Leadership style: Is it autocratic, democratic or laissez-faire?

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Abstract: The work assigned to employee cannot be completed without clear direction. Therefore, leader's responsibility to provide clear direction leads to the completed task and reduces costs to the organization. Leadership style is essential in inspiring employees to work hard and improve their performance. The purpose of this document is to examine the style of Middle Management Leadership especially, Program Leader. The sample in this study consists of 12 program leaders of Polytechnic of Tuanku Sultanah Bahiyah (PTSB), Kedah. The study finds that most program leaders prefer to use a democratic approach. The program leader tends to brainstorm, collaborate and tolerate with another lecturer to achieve the organizational goal. The findings also show that the previous relationship as a lecturer before heading the program influences the leadership style, democratic.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership styles are an essential element of organizational success. To achieve this, the leader had to assume more responsibility in providing direction and job. As such, employees could complete the task and reduce a cost. However, it is challenging to achieve organizational goals if instructional is not clear and misunderstood. The implication of this notion the job, mission cannot perform apart since the cost may increase. A leader who is too strict and not tolerated may exert pressure on employees. However, too linear and tolerant to advance the less severe employee about their work. This indicates that leadership style is very important for achieving of an organizational goal. This shows the other leadership styles have different performance objectives [1]

Leadership style can influence employees' motivation for improved performance. This suggests that the leader should be able to adapt the organizational behavior style, including the situation of the employee. Less strictly tends to lead to lower performance because the task cannot be finished. However, too strict and no human duties tend to create an uncomfortable environment where employees do not volunteer to work together to improve their performance. Understanding the leadership style tends to improve the work environment.

There are various leadership style practices within an organization, from senior management to mid-management. Top management is accountable to shareholders/stakeholders for linkages to performance. This question suggests that an organization's planning and strategy should be accomplished and result in cost savings. Furthermore, middle managers are responsible for the implementation of strategies with employees. However, some of them manage the position seriously to demonstrate their leadership skills and build a better reputation for top management. The question addressed in this study is how leadership style can achieve goals.

The objective of this paper is to examine the leadership pattern. The sample size of this study is 12 program leaders from Engineering and Non-Engineering at Polytechnic of Tuanku Sultanah Bahiyah, Kedah. This study reveals that most of the program's leaders prefer to use democracy style. The Program Leader tends to brainstorm, cooperate and tolerate with another lecturer to achieve the organizational objective. Furthermore, there is a good relationship between middle management (program leader), and staff (lecturer) previously led to their leadership style.

The remaining chapters are organized as follows; Section 2 outlines the relevant literature, while developing more fully ideas in past research are most important to the present study. Research design issues

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and methodology are explained in Section 3. Details of the final sample and the variable measurement, the variable are also discussed in this chapter. The results and discussion are presented in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 sets out the study's conclusion, limitations and some suggestions for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Successful organizational combined with better leadership with better planning and strategy. In addition, the leader required to understand the macro and microenvironment changes to links with organizational strategies to bring up a better performance. [2] Defines leadership generally.

"Leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves structuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members. Leadership occurs when one group member modifies the motivation, or competencies of others in the group. Any member of the group can exhibit some amount of leadership". (pp 19-20)

Many academics define leadership differently [3] [4]. [3] Explains that leadership style means an approach and the ability to achieve organizational objectives and has a greater impact on all organizational activities. Furthermore, [4] addresses that a leadership style is a relationship by which someone uses his rights, and methods to influence many employees to work together in pursuit of a common goal. [5] Describes leadership as the process by which an individual influences group members toward a collective or organizational objective.

A good leader can apply a leadership style such as autocratic, democratic or laissez-faire. This diagram illustrates three types of leadership styles that may apply to the organization.
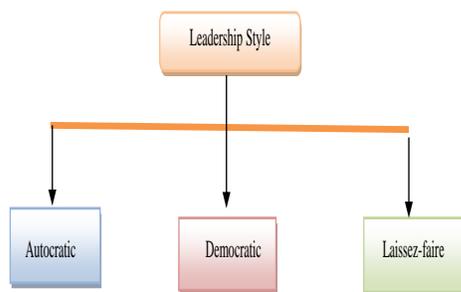

Figure 1: Leadership styles

There are many previous studies of leadership, including leadership style [6] [7] [8]. [6] Noted three broad leadership styles: autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. In addition, the leadership style was also proposed by Blake Mouton [7] throughout the Blake-Mouton management matrix in 1963. Path-Goal Theory was published in 1971, is very helpful in determining the best approach to leadership. [8] Have a leadership matrix that is divided into four quadrants. This indicates that the leadership style is related to the leader's behavior. The definition of each type of leader is presented below [6]

Autocratic Leadership	Democratic Leadership	Laissez-faire Leadership
The autocratic style is one in which a single person takes control and makes decisions, directing others in his or her chosen course of action.	In a democratic leadership style, one person takes control, but is open to group input, often allowing the group to make decisions and collectively assign tasks. This leader guides rather than directed.	With the laissez-faire approach, the person in charge stepped back and did nothing. He or she provided no direction or guidance.

