

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP: Building a Positive Academic Culture

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ABSTRACT

In the organizational context, leadership assumes a pivotal role as a foundational element in executing functions and wielding authority. Occupying positions of prominence and wielding significant authority, leaders possess the capacity to effectively oversee and guide the organization. The leader's strategic positioning is indispensable, rendering them a key ally in advancing the collective interests of the organization's various echelons, ranging from the grassroots to the uppermost tiers, with a steadfast commitment to objective-oriented pursuits. This research endeavors to scrutinize the responses, perceptions, and evaluations of lecturers regarding the leadership exhibited by heads of study programs, thereby furnishing a comprehensive and contextual comprehension of the intricacies of leadership dynamics. The study was conducted at Pamulang University, focusing on the Undergraduate Management study program within the Faculty of Economics and Business. Primary respondents comprised level one lecturers who concurrently served as developers of the study program. Employing a simple random sampling technique facilitated by the distribution of direct questionnaires, the research data underwent analysis through qualitative descriptive methods. Findings from the research reveal that the leadership style demonstrated by the head of the Undergraduate Management study program at the Faculty of Economics and Business embodies democratic characteristics. This is evidenced by the active involvement of developer lecturers in all facets of the tri dharma activities and the decision-making processes inherent to the study program.

Keywords: Lecturer, Higher Education, Leadership, Academic Culture, Human Resource

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role that cannot be ignored in shaping and developing human resources (Dacholfany, 2017). Higher education institutions, in particular, emerge as crucial entities that not only equip individuals with knowledge but also serve as vital platforms in producing professionals who are not only competent but also capable of making positive contributions to societal progress (Bashori, 2019). The process of higher education extends beyond the mere transfer of knowledge; it actively involves character development and leadership formation, creating individuals who are

holistic and prepared to confront the complexities of challenges across various aspects of life.

Higher education serves as a bridge between knowledge and its practical application. Beyond imparting academic knowledge, institutions of higher learning must shape future leaders (Sihite & Saleh, 2019). In this context, educators play a pivotal role as agents of learning, guiding students to evolve into individuals capable of leading with vision and integrity (Yanuarsari, et al., 2022).

The current higher education landscape faces rapidly evolving challenges, including shifts in learning paradigms, the demands of globalization, and changes in the job market. Identifying and understanding effective leadership models become imperative to manage organizational complexity and guide its elements towards a sustainable future.

Leadership in higher education extends beyond administrative responsibilities, involving educators in shaping a dynamic and inspirational academic environment (Mulyono, 2018). Leadership is reflected not only in educational administration governance but also in managing high-quality teaching processes, research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and curriculum development contributions.

Leadership styles can vary, encompassing democratic, transactional, transformational, or a combination of these styles. A profound understanding of leadership styles provides valuable insights into creating a work environment that encourages all academic stakeholders, especially educators, to be exemplary and deliver quality teaching and learning in various domains such as scholarly, moral, and social (Surahman & Munadi, 2022).

Leadership theories offer a conceptual foundation to comprehend the role and function of leadership in diverse contexts, including higher education institutions. Relevant leadership theories such as transformational, transactional, or situational theories can serve as frameworks to examine leadership in higher education. Numerous studies have demonstrated that effective leadership models enhance motivation and performance of subordinates (Palar, et al., 2021), foster innovation, and elevate the reputation of higher education institutions. Therefore, a profound understanding of the most suitable and effective leadership models in the higher education environment will significantly contribute to future progress (Budiman & Barata, 2018).

THEORETICAL BASIS

Theoretically, leadership can be understood as an interactive process between a leader and group members, highlighting dynamic and interpersonal aspects in the leadership role (Dewi, 2019). Stogdill emphasizes that leadership is not just about someone's formal authority but more about the relationship and dynamics between the leader and group members (Tugiah & Hendriani, 2022). This interaction process involves communication, collaboration, and mutual dependence between the leader and group members to achieve common goals. Stogdill's perspective underscores that leadership is oriented towards achieving collective outcomes. Leaders are responsible not only for direction and decision-making but also for guiding, motivating, and directing group members toward shared objectives. Therefore, Stogdill's understanding highlights the essence of leadership as a social dynamic requiring active involvement, effective communication, and collaboration between leaders and group members to achieve group success.

