LEADERSHIP STYLE OF CHAIRWOMEN AND LECTURERS’ MOTIVATIONAL LEVELS IN DRIVING THE SUSTAINABILITY OF NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF MALAYSIA AS A SMART CAMPUS UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study is to review lecturers’ perceptions on the leadership style of chairwomen and also its relationship with the motivational level of the lecturers in the National University of Malaysia (UKM). This descriptive quantitative study was carried out using the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) and a Questionnaire Measure of Individual Differences in Achieving Tendency (QMAT). This study involved 100 respondents from five departments in the National University of Malaysia (UKM). Analysis of the findings were obtained using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, ANOVA and Pearson correlation analysis of level ± = .05. Findings showed that the lecturers’ perceptions on the leadership style of the chairwomen in the National University of Malaysia (UKM) are quite satisfactory overall. Although the leadership style of the chairwomen based on the task-structure dimension is more dominant than the consideration dimension, both are found to be only at a moderate level. From the
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aspect of motivational level, findings showed that lecturers’ motivations towards their tasks are at a satisfactory level. The study also found that there was no significant difference towards the lecturers’ perceptions on the style of leadership of the chairwomen based on the demographic factors of the lecturers. Similarly, there was no significant difference shown on lecturers’ perceptions of the chairwomen’s motivational level based on the demographic factors of the chairwomen, except for the age factor. However, there is a significant relationship between the level of motivation for the chairwomen and the lecturers’ perceptions on the style of leadership of the chairwomen. This confirms that the higher the perception of the lecturers on the leadership style of the chairwomen, the higher the motivational level of the lecturers. This study supports the relevant findings and general assumptions that the leadership style of chairwomen does affect the motivational level of lecturers.

Key words: Leadership Style of Chairwomen; Motivational Level Of The Lecturers; Sustainability Of National University Of Malaysia

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1. INTRODUCTION

The scenario that exists in the profession of lecturers in Malaysia today is that the number of female lecturers has exceeded the number of male lecturers. Thus, the choice of a leader is not based only on gender, but should be based on criteria such as ability, seniority, experience and level of knowledge (Harvey & Donaldson 2003; Zaizul et al 2012). As heads of departments or centres, chairwomen often encounter dualism in their burden of duties; being the chairperson of their workplace and also carrying the task and responsibility of managing their household (Langer & Boris-Schacter 2003; Zaizul et al 2018). The ability to carry out leadership tasks at work may be underestimated by their subordinates, especially the male workers. This sense of doubt affects the trust and cooperation given. In addition to that, female leaders are also confronted with personal challenges, namely society’s expectation towards female leaders that always associate them with their caring nature (Langer & Boris-Schacter 2003).

However as leaders, chairwomen are also responsible for bringing changes to the centres they lead. The chairwomen must be brave in facing risks and have to take responsibility for the decisions they make (Collard 2001). In applying change, not everyone would agree and concede towards the changes being introduced. This is due to the diverse nature of human beings and their varying needs. This is clearly affirmed by Ibrahim (1993) that stated mankind is diverse in nature. Therefore, it is not easy for chairwomen to instruct their personnel or the staff under their leadership to perform the assigned tasks willingly and responsibly (Kochan, Spencer & Mathews 2000; Zaizul et al 2017).

Women are also often assumed to be experiencing obstacles, failing to resolve problems and are inefficient decision makers. Women are also deemed in need of additional assistance or less willing to make any decisions. Additionally, women are considered to be unjust, often misunderstood because it is said that they make decisions based on their emotion and sentiments. In a study by Baron (1987), he found several reasons why men refuse to accept women as leaders which are as follows: (1) women are less confident, (2) women have less
influence or power, (3) women have poor management skills and (4) women are sometimes too insistent.

The excellence of an organization is related to job satisfaction and motivational level of the employees. Employees obtain satisfaction when their needs are met and employers derive their satisfaction when their employees are able to achieve a high level of productivity. The success of a university depends largely on how the centers’ chairpersons can adopt an authoritative leadership style. Competent leadership includes possessing an extensive knowledge in the aspect of center management. These include office management, curriculum management, staff development, motivation for lecturers, students and office personnel, interrelation with other centers and efforts to improve the centers’ performance (Zaizul et al 2017).

This shows that the issue of leadership is a major concern in determining the success and excellence of the future generation. In the context of a chairperson of a center in Malaysia, every chairperson should have the ability to interpret change and implement a certain leadership style in motivating employees towards the change required.

