Advanced Research in
Social and
Behavioural Sciences

The Profile and Leadership Styles of Youth in Malaysia

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Profiling of youth is an important process in youth development as they are the future generation and leader of the country. As youth and leadership represent vital aspects in the development of the nations, it is therefore important to understand youth leadership styles for a better leading by their leaders. There are five leadership styles employed in this research which are autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional and transformational. The purpose of this paper is to review the profile of Malaysian youth and investigate the youth leadership styles. The quantitative method was used and data was collected through questionnaire with 461 data returned for analysis. Analysis was conducted using statistical software. The findings reveal that democratic dominate the other dimensions and autocratic scores the lowest. Therefore, it is concludes that Malaysian youth display various leadership styles but more preference towards democratic leadership style.

1. Introduction

The New Malaysia would mean an improvement for better government administration, rule of law and upbringing the democracy as said by Tun Dr Mahathir and marked the new progression in all aspects of Malaysia development as well in youth development. Young people are crucial segment for future development of the country, as the proverb says "youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but also the partners of today". The Malaysia Youth Policy is an improvement to the National Youth Development Policy (1997) which amends the definition of youth as those between 15 and 30 years. Currently, the total youth in Malaysia is estimated of 12.3 million which 6.5 million are male and 5.8 million are female which covered 38% percent of the 32.4 million of total population [8]. This segment of population which covers most of Malaysian is critical and significant for national well-being and country's future. With that in minds, youth generation has the ultimate power in their hands to steer the region in many aspect of nation formation such as politic, social and economy. Jalaluddin [14] claimed that "youth generation in Malaysia must be developed as homo intelligence youth which is generation of post-modern knowledge era, have high personality, smart in using

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knowledge for life progress and contribute to development of society and nation". From economic perspective, youth is a national asset whereby they act as the pillar for the continuation and transformation of the nation. The contribution of youth and their roles in the country's political, social, and economic have highlighted the need of youth to be engaged in various forms of activities and programs. This research aims to review the profile of youth and investigate the leadership style preferences among youth in Malaysia by selecting five leadership styles which are autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire, transactional and transformational.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Autocratic

Autocratic leaders are described as leaders who is firm in decision making, strict, dominate, force in action and directive. Furthermore, the leaders in this style have structured and organized the overall strategies and action need to be taken in advance, by outlining what needs to be done, when it should be done, and how it should be done, thus constraining followers or subordinates creativity and innovativeness [15]. The authoritarian leaders have absolute power over their subordinates and make decisions independently without discussing from any of group members [13,2]. There is no emotional interaction between the leaders and the followers. Lewin, Lippitt & White (1939) also claimed that "it is hard to change for someone from an authoritarian style to a democratic style". Moreover, this style is suitable when the crisis happened where the critical decision is needed or time constraints or where the leader is the experts among the group members [13]. Researchers found that decision-making under this authoritarian leadership style was less creative.

2.2 Democratic

The democratic leadership also known as participative leadership was the most effective leadership style among others [16]. Unlike autocratic, democratic leaders are generally like the involvement of group members in the decision making process by allowing each member to contribute and provide input or recommendation [2]. Nevertheless, democratic leader is basically held on the final decision in his hand but he will open up and encourage the team members to participate in discussion before the decision is made. Within this approach, the group members feel motivated, increased their skills and job satisfaction.

2.3 Laissez-faire

Gill [11] emphasized that "laissez-faire leaders are avoiding taking a stand, ignore the problem, do not follow up and refrain from intervening". It means the laissez-faire leaders delegate task and give absolute freedom to group members in decision-making in order to complete the task assigned and does not interface in the affairs of followers [3]. Furthermore, this factor of full range leadership represents the absence of leadership, or non–leadership because the leader take no responsibilities, avoiding involvement in decision making, give no feedback and ignoring the subordinates needs [13, 12,2]. However, " this style can be effective if the leader monitors performance, give feedback to team members regularly and the team members are highly qualified in area of expertise" [2]. Hussein Alkahtani *et al.*, [13] has suggested that for leaders to use this style when they have the full trust and confidence in the people below them.

2.4 Transactional

In addition, the transactional leadership refers to the situation whereby a person initiated a contact with others, in order to exchange valuable things. In other words, transactional leadership is explained as behaviours which are related to monitoring and rewarding [17]. Transactional leaders are in some extent similar with autocratic leaders in term of the task structuring and employees feel they had to bargain for power and benefits [12]. However, the transactional leader will identifies and clarifies job tasks for the followers and also communicate on how to successful execute of these tasks [4]. Moreover, transactional leaders evaluate and explain their goals to their subordinates and make suggestions on how to operate tasks. Bass [4] claimed transactional leadership could affect the employees' responses through their attitudinal and behavioural. As a result, the transactional leadership style deals with rewards and monitoring systems which is determined by the leader.

