

Transformational Leadership and Its Predictive Effects on Leadership Effectiveness

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Abstract

Academic departments play an important role in the success of institutions of higher education and success of departments directly depends on effectiveness of their head. This study is an attempt to determine heads of academic departments' leadership styles and its relationship with leadership effectiveness at Malaysian Research Universities (RUs). Using Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire 5x (MLQ), the study employed 298 lecturers of three Malaysian RUs. Results indicated that lecturers perceived the heads of departments exhibited combination of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. The result of regression analysis demonstrated that contingent reward, idealized influence (attribute), inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, laissez-faire, intellectual stimulation, and management-by-exception active are significant predictors of leadership effectiveness. These factors accounted for 82% of the variance in leadership effectiveness. In addition, the results suggest that contingent reward has important effects on leadership effectiveness. The implications of the research findings are discussed.

Key words: transformational leadership, leadership effectiveness, higher education, head of academic department

1. Introduction

World is changing more quickly than whatever we can imagine. Malaysia as a developing country is faced with different challenges of changing world. To be confronted with challenges of 21st century the Malaysian government has set out an ambitious vision for the country, namely vision 2020, which based on that, the country should be a fully developed nation by 2020. One of the sectors that has strategic role to materialize this vision is higher education (National Higher Education Action Plan, 2007). Transforming Malaysia to an international center of higher education excellence is the most important mission of higher education (Malaysia Ministry of Education, 2008; National Higher Education Action Plan, 2007). To facilitate process of transformation and achieve its goals, Ministry of Higher Education has selected four public universities as Research University. They have been selected to be at the forefront of quality research and teaching (National Higher Education Action Plan, 2007). To materialize the mission of higher education, university administrators have key role, to be dealt with challenges they must adopt effective leadership styles to direct their organizations effectively. University administrators are key decision makers, and their quality of decision will result in obtaining the organizational objectives successfully (Verma, 2000).

Academic departments play an important role in the success of institutions of higher education. They are established to develop, preserve and transmit knowledge. It is believed that the success of each higher education institution is measured by the success of its departments (Coats, 2000). Heads of departments are the first line leaders who directly influence the quality of their departments (Bowman, 2002; Williams, 2001).

The heads of departments' duties comprise a wide spectrum of tasks, these may include managing the department finances, implementing departmental bylaws and rules to duties such as curricular changes, conducting lecturers evaluation, promotion and tenure processes, employing new lecturers and staff, maintaining proper records about lecturers, staff, and students, administrating and supervising scholarship and assistantship support for students, supervising grants and agreements, and finally organizing department's general activities such as faculty meetings and social events (Thomas & Schuh, 2004). Moreover, heads of departments have to play the important role of facilitating the process of change in their departments (McArthur, 2002). Concentrating on this role, heads of departments in Malaysian RUs can act as effective agents of transforming Malaysian higher education institutions to world class institutions.

Research and literature about top level of management in higher education is relatively abundant, however, despite importance of head of department's position in institutions of higher education, there have been a small number of studies addressing the attributes of successful department head (Coats, 2000, Williams, 2001). Consequently, there is a knowledge gap related to the position of heads of departments particularly their leadership role in the literature, which suggests that the subject should be considered more closely by researchers. Leadership is the important factor that has ability to manage change in organizations (Sarros & Santora, 2001); it is one of the most important needs for success of each organization (Murphy & Ensher, 2008). Leadership can be defined as "the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to achieve organizational goals" (DuBrin, 2007, p.2). Leaders can direct human resources toward the strategic objectives of the organization and ensure that organizational functions are in line with the external environment (Zaccaro & Klimoski, 2001). Furthermore, predicting the future probabilities and planning choice strategies to satisfy uncertainties are capabilities of effective leaders (Riaz & Haider, 2010). They can lead organizations to success by paying more attention to environmental changes, which in turn helps them set proper goals and objectives.