Recognizing the challenges faced by female leaders, the researcher studies what level of leadership style can female leaders offer in their workplace situations. According to Hersey and Blanchard (1977) and Zaizul (2017), the situation of a place and its challenges affect leadership style and priorities that are set by the leader. The leadership style of a center’s chairperson is very important in determining the success of that center. Staff’s cooperation will be obtained if the chairperson of the center adopts appropriate leadership styles and can boost the motivation of the staff in performing their duties. The researcher will identify the extent to which the leadership style of several chairwomen that exercise task-structure dimension and consideration dimension can influence the motivation of the lecturers at several schools in the National University of Malaysia (UKM). In particular, this study aims to:

1. Identify the perceptions of lecturers on the leadership style of the chairwomen of centers at several faculties in UKM.
2. To identify the relationship between the motivational level of lecturers and their perception on the leadership style of the centers’ chairwomen.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The type of this study is a descriptive quantitative study. It is carried out by conducting a survey, which involves exploring the perceptions of lecturers on the leadership styles of chairwomen in several schools in the National University of Malaysia (UKM). A questionnaire is selected as the method to collect data from respondents. Respondents’ selection is based on simple random sampling so that each lecturer has equal opportunity to be involved in the study. The study is conducted in several schools in the National University of Malaysia (UKM). The questionnaire in this study consists of two parts. Part A is a questionnaire consisting of 45 items that measures the leadership style of the chairwomen. In this study, the researcher uses the The Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) instrument established by Ohio University (Halpin 1966). The items for the task-structure dimension are from questions 1 to 31. The items for the consideration dimension are questions 32 to 45. For Section B, the questionnaire used is derived from A Questionnaire Measure of Individual Differences in Achieving Tendency (QMAT) by Mehrabian and Bank (1978 ) to measure the motivational levels of the lecturers. This section contains 34 items related to a person’s motivation for achievement. A total of 18 items were positive statements and 16 were negative statements. Each item has five options of answers that states the degree
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of agreement in five point scales. The scale positions are 1 (Never), 2 (Sometimes), 3 (Frequently), 4 (Always) and 5 (Very Often). For negative items, they are re-encoded into positive form and scoring such as 1 (Very Often), 2 (Always), 3 (Frequently), 4 (Sometimes) and 5 (Never). To ensure that the questionnaire items are reliable and valid, the researcher has conducted a pilot study at the Department of History, National University of Malaysia (UKM). The researcher has set the Alpha Cronbach's value at 0.60 because according to Majid (1990) and Ahmad Sunawari et al (2017), the validity coefficient that is commonly used should be greater than 0.60. A total of 30 respondents were randomly selected from the department. The results of the pilot study showed that the value of the validity for the task-structure dimension is 0.86, while the value for the consideration dimension is 0.76. These values are considered good. The Alpha Cronbach validity value for lecturers’ motivation is 0.66. According to Mohd. Majid Konting (1990) and Ahmad Sunawari et al (2017), this value is low but it is sufficient because it exceeds 0.60. The study population consists of lecturers serving at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). According to the sampling table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), for a population of 300, the sample size that is required is 100. A total of 40 lecturers were randomly selected from each department that led to a total sampling of 160 people. The number of samples exceeded the sample size limit recommended by Krejcie and Morgan. However, only 90 lecturers returned the questionnaire form.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Perceptions of Lecturers on the Leadership Style of Chairwomen of Centers

To describe the lecturers’ overall level of perception on the leadership style of chairwomen of centers for task-structure and consideration, as well as the motivational level of lecturers, the total of mean is calculated and divided by the number of items to produce the overall mean. The mean interpretation that is used is shown in Table 1.