2.5 Transformational

Transformational leadership style is a leader who able to inspire positive changes in those who follow and raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality [7,1]. Nevertheless, transformational leaders have the ability to encourage their followers or subordinates to push themselves to perform beyond expectations [4, Bryman, 1992), promote acceptance and awareness of the reasons then motivate members to complete the task by looking beyond their own self-interest [5] and make sure that followers know the importance of sharing organizational goals and values (Burns, 1978). These leaders are concerned towards their team members' self-development and succeed by focusing in helping every member of the group. Moreover, transformational leaders not only oriented towards goal achievement as a mission and usually be described as energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate in person. Transformational leaders rise from the ranks by attracting and motivating the morals and values of followers.

3. Methodology

Basically, this study applied a quantitative study where the data were gathered from a population of the youth in Malaysia. The data were collected using a questionnaire designed based on the literature and adapted from the existing leadership instruments. A total of 576 questionnaires were proportionately distributed to all the state across Malaysia. 500 were successfully collected with 86.8% response rate that is considered high for a quantitative research [10]. Apart of 500 questionnaires returned, 461 were considered complete and analysed. The SPSS tool has been used to analyse the data.

4. Findings and Discussion
4.1 Profile of Malaysian Youth

The profile of respondents for this study is the Malaysian youth between the ages 15 to 30 years. This study reports some of the profiles of the Malaysian youth by looking on their personal details, education background and occupational background. The personal details were represented through demographics profiles of youth including age, gender, ethnicity, religion, marital status and state of origin as in Table 1.

Table 1
Personal Details

	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age	15-20	126	27.3
	21-25	198	43.0
	26-30	137	29.7
Gender	Male	234	50.8
	Female	227	49.2
Ethnicity	Malay	276	59.9
	Chinese	82	17.8
	Indian	37	8.0
	Orang Asli	3	0.7
	Kadazan Dusun	9	2.0
	Murut	1	0.2
	Bajau	11	2.4
	Indigenous Sabah	7	1.5
	Bidayuh	8	1.7
	Melanau	4	0.9
	Iban	3	0.7
	Indigenous Sarawak	4	0.9
	Others	16	3.5
Religion	Islam	313	67.9
	Budhha	67	14.5
	Hindu	31	6.7
	Christian	46	10.0
	Traditional (e.g: *Orang Asli)*	3	0.7
	Other	1	0.2
Marital Status	Single	358	77.7
	Married	97	21.0
	Divorced	6	1.3
Area of Living	Urban	334	72.5
	Suburban	127	27.5
State of Origin	Perak	54	11.7
	Selangor	63	13.7
	Pahang	22	4.8
	Kelantan	40	8.7
	Sabah	53	11.5
	Kedah	44	9.5
	Johor	53	11.5
	Labuan	2	0.4
	Melaka	30	6.5
	Negeri Sembilan	22	4.8
	Sarawak	21	4.6
	Perlis	4	0.9
	Terengganu	11	2.4
	Putrajaya	6	1.3
	Kuala Lumpur	12	2.6
	Pulau Pinang	24	5.2

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were at the age of 21 and 25 years old with 43%, while the rest of respondents were divided almost equally in another two categories which 29.7% age between 26 and 30 years old and 27.3% of youth were between 15 and 20 years old. The male respondent is 234 (50.8%) more than female with 227 (49.2%) respondents. This is consistent with the population of youth in Malaysia where 6.5 million are male and 5.8 million are women (Department of Statistic, 2018). Furthermore, the data indicates among youth is Malay youth (59.9%) while the rest are Chinese (17.8%), Indian (8%), Orang Asli (0.7%), Kadazan dusun (2%), Murut (0.2%), Bajau (2.4%), Indigenous Sabah (1.5%), Bidayuh (1.7%), Melanau (0.9%), Iban (0.7%) and Indigenous Sarawak (0.9%). While others ethnicities are Bisaya, Bugis, Buton, Siam, Kayan, Kedayan, Punjabi, Suluk and Toraja. In Malaysia the majority of the population are Malays and other ethnic group represented as minorities especially in Sabah and Sarawak. In keeping with the overall religious mix of the Malaysian population, a large majority of youth are Muslim with 67.9% and other minorities are Buddha (14.5%), Hindu (6.7%), Christian (10%), Traditional; i.e Orang Asli (0.7%) and other; Sikhism (0.2%). In terms of religious distribution, it follows the general demographic structure with Muslims are majority while others are minorities. Moreover, it seems that only 21% of youth are married while 77.7% of youth are single, as most of the respondents are at the age between 21 to 25 years old. It is the age where most of the youth trying to achieve their goal while further their studies in higher institutions. A small proportion of youth has already had their marriage ended due to the divorce. Also, the majority of youth chooses to stay in an urban area with 72.5% as compared to suburban area with only 27.5% with the distribution of the population shows that most of the respondent state of origin was from Selangor, Perak, Sabah and Johor with the percentage of 13.7%, 11.7%, 11.5% and 11.5% respectively. Then it follows by Kedah (9.5%), Kelantan (8.7%) and Melaka (6.5%). Country such Pahang, Labuan, Negeri Sembilan, Sarawak, Perlis, Terengganu, Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur and Pulau Pinang were below than 5 percent of each country.