One of the most important elements of leadership that contributes to leadership effectiveness is the style of the leader. A leadership style is the behavior a leader exhibits while guiding organizational members in appropriate directions (Certo & Certo, 2006). Leaders improve their style over a period of time due to experience, education, and training. For many years, researchers have tried to explain how leaders' style or behavior relates to effectiveness (Dessler, 2004). Transformational leadership has been demonstrated as an effective leadership style in leading organization (Felfe & Schyns, 2004), it has great effects on subordinates' behavior and organizational outcomes (Tickle et al, 2005; Bommer et al, 2004). The main purpose of this research is to investigate that a combination of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership dimensions has more predictive effect on perceived leadership effectiveness than each leadership style alone.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Transformational Leadership

By combining trait, behavioral, and contingency approaches of leadership, one of the new integrative leadership theories, namely transformational leadership was developed (Abu Daud Silong, 2009; Lussier & Achua, 2007). The concepts of transformational and transactional leadership are among the most popular and current approaches to understanding leader effectiveness. It was developed in 1978 by Burns (Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008). Bass (1985) built new version of transformational leadership on Burn's work and then Bass and Avolio (1994, 1997) proposed full-range theory of leadership consists of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire (Antonakis & Atwater, 2002).

Transformational leaders encourage follower to do more than required (Sosik et al, 2002), are proactive and help followers to attain unexpected goals (Antonakis et al, 2003), they move followers beyond immediate self interest (Bass, 1999). The transformational leaders engage in a particular set of behaviors. They are models of integrity and fairness, set clear goals, have high expectations, provide support and recognition, stir the emotions and passions of people, and get people to look beyond their self-interest to reach for the improbable (Pierce & Newstorm, 2008; Bass, 1985). Transformational leadership focuses on social values and appears in times of distress and change (Bass, 1985). This type of leadership is an important antecedent to construct the collective confidence or strength required by groups to be successful when facing with difficult challenges (Bass et al, 2003).

Transformational leaders can create significant organizational change and act as change agents, foster higher level of intrinsic motivation, and loyalty among followers, introduce a new image or view of the future and create a commitment to this image among followers (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2008; Noorshahi & Yamani Dozi Sarkhabi, 2008). Transformational leadership is comprised of five dimensions which are idealized influence (attribute and behavior), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

Idealized influence describes the degree in which leaders are perceived as an inspiring role model (Moss & Ritossa, 2007). These leaders are admired, respected, and trusted; followers identify and pursue their leaders (Bass et al, 2003). Idealized influence consists of two forms; *idealized influence attribute* in which leaders receive trust plus respect, and *idealized influence behavior* in which leaders exhibit excellent behavior and might sacrifice their own needs to improve the objectives of their workgroup (Moss & Ritossa, 2007). *Inspirational motivation* describes the degree in which the leader states a vision that is attractive and encouraging to followers (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Leaders strengthen followers by viewing the future by optimism (Antonakis et al, 2003), and act in ways that motivate those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers' work (Bass et al, 2003). *Intellectual stimulation* explains the degree in which the leaders stimulate their followers' endeavors to be innovative and creative (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008), and consider old organizational problems with a new perspective (Moss & Ritossa, 2007). *Individualized consideration* refers to the degree in which leaders providing support, encouragement, and coaching to followers (Yukl, 2006). The leaders listen carefully to individual needs of followers and may delegate certain responsibilities to help followers grow through personal challenges (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bass et al, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Northouse, 2007).

2.2 Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership is the second part of transformational leadership theory. Transactional leadership concentrates on the exchanges that occur between leaders and their followers (Northouse, 2007), in which helps follower to fulfill their own self-interests (Bass, 1999). Transactional leaders clarify followers' responsibilities, their performance objectives, and their tasks that must be completed (Eptropaki & Martin, 2005). This type of leadership deals with maintaining the current situation and motivating people through contractual agreement (Bass, 1985; Jung et al, 2008). Transactional leaders direct followers to achieve established goals by explaining role and task requirements (Armandi et al, 2003). This leadership style tends to emphasize extrinsic rewards, such as monetary incentives and promotion (Jung et al, 2008). Transactional leaders prefer to avoid risk, and focus on efficiency (Levy et al, 2002). It can be concluded that transactional leaders help the followers to identify what must be done to accomplish the described results such as better quality output, more services, and reduce cost of production. Transactional leadership is comprised of three dimensions which are contingent reward, management-by-exception active, and management-by-exception passive.

