

Understanding Leadership Values Among Under Graduate Students in UiTM: Their Values, Beliefs, and Motivation

Sham Sul Kamal Wan Fakeh, Mohd Sazili Shahibi, Adnan Jamaludin, Mohd Rukhaire Rahim, Jailani Paiman, Zaharudin Ibrahim

Abstract — UiTM has prominently produced a numbers of leaders in Malaysia's society. If you want to understand the direction of this nation, we must examine the people who will lead the country for the next decades. Where do you find these people? They are in our universities. There are hundreds of thousands young adults enrolled in undergraduate programs in the university in Malaysia. In UiTM itself, there are 172,000 students. If past performance is any indication, there is the reason to believe that among the students, the leader will be produced and they will quickly rise to positions of influence and authority in business, education, and government in Malaysia. A new generation of leaders is needed not only to build the local partnerships in today's communities, but to assume all positions of leadership. Student in UiTM were given the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaires (MLQ) to determine their self-perception of leadership behavior according to the Full Range Leadership Development Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1997) focusing on transformational, transactional or laissez-faire leadership factors.

Keywords – UiTM, leadership, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaires, behavior, Development Theory.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership development programs have been found to enhance the self-efficacy, civic engagement, academic performance, and personal development of students (Astin, 1993). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, 2005) found that students can and do improve their leadership skills through involvement in such activities.

The development of such skills has been found to differ as a function of gender (Eagly & Johnson, 1990) and involvement type (Dugan, 2006b; Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Moriarty & Kezar, 2000). UiTM has prominently produced a numbers of leaders in Malaysia's society. This

includes the leaders in politics, government sectors, businesses, technocrats, academicians, and many more. If you want to understand the direction of this nation, we must examine the people who will lead the country for the next decades. There are hundreds of thousands young adults enrolled in undergraduate programs in the university in Malaysia. In UiTM itself, there are 172,000 students. If past performance is any indication, there is the reason to believe that among the students, the leader will be produced and they will quickly rise to positions of influence and authority in business, education, and government in Malaysia. The notable alumni's from UiTM are ranking from the academicians (i.e Prof. Dr. Hatta Azad Khan, film director and Dean of the Faculty of Artistic and Creative Technology), Law (i.e Datuk Zaid Ibrahim, founder of the largest law firm in Malaysia, public administration (i.e Tan Sri Prof Dr. Ibrahim Abu Shah, former Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Teknologi MARA), business (i.e Dato' Seri Ahmad Farid Ridzuan, Group Chief Executive Officer of Media Prima's Television Networks), politician (i.e Datuk Musa Aman, the Chief Minister for the state of Sabah), and engineering (i.e Datuk Ir. Mohd. Zin Mohamed, former Malaysia's Works Minister).

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The enhancement of students' leadership skills has been articulated by many universities across the country as a desirable outcome of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000). Employers are seeking students with exceptional speaking and writing abilities, strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and the ability to effectively work with and influence others (Coplin, 2003). Students in the university should not only focus on coursework alone that is assumed to sufficient in developing such desirable skills. Employers would not focus primarily on grade point average as a benchmark of success in the work place. Instead, Coplin (2004) and others have suggested that coursework should be heavily supplemented by co-curricular involvement. Extra-curricular activities and outside activities such as community service or student government provide learning opportunities that generate the exceptional skills among the students. The facilities in the university that are allocated with lots of spending shall help the university students to develop skills essential to their post-

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graduate careers. As noted by Daugherty and Williams (1997), there is a growing need for effective leaders in groups, organizations, and communities. As a result, many universities have devised programs in many areas such as economic, social, and environmental lessons in order to well equip these groups of future leaders. Such programs allow students to serve in a variety of leadership roles such as resident advisors, student government officers, orientation leaders, and officers of fraternal organizations. These roles help students better understand leadership and develop skills to become effective leaders themselves. Nearly 600 Universities and universities address leadership topics through courses, programs, and co-curricular activities in leadership education (Binard & Brungardt, 1997).