Table 1: Leadership styles

Autocratic Leadership

Leadership based on skill, knowledge and experience relates to organizational performance. As a result, management is equipped with better planning, and strategies to support better performance. Management decides without the intervention of the employee. The organization uses its authority and status to manage business activities without considering employee feedback, even though the suggestion is beneficial to the organization.

This type of leadership is most useful when the leader must make a decision quickly and without notice. For example, the product has a problem in the market, depending on the economic crisis, which is rapid decision-making. At this level, the leader decides to stop production and minimize staff immediately. The autocratic leader does not care about what happens to employees when making decisions, and the relationship between employees and leaders can get worse. [9] Reported that satisfaction was positively related to work performance.

The middle of the potential management level practices an autocratic style in that they tend to draw senior management's attention to their leadership skills. This indicates that they have sent a signal to top management about their leadership competence, which

is good for their careers. As a result, power will be used to ensure all tasks are performed concerning to the schedule. Employee motivation may be reduced and lead to poor performance, [10] and [11] found a strong relationship between employee work effort and job performance.

Employees are not welcome to propose an idea that can lead to lower performance. This is because top management decisions are made without feedback from employees. Moreover, too much pressure from the manager on employees to achieve the objective can demoralize them. Consequently, they are dissatisfied, which can contribute to absenteeism and increased turnover. When employees are not unhappy with the supervisor's attitude, that is one of the main reasons employees leave their jobs [12]; [13]). It can be costly to an organization. Diagram 1 shows how autocratic leadership relates to employee motivation

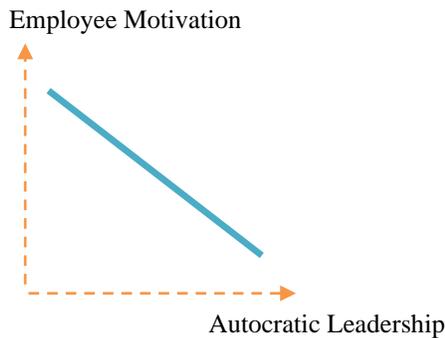Employee Motivation

Autocratic Leadership

Figure 2 Relationship between autocratic leadership and employee motivation.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between autocratic leadership, and employee motivation. Increased employer use of power can reduce an employee's motivation. When the employer puts too much pressure to achieve goals without concern for ideas and the employee's solution, it is tends to affect their motivation to work hard. Lower motivation can lead to poor performance because employees do not have the benefit from of sharing expertise and experience to solve the problem.

Democratic Leadership
There are many research studies on democratic leadership [14] and [15]). Few researchers come with definitions such as [14] and [15] explain that a democratic leader relied upon group decision making, active member involvement, honest praise and criticism, and a degree of comradeship.

The democratic leader prefers to make up his mind from the ground up before making decisions about the operation of an organization. Combining view from senior management with employees tends to improve performance. The leader opens the view from below to encourage creativity which is helpful for better planning and strategies in the marketplace competition. As such, it is the employee's responsibility to participate thoughtfully in work to ensure that the task is completed on time, is linked to improved performance. In this situation, the leader had to communicate efficiently to sit down with the employee. As well, throughout the communication, the leader can persuade the employee to follow their vision [16]

The employee and employer will work together by sharing an idea to meet the organization's objectives. An employee tends to work harder, particular by working overtime, and the relationship between team members improves. In addition, the employer can deliver a task and be able to complete it on time, the cost is reduced, and the return becomes better. According to [17] employees are most satisfied when they perceive their supervisor as a sign of relational and task-based behavior. The employee will feel that the organization is theirs and anything that affects the organization will be theirs.