Contingent reward describes the degree in which the leader determines rewards in exchange with followers' efforts to satisfy organizational goals. It includes clarification of the work required to obtain rewards and the use of incentives to influence motivation. Leaders must clarify the expectations and present recognition when goals are accomplished (Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008; Yukl, 2006). *Management-by-exception active* explains the degree in which a leader watches followers closely for mistakes or role violations (Northouse, 2007). Active leaders check follower behavior, predict problems, and take corrective actions before the behavior makes severe difficulties (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). *Management-by-exception passive* leaders wait for deviances, mistakes, and errors to happen and then take corrective action (Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1994). They do not actively seek out deviations from desired performance and only take corrective action when problems occur (Pounder, 2001). This type of leader avoids describing agreements, explaining expectations and standards to be achieved by subordinates, but will intervene after particular problems become apparent.

2.3 Laissez-faire Leadership

Laissez-faire leadership represents a type of behavior in which leaders display a passive indifference towards their followers (Moss & Ritossa, 2007). Laissez-faire leaders incline to move out from the leadership role and offer little direction or support to followers (Kirkbride, 2006), they avoid making decision, give up responsibilities, and are indifferent to the needs of their followers. It is believed that laissez-faire is the passive avoidant and ineffective type leadership theory.

Leadership and organizational effectiveness are advantages of transformational leadership in comparison with transactional leadership.

Several experts believe that transformational leadership produces greater effects than transactional leadership (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Dvir et al, 2002; Erkutlu, 2008; Northouse, 2007; Waldman et al, 2001). Although applying transactional leadership results in expected outcomes, transformational leadership results in performance that goes beyond expectation and leads organizations to triumph (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Erkutlu, 2008; Limsila & Ogunlana, 2008). Leaders who display transformational leadership behavior can direct their organization toward effectiveness and productivity.

An important issue which has been discussed is the better results of applying a combination of transformational and transactional leadership. The newer paradigm adds transformational leadership to previous transactional leadership model (Avolio & Bass, 2004), a combination of both leadership styles produces greater outcomes (Yukl, 2006). Bass and Avolio during their studies have found augmenting effects of transformational leadership on transactional leadership, they believe that transformational leadership is not a substitute of transactional leadership rather it “augments transactional leadership in achieving the goals of the leaders, associate, group and organization” (Avolio & Bass, 2004, p. 21).

2.4 Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership effectiveness is crucial to success in any organization. It closely depends on outcomes and consequences of the leaders’ activities for followers and organization (Yukl, 2006). The extent to which the organization achieves its goals and performs its task is the most commonly measures of leadership effectiveness (Erkutlu, 2008). Effective leaders are capable to fully engage followers in the organizational strategies. Appropriate leadership style is an important factor influences effectiveness of the leaders (Hur et al, 2011; Hogg et al, 2005; Bruno & Lay, 2006). Leaders to be effective require good relationships with their followers because these relationships should enhance followers’ well-being and work performance. These relationships also may connect the followers to the group more tightly through loyalty, gratefulness, and a sense of inclusion (Hogg et al, 2005). Transformational leaders because of their close relationship with followers should be more effective than other leaders.

Leaders with transformational leadership behavior can direct their organization toward effectiveness and productivity. Motivating followers toward extra effort, increasing followers’ job satisfaction, improving their performance beyond expectation and cultivating creativity and innovation in organization are some of the consequences of transformational leadership (Zaidatol Akmaliah et al, 2011). Moreover, it has positive effects on leader effectiveness and performance (Hur et al, 2011; Burke et al, 2006; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). The outcomes that are obtained by transformational leadership are greater than what transactional leadership does.

2.5 Research on Leadership Effectiveness

Research findings in different context have indicated statistical significant relationship between leadership effectiveness and different dimensions of transformational leadership as well as transactional contingent reward and management-by-exception (Lowe et al, 1996; Bass & Yammarino 1991; Kirby et al, 1991).