Overall, the mean score of the leadership style scale for the centers chairwomen was quite satisfactory, in which the mean = 2.85 (SD = .57). The mean for the task-structure dimension is mean = 2.97 (SD = .62), while for the consideration dimension, mean = 2.60 (SD = .62) (see Table 1). Although the mean difference shown is small, this shows that the leadership style of the chairwomen based on the task-structure is more dominant according to the perception of the lecturers. Both dimensions of leadership style of chairwomen are at a moderate level only. This shows that the leadership style of chairwomen for both dimensions needs to be improved.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Unsatisfactory</td>
<td>1.00 – 2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Moderately satisfactory</td>
<td>2.01 – 3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Satisfactory</td>
<td>3.01 – 4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Very satisfactory</td>
<td>4.01 - 5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Leadership Style of the Centers’ Chairwomen Based on Task-Structure Dimension

The task-structure dimension is the first dimension in the leadership style of some centers’ chairwomen. The findings of the study revealed that the leadership style of the chairwomen based on this dimension was at a moderate level with mean = 2.97 (SD = .62). The female
leadership style on this dimension is measured based on the perceptions of lecturers-respondents on the way chairwomen structure and define their rules and the rules of their employees towards achieving their goals.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation of lecturers’ perceptions on the leadership style of the centers’ chairwomen.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Dimensions of the Centers’ Chairwomen</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Structure Dimension</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Consideration Dimension</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the analysis of items show that lecturers are more likely to see centers’ chairwomen implementing structures related to the disciplinary monitoring of lecturers, but not necessarily on other official duties, particularly in areas of teaching, conducting research, service and administrative lecturers. The task-structure items are "She asks all employees to follow all specified rules and working conditions" with mean = 3.58 (SD = .88), "She explains what the lecturers expected" with mean = 3.40 (SD =1.03), "She decides all lecturers to carry out their duties fully" with mean = 3.36 (SD = 1.00) and "She ensures that the presence of the daily lecturers are optimal" with mean = 3.36 (SD = 1.06).

Table 3 Mean and standard deviation of task-structure in the leadership style of the centers’ chairwomen based on the perceptions of lecturers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Task-structure in the Leadership of the Centers’ Chairwomen Based on the Perceptions of Lecturers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>She asks all employees to follow all specified rules and working conditions</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>She explains what the lecturers expected</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>She instructs all lecturers to carry out their duties fully</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>She ensures the lecturers log in their attendance in the Ewarga UKM system daily</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>She monitors the tutorial activities</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>She monitors the lecturing activities</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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This suggests that lecturers have a perception that chairwomen emphasize on the discipline of lecturers. Structure items such as "She monitors the tutorial activities" mean = 2.25 (SD = 1.17), "She monitors the lecturing activities" with mean = 2.28 (SD = 1.52) proved that the lecturers perceive that the chairwomen at least conducted monitoring at the study centers. Overall, the mean and standard deviation for the task-structure dimension are listed in Table 4.

3.3. Leadership Style of the Centers’ Chairwomen Based on Consideration Dimension

The consideration dimension is the second dimension in the leadership style for the chairwomen of centers. The findings of the study show that the chairwomen’s leadership style based on this dimension as a whole is also quite satisfactory with mean = 2.59 (SD = .62). The style of leadership of female heads in this dimension is measured based on the perceptions of teachers-respondents on the way the chairwomen display friendship, mutual respect, mutual trust and a cordial relationship between the leaders and their employees.

Based on Table 4, the consideration items in the leadership style of chairwomen based on the perceptions of the lecturers are "She is approachable and friendly with all lecturers" mean = 2.92 (SD = 1.06), "She is ready to make changes if necessary" mean 2.80 (SD = 1.30) and "She is responsible for the actions of all lecturers" mean = 2.76 (SD = 1.33). This suggests that lecturers are of the opinion that the department heads are concerned about their staff, friendly and ready to make changes.

Other items such as "She requests the consent of the lecturers before proceeding with important things" mean = 2.38 (SD = .86), "She socializes less with the lecturers" with mean = 2.39 (SD = 1.13), and "She refuses to explain all her actions" with mean = 2.40 (SD = 1.12) indicate that the lecturers perceive that chairwomen of the centers are less involved in the decision-making process and exclude the involvement of lecturers in important matters. The mean score of these items clearly indicates that although the centers’ chairwomen are friendly, responsible and willing to change, they are seen to be less likely to include the lecturers in discussions about decisions they need to take or have taken. It is obvious here that the leadership style of chairwomen for consideration dimension leans more to friendliness and cordiality but not necessarily towards involvement of the staff.