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Good leadership has the influence to determine success in the current global economy. There are many examples that support this statement. On the other hand, bad leaders are individuals who always look over their shoulder, react negatively during a crisis and are always blaming others for their own weakness. A good leader is a courageous leader. This trait shouldn't be confused with gung-ho recklessness, but such courage usually comes from a strong sense of self-worth. A bad leader is usually a person who is fearful of something or other – or maybe his self-worth. Rather than dwell on bad leadership, we should focus more on isolating good leadership qualities badly needed in the current global economy. The new generation of leaders are required to extensively exercise discretion to address the issues they face. In practice, discretionary leadership means that the leader is responsible in determining his own role and its more intricate nature. Ultimately, discretionary roles are the positions for which organizationally beneficial behaviors and gestures can neither be enforced on the basis of formal role obligation nor can it be elicited by contractual guarantee or reward. The peculiarities of each leadership role and the characteristics of the individual are critical considerations in determining role boundaries and parameters. There are thousands of descriptions on leadership available. In the leadership literature, more than one hundred different definitions of leadership have been identified (Rost, 1991). Handbooks on leadership (e.g. Bass, 1990) contain references to thousands of studies presenting various view points and definitions. According to Burns (1978), leadership is one of the most least understood quality on earth. Bass (1985) advised that as the studies of leadership are wide and varied; choosing one specific definition for leadership can be a very complex task. In general, leadership is a process of moving people in the direction that fits their longterm interests perfectly (Rutter, 1995). According to Yukl (2005), leadership is a process of interaction between leaders and subordinates where a leader attempts to influence the behaviour of his or her subordinates to accomplish organizational goals. Krause (2004)

described leadership as the selection of bases of influence. Kanungo (1998) regarded leadership as an individual exercising his or her influence over others by utilizing various bases of social power in order to achieve organizational objectives. Gardner (1990) defined leadership as the process of influencing the activities of an individual or a group in the efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation. Jacques and Clement (1994) supported this argument when they defined leadership as a process in which one person (the leader) sets the purpose or direction for others and motivates them to work together with him/her in that direction, with competence and commitment. In terms of social approach, Nirenberg (2001) defined leadership as a social function necessary for the achievement of collective objectives. He further elaborated that leadership is not just a position in a hierarchy or a chain of commands, but involves the actions of the leader. Leadership is also perceived as what the leaders do to inspire their subordinates who have the same goals, and to maintain the group's or the organization's strength. According to Yukl (1989), most definitions of leadership reflected the assumption that it actually involves a process of social influence whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person (or group) over other people (or groups) to maintain a structure of activities and relationships in a group or organization.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methodology used in this study to test the hypothesis and the rationale behind it. The population, sample and the sampling approach is described. Furthermore, the two instruments that were used in the research are described and their applicability discussed. Finally, a brief description of the relevant statistical techniques used in the study is also provided. According to Peil (1982) stated that much of the social research, especially in developing countries, sets out to explore a new era or at least one about which little is known in the local context. Babbie and Mouton (2004), there are different types of social research methods that can be identified from the literature, namely exploratory research, descriptive research and explanatory research.

A. Research Design

According to Adams and Schvaneveldt (1985:103) "research design refers to a plan, blueprint or guide for data collection and interpretation – a set of rules that enable the investigator to conceptualize and observe the problem under study". From the hypotheses it is evidence that the research is of a quantitative nature. Figure 1. below provides a schematic diagram of the research method proposed. This method consists of the following steps: selection of research method; population and sampling; questionnaire selection; data collection; data capturing; data statistical analysis.

B. Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations of confidentiality and privacy were addressed. A concerted and conscious effort was made at all times to uphold this promise. From an ethical consideration, the research dealt with the information gathered from UiTM students in complete confidentiality and privacy. A conscious effort was made at all times in a way that the respondents' names were not revealed in the research report.