The style of democratic leadership can cause the employee to feel like an important person in an organization. This is because that sharing the mission and goal of the organization can put the employee in a position where they feel they are a member of an organization. According to this case, perhaps the employee motivation rises. They believe that they are contributing to the company's success. In addition, the leaders who tend to motivate the employee into action can create an environment where they feel compelled to their beast [18]. A better performance is directly linked to the relationship between leadership style and followers' motivational needs [19]. This shows a better relationship between the leader and the employee can achieve organizational objective. Diagram 1 demonstrates the link between democratic leadership and employee motivation.
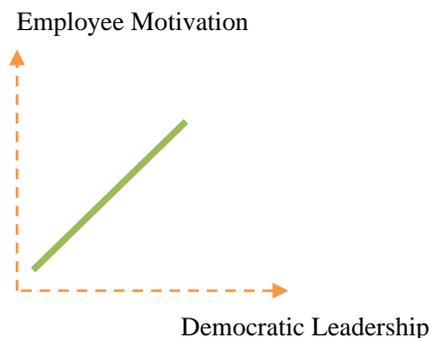
Employee Motivation

Democratic Leadership

Figure 3 Relationship between democratic leadership and employee motivation

Figure 3 shows the relationship of democratic leadership to employee motivation. Employers address the company's employee issues to find the best solution, leading to greater employee motivation. The more employees are engaged in the company's policies and procedures, the more motivated they are, and the more the company's performance increases. This situation indicates that the organization has recognized the employee's contribution to the business' success.

Laissez-faire

The laissez-faire leader will give team members the freedom to develop their work and deadlines. The leader does not interfere in the employee's way of working and performs the task. The leader can give the employee the authority to make a personal decision about the work [20]. The organization believes that when the employee allows for the design of their work, they may take the task seriously and complete it on time. As a result, they are confident and highly motivated. [21] explains that when employee`s (salesman) is satisfied with his supervisor, he is motivated to work harder. The leader becomes a consultant to lead the employee`s in the right direction to ensure the job is completed without further delay.

Advice is very important to show management support anything that does by the employee in addition to making sure the tasks have no problems. Furthermore, less interface between leaders tends to give employees greater freedom to be creative and engaged in their work. In addition, work satisfaction for employees is higher. However, there should be a limit to an employee's freedom to ensure are not lost and that they are still on track to achieve their organization`s goal.

While employees are satisfied with the autonomy provided, it can destroy team members if they are bad at time management. The goal of the organization cannot be achieved if team members have less knowledge, skills or self-esteem to work effectively. Therefore, the leader should be given advice and direction of the organization. It shows that the laissez-faire style may be better when the employee's leadership can be guided. Also, the organization less costs to carry if something happens to the given task if the employee truly understands what they are doing and involves with the organization.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample of this study consists of program leaders from various departments of the Polytechnic of Tuanku Sultanah Bahiyah. The Program Leader is made up of the Department of Commerce (JP), Civil (JKA), Electrical (JKE), and Mechanical (JKM). Table 3.1 presents the results of the program for each department. There are four (4) academic departments, Commerce, Civil, Electrical, and Mechanics. However, the study excluded support departments, mathematics, science and computing, and general studies. This study only focuses on the academic department regarding the complexion of management staff and students.

Head of Program			
Commerce	Electrical	Mechanical	Civil
Accounting	Electrical	Mechanical	Civil
Business	Electronic (Communication)	Mechanical (Manufacturing)	Geometric
Marketing	Electronic (Computer)	Mechatronic	
	Electrical and Electronic		

Table 2 Program leader by department

Instrument

A pilot survey questionnaire is developed through the literature review. The sample for the pilot test comes from the Department of Mathematics, Science and Computing and the General Department. Throughout the test, the researcher can identify issues with the questionnaire. If the questionnaire is not precise, it should be examined and re-written. It is essential to ensure that respondents give a correct answer.

When the questionnaire is handed out to the respondent, the researcher may need to set a time limit to verify whether it is reasonable or not. If the time is long enough, the questionnaire may be shortened without changing the validity of the question.

To meet the purpose of the research, the questionnaire is divided into two sections. The first part of the questionnaire relates to demographic information. It dealt with age, race, educational background, and gender. Part B includes a questionnaire (30 questions) on leadership styles such as autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire. Every type of leadership raises to 10 questions. These sections are based on a self-evaluation ratio on a 5-point Likert scale. Moreover, the questionnaire uses the Likert scale because the reliability level is superior [23]

Higher scores in the questionnaire column indicate which type of leadership is typically used, such as autocracy, democracy and laissez-faire. The questionnaire shows that the highest score is 40 or higher, which is a strong indicator of the leadership style.

Data Collection Procedure

Before data can distribute to the head of the program in Politeknik Tuanku Sultanah Bahiyah (PTSB), the researcher need to get permission from the head of the department to ask for the study participants. The permit is required to ensure that the work routine is not interrupted and that confidential information can be disclosed. In addition, the department head must forward the request to the Director to acknowledge receipt.