Erkutlu’s (2008) findings revealed that all dimensions of transformational leadership were positively correlated with leadership effectiveness while, laissez-faire leadership was found to be negatively correlated. Webb (2003) indicated that combination of idealize influence attribute, individualized consideration, and transactional contingent reward were significant predictors of perceived presidential leadership effectiveness at Evangelical colleges and universities rather than transformational or transactional leadership alone. Laissez-faire leadership was negatively correlated with leadership effectiveness. Masson (1998) found that transformational leadership as well as a combination of idealize influence attribute, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management-by-exception active, and laissez-faire have equal predictive effect on perceived presidential leadership effectiveness at American community colleges. Both set of predictors were statistically significant.

Most of previous research on leadership have been conducted in Western countries, very few research have focused on developing countries such as Malaysia (Lo et al, 2010), and particularly on institutions of higher education (Voon et al, 2010). Considering new position of some Malaysian public universities as Research University, there is knowledge gap in terms of administrators’ leadership styles at these universities. Hence, this study intends to investigate heads of academic departments’ leadership styles and its predictive effect on leadership effectiveness. To achieve its purpose, the study tries to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the Research Universities heads of departments' leadership styles as perceived by lecturers?
- 2- What combination of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles are predictors of leader effectiveness?

3. Methodology

3.1 Design and Sample

This study utilized a descriptive correlational research design. The population consisted of all permanent lecturers of three Malaysian RUs. In order to determine sample size G-power statistical software was utilized. Using stratified random sampling, a sample of 400 lecturers from target universities were selected as participants of the study. Among distributed questionnaires, 320 were returned, 298 of which were useful for statistical analysis that demonstrates a response rate of 74.5%.

3.2 Instrument

To measure Heads of academic departments' leadership styles and their leadership effectiveness as perceived by lecturers, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) form 5x was utilized. The MLQ was designed and developed by Bass and Avolio (1995, 2004). This instrument is commonly employed for organizational surveys. It has been designed based on a five-point type scale which can be utilized for rating the frequency of leader behaviors. The rating scale for leadership items includes: Not at all (0), Once in a while (1), Sometimes (2), Fairly often (3), and Frequently, if not always (4).

The MLQ includes 45 items; 36 items represent the nine leadership factors, five factors for transformational, three factors for transactional, and one factor for laissez-faire leadership. Each factor consists of four items. Nine items assess three leadership outcome scales that are effectiveness (4 items), extra effort (3 items), and satisfaction (2 items). In order to determine the mean score of each factor (dimension), the values of the scale for the items were calculated which were then divided by four.

The MLQ is a well-established instrument. It has been used in a variety of setting and broad range of sample population such as, industry, military, primary and secondary schools, marketing, and higher education organizations in different countries (Lowe et al, 1996; Antonaks et al, 2003; Avolio & Bass, 2004; Erkutlu, 2008). Over the past twenty years MLQ has been revised several times by scholars (Antonakis et al, 2003; Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bass et al, 2003; Judge & Piccolo, 2004). In the current study the validity of MLQ was approved by eight experienced and knowledgeable academic staff. Prior to data collection in order to check internal consistency of questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted. The Cronbach's alpha value ranged from .67 to .94 (Table 1), was obtained which is acceptable (Hair et al, 1998). The result showed that the instrument is reliable.

3.3 Data Analysis

Based on minimum and maximum scores of transformational and transactional dimensions, as well as laissez-faire and leadership effectiveness the possible score for each dimension was calculated and categorized. To scrutinize predictors of leadership effectiveness, a stepwise multiple regression was run.

4. Findings and Discussion

The results revealed that the lecturers perceived their heads of departments fairly often display transformational and sometimes exhibit transactional leadership behavior. Nevertheless, the lecturers perceived heads of departments once in a while display laissez-faire leadership (Table 1). The findings of the study for transformational and transactional leadership styles are in line with MLQ norm (Avolio & Bass, 2004), except laissez-faire leadership which, according to respondents' perception, was exhibited by heads of departments more than the norm. Based on MLQ norm, the perfect range for transformational leadership is 'fairly often', for transactional leadership is 'sometimes', and for laissez-faire leadership is 'not at all'. Leaders who receive mean scores in these ranges are more successful in achieving the best outcomes. However, the RUs heads of departments in terms of laissez-faire leadership did not meet the criterion.