C. Instrument

Two set of questionnaires system were used in this research to obtain information on leadership and organisational commitment, respectively, namely the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS).

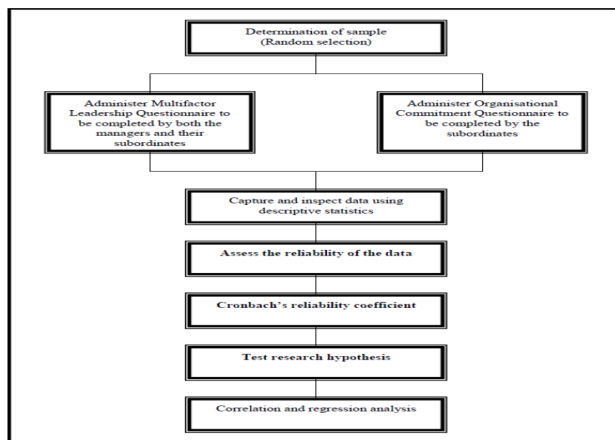


Fig 1: A schematic representation of the general research design

D. Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLO)

The MLQ was formulated from the Full Range Leadership Development Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Thus, the MLQ is based on the work of renowned leadership theorists like Bass, Avolio and Yammarino (Avolio & Bass, 1997). The MLQ has been improved and tested since 1985 with the result that many versions of the questionnaire have been developed. The latest versions, Form 5X (Revised), were used in this study. The MLQ takes the form of a number of statements about the leadership style of the individual being tested. The questionnaire used in this study contains 45 statements that identify and measure the key aspects of leadership behaviours. Each statement corresponds to one of the nine components of either transformational, transactional or laissez - faire leadership factors. The transformational leadership style is divided into idealised charismatic behaviours and attributes. Factors representing transformational leadership include idealised influence (attributed),

idealised influence (behaviour), inspirational motivation, individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation. Transactional leadership style is represented by two factors called contingent rewards and management-by-exception. Thus, MLQ 5X (Revised) contains nine factors. The MLQ comprises a 5 point Likert scale and the respondents were instructed during the administration of the questionnaires by the researcher to mark the most suitable answer. The scale ranges from 0 to 4 as follows:

0 - Not at all, 1 - Once in a while, 2 – Sometimes, 3 - Fairly often, and 4 - Frequently if not always

Each respondent was required to assess and testify as to how frequently the behaviors described by each of the statements are exhibited by their leader. The MLQ consists of two versions known as the 'rater version' and the 'self-rater version' (see Appendix L and M). These two versions consist of exactly the same statements, except that they are written from different perspectives. The leader, for example, would be given the statement, 'I spend time teaching and coaching', whereas the subordinate's questionnaire would say, 'The person I am rating spends time teaching and coaching'.

V. ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the results of the correlation analysis of the research hypotheses were discussed. In order to summarize the quantitative data and the relationships, a descriptive statistics was used.

A. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize quantitative data, enabling patterns and relationships to be discerned which are not apparent in the raw data (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). The common purpose of these techniques is to summarize both variability (that is the spread of the numbers) and the centre of data. Sekaran (2000:397) describes the mean of a sample as "a measure of central tendency that offers a general picture of the data without unnecessarily inundating one with each of the observations in a data set or sample". The standard deviation of a sample is defined as an index of the spread of a distribution or the variability in the data.

B. Leadership Style - Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Management-by-exception-Passive is a form of leadership in which the leader intervenes only if standards are not met and only take action after rules have been broken or mistakes are "brought to their attention.". Study showed the students agreed that they were a firm believer in 'If it

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isn't broke, don't fix it. Table 1, demonstrates the results.

