

ANALYZING THE SUBSTITUTES FOR LEADERSHIP: ARE THERE ANY DIFFERENCES AMONG ACADEMIC AND NON ACADEMIC STAFF?: CASE IN ANDALAS UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

This research has the purpose to find out and analyze the differences of substitutes for leadership among academic and non-academic staff. The research was conducted in the head office and each faculty of Andalas University. The questionnaires were distributed to 254 employees, specifically 161 non-academic staff and 93 academic staff using stratified random sampling method. The data analyzed using SPSS 16. The research found that there was the differentiation of substitute for leadership among academic and non-academic staff. Two of follower characteristics had high scored that most contributed to substitutes for leadership in academic staff; there were Ability Experience, Training & Knowledge and Professional Orientation. Meanwhile, for non academic staff, there were five characteristics had high score that mostly contributed to substitutes for leadership. There were two of follower characteristics: Ability Experience, Training & Knowledge Dimension; Professional Orientation; one of task characteristic which was Task Provided Feedback concerning accomplishment; and two of organizational characteristics which were Organizational Formalization; and Advisory and Staff Functions.

Keywords: *Substitutes for Leadership, academic staff, non academic staff*

INTRODUCTION

The dominant ideals about the organization and governance of universities have changed over the last few decades. Traditionally, organization theorists have conceptualized universities as complex (Damrosch, 1995), multifunctional (Parsons and Platt, 1973; Kerr, 1995) and loosely coupled organizations (Weick, 1976). Lately, the ways in which organizational and decision-making structures within universities are justified are informed by two broad set of ideas about university governance (Bleiklie & Kogan, 2007). According to the first, we may consider the university as a republic of scholars whereas the second regards the university as a stakeholder organization.

In the sense that university as a stakeholder organization, institutional autonomy is considered a basis for strategic decision making by leaders who are assumed to see it as their primary task to satisfy the interests of major stakeholders and where the voice of academics within the institutions is but one

among several stakeholders. Academic staff and non academic staff are the two types of stakeholders in university aside many others, such as students, alumni, users from business & public organization. Academic freedom is therefore circumscribed by the interests of other stakeholders, and decision making is taking place within more hierarchical structures designed to provide leaders the authority to make and enforce strategic decisions within the organization (Bleiklie, 2007). Consequently, the University tends to practice like business organization (Musselin 1999; Teixeira et al., 2004, Kogan et al., 2006, Fahmy, 2009). University as well as business organization, has a wide variety of individual, task, and organizational characteristics have been found to influence relationships between leader behavior and subordinate satisfaction, morale, and performance (Kerr and Jermier, 1978). Some of these variables (for example, job pressure and subordinate expectations of leader behavior) act primarily to influence which leadership style will best permit the hierarchical superior to motivate, direct, and control subordinates (Kerr and Jermier, 1978).

The relationship between leader behavior and subordinate readiness such as academic staff and non academic staff in university (situational instrumentality) can be moderated or influenced by the characteristics of subordinates and the readiness level of skill or knowledge. Organizational characteristics proposed as potential substitutes included the level of formality, inflexibility, highly active advisory and staff functions, closely knit and cohesive work groups, lack of leader control over rewards, and spatial distance between leader and subordinates (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). The final contingency approach suggests that situational variables can be so powerful if they actually substitute for or neutralize the need for the leadership (Kerr & Jermier, 1978). A substitute for leadership makes the leadership style unnecessary or redundant. In relation to this argumentation, the study has been conducted to find out and analyze the differences of substitutes for leadership among academic and non-academic staff in university, and the implications to university leadership style.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Leadership is influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purpose (Rost, 1993). Leadership occurs among people; it is not something done to people. Since leadership involves people, there must be followers (Daft, 2005). Leadership is defined according to their individual perspectives and the aspects of the phenomenon of most interest to them (Yukl, 1989).

There are wide approaches to leadership, one of them is contingency approach which focus on leadership style, the follower's nature, and situation's characteristics. Situational variables can be so powerful that they can actually substitute for or neutralize the need for the leadership (Kerr and Jermier, 1978). A "substitute" is defined to be a person or thing acting or used in place of another (Fratangelo, 1998). A "neutralizer" is defined as something which is able to "paralyze, destroy, or counteract the effectiveness of" something else (Fratangelo, 1998).