4.2 Education Background

Table 2 represents the education background of youth in Malaysia from school to their highest academic qualifications. Most of them (79%) are from Sekolah Kebangsaan, 13.7% and 4.6% go to Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina and Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil respectively and others are from Sekolah Agama (1.7%), self-study (0.7%) and private schools (0.4%). While, 90.8% of youth having their secondary school in Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan with the highest stream taken by the students are in arts stream by 39.2% followed by science stream 31.1%. Through the data, most of the respondents have SPM/O-level and STPM/A-Level as their highest qualification at school with 78.5 % and 18% respectively. However, there are also some of our youth just ends their schooling after UPSR and PMR qualification. Among youth that succeed to get better results in their school qualification get to further their study in IPT. Most of them qualified in diploma and degree with 51% and 40.2% respectively.

4.3 Occupational Details

The data in Table 3 provides important information about employment among youth, including their current status, type of employment, employment status and their monthly income. The frequency and percentage are as follows. During the time of the survey, 45.1% are working while 14.8% of youth are not working. The data states that the rest of respondents are still studying and working while studying.

Table 2
Education Background

	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Primary School	*Sekolah Kebangsaan*	364	79
	Sekolah Agama	8	1.7
	Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina	63	13.7
	Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Tamil	21	4.6
	Self-Study	3	0.7
	Others (Private School)	2	0.4
Secondary School	*Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan*	413	90.8
	Sekolah Menengah Persendirian Cina	18	4.0
	Sekolah Mubaligh	2	0.4
	Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Agama	16	3.5
	Sekolah Agama Rakyat	5	1.1
	Self-Study	1	0.2
Stream in Secondary School	Technical / Vocational	52	11.5
	Science	141	31.1
	Arts	178	39.2
	Religion	23	5.1
	Accounting	50	11
	Others	10	2.2
Highest Academic Qualification (School)	UPSR	6	1.3
	PMR	10	2.2
	SPM/O LEVEL	362	78.5
	STPM/A LEVEL	83	18
Highest Academic Qualification (Higher Institution)	Diploma	123	51
	Degree	97	40.2
	Master	19	7.9
	PhD	2	0.8

Table 3
Occupational Details

	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Current Status	Student	173	37.5
	Working	208	45.1
	Not working	68	14.8
	Working while studying	12	2.6
Type of Employment	Entrepreneur	22	9.7
	Government	46	20.4
	Private sector	123	54.4
	Self-employed	29	12.8
	Housewives	6	2.7
Employment status	Permanent	165	75.7
	Contract	27	12.4
	Part time	26	11.9
Monthly income	<RM1,000	52	23.6

RM1,000-1,999	50	22.7
RM2,000-2,999	71	32.3
RM3,000-3,999	26	11.8
RM4,000-4,999	14	6.4
RM5,000-10,000	5	2.3
>RM10,000	2	0.9

The largest population of youth is working in the private sector with 54.4%. Only 20.4% of youth got the position in the government sector. Youth also seems interested in self-employed and entrepreneurship as about 12.8% and 9.7% starting their own business. Among all of the youth that have been working, 75.7% are permanent while the rest are contract and part time workers. Unfortunately, there are many more of the youth got monthly incomes below RM1,000 and RM1,999 with 46.3% which is higher. This shows that most of the youth earning rate is still below the wealth index.

Table 4
Mean and Standard Deviation

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Autocratic	3.09	1.05
Democratic	3.74	0.94
Laissez-Faire	3.45	0.88
Transactional	3.72	0.72
Transformational	3.71	1.20

As the result, the research has identified the leadership style that is perceived and desired by youth which the leaders can develop their style to influence their followers. On average, based on the mean as in Table 4.4, their scores are above the 3.0 level, which indicate the democratic leadership style was dominant over other styles with mean 3.74. While, the lowest score is belong to autocratic with value of 3.09.

5. Conclusion

The research explored on the profile of Malaysian youth and their preference of leadership styles. It is seemed that our youth perceived themselves more towards democratic leadership style which a leader that give empowerment to his subordinate to involve in decision making and considerate to others. However, less of them are not likely in preference of autocratic style. This is due to the absolute power control of leader towards their subordinates which non parallel with our democracy system of government. Thus, this research may conclude that the Malaysian youth display various leadership styles with higher domination on democratic leadership styles.

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