Good leadership is a concept describing a leader meeting specific criteria considered optimal or ideal in achieving group or organizational goals (Kurniawan, 2016). Ideal leadership characteristics can vary depending on the adopted perspective and leadership theory. Here are some common characteristics of ideal leadership (Wijono, 2018):

1. **Clear Vision.** An ideal leader possesses a clear vision and effectively communicates it to team members, serving as a source of inspiration and motivation for achieving shared goals.
2. **Integrity.** Ideal leadership involves high integrity. Ideal leaders are honest, fair, and ethical in their actions, holding steadfast to moral values and demonstrating integrity in decision-making.
3. **Empathy.** Ideal leaders understand and care about the needs, aspirations, and feelings of team members. They can form strong relationships with those around them and show empathy towards individual issues.
4. **Effective Communication Skills.** Good communication is a key trait of ideal leaders. They can convey messages clearly, actively listen, and ensure that information is received and understood by team members.

5. Ability to Inspire and Motivate. Ideal leadership includes the ability to inspire others and encourage high performance. These leaders can motivate the team to achieve better results and develop the potential of team members.
6. Wise Decision-Making Skills. Ideal leaders can make wise decisions, considering relevant information and understanding its implications for organizational goals. They can also overcome challenges and manage risks.
7. Delegation Skills. Ideal leaders do not attempt to do everything themselves but can wisely delegate tasks. They understand the strengths and expertise of team members and assign responsibilities accordingly.
8. Flexibility. Ideal leaders are flexible and can adapt to change. They are not rigid but open to new ideas and ready to change strategies if necessary.
9. Transformational Leadership. In the context of ideal leadership, transformational leadership is often sought, capable of inspiring positive change, developing a shared vision, and enhancing team engagement.
10. Empowerment. Ideal leaders empower team members by providing responsibility and opportunities for growth. They support the individual growth and development within the team.

METHOD

The research methodology employed encompasses various approaches and techniques, including:

1. Quantitative Approach. Utilizing a quantitative approach involves the collection and analysis of numerical data to draw statistical inferences. This method provides a systematic and structured way of investigating research questions.
2. Survey Method. The research employs the survey method, which involves gathering data from a selected group of participants to gain insights into their opinions, attitudes, or behaviors. Surveys are commonly conducted through questionnaires.
3. Questionnaire Data Technique. The technique involves the use of structured questionnaires as a primary tool for data collection. Questionnaires enable standardized data gathering, facilitating quantitative analysis.

4. Descriptive Analysis. The research employs descriptive analysis, a method that focuses on summarizing and presenting data in a meaningful way. This includes organizing, categorizing, and describing the main features of the data.
5. Unit of Analysis. The unit of analysis for this research is the permanent faculty members of the Management Program at Pamulang University. This specific focus allows for a detailed examination of the characteristics, perceptions, or behaviors of this group.

These research methods collectively contribute to a comprehensive investigation into the chosen subject matter, combining quantitative measurements, survey insights, questionnaire data, and descriptive analyses to derive meaningful conclusions about the permanent faculty members of the Management Program at Pamulang University.

RESULT

Respondents Characteristics

The results of the questionnaire distribution indicate that in this study, the proportion of male respondents participating is more dominant compared to female respondents. With a percentage of 60% of the total respondents, this suggests that the majority of research participants are male. In contrast, females contribute to 40% of the total respondents. Understanding the distribution of respondents' gender provides an overview that the data obtained in this study predominantly stems from the perspective of males, while the contribution from females tends to be lower. This analysis can assist researchers in better comprehending and interpreting research findings by considering the specific gender dominance in the respondent sample.

The questionnaire distribution results also reveal that in this study, the majority of respondents come from the academic background of Master's or postgraduate education, reaching 75%. Conversely, respondents with a Doctorate or Ph.D. level of education contribute to 25% of the total research participants. Thus, this data indicates that the majority of respondents involved in the study have an educational background at the Master's level. This information can be crucial in the context of analyzing research results as it may reflect the perspectives and understanding underlying the generated findings, especially considering that educational differences can influence the viewpoint and contribution of respondents to this research.