The results demonstrated that among the dimensions of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation received the highest mean score ($M=2.73$) and was rated as 'fairly often' which is consistent with MLQ norm. Utilizing inspirational motivation behavior, leaders inspire their followers by preparing challenges and meaning for followers' work (Avolio et al, 2004; Bass, 1999; Jung et al, 2008). It means RU heads of departments motivate lecturers, encourage them to accomplish their responsibilities, and imagine the future of departments by optimism.

This behavior is the prominent behavior of heads of departments. Idealized influence behavior received the second highest mean score ($M=2.61$), with a frequency of 'fairly often' which is consistent with MLQ norm. Idealized influence behavior leader focuses on worth and sense of mission (Antonakis et al, 2003). This revealed that the heads of departments are leaders who fairly often talk about important values in organization and focus on attractive and worthwhile visions and the ethical aspects of their activities as values are very important for them (Zaidatol Akmaliah et al, 2011). Idealized influence attribute was the third dimension with a mean score of 2.55, that falls in the 'fairly often' range which is in line with MLQ norm. Exhibiting idealized influence attribute helps leaders to be confident and powerful and focus on higher order ideals and ethics (Antonakis et al, 2003). It could be concluded that heads of departments acted as confident and powerful leaders in their departments and tried to make lecturers feel confident.

In this study among the dimensions of transformational leadership, inspirational motivation and idealized influence (attribute and behavior) received the highest mean scores. These dimensions represent the charismatic aspect of transformational leadership (Bass & Avilio, 1994). It implies that heads of departments in Malaysian RUs motivate lecturers and act as role models. Based on the socio-cultural characteristics of developing countries, charismatic leadership has emerged as the most important and suitable method of leading for organizational leaders (Tuomo, 2006). Moreover, organizational change is the critical means of development (Tuomo, 2006). Malaysian RUs, in their endeavor to transform the country's higher education situation to world class and to become excellent centers of education, are confronting with enormous change. Charismatic leadership is an effective leadership style that can satisfy the requirements of effective change and charismatic leaders are able to mobilize their organization in the face of difficult challenges (Conger et al, 2000). As mentioned earlier, charismatic leadership as a part of transformational leadership was fairly often exhibited by RUs heads of departments which implies their leadership style can meet the requirements of RUs in the face of challenges. Although, heads of departments exhibited characteristics of effective leaders, however, they did not display these characteristics at optimum levels. According to Bass and Avolio (2003), the optimum rating for transformational leadership is more than 3; therefore, heads of departments leadership just can be categorized at medium level of effective transformational leaders. The findings of this study supported previous research (Zaidatol Akmaliah et al, 2004; Voon et al, 2011; Lo et al, 2009). They found that inspirational motivation and idealized influence are dimensions of transformational leadership which received the highest mean scores.

Among the dimensions of transformational leadership, intellectual stimulation ($M=2.37$) and individualized consideration ($M=2.34$) received the lowest mean scores, which indicates a low frequency range, 'sometimes', that is inconsistent with MLQ norm. The expected range for intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration is 'fairly often'. Regarding intellectual stimulation, as the results displayed, 50% of the respondents stated their head of department 'seeks differing perspectives when solving problems' less than sometimes; 52.4% stated (s)he 'gets them to look at problems from many different angles' less than sometimes; and 53.1% stated (s)he 'suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments' less than sometimes. With regard to individual consideration, the results showed 58.8% of participants stated their head of department 'spends time teaching and coaching' less than sometimes and 54.3% of the lecturers stated (s)he 'considers them as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others' which indicate less than sometimes (Table 2). Exhibiting intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration less than norm might be indicator of heads of departments' insufficient knowledge regarding these dimensions of transformational leadership.

Displaying intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration behaviors, leaders can motivate followers to be creative and innovative and think about old organizational problems with a new perspective. Delegating authority to the followers and satisfying their needs are important for these leaders, moreover, they are continuously involved in the process of coaching (Zaidatol Akmaliah et al, 2011; Northouse, 2007; Reuvers et al, 2008). In this study, the heads of departments sometimes exhibited these leadership behaviors. These findings supported previous research (Zaidatol Akmaliah et al, 2004; Voon et al, 2011; Lo et al, 2009) conducted in different discipline in Malaysia. These studies found that intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration, as the dimensions of transformational leadership, received the lowest mean scores respectively. In all of aforementioned research, inspirational motivation received the highest mean scores which are similar to the findings of the present research. As it can be seen in different Malaysian disciplines, with respect to transformational leadership, researchers achieved similar findings.

