

THE EFFECT OF DIPLOMATIC ADMINISTRATION OFFICER LEADERSHIP STYLE ON PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OFFICER MOTIVATION: A STUDY OF JABATAN AGAMA ISLAM SELANGOR

Zulkifli Abdul Hamid, PhD¹ & Mokthar Hj. Ismail²
Faculty of Management and Muamalah
International Islamic University College Selangor
43000 Kajang, Selangor, MALAYSIA

ABSTRACT

Research has shown that effective leadership style is essential to employee's motivation. This study investigated the relationship between employees' perception of department head leadership style and employees' motivation in an Islamic base organization environment. Three construct leadership style namely democratic, autocratic and laissez-fair, and employees' motivation, served as a conceptual framework for this study. Based on data collected from 120 employees from Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (JAIS) we found that differences leadership style related to motivation. Specifically, democratic style reacted more positively when they viewed their leader as being more transformational. The result of this research recognized the different leadership style contributed to employee motivation.

Keywords: leadership style; religious organization; *motivation*

1. INTRODUCTION

Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (JAIS) have been administrated and lead by Islamic education background officer since 1949 until 1990. On that consensus, leadership style and culture definitely congruence between leader and employees who are also from same background. Organizational effectiveness can be related to leadership style that is understanding organization culture (Sweeney, 1982). Leadership style refers to how leader practice their leadership functions and direct their follower.

However, started from 1990, government allocated officer from non-Islamic education background to lead the Islamic organization. Officer from Diplomatic Administration Officer (PTD) have been appointed as a head department in JAIS. This study examined

¹ Deputy Rector of Corporate Management (Development and Internationalisation), International Islamic University College Selangor. Corresponding author e-mail: drzulkifli@kuis.edu.my

² Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Management and Muamalah, International Islamic University College Selangor (KUIS).

the consequences of non-Islamic education background in leading the Islamic base organization and the employees in this organization. Specifically, this study will look into three leadership styles namely democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire, and what type of leadership style can promote motivation among employees. This study also investigated what leadership style is appropriate in leading Islamic organization background in management position in an organization setting.

An organization's success is often measured by organizational cohesiveness that transcends personal self-interests (Holtzman, 1992), employees in management position such as administration officer and their supervisory leaders must act collectively in their decision making process. An ineffective leadership style can undermine the efforts of administrative officer in their work environment (Sweeney, 1982). Meanwhile, effective leadership must build collaborative relationships and employ participatory leadership style that can motivate employees. The determination of leadership's style and followers' motivational needs can help the organization to better predict and direct organizational outcomes (Avolio and Bass, 1995). Once the leadership style and followers' motivational needs are identified, strategies can be used to maximize the followers' productivity through the use of specific motivational theory (Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 2012). The use of motivational strategies will help direct follower behavior and increase organizational effectiveness and worker satisfaction. The end result of using these strategies is creating an optimally effective organization. Therefore, this study highlighted the leadership style as perceived by subordinate in management position and how it affected their subordinate motivation.

1.1. Leadership Style

In the 1930's Lewin and his group of researchers studied organizations and leadership styles: autocratic, democratic, or laissez-faire (Lewin, Lippitt, & White, 1939). The term "leadership style" refers to a leader's manner of behavior in a work situation. According to Lewin et al., (1939) one's leadership style depends on one's personality and is therefore relatively fixed. A study of leadership styles therefore deals mainly with the manner in which the leader carries out his/her leadership functions or roles—the use of authority and power and the approach to the decision-making process.

Fundamentally, the leadership adopted is the one with which the person is most comfortable. This is dependent on the person's values, personality, and how comfortable it is to allow subordinates to participate in the decision-making process. Many of these characteristics are well developed by the time persons on the job would be considered for leadership positions. Meanwhile, many leaders, by means of training and introspection have been able to change their leadership style dramatically.

It is an ever present challenge for JAIS leadership to be effective and efficient in daily managerial process. Employers look to recruit leaders who understand the overall structure of an Islamic organizational and who can bring a well rounded understanding of leadership. Often awkward times, negotiation and conflict management skills are definitive characteristics of successful leaders (Bass, 2008). It is the responsibility of leaders to ensure competency of many departments and working collaboratively with

other leaders in evaluating performance (Holder, 1985). With constant organizational changes, leaders are challenged in managing the people side of their job duties (Bryant, 2003). Leaders must know how to motivate their staff; employ performance management systems; and solve poor employee performance problems.

Leaders must understand and counteract any influencing factors that may offset any efficient decision-making and lower staff morale (Eby, Freeman, Rush and Lance, 1999). They must deal with their subordinate managers' perceptions of their work environment while, improving motivation (Beckham, 2002). In order to become effective leaders, Islamic base institution leaders must have working knowledge in leadership development skill sets (Al-Ramaiah, 1992). The leaders can use the appropriate leadership style in their motivational tactics, by encouraging feedback on implementation procedures (Kuokkanen et al., 2003; Laschinger, et al., 2003). Grossman & Valiga (2012) found that this motivation gave individuals the ability to excel at their position, by giving them a sense of ownership and pride, while working towards a common goal (Jick & Peiperl, 2010). By motivating through the appropriate leadership style, employees become inspired and are willing to achieve organizational objectives and goals (Schein, 2010; Grossman & Valiga, 2012).