Leadership Style

Based on the research findings, it is revealed that the Head of the Management Bachelor's Program at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Unpam, is recognized for having a democratic leadership style. This is reflected in several distinctive characteristics, such as openness to receiving criticism, providing opportunities for lecturers to express aspirations, ideas, thoughts, or concepts directly, and involving lecturers, especially those involved in program development, in decision-making or policy formulation. According to the majority of respondents, this democratic leadership style is considered supportive of the progress of the program. However, it is acknowledged that achieving this requires more participation and support from leadership to build a healthy work climate. Therefore, the research results underscore the importance of cooperation and active involvement between leadership and lecturers to ensure the success and development of the Management Bachelor's Program at the institution.

Despite being democratic, this leadership style also demands active participation and full support from the team members. The involvement of lecturers in decision-making processes can strengthen collective commitment to the program but, at the same time, creates challenges in ensuring that such participation occurs effectively and efficiently (Indayanti & Malik, 2023). Therefore, the research results provide nuanced insights into the need to create conducive conditions for democratic leadership while emphasizing the necessity of active support and collaboration in the academic environment to achieve optimal progress and sustainability.

Leader's Personality

The research results highlight that the Head of the Management Bachelor's Program at the Faculty of Economics and Business exhibits excellent leadership characteristics in terms of personality. His leadership is portrayed as friendly, polite, and characterized by effective communication, marked by courteous speech and the application of good etiquette. Additionally, the head of the program is seen as adept in interactions, approachable, and enjoys mingling with faculty members. These characteristics are viewed as highly positive and preferable, as they can create a harmonious work environment, build strong team relationships, and strengthen solidarity among team members.

A leader's success in fostering friendly and inclusive relationships with team members has a positive impact on team effectiveness and overall productivity. A good attitude and the ability to be open and inclusive contribute to creating a positive work environment where each team member feels valued and motivated to contribute maximally (Rohmah & Sayuti, 2021). Therefore, the research results underscore the importance of personality aspects in shaping effective leadership in the academic environment.

Leader Managerial Skills

Based on the research findings, the Head of the Management Bachelor's Program at the Faculty of Economics and Business appears to be evaluated as a leader with strong managerial skills. These characteristics encompass leadership capacity and competence that are highly regarded by the respondents. The leader is recognized for his ability to lead effectively and possesses relevant expertise in managing the program. Furthermore, the research also indicates that the head of the program emphasizes proportionality in his work, refraining from arbitrary behavior or abusing his position for personal gain. This reflects positive leadership ethics and integrity in managing leadership functions.

Moreover, the research results state that the head of the program acts objectively and measurably in delegating academic tasks. A leader capable of objectively and measurably distributing tasks can create a balanced work environment and provide opportunities for the development of all team members (Putra & Sinambela, 2021). Success in delegating academic tasks demonstrates high managerial efficiency, as well as wisdom in leveraging the potential and expertise of team members.

Leader Social Skills

The research results highlight that the head of the program is perceived as a highly social individual. Striking personality traits include a tendency to be friendly and open, with a lack of distance maintained between the head of the program and other faculty members. This leader also tends to mingle, engage in conversations, and joke with team members, creating a relaxed and friendly work atmosphere. Furthermore, a propensity to be generous and generous is also recognized, demonstrating social aspects in building relationships with the team. Additionally, the head of the program actively participates

in social activities both on campus and beyond, creating an inclusive work environment that supports camaraderie among team members.

These characteristics of social leadership can have a positive impact on team dynamics and the overall work environment. The lack of distance and participation in social activities can build strong relationships between the head of the program and faculty members, creating an environment that supports collaboration and team engagement (Lubis, 2020). In conclusion, the research results provide insight into the importance of social aspects in the leadership of the head of the program, contributing to harmony and well-being within the academic environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the leadership style of the Head of the Bachelor's Program in Management at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Unpam, is democratic. The openness in this leadership system has a positive impact by encouraging participation and involvement of faculty members, especially those involved in the development of the program, in advancing the program of study. The head of the program serves not only as a decision-maker but also as a facilitator who promotes collaboration and active participation from the entire academic team.

Furthermore, the good social and personal characteristics of the head of the program also highlight their uniqueness. The positive attitude and sociable nature help build positive interactions between the leader and the team members, creating a harmonious work environment. This strong interaction has the potential to strengthen collaboration across various levels in the organizational hierarchy, creating synergy that can accelerate the progress of the program of study.

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