It can be concluded that based on research findings in Malaysia's context utilization level of intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration needs improvement. The results demonstrated that amongst the dimensions of transactional leadership, contingent reward received the highest mean score (2.54) and was 'fairly often' exhibited by the heads of departments. It means that it meets MLQ criterion. Contingent reward leaders explain expectations and present recognition when goals are accomplished (Bass et al, 2003). They obtain essential resources, fulfill material and mental needs of subordinates, and present rewards on the gratification of contractual obligation as well as certain tasks (Antonakis et al, 2003; Nguni et al, 2006). It implies that the heads of departments fairly often recognize lecturers' needs and try to fulfill these needs by preparing different reward; moreover, they offer rewards to compensate lecturers' good performance based on mutual contract.

Active management-by-exception (M=2.2) was the second transactional leadership behavior which was only 'sometimes' displayed by the heads of departments. It was consistent with MLQ norm. Active management-by-exception leaders concentrate on standards, directly monitor subordinates' behavior and performance, and actively keep track of all mistakes (Antonakis et al, 2003; Nguni et al, 2006). This implies that the RUs heads of departments tend to determine standards for compliance, check lecturers' activities and focus on the aspects of their work which do not conform to standards. When they find deviations from standard, they utilize corrective action and negative feedback to correct real situation.

Passive management-by-exception (M=1.33) was the third transactional behavior that was exhibited only 'once in a while' by the heads of departments. It was consistent with MLQ norm. Passive management-by-exception leaders wait for mistakes and problems to occur before taking action (Bass et al, 2003), and intervene just when the standards have not been met (Northouse, 2007). This finding suggests that heads of departments do not intervene in lecturers' activity as far as their (lecturers') work matches with the standards. Only when the lecturers make mistakes or deviations from the standards, the heads of departments will intervene. Regarding transactional leadership dimensions, the findings are consistent with MLQ norms and meet its criteria. Nevertheless, management by-exception active (M=2.2) earned means score more than what leaders received in MLQ norms (M=1.67). This implies in Malaysian RUs mean scores for directive aspects of transactional leadership are more than the norms. It means RUs heads of departments are more directive than the leaders mentioned in MLQ norm. The mean score of laissez-faire leadership (M=1.14) indicated lecturers perceived that their heads of departments exhibited this type of behavior 'once in a while'. This finding is not consistent with MLQ norm and implies heads of departments display this leadership style more frequently than the norm. Based on MLQ norm, the mean score for laissez-faire leadership should not exceed .65.

A review of the items of this construct displays 37.2% of the respondents perceived their heads of departments more than sometimes 'avoid getting involved when important issues arise', 33.8% 'avoid making decision' and 35.9% 'delay responding to urgent questions' (Table 3). These percentages reveal that the RUs heads of departments exhibit laissez-faire leadership behaviors more than what is necessary for effective leaders. Considering mean score of laissez-faire leadership, It implies that when heads of departments apply this leadership style, they make little contact with lecturers, avoid getting involved when important matters rise in department, avoid making decisions, and delay responding to lecturers' question. To be more effective leaders, they should reduce the frequency of laissez-faire leadership behaviors to less than 'once in a while'. The possible explanation for employing laissez-faire leadership more than the norm by the RUs heads of departments can be their insufficient knowledge regarding this leadership style. If they get appropriate knowledge and understanding, they will utilize this type of leadership according to the norm. The finding of this study regarding laissez-faire leadership style more or less supported Voon et al (2010) who found that laissez-faire leadership received a mean score of more than the average. The finding of this study is not consistent with Toor and Ofori's (2009), using MLQ, they found a mean score of .68 for laissez-faire which is very close to MLQ norm.

