

## **Leadership Style of the Residential College Principal in National University of Malaysia and the Staff Working Satisfaction: Towards the Professional Development of Residential College Principal**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*High level of working satisfaction plays a vital role in improving the professionalism of the residential college principal in National University of Malaysia (UKM). Besides, the leadership style of the residential college principal is always connected to the staff working satisfaction. An effective leadership skill is often considered as the main contributor in positive working satisfaction, while negative working satisfaction might be the result of ineffective leadership skill. In parallel to that, this paper is focusing on the relationship between the leadership style of the principal and the staff working satisfaction. The respondents of the study are the staff of Rahim Kajai College in National University of Malaysia (UKM). The findings show that there is no significant difference between the staff working satisfaction and gender. However, the findings highlight that democratic leadership contributes to the high level of working satisfaction while the autocratic and laissez-faire leadership contribute to lower level of working satisfaction. Moreover, this paper also discusses few interventions involved in improving the working satisfaction level of the principal as well as enlightening the principal's professionalism in residential college of National University of Malaysia (UKM).*

Keywords: leadership style, leadership skill, working satisfaction

### **Introduction**

In the era of educational transformation experienced by the country, a strong and effective leadership quality is greatly required in assuring the good quality of professionalism among the administrators. In assuring good level of professionalism among the residential college principals, they should be aware of the suitable leadership style in leading an organisation efficiently. Other than that, the principals should also be alert on the challenges occurred in the residential college organisation which are agreed to be great, in parallel to the rapid development of education. Generally, leadership is perceived as a dynamic relationship between an individual and other members of a group, as well as the environment. It is also a process of an individual being influenced by the other people in achieving an objective in certain situation.

A leadership style is determined by the appropriateness of that leadership. There is a leader who stresses on task-centred style; meanwhile, there is also a leader who stresses more on human relationship style. According to Khan (1993), most of the leaders portray a leadership style that combines both task-centred and human relationship styles. He further added that the school administrators who are willing to share ideas with the other staff as well as encouraging the concept of freedom in working obtain higher level of working satisfaction than administrators who rigidly follow the rules. Other than that, most of the researches compared the leadership style between autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire. Khan (1983) defined autocratic leadership style as a situation in which the leader makes important decisions without referring to the other members of the government (ZaizulAbRahman et. al. ,2012, 2018). On the other hand, a democratic leader encourages discussion among the members of the government before making any decision.

Owens (1970) has divided the leadership style into five which are; autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, bureaucratic and charismatic. He stated that a leader who applies the extreme autocratic leadership is the leader of all decisions while the policies are applied by the administrators. Meanwhile, a laissez-faire leader encourages group discussion in making any decision. On the other hand, most of the bureaucratic leaders combine three leadership styles which are democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire. Besides, Jacobson, Logsdon and Wiegman (1973) has distinguished the democratic, autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles based on the three assumptions which are; a democratic leader highly respects people regardless of their race or social status. This is because, that leader highlights more on people's potential development as well as cooperation between them for public benefit (ZaizulAbRahman et. al.,2012, 2018).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilised observational method through questionnaires. There were 40 respondents involved which are the staff of residential college in UKM, Bangi, Selangor DarulEhsan. In this research, the researcher utilised the information obtained from the combination of questionnaires from Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire and staff working satisfaction. In determining the level of leadership style whether it is high or low, the researcher used the mean range of 1.00 to 3.00 as low and the mean range of 3.01 to 5.00 as high. However, in the determination of working satisfaction, there are three ranges which are the mean range of 1.00 to 1.99 as dissatisfied, the mean range of 2.00 to 2.99 as average and the mean range of 3.00 to 4.00 as satisfied.

The utilised questionnaire consists of three parts which are the first part focuses on the respondents' demographic, the second part focuses on the leadership style of the residential principal, and the third part focuses on the working satisfaction among the residential college staff. The demographic part consists of 7 items which are gender, age, marital status, educational level, teaching experience, working period at the residential college and the position and department assigned to the staff. Meanwhile, the second part consists of 40 items created in identifying the leadership style of the principal in carrying their daily task and determining their leadership style. There are 3 leadership styles which are studied in this research which are the task-centred leadership style (autocratic style), the consideration or human relationship leadership style (democratic style) and the laissez-faire style. The higher score obtained will result on the higher leadership style obtained. Besides, the third part consists of 18 items to measure the staff working satisfaction which 8 positive items and 10 negative items. For the negative items, the score is changed. Every item is given by using the *likert* scale which are strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1).

The working satisfaction index is measured based on the total score of all items. The scoring from 1 to 4 is classified as strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). In contrast, for the negative statement, the score is changed as strongly agree (1), agree (2), disagree (3) and strongly disagree (4).

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework is adapted from Yukl model as taken from JaafarSulaiman (1999) which suggests that the leadership style can influence the environment and staff working satisfaction in an organisation.

