah Alagappa. (1993). International security in Southeast Asia, growing salience of regional and domestics dynamics. Dalam Jagjit dan Thomas Bernauer (Ed.). *Security of third world countries. Aldershot United Nations institute for disarmament research*.
- [35] Nathan, K. S. (2002). Malaysia-Singapore Relations: Retrospect and Prospect. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 24(2).
- [36] Nazri Latiff Azmi, (2013). Multilingualism and Personality Traits Among Malay Primary School Students in Vernacular Schools. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science*.
- [37] Ober, J,. (2007). The Original Meaning of 'Democracy': capacity to do things, not majority rule. *Stanford University - Department of Classics*. Retrieved 3 march 2017, from <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1024775>
- [38] O'Boyle, I. & Murray, D,. (2015). Leadership in Sport. *Routledge*.
- [39] Peter G. (2010). Leadership: Theory and Practice. *SAGE Publications*. New Delhi.
- [40] Phillipe, P. (1992). Singapore-city State in Southeast Asia: Kuala Lumpur. *Abdul Majeed & Co*.
- [41] Ramlan Surbakti. (1999). Memahami Ilmu Politik. *PT Grasindo*, Jarkarta. Retrieved 10 October 2016, from https://www.academia.edu/8746334/Resume_Memahami_Ilmu_Politik_oleh_Ramlan_Surbakti
- [42] Rizal Sukma. (2010). ASEAN and Regional Security in East Asia. Retrieved 20 April 2017, from http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_19799-1522-2-30.pdf?100608093214
- [43] Rusdi Omar. (2006). Malaysia-Singapore Relations: Issues and Strategies. *Regionalism and Political Development in Southeast Asia*. Kuala Lumpur: UM.
- [44] Rusdi Omar, Mohd Ainuddin Iskandar Lee & Mas Juliana. (2008). Hubungan Malaysia-Singapura era Mahathir. Sintok, Kedah: *Penerbit Universiti Utara Malaysia*.
- [45] Rusdi Omar. (2015). Malaysia-Singapore Pasca PRU 2015. *Utusan Online*. Retrieved 20 October 2016, from <https://www.utusan.com.my/rencana/malaysia-singapura-pasca-pru-2015-1.138926>
- [46] Shaidin Shafie. (2006). e-Government Initiatives in Malaysia and the Role of the National Archives of Malaysia in Digital Records Management. From <http://www.archives.go.jp/english/news/pdf/MrShaidin.pdf>
- [47] Shuib, M., Keling, M., & Ajis, M. (2009). The Concept of Mahathiriskonomisme: An Economic Recovery Model during Crisis. *Journal of Politics and Law*, 2(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/jpl.v2n1p75>
- [48] Singh, B. (1985). Singapore Management of its Security Problems. *Asia Pacific community*.
- [49] Smith, S. & Hadfield, A. (2008). Foreign policy: Theories, Actors and Cases. New York: Oxford University Press.
- [50] Smith, A, L,. (2014). Malaysia-Singapore Relations: Never Mind the Rhetoric. *Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies*.
- [51] Soon, L, T,. & Suzaina Abdul Kadir. (1992). Singapore's Foreign Policy. In Low, L. & Heng T, M. (Eds). Public policies in Singapore-

Changes in the 1980s and future signpost
Singapore: *Time Academic press*.

- [53] Sodaro, M, J,. (2004). Comparative Politics: a Global Introduction. *Mc Graw Hill*. New York.
- [54] Suhana Saad, & Kartini Aboo Talib@Khalid. (2015). Implimentasi Budaya Kerja Jepun Dalam Organisasi di Malaysia. *Malaysia Journal of Society and Space*, 11(6), 1-10.
- [55] Suzuki Shizuo. (1988). Political Change in ASEAN Countries. Dalam Okabe, T. (Ed.) *Twenty years of ASEAN: its survival and development*. Japan Institute of International Affairs.
- [56] The World Bank. (1997). World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World. *Oxford University Press*.
- [57] Tim Huxley. (1991). Singapore and Malaysia: A Precarious Balance. *The Pacific Review*, 4(3), 204–213.
- [58] United Nations Development Programme. (2005). Malaysia Achieving the Millennium Development Goals. *United Nations*. Malaysia.
- [59] Weinberg, R. S., & Gould, D. (1999). Personality and Sport. *Foundations of Sport and Exercise Psychology*. (pp.25-46).