Kerr and Jermier's (1978) suggested the substitutes for leadership model, they had identified 14 characteristics of subordinates (ability/experience/knowledge, need for independence, professional orientation, indifference to organizational rewards), tasks (unambiguous/routine, methodologically invariant, provides its own feedback, intrinsically satisfying), and organizations (formalization, inflexibility, highly specified functions, cohesive work group, organizational rewards not within leader control, spatial distance between leader and subordinate) believed to neutralize and/or substitute for

relationship-and/or task-oriented leadership. Kerr and Jermier then presented results suggesting that, when certain substitutes for leadership existed, the leader's supportive behavior failed to significantly predict the criterion variables. They concluded that future leadership research should examine both main and interaction effects (that is, joint effects or moderators) of leadership and substitutes for leadership. They also urged future research to distinguish between direct and indirect (that is, mediation) leadership effects, to identify other relevant leader behaviors and other potential substitutes and/or neutralizers, distinguish between cause and effect in leader behavior, and to specify interaction effects (that is, joint effects or moderators) among substitutes and neutralizers.

In this study, the researchers used the substitutes for leadership that were modified by Nancy Pitner (1988). She revised Kerr's Substitutes for Leadership scale, from 14 became 13 characteristics to make the instrument useful and appropriate for research in educational settings. Two of Task Characteristics which were unambiguous and routine methodologically invariant, she combined became one characteristic, named as Unambiguous, routine, and methodologically invariant tasks.

Several studies examining the substitutes for leadership model have been conducted with varying outcomes (Howell and Dorfman, 1981, 1986; Kerr and Jermier, 1978; Podsakoff et al., 1996, b, 1993a, b, 1984). Results from a meta-analysis (Podsakoff et al., 1996a, p. 380) showed that the combination of the substitute variables and leader behaviors accounted for the majority of the variance in employee attitudes and role perceptions as well as a substantial proportion of the variance in in-role and extra-role performance. The study further found that, on average, the substitute for leadership uniquely accounted for more of the variance in the criterion variable than did leader behaviours. Following Podsakoff et al. (1996b, p. 261), the study also posits that the key to leadership effectiveness is the identification of those important situational or contextual variables that may "substitute" for the leader's behavior, so that the leader can adapt his or her behavior accordingly.

In this study, the research was conducted in the university setting where the leaders had two type of follower there were academic staff and non academic staff. In term of the nature of their work, they were different. In one side, the academic staffs were well known as experts, professionals, well educated and more independent in their working activities. On the other hand, non academic staffs had job that focus on how to support the academic staff, more involved in administrative matters. In this context, the leaders dealt with different situations, therefore the hypothesis was formulated as follow:

H₀: There is no significant difference of substitutes for leadership among academic and non-academic staff in Andalas University

H_a: There is significant difference of substitutes for leadership among academic and non-academic staff in Andalas University

METHOD

This research is a descriptive study to describe the characteristics of the variables. Descriptive studies are undertaken in organization to learn about and describe the characteristics of a group of employees, as for example, the age educational level, job status, and length of service, who working in a system (Sekaran, 2003). Sample in this study was processed by stratified convenience random sampling. The total of the sample were 254 that consist of 161 in non-academic and 93 for academic.

The data obtained through questionnaires, and processed by using Microsoft Office Excel to obtain frequencies of substitutes for leadership on employee and lecturer. The SPSS with the recent for windows program also had been used to analyze the differences of respondents in terms of substitute for leadership by obtaining One Sample T-Test. Items in questionnaire was adopted from Kerr and Jermier (1978) that had been modified by Pitner (1988) that consist of 13 characteristics: 4 for follower characteristics, 3 for task characteristic and 6 for organizational characteristics. The questionnaire using 5 scales from Almost always true (5) up to Almost always untrue (1). The maximum score of any dimension could be 5 and the minimum 1. The mean between 1 and 2.49 represented low leadership substitute, 2.50 to 3.50 represents moderate substitutes for leadership and between 3.50 until 5 represent high leadership substitute (Kerr and Jermier, 1978).

RESULTS

The validity testing for academic staff showed that from 58 questions, there were 21 items were not valid and deleted from the analysis because they had loading value less than 0.3. Meanwhile for non academic staff, there were 21 items deleted. Reliability test showed that all items were reliable. Hypothesis testing showed that the t-test found the significant differences at the significant level 0.000 which is lower than 0.05. H_0 is supported. It means there was a significant difference in substitutes for leadership between academic and non academic staff in Andalas University.