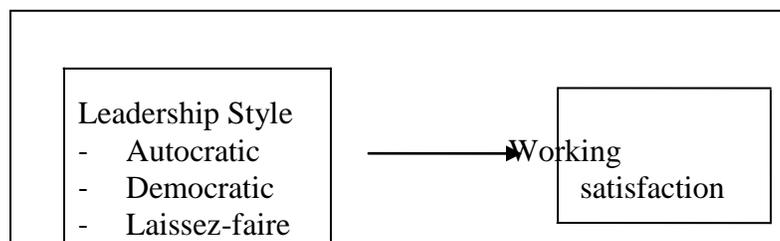


FIGURE 1: Theory Model

Source: Adapted from the Relationship between Leadership Style and Working Satisfaction Model

*Hypothesis Test*

This research listed 4 hypotheses in answering the research problems. The hypotheses are:

- There is a significant relationship in working satisfaction between the male and female subjects.
- There is a significant relationship between the autocratic leadership style and working satisfaction.
- There is a significant relationship between the democratic leadership style and working satisfaction of residential college staff.
- There is a significant relationship between the laissez-faire leadership style and working satisfaction of residential college staff.

**RESEARCH FINDINGS**

TABLE 1: The differences in Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Working Satisfaction between Male and Female Subjects

Gender	Amount	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
Male	26	52.46	6.96	0.47
Female	26	53.31	6.14	

p> 0.05

Based on the table, the mean score of working satisfaction among the female subjects (mean=53.31, sd=6.14) is higher than the mean score of male subjects (mean=52.46, sd=6.96). However, the *t* test value (*t*=0.47, p>0.05) that there is no significant difference between the male and female subjects in the sub-scale of working satisfaction. Therefore, it can be concluded that gender does not influence the working satisfaction of the research subjects. In addition, the findings are consistent with the studies conducted by MohdDahalan Abdul Maleket. al (1998) and EsahSulaiman (1998). In contrast, the findings are not parallel to the studies by Xia Ma and MacMillan (1999) and Nawi as cited in Suraineh (2001) which claimed that female staffs are more satisfied in their jobs compared to the male staff.

TABLE 2: Pearson Correlation between the Working Satisfaction Scales of Residential College Staff and the Leadership Style of Residential College Principal

Variables	Working satisfaction (N=52)
Autocratic Leadership Style	0.16
Democratic Leadership Style	0.30*
Laissez-faire Leadership Style	0.22

\*p< 0.05

By referring to the findings above, working is positively correlated only with the democratic leadership style (0.30\*, p<0.05). Thus, the autocratic and laissez-faire leadership style are not positively correlated with the working satisfaction as the value (r=0.16, p>0.05), followed by (r=0.22, p>0.05). These findings are consistent with the study by Khan (1993) as the administrators who practised the democratic leadership style are more satisfied with their jobs compared to the administrators who practised the autocratic leadership style.

In fact, this research is also parallel to the study by Morse and Reimer (1956) which found that the democratic administrators possess high level of working satisfaction regardless of the effectiveness.

Scbuler (1976) found that participation significantly affect the working satisfaction. This is also agreed by Ralston (1986) who discovered that if a decision making is made by the whole institution, the workers will possess working satisfaction. This is consistent with the study by Morrissey (1988) which yielded on the officers or the authorities are more satisfied if their working objectives are achieved (ZaizulAbRahman et. al. ,2012, 2018).

Based on the research analysis on the working satisfaction, it is found that the subjects' working satisfaction is at the average level with total mean score 2.93. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Suraineh Suweh (2001) at a secondary school in Tamparuli, Sabah which shows that the working satisfactions among the teachers are at the average level. The finding is also parallel to the research conducted by MohdNor as cited in Shahrul Arba'iah Othman (1997) which found that most of the lecturers in Politeknik Kota Bharu possess an average working satisfaction.

### **Conclusion**

In the effort of strengthening the professionalism of the principals, the leadership style in residential college should be adapted to the current needs and wants. Especially, in any planning, both weaknesses and strengths of the staff, particularly the principal, should be the main concern in assuring the working satisfaction among the staff specifically and the university students generally. The leadership in residential college should focus on the service improvement by encouraging the staff to improve their professionalism. The encouragement such as joining the service courses, furthering studies to the higher level and giving chances to hold the administration position in the residential college organisation are beneficial to all parties either to an individual or the college authority. In a country which is experiencing a rapid development in education, the leadership quality should be seriously concentrated. A good leadership style and a high level of working satisfaction are seen to be the main role in the effort of expanding and improving the professionalism level of the residential college principal of the local public institutes of higher education (IPTA). The effective leadership style is often viewed as the main contributor in the high level of working satisfaction, while the low level of working satisfaction is the effect of ineffective leadership. In relation to that, this research is meant to identify the relationship between the leadership style and working satisfaction. The democratic leadership style is found to contribute to the high level of working satisfaction. In contrast, the average working satisfaction level possessed by the research subjects required noble action by the authorities. The research findings also show that the democratic leadership style contributes to the high level of working satisfaction. Some of the recommendations and interventions are proposed in the effort of expanding and improving the professionalism level of residential college principal of the local public institutes of higher education (IPTA).

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