Youth Leadership Empowerment in Malaysia's Higher Education
(Pemerkasaan Kepimpinan Belia di Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia)

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ABSTRACT

The process of empowering young people in a leadership platform that requires information, abilities, resources, and self-confidence to assume leadership roles and have a positive impact on communities and society as a whole is known as youth leadership empowerment. Although the leadership empowerment platform in Malaysia higher education specifically to develop competent youth and individuals is improving, it is important to empower youth with leadership skills to build a strong and sustainable future as young leaders could have new perspectives and ideas. Thus, this paper will provide a literature review on the need to reduce disparities and university programs in youth leadership empowerment effectively. The methods used are primary data and secondary data which interviewed Malaysia's student leaders via 50 questionnaires and websites. This paper entails helping the youth to develop resilience and the ability to reinvent while promoting active involvement in decision-making and allowing the youth chances to take the lead and effect change. Hence, the finding helped the youth to empower leadership elements through Malaysia's leadership platform initiatives and the advantages of leadership competencies for future sustainability.

Keywords - Empowerment, Leadership platform, International program

ABSTRAK

Proses memperkasakan golongan muda dalam platform kepimpinan yang memerlukan maklumat, kebolehan, sumber, dan keyakinan diri untuk memikul peranan kepimpinan dan memberi kesan positif kepada masyarakat dan masyarakat secara keseluruhannya dikenali sebagai pemerkasaan kepimpinan belia. Walaupun platform pemerkasaan kepimpinan di pendidikan tinggi Malaysia khusus untuk membangunkan belia dan individu yang berwibawa semakin bertambah baik, adalah penting untuk memperkasakan belia dengan kemahiran kepimpinan untuk membina masa depan yang kukuh dan mampan kerana pemimpin muda boleh mempunyai perspektif dan idea baharu. Justeru, kertas kerja ini akan memberikan tinjauan literatur tentang keperluan untuk mengurangkan jurang perbezaan dan program universiti dalam pemerkasaan kepimpinan belia secara berkesan. Kaedah yang digunakan ialah data primer dan data sekunder yang menemu bual pemimpin pelajar Malaysia melalui 50 soal selidik dan laman web. Kertas kerja ini memerlukan bantuan belia untuk membangunkan daya tahan dan keupayaan untuk mencipta semula sambil menggalakkan penglibatan aktif dalam membuat keputusan dan memberi peluang kepada belia untuk memimpin dan melaksanakan perubahan. Justeru, penemuan itu membantu belia memperkasa elemen kepimpinan melalui inisiatif platform kepimpinan Malaysia dan kelebihan kecekapan kepimpinan untuk kelestarian masa hadapan.

Kata kunci - Pemerkasaan, Platform kepimpinan, program antarabangsa

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the ability to persuade people to work against a common objective. It is a complicated method that calls on various qualifications, including motivation, decision-making, and communication. For instance, leadership was described by the Greek philosopher Aristotle as "the art of getting things done through others." (Aristotle, 1885). Based on Islamic intellectualism, Abu Nasr al Farabi described leadership as "the capacity to direct people to the right path." (Abu Nasr al-Farabi, 2002).

These concepts emphasize the value of persuasion, collaboration, and direction in leadership. Influential leaders can persuade people to follow them voluntarily and inspire them to accomplish great things. Additionally, they can communicate their clear future vision to others. The unique circumstances will determine the greatest type of leadership for a certain time. However, all successful leaders have several characteristics in common, including motivation, communication, vision, and decision-making.

There are different types of leadership with each one suited to a particular situation and environment. The ability to inspire and motivate others to do great things is fundamental to such leadership style, commonly

referred to as transformational leadership. However, transactional leadership is someone who values order and structure (STU online, 2014) and the provision of incentives for exceeding those goals. The liberty to make their own decisions is given to people under laissez-faire leadership, in contrast. The specifics of the current circumstance must be taken into consideration while choosing the best leadership strategy. But regardless of the leadership style used, all successful leaders have certain traits that support their success.