1.2. Motivation

Motivation is one of the most important elements in ensuring organizational goals are achievable. Leaders are required to lead and motivate subordinates to achieve common goals or objectives shared among employees. There are many points of reference for motivation. Some are very classical such as Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*. His brilliant ideas of leadership in battlefields have been transformed into today's leadership tools in corporate and organizational environment.

For examples, Sun Tzu said "*Regard your soldier as your children, and they will follow you into the deepest valleys. Look upon them as your own beloved sons, and they will stand by you even unto death*" (McCreadie, 2008, p.79). In today's set up, the way leaders motivate and treat their staff could make the organization prospers. Sun Tzu also advised that leaders must find a balance between reward and punishment in order to lead followers "*...soldiers must be treated in the first instance with humanity, but kept under control by means of iron discipline*" (McCreadie, 2008, p.73).

1.3. The Importance of Leadership Style in Motivation

Motivation is back on the leadership agenda, classic motivational theorists such as Maslow and Herzberg have given leaders useful pointers. In their theory, motivators at work are not the opposite of factors that de-motivate. Leader is able to reducing dissatisfaction around the job. They can do more; such as provide a sense of achievement or recognition. However, paying more money sometimes motivates when seen as a tangible achievement and recognition measure.

From the 1960s to mid-1980s, leaders believed they could motivate employees to higher levels of productivity. But the advent of loose business structures, remote working and

the shift from a paternalistic style has made leaders complacent. With recent structural business changes comes the belief that leaders cannot motivate other people. Recently motivation is back. With the drive for more growth in these uncertain times, leaders are looking for ways to help increase company performance.

An overly controlling style de-motivates employees and results in poor delivery. Although it is intended to boost performance, this style is perceived as lacking trust. Eventually individuals lose their motivation to make decisions or act, which leaders see as proof of poor performance and so the cycle is reinforced. Alternatively, leaders can treat individuals as good performers and use a more motivational style allowing greater discretion. Praising outputs, asking opinions and giving interesting assignments, for examples, in turn reinforce a motivational cycle.

John Adair (2006) suggested that leaders cannot motivate others unless they are motivated as well - motivation is caught, not taught, he says. His 50:50 rule states: 50 percent of motivation comes from within and 50 percent from a person's environment, especially their leader. This means the link between leadership and motivation is strong. Most people know of the leadership continuum where a leader makes decisions while the team makes none (directive) through to the opposite, participative end where the team makes all the decisions. But which style to choose? People are motivated when they feel at the centre of things rather than the margin - and so leaders are told to be participative, not directive. As a rule, experienced team members need less direction and in our dynamic, networked organizations, individuals must be self-managing. The aim then is to motivate people to become self-directing business participants.

A participative style also works well in performance target conversations. Simply assigning targets to individuals or teams means the leader has lost the game motivationally and will probably see a cynical perversion of performance management as individuals circumvent the system - a response when leaders are too directives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Democratic Leadership Style and Motivation

Democratic leadership style focuses on group relationships and sensitivity to the people in the organization (Duncan, 1981). This type of leadership style fosters professional competence. These behaviors are categorized as decisive actions the leader can take. The continuum moves from an action that is completely decided on by the leader to one where the leader allows the follower to make the decision. These methods not only foster democratic participation but promote shared liability for the successes of decisions. This occurs through eliciting members' ideas and opinions and encouraging participation actively in decision-making. It provides a clearer understanding of the ways to receive various rewards and for identifying the reward employees value most. Further, by allowing employees' participation, they will provide input into problem solving; they may be more motivated to resolve problems affecting the organization. A democratic leadership style should be associated with higher levels of motivation because of beliefs that a high level of effort will lead to desirable outcomes. Various

related studies in organizational behavior and sales management have found that allowing subordinates to participate in decision-making lead to increased motivation (e.g. Gilbert, 1982; Kim, 1986; Holder, 1985; Teas, 1981; Tyagi, 1982). Based on this argument, we propose that democratic leadership style will have significant effect on employees' motivation.

2.2 Autocratic Leadership Style and Motivation

The Authoritarian Leadership Style is characterized by a leader who makes all the decisions and passes the directives to subordinates who are expected to carry these out under very close supervision (Duncan, 1981). Any subordinates' attempt at questioning the directives given are discouraged. There is little or no opportunity for subordinates to develop initiative and creativity. Employee behavior is closely controlled through such means as punishment, reward, arbitrary rules, and task orientation (Bass, 1990a). The authoritarian leadership style is based upon the assumption that the leader knows everything and knows what is best for the organization (Avolio & Bass, 2001). Employees are ignorant, indolent, lack ambition, dislike responsibility, and prefer to be led. Employees cannot be trusted to do what is right for the organization. Unlimited authority is thus rightly vested in the leader.