In general, findings revealed that heads of departments utilized a combination of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles with different frequencies. In comparison with other studies, the findings of this research are consistent with Bass and Avolio (2004), Chen and Baron (2006), Rukmani et al (2010), Sung (2007), Grosso (2008), Erkutlu (2008), and Brown and Keeping (2005). In their studies they found that leaders exhibited combination of transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. Transformational and transactional leadership styles have complementary effects on each other and increase leadership effectiveness (Felfe & Schyns, 2004; Bass & Avolio, 1994).

As Yukl (2006) stated, “transformational leadership increases follower motivation and performance more than transactional leadership, but effective leaders use a combination of both types of leadership” (p.262). With regard to the leadership effectiveness, the RUs’ lecturers perceived their heads of departments ‘fairly often’ demonstrated behaviors of effective leaders which -in terms of rating- is consistent with MLQ norm. But, by comparing the value of mean score for leadership effectiveness in current study ($M=2.58$) with that of leaders in MLQ norm ($M=3.07$), it can be concluded that heads of department are ‘usually’ and not ‘always’ effective leaders. This implies heads of departments ‘usually’ meet lecturers’ job-related needs as well as organizational requirements, represent lecturers higher authority, and lead departments effectively. This finding is consistent with Avolio and Bass (2004), Hur et al (2011), Hogg et al (2005), using MLQ they indicated that investigated leaders ‘fairly often’ exhibited behaviors of effective leaders.

In order to find significant predictors of leadership effectiveness stepwise regression analysis was run. The result revealed that among nine variables which were entered as a block, contingent reward, idealized influence attribute, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, laissez-faire, intellectual stimulation, and management-by-exception active were significantly contributed towards the variance of leadership effectiveness as predictors (Table 4). These factors accounted for 82% of variance in leadership effectiveness. Among all dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership, contingent reward had highest correlation with leadership effectiveness ($r=.83, p<.001$), it was selected as first predictor of leadership effectiveness.

In addition, contingent reward strongly correlated with all dimensions of transformational leadership which supported previous research (Avolio & Bass, 2004; Bass et al, 2003; Lowe et al, 1996; Hinkin & Schriesheim, 2008; Nguni et al, 2006; Rafferty & Griffin, 2004). On the basis of standardized beta coefficients, selected dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership as significant predictors were found to be positively correlated to leadership effectiveness while, laissez-faire was negatively correlated. Reviewing standardized beta coefficient, results demonstrated a linear relationship between selected predictors and leadership effectiveness. The significant F-value provides evidence for the fact that the model fits the data and the model is valid. This implies combination of transformational and transactional leadership behaviors has strong predictive effect on leadership effectiveness. The results of the current study provide empirical evidence for this proposition that combination of transformational and transactional leadership is more predictive of leadership effectiveness rather than each leadership style alone.

The findings of current study are consistent with other researcher (Jung et al, 2009; Erkutlu, 2008; Avolio & Bass, 2004; Webb, 2003; Masson, 1998; Lowe et al, 1996; Bass & Yammarino 1991; Kirby et al, 1991), who found significant and positive relationship between dimensions of transformational and transactional leadership and leadership effectiveness. Furthermore, the findings of this study supported findings of other studies such as by Webb (2003) and Masson (1998), they found significant predictive effect of combination of transformational and transactional leadership as well as laissez-faire leadership on presidential leadership effectiveness. They reported negative relationship between laissez-faire leadership and leadership effectiveness.

5. Conclusion and Implication

This study is an early attempt to determine heads of departments’ leadership styles in Malaysian RUs and factor associate with leadership effectiveness. The results demonstrated that the heads of departments utilized a combination of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. It can be inferred that the RUs heads of departments relatively exhibited appropriate leadership styles to direct their academic departments to achieve organizational goals. However, their leadership style was not at optimum level for transformational leadership. The results also revealed that RUs heads of departments are more directive than what is need for effective leaders. These are indicators that show RUs heads of departments could not meet specifications of ideal effective leaders. On the other hand, requisite of leadership effectiveness are knowledge, understanding and abilities of the leaders. These requirements can be satisfied by involving leaders in training programs. Therefore, this study provides appropriate information for RUs top administrators regarding heads of departments’ leadership capabilities, which assist them to arrange leadership training program to cultivate effective leaders. Heads of departments to develop their leadership effectiveness, still need to increase the frequency of transformational behaviors, particularly intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration more often than what they did in this study. Moreover, they also need to decrease the frequency of management-by-exception as well as laissez-faire behaviors. In addition, for enhancing leadership effectiveness, heads of departments should employ contingent reward.