These include having a distinct and compelling outlook for the future, communicating that vision to build relationships and trust, making thoughtful judgments even under pressure, and having the ability to inspire and encourage people to realize their goals. These key qualities act as the pillars of good leadership, driving people and organizations toward development and success.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

The significance section of a research paper often explains how the findings can benefit various stakeholders, including researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and the general public (Maxwell, J. A.,

2005) whereby this article providing fresh perspectives on the list of proactive involvement in leadership empowerment among youth in higher education. Additionally, this conceptual research will offer several ideas on how Malaysia's youth may empower leadership.

Additionally, it's critical to foster resilience and the ability to innovate for the sake of future advantages through leadership empowerment in higher education. Additionally, it is important to foster resilience and the ability to innovate for future advantage through leadership empowerment in higher education. This study will provide important insights on how to empower leadership among higher education students through experiences gained through programs conducted at universities and efforts undertaken by the government. In addition, this study will also provide benefits in talent development efforts that drive student excellence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper used a mixed-methods approach to collect detailed data on leadership empowerment using both in-person interviews and formal questionnaires. Quantitative data was collected through structured questionnaires that were emailed to a larger group of respondents who were student leaders in higher education using the Google Forms platform. Quantitative data collection methods often include various forms of surveys, questionnaires, and tests, which yield numerical results that can be analyzed statistically (Bryman, A., 2006). The questionnaires were created with the goals of the publications in mind, and their validity and reliability were confirmed by expert review. Face-to-face interviews with student leaders at Malaysia's higher education institutions were done as part of the qualitative data collection process. All face-to- face interview respondents provided their informed consent. Pre-planned open-ended interview questions with an emphasis on leadership empowerment served as the direction for the interview sessions. The respondents will develop an answer in their own words to the open-ended questions.

Questionnaire

The use of new technology, such as Google Forms, enables the questionnaire approach to interact with modern technology in a smooth manner, which revolutionizes the process of data collection, especially considering that our target respondents are student

leaders in Malaysia's higher education. Researchers now could easily construct and distribute electronic surveys using Google Forms, providing an avenue for more effective data collection from a broader spectrum of participants within this specific context. This platform supports a diverse array of question formats, including multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, and items rated on a Likert scale. Furthermore, it empowers researchers to collect real- time responses, allowing for immediate insights that can be further analyzed to gain deeper insights specific to student leaders in Malaysia's higher education institutions.

The intuitive layout of Google Forms makes the generation and personalization of surveys much more efficient, resulting in a procedure that is both quick and free of complications. Notably, the approach extends its reach by capitalizing on the expansiveness of the digital sphere. Surveys may be broadcast by email, social media, and other online platforms, thereby drawing replies from individuals located in a variety of different locations. This is a significant advantage of the method. Researchers are given the ability to evaluate their success and make rapid adjustments to their plans as a result of the immediate data collection and real-time monitoring that accompany it.

In addition, Google Forms provides researchers with fundamental tools for data analysis. These tools include summary statistics and charts, and they make it easier to do a preliminary study on the data that has been accumulated. It is notable that the platform places a strong emphasis on both security and privacy. This provides researchers with control over the protection of survey responses and access to surveys. Google Forms offers a contemporary and cost-effective alternative to the more traditional paper-based surveys, and its cost-effectiveness is another factor that contributes to the service's widespread popularity. In summary, the combination of the questionnaire approach and Google Forms heralds an era of data collection that is seamless, efficient, and versatile, rethinking research practices for the digital age.

i. Student Leadership Empowerment in Higher Education:

The data emphasizes the positive impact of student leadership empowerment in higher education. It is described as a crucial factor in unlocking students' potential, fostering creativity, and preparing them for future personal and professional challenges. The idea is that by empowering students, higher education institutions enable them to grow, excel, and succeed in various aspects of their lives.

ii. Promotion of Diversity and Collaboration:

Respondents also emphasize that student leadership empowerment contributes to promoting diversity, inclusivity, and collaboration among students. They view this as pivotal in creating a vibrant and enriching campus environment, where students from various backgrounds can come together to learn and grow.

iii. Development of Critical Skills:

The data highlights that student leadership empowerment serves as a catalyst for developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and effective communication skills. These skills are seen as essential for students to become successful leaders in their chosen fields, enabling them to navigate complex challenges and communicate their ideas effectively.

iv. Fostering Positive Working Culture:

The data transitions to discussing how leadership elements contribute to cultivating a positive working culture. It emphasizes that elements like clear communication, transparency, and empathy play a vital role in building trust and strong relationships among team members. These elements are believed to promote collaboration, encourage contributions, and establish a supportive work environment.

v. Qualities of Young Leaders:

The data further delves into the qualities expected of young leaders. Respondents agree that strong communication skills are essential for young leaders to articulate their vision and connect effectively with others. Adaptability is highlighted as crucial, given the rapidly changing world, and the need for young leaders to embrace new ideas and technologies. Empathy is seen as a key quality for building trust and fostering collaboration. Resilience, innovation, and creativity are also identified as important qualities for young leaders to navigate challenges and inspire others.

vi. Assessment of Leadership Development and Empowerment Platforms:

The data concludes by posing questions about personal experiences in developing leadership elements and challenges faced. It also raises questions about the sufficiency and effectiveness of platforms for youth leadership empowerment, both at local and international levels. These questions invite respondents to reflect on their experiences and opinions regarding the current state of leadership empowerment platforms for young individuals.

What is your point of view on student leadership empowerment in higher education? [Good / Bad / Growing]

the key to unlocking students' full potential, nurturing their creativity, and preparing them for future challenges in their professional and personal lives.

Student leadership empowerment in higher education is
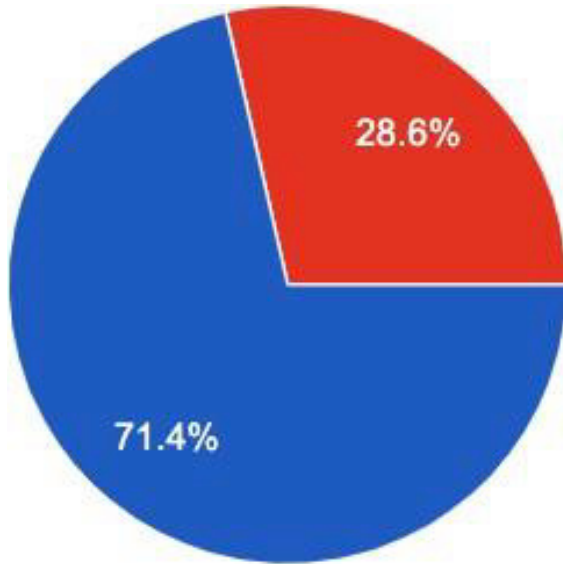
The outlook on student leadership empowerment in higher education is indisputably favorable, with a rising understanding that it is critical in shaping students' overall development. The statistics speak for itself, with 71.4% of respondents agreeing that student leadership empowerment is helpful. This reflects a strong view that empowering students to direct their own learning experiences increases their potential and creates a feeling of creativity, both of which are essential for managing the intricacies of their professional and personal life.

Furthermore, the 28.6% who strongly agree with this point of view highlight the significant impact that student leadership empowerment has on higher education. This is a clear recognition of the transformative power that kids possess when given the opportunity.

Resilience is a vital quality for young leaders to bounce back from setbacks, learn from failures, and stay determined in pursuing their goals.
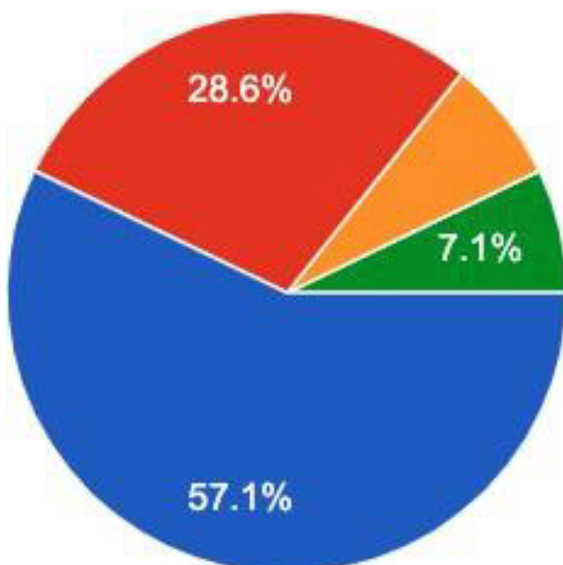
The significance of resilience among young leaders cannot be emphasized enough, as it stands as a foundational trait that empowers them to recover from setbacks, extract valuable insights from failures, and steadfastly pursue their ambitions. This observation is corroborated by the data, where a substantial 85.7% of participants comprising both a strong consensus (57.1%) and general agreement (28.6%) support the notion that resilience is pivotal for young leaders.