Dimension	Q#	Item	N	M	SD
Management by exception Passive	Q17	I show that I am firm believer in 'IF it ain't broke, don't fix it	136	3.01	1.03
	Q3	I fail to interface until problems become serious	136	2.6	0.94
	Q20	I demonstrate that problems must become chronic before I take action	136	2.47	1.04
	Q12	I wait for thing to go wrong before taking action	136	2.53	0.51
			136	2.61	0.51

Note: 0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 Fairly Often, 4 = Frequently if not always

TABLE 1: Data Collection – Management by exception – Passive

Management-by-exception-Active is a form of leadership which watches and searches for deviations from the rules and standards and takes corrective action when followers are not acting correctly; “they enforce the rules to avoid mistakes” (Bass, 1997). In the study, students scored high on “I concentrate my full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures”. Table 4, demonstrates the results.

Dimension	Q#	Item	N	M	SD
Management by exception Passive	Q22	I concentrate my full attention on dealing with mistake, complain, and failures	136	3.71	0.89
	Q4	I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards	136	3.53	0.95
	Q24	I keep track all mistakes	136	3.43	1.05
	Q27	I direct my attention toward failures to meet standards	136	3.25	1.02
			136	3.48	0.49

Note: 0 = Not at all, 1 = Once in a while, 2 = Sometimes, 3 Fairly Often, 4 = Frequently if not always

TABLE 2: Data Collection – Management by exception – Active

Table 3, contains descriptive data for the five transformational leadership subscales, three transactional subscales, and one laissez-faire subscale. The distribution of scores for the sample contained reasonable variance and normality for use in subsequent analyses. All leadership variables hold a sample size of 135. The mean values for each of the transformational leadership subscales are all relatively close to 3 and those for transactional leadership ranges from 2.61 to 3.64. The mean values for laissez-faire is less than 3. The greatest standard deviation in the leadership factors is Laissez-Faire Leadership which attained approximately 1.05 standard deviation scores. In some instances, the overall scores for the transformational and transactional leadership subscales are slightly less than what Bass and Avolio (1997) consider ideal levels for effective leadership. For the most effective leadership, they suggest mean scores of greater or equal to 3.0 for individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence (behavior), idealized influence (attributed) and inspirational motivation.

Dimension	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Idealized Influence (Attributed)	136	3.41	0.98
Idealized Influence (Behavior)	136	3.51	0.94
Inspirational Motivation	136	3.63	0.96
Intellectual Stimulation	136	3.55	0.98
Individualized Consideration	136	3.34	1.01
Transformational Leadership	136	3.49	0.99
Contingent Reward	136	3.64	0.94
Management by Exception - Passive	136	2.61	1.01
Transactional Leadership	136	3.24	0.99
Laissez Faire Leadership	136	2.53	1.05

TABLE 3: Mean & Standard Deviation Scores for Leadership Style – Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ)

Another construct that related when working in the group was common purpose. Majority of the students agreed with the importance to develop a common vision within the group. Other important statement were their own knowledge and support of the goals of the group as well as a familiarity with other group members' priorities. The less important perceived by the students were being familiar with and committing to collective values within a group. Responded the least important factor was assisting in shaping the overall mission of the group. Table 4, shows the results of the common purpose construct.

Construct	Q#	Item	M	SD
Common Purpose	15	It is important to develop common direction in a group in order to get anything done	4.2	0.64
	19	I contribution to the goals of the group	4.16	0.56
	67	I support what the group is trying to accomplish	4.09	0.52
	58	I know the purpose of the groups to which I belong	4.09	0.52
	31	I think it is important to know other people's priorities	4.06	0.59
	61	I work well when I know the collective values of a group	3.99	0.55
	14	I am committed to a collective purpose in those groups to which I belong	3.92	0.66
	37	Common values drive an organization	3.89	0.67
	35	I have helped to shape the mission of the group	3.64	0.75

Note 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

TABLE 4: Ranking of Student's Perception of Overall Leadership Skills by Construct – Common Purpose (n=136)

Congruence was another constructs that the students at least mildly agreed with every statement. Most significant to respondents was they want to be seen as a person of integrity. It was followed by desire to be both truthful and genuine. The response of the statements in general showed that behaviors and attitudes play an important role within their own leadership style. Table 5, shows the results for the congruence construct.