The rewards may consist of facilitating lecturers' participation in international conferences and workshops, offering research grants and sabbatical opportunities to promote lecturers' academic rank, presenting awards and recognition by head of department, dean of faculty or university top administrators. This research also provides empirical evidence for educational administrators and researchers in developing countries regarding importance of heads of departments' position as well as applications of transformational leadership theory. Finally, the findings of this research empirically and theoretically contribute to the body of transformational leadership theory by determining the extent to which leadership styles influenced leadership effectiveness.

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Table 1: Descriptive of IVs and DV

Variables	Mean	SD	Reliability ^a	Interpretation	MLQ Norms
Transformational	2.52	.72		Fairly often	2.85
Idealized Influence (attribute)	2.55	.82	.91	Fairly often	2.94
Idealized Influence (behavior)	2.61	.8	.80	Fairly often	2.77
Inspirational Motivation	2.73	.84	.94	Fairly often	2.92
Intellectual Stimulation	2.37	.76	.88	Sometimes	2.78
Individualized Consideration	2.33	.79	.84	Sometimes	2.85
Transactional	2.02	.53		Sometimes	1.86
Contingent Reward	2.54	.82	.89	Fairly often	2.87
Management-by-Exception (active)	2.20	.83	.67	Sometimes	1.67
Management-by-Exception (passive)	1.33	.80	.70	Once in a while	1.03
Laissez Faire	1.14	.90	.77	Once in a while	.65
Leadership Effectiveness	2.58	.82	.94	Fairly often	3.07

a. Cronbach's alpha

Interpretation Score: Not at all=0-.8; Once in a while=.81-1.6; Sometimes=1.61-2.4; Fairly often=2.41-3.2; Frequently if not always=3.21-4

MLQ Norms: Adapted from Avolio and Bass 2004, p. 70.

Table 2: Percentage on the Transformational Leadership Scale

Item	Transformational Leadership Scale	Percentage (%)				
		N	O	S	FO	F
Intellectual Stimulation						
1-	Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.	2.0	8.7	35.9	45.0	8.1
2-	Seeks differing perspectives when solving problems.	4.0	10.1	35.9	37.2	12.8
3-	Gets me to look at problems from many different angles.	7.7	11.1	33.6	39.9	7.7
4-	Suggests new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.	8.1	15.8	29.2	38.3	8.7
Individualized Consideration						
1-	Spends time teaching and coaching.	9.4	13.8	35.6	29.2	12.1
2-	Treats me as an individual rather than just as a member of group.	6.7	10.1	25.5	36.6	21.1
3-	Considers me as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.	9.7	15.4	29.2	33.9	11.7
4-	Helps me to develop my strengths.	8.1	10.7	30.2	38.9	11.7

Scale: N = Not at all, O = Once in a while, S = Sometimes, FO = Fairly often, F = Frequently if not always

Table 3: Percentage on the Laissez-faire Leadership Scale

Item	Laissez-faire Leadership Scale	Percentage (%)				
		N	O	S	FO	F
Laissez-faire						
1-	Avoids getting involved when important issues arise.	33.9	28.9	21.1	11.7	4.4
2-	Is absent when needed.	38.9	34.2	18.1	5.7	3.0
3-	Avoids making decisions.	37.6	28.5	21.1	7.7	5.0
4-	Delays responding to urgent questions.	34.9	29.2	23.8	7.4	4.7

Scale: N = Not at all, O = Once in a while, S = Sometimes, FO = Fairly often, F = Frequently if not always

Table 4: Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of Leadership Effectiveness on Predictive Variables

Independent Variables	Std Beta
Contingent Reward	.158***
Idealized Influence Attribute	.159***
Individualized Consideration	.207***
Inspirational Motivation	.237***
Laissez-faire	-.123***
Intellectual Stimulation	.165***
Management-by-exception Active	.065***

Note: R²=.82, Adj R²=.818, R=.91, F {7, 289} = 191.50, *** p<.001.