The robust agreement of 57.1% underscores a unanimous acknowledgment of the importance of resilience in the leadership journey. This emphatic concurrence underscores the widely accepted belief that the capacity to confront challenges, evolve through adversities, and emerge stronger is an indispensable quality for emerging leaders.

The 28.6% agreement further reinforces the argument for resilience as a cornerstone attribute for young leaders. This proportion amplifies the prevalent sentiment that embracing setbacks as opportunities for learning and persisting in the face of difficulties are imperative qualities for triumphing in leadership roles.

While a small segment of 7.1% maintains a neutral stance on this issue, the combined total of those in disagreement (1%) and strong disagreement (0%) signals a marginal dissenting viewpoint. This scarcity of opposing perspectives solidifies the consensus that resilience is, indeed, a crucial attribute for young leaders.

To conclude, the data-driven perspective on the significance of resilience among young leaders is overwhelmingly positive. The substantial agreement and strong consensus among respondents underscore the shared realization that resilience constitutes a vital element for navigating the challenges inherent in leadership, drawing lessons from failures, and resolutely pursuing one's objectives. This alignment of viewpoints underscores the lasting acknowledgment of resilience as a fundamental component of effective leadership development.

Interview

The interview method is a dynamic research approach that enables researchers and participants to engage in direct conversation in order to glean important insights. Based on the interview from the UUM Student Representative Council, our target respondents are student leaders in Malaysia's higher education institutions.

Interviews, which can be conducted in person, over the phone, or even through video conferencing, give researchers the opportunity to record participant replies that can then be analyzed. Researchers dig deeper into responses using procedures called probing, which encourages participants to expound and provide more significant ideas. The contextual information that can be gained through interviews is extremely significant; researchers are able to contextualize participant replies within the personal, social, and cultural milieus of the participants, fostering a holistic understanding specific to student leaders in Malaysia's higher education setting. Because it relies on open-ended questions, the interview technique creates data that is not only rich but also nuanced. This contributes to the interview method's already considerable value. Due to this qualitative richness, researchers are equipped to disentangle the complex nuances embedded within participant narratives.

The interview questions we've provided aim to elicit detailed and thoughtful responses from respondents regarding their perspectives on student leadership empowerment, their personal experiences with leadership development, their opinions about the effectiveness of youth leadership platforms, the impact of leadership elements on workplace culture, and the qualities expected of young leaders within the context of Malaysia's higher education. These questions delve into various dimensions of leadership and offer the interviewees the opportunity to share their insights, experiences, and reflections, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by student leaders in the higher education landscape of Malaysia.

i. What is your point of view on student leadership empowerment in higher education? (good/bad/ growing):

This question seeks to understand the interviewee's opinion on the current state of student leadership empowerment in higher education. By asking for a classification as "good," "bad," or "growing," the interviewer aims to capture the interviewee's perspective on whether student leadership empowerment is effective, problematic, or evolving positively.

ii. What is your experience in developing leadership elements and the challenges within yourself?

This question invites the interviewee to share their personal experiences with developing leadership qualities or skills. The question encourages a reflection on the challenges the interviewee might have faced in their own journey towards becoming a better leader. It encourages the interviewee to consider both the successes and obstacles they've encountered.

iii. Is the platform for youth leadership empowerment sufficient and effective? What and why? (local & international):

This question prompts the interviewee to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of platforms designed for empowering youth leadership, both within their local context and on a global scale. The question encourages the interviewee to provide specific reasons for their assessment, considering factors that contribute to the platform's effectiveness or limitations.

iv. How can leadership elements contribute to a positive working culture?