However, the authoritarian leadership style can be an effective means to plan, organize, coordinate, and maintain control over the work-related activities of subordinates. Established through formalization, the institutionalization of explicit rules and operating procedures to govern activities is a method that leaders can use to structure the performance of distribution tasks (John, 1984). When subordinates engage in ambiguous or unstructured task, they might feel that by following expertise and guidelines of the leader who usually has more expertise and knowledge, they may be more successful in attaining overall performance objectives. Finding reported indicate that authoritarian leadership style has a positive impact on subordinate motivation (Chris, Jule, Robert, 2004). Based on this argument, we propose that authoritarian leadership style will have significant effect on employees' motivation.

2.3 Laissez-faire Leadership Style and Motivation

This leadership style is quite the opposite of the authoritarian style. There is the absence of any real leadership and every one is free to do as it pleases. Usually, with no goals or direction there is a state of confusion, and lack of confidence in leadership. The employees also often doubt their own ability to accomplish the task at hand, thus productivity is usually very low. Although this leadership style is not usually advocated, it has its place with persons who are highly motivated and can work totally on their volition. This type of leadership style would also be appropriate when there is nothing significant at stake. Based on this argument, we propose that laissez-faire leadership style will not have significant effect on employees' motivation.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants in our sample were 120 public administration officers in Jabatan Agama Islam Selangor (JAIS), Malaysia. 73.5% respondents were male and 26.5% were female. The mean age of the sample was 34.2 years old. 46.9% reported age range between 31 to 40. 33.6% of the respondents reported age below 30. The rest of the respondents (19.5%) were age more than 40 years old. In term of working groups, 53.1% percent of the sample reported working in executive level. 34% reported working in non-executive and the balance of the sample reported working in management levels.

3.2. Instrument

3.2.1. Leadership Style

Leadership style was assessed using the “*The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire*” (LBDQ) measure developed by Halpin (1966) from Ohio State University. Response option were based on a 4-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The reliability of the scale from previous studies (Jambak Jamal) or α was 0.84 which is highly reliable.

3.2.2. Motivation

Motivation was assessed by “*A Questionnaire Measure of Individual Differences in Achieving Tendency*” (QMAT). It have 34-items scale developed by Mehrabian dan Bank (1978). The scale assessed the extent to which participants felt motivated by their leadership style were elicited on four-point scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The internal consistency of this scale from the previous study was $\alpha = 0.91$ (Mehrabian and Bank, 1978).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Means, standard deviations and t-test reliabilities for the measures used in this study are presented in Table 1. We used the percentage of items to measure the respondent perception on effective leadership style (see Table 2).

Table 1: Means, standard deviations and t-test on motivation

	Mean	SD	t
1. Leadership style	-1.03540	1.7966	-9.330
2. Gender	-0.46903	0.93609	-5.326
3. Position	-0.53097	1.02705	-5.496
4. Age	1.63717	1.24687	13.958

$p > 0.05$

4.1. Demographic factors, leadership style and Motivation

To examine whether employees motivated by demographic factors and leadership style, this study run paired t-test to conform the hypotheses. Table 1 presents the analysis using the paired t-test revealed that there was no significant difference between leadership style with motivation ($t = -9.330$; $p > 0.05$), gender with motivation ($t = -5.326$; $p > 0.05$) and position with motivation ($t = -5.496$; $p > 0.05$). However, there was a significant difference between age and motivation ($t = 13.958$; $p > 0.05$). Therefore, it can be concluded that subordinates in JAIS were not affected by leadership style on employees' motivation.

Table 2: Mean of perception on effective leadership style

	Leadership style	Mean
1.	Democratic	5.97
2.	Autocratic	5.80
3.	Laissez-faire	5.37

4.2. Perception of leadership style

Table 2 presents the means of perception on effective leadership style. The table indicates that democratic leadership and follow by autocratic leadership style were more likely preferred by employees ($M = 5.97$; $M = 5.80$), while laissez-faire leadership style was less likely ($M = 5.37$). This indicated that employees in JAIS prefer democratic leadership and autocratic leadership style as the effective style.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, each style has its place in an organization and can be used for different situations, tasks, and the maturity and level of professionalism of employees. It also identifies the different types of behaviors leaders can choose when motivating their followers. The results reveal that, the democratic leadership style was seen as a useful way for motivating employees. Present findings disclose that when employer used democratic or autocratic leadership style, subordinates reported increase in motivation, meanwhile laissez-faire leadership style reported less motivation. In general, the results regarding leadership style concur with earlier findings in the literature. Present findings support the assumption that democratic leadership style is more effective than laissez-faire leadership style.

This study has certain limitation. It considered only subordinates' perception about leadership style namely, democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire on employees' motivation. In conclusion these findings have implication for both researcher and practitioners. The rationale for this research topic includes adding to today's body of research on the impact between leadership styles (as perceived by employees in

management positions) and in motivating employees. These finding also have implications for positive work culture in organizations. Future research need to examine the link between subordinates' compliance with leadership power bases and organization's performance along with moderating effects of cultural factors.

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