All responders are informed that the information is strictly controlled by the researcher and confidential. In addition, the researcher should follow the ethics where the name of the program leader is not allowed to disclose. This is very important for a respondent to feel secure and compliant. The survey was distributed to the Program Leader via the Google form.

The data cannot make any sense without analyzing, and interpreting. Therefore, this study uses SPSS release 20.0 software to analyze the data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1 presents the respondent's background, such as department, gender, educational qualification and work experience. The results show that the Leaders program is dominated by women, only seven people and four men. In addition, the majority of program leaders have a master's degree, except for someone from the Civil Department as a degree. Interesting findings show that more than 80% have more than ten years experiences in teaching before they are appointed as program leaders. This demonstrates that the program leader can understand the learning and teaching process to make effective decisions. Initial findings show that when the program leader has teaching experience, he or she can maintain better relationships among staff.

	Department			
	JP	JKA	JKE	JKM
Gender				
Male	-	2	1	2
Female	3	-	3	1
Academic Qualification				
Degree	-	2	-	-
Master	3		4	3
Working Experience				
6 – 10 years			-	-
11 – 15 years	2	1	4	2
>15 years	1	1	-	1

Table 3 Department, Gender, Academic Qualification and Working Experience

Table 3 illustrates the interrelationship between autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire leadership styles. Autocratic and democratic leadership has a significant correlation. Similar results show that democracy is significantly correlated to autocratic, and laissez-faire. Initial results show that the autocratic leadership style tends to use democracy in its dealings with its staff. Concerning the type of democratic leadership, they are tolerated and receive feedback from staff and at the same time use authority as a leader to carry out a task.

Type Leadership	Autocratic	Democratic	Laissez-faire
Autocratic		0.613*	0.297
Democratic	0.613*		0.875**
Laissez-faire	0.297	0.875**	

Table 4 Correlation
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 indicates the kind of leadership implemented by the program leader in Polytechnic of Tuanku Sultanah Bahiyah. The finding shows that the program leader from all departments, Commerce, Civil, Electrical, and Mechanical leadership styles is democratic. This means that program leaders work as a team with their staff to achieve the organization's goal. Brainstorming, cooperation, and tolerance between staff members are priorities in carrying out the task. This may motivate staff to bring their knowledge, skills, and experience to the task at hand.

The nature of the academic service, particularly at the polytechnic, the relationship between middle managers, such as the program leader and academic staff, is very dependent on each other. Furthermore, the position of program leader is not permanent because they may be promoted and possibly returned to the lecturer position. It is essential that the program leader must have good relationship now and after the position. Program leader prefers to talk with their subordinate where most of them is a senior rank of service less suited to applying an autocratic style. In middle management, particularly in academic fields, the democratic leadership style is most appropriate to ensure that all employees work together to improve organizational performance.

	Autocratic (Authoritarian)	Democratic (Participate)	Laissez-faire (Delegalize)
Score	32.58	40.58	39.33

Table 5 Types of Leadership

CONCLUSION

Organizational performance is a significant need to ensure its long-term survival. Without good collaboration, teamwork or leadership, it may be challenging to meet organizational objectives. Leadership style plays an important role in aligning similar interests between organizations and staff to enhance performance. A leader should influence employees to work together and follow directions that are beneficial to the organization.

Leadership technique may influence the motivation of the employee to perform better. This indicates that the leader should be able to adjust the style to the organizational behavior, including the employee's situation. Less strictly tends to lead to lower performance because the employee can be less serious about their job tends not to be finished. However, too strict and no human duties tend to create an uncomfortable environment where employees do not volunteer to work together to improve their performance. Understanding leadership trends have a positive impact on the workplace.

The objective of this paper is to look at the leadership trend among program leaders. The sample size of this study is 12 program leader from various departments in Polytechnic of Tuanku Sultanah Bahiyah, Kedah. The research shows that most program leaders prefer to use a style of democratic leadership.

The results indicates that the program leader prefer to brainstorm, co-operate and tolerate with their subordinate to achieve organizational objectives. In addition, the senior lecturers must come together as a team, where discussion and tolerance are more appropriate than autocratic style. A good relationship between the person in charge of the program and the lecturer previously contributes to their leadership style.

This study deals solely with the leadership style model for the program leader. The results were generalized to the program leader only, but the analysis based solely on the program leader does not show the whole picture. However, this study could not consider the middle managers of SUPPORT Unit Leaders because they are not directly involved in academic fields. Further research could be undertaken to examine the relationship between leadership style and culture.

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