Construct	Q #	Item	M	SD
Congruence	52	Being seen as a person of integrity is important to me	4.41	0.64
	68	It is easy for me to be truthful	4.29	0.64

	64	I am genuine	4.27	0.62
	32	My actions are consistent with my values	4.13	0.64
	63	My behavior reflect my beliefs	4.09	0.6
	27	It is important to me act on my beliefs	4.05	0.65
	13	I am committed to a collective purpose in those groups to which I belong	4.01	0.66

Note 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

TABLE 5: Ranking of Student’s Perception of Overall Leadership Skills by Construct – Congruence (n=136)

Controversy with civility means to discuss on topics of conflict and diversity. This is a sensitive topic which covers being open to others’ ideas, respecting diverse opinions, and valuing differences in others. The indication showed that respondents were relatively comfortable with differences and opinions that were not their own. Although the responds were neutral, they pretty solidly disagreed with being uncomfortable around issues of conflict with others. Table 6, shows the results of the controversy with civility construct.

Construct	Q #	Item	M	SD
Controversy with civility	1	I am open to others ideas	4.29	0.59
	1	I respect opinion other than my own	4.25	0.61
	3	I value difference in others	4.21	0.67
	5	Hearing difference in opinion enriches my thinking	4.17	0.69
	6	I share my ideas with others	4.08	0.59
	2	Creativity can come from conflict	3.98	0.71
	1	Greater harmony can come out of disagreement	3.44	0.81
	4	I am comfortable with conflict	3.41	0.89
	2	I am uncomfortable when someone disagrees with me	4.29	0.59
	2	When there is a conflict between two people, one will win and the other will lose	4.25	0.61
7	I struggle when group members have ideas that are different from mine	4.21	0.67	

Note 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

TABLE 6: Ranking of Student’s Perception of Overall Leadership Skills by Construct – Controversy with civility (n=136)

VI. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to investigate the various leadership styles among UiTM Students. From this study, the leadership student profile could be generated for further use for the institution. Overall findings

from this study suggest that transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership behaviors in the perception of the students. The only thing was they did not recognize each trait of leadership that they possessed. Transactional Leadership style starts with the idea that team members agree to obey their leader when they accept a job. The "transaction" usually involves the organization paying team members in return for their effort and compliance. The leader has a right to "punish" team members if their work doesn't meet an appropriate standard. Although this might sound controlling and paternalistic, transactional leadership offers some benefits. The future leader in our society and community shall receive direct and indirect leadership education in order to allow them to excel as leaders in a changing world. The '8' leadership construct were tested on UiTM students to help us to understand and individual perception of leadership ability. This will also help us to find the answer whether our students nowadays have the better impact in community in future. By looking at the responds of the students according to SRLS model, we can define those areas that need to be emphasized in and outside the classroom. Overall, from the study, it's obvious that the students are very well aware and can articulate passionately in about leadership topics. This is the major breakthrough and positive impact of the study. The study can help the researchers to do future level of interest on leadership topics among the students. The concerned issue such as self-confidence apparently perceived neutral response among the students. However, this issue can be addressed through leadership experiences within institution to build self-efficacy. The institution shall encourage the students to get involved in student organizations, providing a wide variety of those organizations, and assigning role plays in class which focus on the importance of being a confident leader. Students' responds to construct congruence and commitment shows that the current students at UiTM have a moderately good idea on how important traits required for ethical leadership. Furthermore, student commitment to "do their part" and accountable for the task, implies that the students are ethically and morally positive. The positive attitude shall be encouraged by the institution by recommending the students to attend courses and seminars regarding leadership.

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