Table 4 Mean and standard deviation of consideration in the leadership style of centers’ chairwomen based on the perception of lecturers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Consideration in the leadership style of centers’ chairwomen based on the perception of lecturers</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. She is approachable and friendly with all lecturers.</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. She is ready to make changes if necessary.</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. She is responsible for the actions of all lecturers.</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. She requests the consent of the lecturers before proceeding with important things.</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. She socializes less with the lecturers.</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. She refuses to explain all her actions.</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Score</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4. Lecturers’ Perceptions on the Motivational Level of the Centers’ Chairwomen

The results show that the overall mean score for the level of motivation of the lecturers was satisfactory with mean = 2.90 (SD = .41). The overall achievement of the overall mean score is also only satisfactory. However, the analysis of items show that the perception of the motivational level of lecturers is actually unequal on certain aspects. The following items show the high motivational level of lecturers. These items have been re-encoded in the positive form thus bringing the meaning of lecturers’ motivation to a very satisfactory level. The items are "I work because I have to” with mean = 1.49 (SD = .96), "Learning new skills do not interest me” with mean = 1.73 (SD = 1.17) and "I only work hard as required by the center chairperson” with mean = 1.84 (SD = 1.51). This mean score indicates that lecturers disagree with this statement. These means that lecturers work not because they are forced to. They are also interested in learning new skills and are willing to work hard with sincerity even without the instructions from the center’s chairperson. Apart from that, the following items such as "I believe if I work hard, I will achieve my life’s goal” with mean = 3.96 (SD = .74), "I’m optimistic about my work as a lecturer” with mean = 3.94 (SD = 1.01) , "I am satisfied if I can complete important work that requires extra effort” with mean = 3.91 (SD = .82) clearly indicate the high motivational level of a lecturer.

The analysis of other items such as "I can perform well if there is competition” with mean = 2.99 (SD = 1.18), "I like working under my current department head” with mean = 2.93 (SD = 1.11), “I prefer to do a work that is easy and one that I am confident with rather than doing a hard work” with mean = 2.91 (SD = 1.15) and "I cannot work well under pressure” with mean = 2.84 (SD = 1.02) explain the simplicity of self-perceptions when dealing with risky situations. Generally, the average of means in these items indicates that although the motivational level of lecturers is generally positive, they lack confidence in facing challenges and risky situations influence the lecturers' motivation.

4. DISCUSSION

Perceptions on the leadership of the chairpersons in the National University of Malaysia’s (UKM) departments were found to be satisfactory and leaning more towards the orientation of task-structure rather than consideration. However, some other scientific studies have also obtained similar findings on chairwomen (Gan Pei Ling, 2003; Jaffary Awang et al 2017). Hence, the assumption that there is a difference of style in female leadership may not be accurate. Apart from that, the results of the study show that most lecturers perceive that chairpersons of centers are more concerned with disciplinary supervision of lecturers than conducting educational leadership, research, article writing and community service activities that must be given attention. The leadership style of chairpersons of centers who often controls rather than providing professional guidance has been defined by Jones and Webber (2001) and Zaizul et al (2018) as a level of leadership of the 'survival' level, and not at the level of educational leadership. According to them, one of the features of leadership at the 'survival' level is the use of autocratic leadership style that does not involve or include lecturers in the decision-making process.

In addition to that, findings have shown that the correlation of lecturers' perception on motivational level with their perceptions of the leadership style of chairwomen is significant, but weak. Primarily, their perceptions of their own level of motivation are also quite satisfactory. The conclusion that can be made is that female leadership factor is just one of several other factors that influence lecturers’ motivational level. Other future studies need to be carried out to identify other factors. Even though studies by Hussine (1998), Kamal Ariffin
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(2003) Khadijah (1999), Abd Latiff (2003), Mutsalim Khareng et al (2014), Zaizul et al (2017, 2018) found that lecturers’ motivation has significant relationship with leadership, their study did not take into account the leader’s gender factor. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that there was no significant difference towards the lecturers’ perceptions on the style of leadership of the chairwomen based on the demographic factors of the lecturers. This shows that although the demographics were different, the lecturers’ perceptions of the leadership style of the centers’ chairwomen are the same. The information obtained from this study is very useful and valuable to the chairpersons of centers, especially chairwomen.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This study has identified the perceptions of lecturers in various departments in the National University of Malaysia (UKM) on the leadership style of chairwomen, their level of motivation and the relationship between perceptions of female leadership style and the motivation of lecturers. The findings confirm that female leadership is satisfactory and leaning more towards the style to task-structure, and this leadership style has a significant correlation, but weak with the lecturers’ motivational level. Other scientific studies are needed to verify the findings of this study at a wider population level.

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