Table 1
Substitutes for Leadership Measurement: Academic staff and Non Academic staff

Dimension	Academic Staff		Non Academic Staff	
	Mean	Status	Mean	Status
Follower Characteristics				
Ability Experience, Training and Knowledge Dimension	4.02	High	3.89	High
Professional Orientation	3.52	High	3.52	High
Indifference toward Organizational Rewards	3.05	Moderate	2.92	Moderate
Subordinate Need for Independence	3.43	Moderate	3.19	Moderate
Task Characteristics				
Unambiguous, routine, and methodologically invariant tasks	3.2	Moderate	3.18	Moderate
Task Provided Feedback concerning accomplishment	3.47	Moderate	3.57	High
Intrinsically Satisfying Tasks	3.50	Moderate	3.33	Moderate
Organizational Characteristics				
Organizational Formalization	3.35	Moderate	3.64	High
Organizational Inflexibility	2.7	Moderate	2.74	Moderate
Advisory and Staff Functions	3.30	Moderate	3.53	High
Closely-knit , cohesive, interdependent work groups	3.01	Moderate	3.01	Moderate
Organizational Reward not within the leader's control	3.12	Moderate	3.14	Moderate
Spatial Distance between superior and supervisor	3.15	Moderate	2.92	Moderate

The result presented in Table 1 shows that for the academic staff, two follower characteristics have high score there are Ability, Experience, Training and Knowledge Dimension; and Professional orientation. It explains that those characteristics will affect the role of leader and acts as substitutes for leadership. By having the Abilities, Experience, Training and Knowledge Dimension, and professional orientation, the academic staff (lecturers) are able to work independent without leader's guidance. There are three characteristics that have potentiality as substitutes for leadership, there is subordinate need for independence from follower characteristics, and two characteristics from task characteristics which are task provided feedback concerning accomplishment and intrinsically satisfying tasks. The rest has score on moderate level at more than 3. It means the existence of leadership is not strongly needed, but certain situations the leaders should assist them. The lowest score is organizational inflexibility, in this situation the academic staff prefers to have strong interaction to their leaders.

Table 1 show that there are different characteristics of substitutes for leadership in academic staff and non academic staff. More substitutes for leadership in non academic staff, they are two follower characteristics similar to academic staff: Ability, Experience, Training and Knowledge Dimension; and Professional orientation. One of task characteristics which is Task Provided Feedback concerning accomplishment, and two of organizational characteristic which are organizational formalization, and advisory and staff function. Although, the rest characteristics have moderate score for both type of followers (academic and non-academic staff), but non academic staff need more assistance and the present of leaders in their activities compared to academic staff.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION

The result processed in one sample T-Test has shown there is a significant difference of substitute for leadership among academic and non-academic staff. The results shows the ability, experience, training, skill and knowledge was the most believed as substitutes for leadership to exist for both sample which are academic and also nonacademic. These factors make the role of leader could be substitutes and the academic staff don't really need leader to guide them in term of working area. By having the ability followers (academic and non-academic staff) already have capacity to teach and do their job description well, by having the experience they can learn from the past mistakes and will not make any further problems in the future. An experienced follower's has gained competence and acquired the skill to conduct the daily activities without the present of leadership. The other factor is the professional orientation that makes followers work professionally in finishing their task.

The lower score was organizational inflexibility for both academic staff and non-academic staff which shown the substitute for leadership received relatively low scores and would limit the probability of their functioning as substitutes. Organizational inflexibility which determines these dimension are "sometimes true and sometimes untrue." Therefore, these substitutes are not believed to exist, nor are they nonexistent in the Andalas University. There are 5 factors that make substitute for leadership happen in non-academic staff (employees) in Andalas University. Those are 1) Ability, Training, Experience and Knowledge, 2) Professional Orientation, 3) Performance Feedback, 4) Organizational formalization, and 5) Advisory of Staff Functions. These factors make the role of leader could be substitutes and the employees don't really need leader to guide them in term of working areas.

House and Mitchel (1974) suggest that individual, task and organizational characteristic will help to determine whether or not hierarchical leadership likely to matter. The categories of organizational characteristics for non-academic staff in Andalas University are having greater value compare to

academic staff. It was caused by the hierarchy of the organization that put non-academic staff as the main part in managing university organization.

The leaders in Andalas University need to consider potential substitutes when choosing their own job behaviors. The results of this study are that assessment of leadership substitutes for academic staff (lecturers) and non-academic staff (employees) in Andalas University. Academic staff, non-academic staff and leaders in university needs to work together in achieving the better result in their performance, since the characteristics of organizational, tasks and followers are at the level moderate. Leader should track their staff's performance regularly. Both parties should work together in both assessing and developing plans for improvement in Andalas University.

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