

6th International Research Symposium in Service Management, IRSSM-6 2015, 11-15 August 2015, UiTM Sarawak, Kuching, Malaysia

Organization Performance and Leadership Style: Issues in Education Service

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Abstract

Leadership has been recognized as a vital focus in the field of organizational behaviour in which it is one of the dynamic effects during individual and organizational interactions. Leadership undoubtedly has the major role in the outcome of any project in which all identified leadership styles have variable outcomes under different situations. Due to the fact that Malaysian literature on leadership styles and organizational performance is not being enriched, there is an urge for the researcher to perform a robust and rigorous research by examining the relationship of leadership styles and organizational performance among academics leaders in education service environment. This study examines the leadership styles of the academic leaders in the Malaysian Public Universities in Klang Valley area. It is found that transformational leadership was highly practiced by most academic leaders in Malaysian Public Universities in Klang Valley area. Transformational leadership supported knowledge sharing among educators. Further research is needed to understand the characteristics, skills, and preparation needed for aspiring an individual seeking to move into the position of faculty leaders.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the Universiti Teknologi MARA Sarawak

Keywords: transformational; transactional; organization performance; education service

1. Introduction

Many researchers have showed their keen interest in studying leadership and such environment leads to the establishment of different leadership theories (Khan et al., 2012). Leadership theories attempt to explain the various

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actions and leader behavior basis (Humphreys & Einstein, 2004). Hence, studying the leadership behavior is important because it helps the leaders as well as the organisation to fully utilize the resources; this not only give a resistance to change in the organisation but it can lead to be more efficient. The root of this study focused on the three main leadership styles including the Transformational leadership, Transactional leadership, and Laissez-faire leadership.

1.1. Academic leaders and roles

Today's academic leaders must have varieties of leadership skills to be effective in an organisation (Thrash, 2009). Many literatures done by researchers showed that there are many components of effective leadership that can take place in educational sector including the ability be to a role model for the followers, capability to lead a number of faculty varieties, and to have a critical thinking skills (Haslam, 2004). It is important for the academic dean, deputy of dean and head of department as a leader, to adapt to the appropriate leadership style that suits him or her with the groups for which he or she is responsible for (Nunn, 2008).

Academic leaders are responsible as the chief academic officers of their divisions or faculties (Wood, 2004). Nevertheless, the university's hierarchy acts as the middle manager to play the role as the mediators between the executive level administrations, the chairpersons, and the faculty of the respective universities (Rosser, Johnsrud, & Heck, 2003). The main responsibility of the academic leaders is they must operate within the university system in which it has numbers of characteristics to deal with and therefore, academic leaders must navigate the bureaucracies of the university in order to successfully lead their divisions (Thrash, 2009).

However, the leadership style of academic leaders are varied and diverse due to the no formal professional training provided who seek for this positions (McGregor, 2005) as well as no consistency in the job descriptions for academic leaders which lead to further uncertainty about their roles and accountabilities (Jackson, 2004). Hence, Gmelch (2004) agreed that academic leaders need to be taught leadership skills in order to decrease the unprofessional nature of the leadership in the ranks of administrations. Further argued by Packard (2008), indicated that one of the significant challenges faced by the many leaders today is in terms of their ability to adapt to a constant global environment changing and at the same time to maintain the internal self-motivated of the organisations. Therefore, the appropriate selection of leadership style adapted by academic leaders is important in order to play a major role in the succession of the overall organizational performance of their academic units (DeI Favero, 2006).

1.2. Leadership styles and performance

In the literature, leadership has been recognized as a vital focus in the field of organizational behaviour in which it is one of the dynamics effect during individual and organizational interactions (Obiwuru et al., 2011). Leadership undoubtedly has a major role in the outcome of any project in which all identified leadership styles have variable outcomes under different situations (Khan et al., 2012). Fry (2003) explains that leadership plays a strategic tool to motivate the staff to enhance their potential growth and development. On the other hand, organizational performance refers to ability of an organisation to achieve certain objectives and goals such as good financial results, high organisation profit, and produce high quality products by using effective strategies adopted (Koontz & Donnell, 1993).

Under certain circumstances, transactional style of leadership lead to a successful work of the organisations even though it does not give the followers as much right as transformational leadership does (Boseman, 2008) but it does give the followers a sense of identity and job satisfaction. On the contrary, other studies suggested that transformational leadership had a greater role to play regarding followers' performance and creativity compared to the transactional leadership (Boerner, 2007).

Furthermore, the discussion on the relationship between leadership styles and performance has been discussed often by the scholars. Many research done before showed the results that leadership styles have significant relation with the organizational performance, in which different style of leadership can determine the relationship between the leadership styles and the organizational performance either it may have positive correlation or negative correlation (Wang, Shieh, & Tang, 2010). Sun (2002) compared the leadership styles and the organizational

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