This question explores the relationship between leadership elements and workplace culture. It invites the interviewee to explain how components like clear communication, empathy, transparency, and other leadership attributes can impact and shape a positive and productive work environment.

v. What qualities should young leaders have?

This question focuses on the attributes expected of young leaders. The interviewer aims to gather insights into the interviewee's perception of the essential qualities that young leaders should possess. By asking about these qualities, the question provides a platform for discussing traits like communication skills, adaptability, empathy, resilience, and creativity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An understanding of the similarities between empowering leadership and other well-established leadership concepts is inevitable because empowering leadership is founded on leader support-related notions. However, the unique attributes of empowering leadership set it apart from other leadership frameworks that have their roots in concepts relating to leader support. There are several ways to promote leadership empowerment in higher education. Participating in a university program offers a unique and structured opportunity to develop leadership skills. Student leadership and development committee Bank Rakyat residential hall of Universiti Utara Malaysia has successfully executed two different international projects involving three different countries and universities which is Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) and Suan Dusit University (SDU) Thailand.

A program known as "Passage to Asean (P2A)" (Figure 1) and "Strategic Exploration UUM-YOGYAKARTA" (Figure 2) is one of the achievement and challenging program with the objective of to reactivate networking activities between UUM and its partners in terms of global mobility and academic activity, regain experience on global exposure for students after being limited by the pandemics situation since the beginning of year 2022, and To promote UUM as an eminent management University and conducive place for study to other parties. The preparation to accomplish the project is tough and stressful. One of the requirements to accomplish the project is by preparing international documentations and the university's official letter which involves upper university's management, which is time consuming. Other than that, any international project will go through the crucial part of the project which is financial management and budgeting.

The P2A program involves three different currencies and a different payment method. However, it requires accountability and integrity in handling a huge amount of money and to ensure the cash flow in and out is being recorded to avoid leakage in income and expenditure. The program is conducted in three different locations with the starting point in Indonesia to Malaysia (UUM) and Thailand. Before the international participants arrive in Malaysia, a smooth preparation in terms of financially, activities and committee members are necessary to maintain the university image for the international participants.

A well-planned schedule will reflect how the team manages and being decisive towards certain decision making with proactive action to anticipate future challenges. In addition, to enter a certain area or to reach a venue for activities will require a negotiation with the responsible party and an approval letter as a sign of agreement. To accomplish the international without financial aid through sponsorship and fees will be problematic to run any activity and spending.

Additionally, conducting a community service also known as university social responsibility will provide important insight in developing leadership qualities through experiencing community service. The community service program held by UUM student bodies with the collaboration with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) at Seremban Malaysia named as "Tautan Kasih Sentuhan Jiwa" (Figure 3) is one of the programs to be an example on developing young quality leaders. The crucial part in conducting community service is to foster teamwork among university students and senior citizens while being a strategic thinker to analyze the situation critically. The program aims to collaborate and value diverse contributions.

CONCLUSION

This study has covered several aspects of practical importance for youth and individuals to empower leadership. To summarize, youth leadership empowerment is a potent catalyst for personal development growth. It not only positively impacts the youth self-development, the communities it serves but also offers valuable learning opportunities and personal development for students. Encouraging and endorsing leadership empowerment can yield widespread benefits for both students and the communities they serve. Moreover, universities and higher institutions that foster and endorse such initiatives stand to gain enhanced reputation, stronger community ties, and increased student engagement.

University offers students a platform to develop leadership and hone various skills that are valuable in their academic and professional lives through experiencing University's program. The program often acquires strategic thinking, communication, resilience,n and diplomacy through leadership experiences. These skills not only benefit the youth individually but also contribute to the overall intellectual capital.

Furthermore, a combination of leadership qualities is identified as a cornerstone of successful leadership empowerment. Lastly, the study reinforces the paramount importance of leadership empowerment benefiting future prospects of the country and organizations which possess a deep understanding of developing resilience and the reinvention to build a better nation.

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