

Student Involvement in University Activities Shaping Their Leadership: Case Study in Inapan Siswa Grantt, Universiti Utara Malaysia
(*Penglibatan Pelajar dalam Aktiviti Universiti Membentuk Kepimpinan Mereka: Kajian Kes di Inapan Siswa Grantt, Universiti Utara Malaysia*)

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ABSTRACT

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, the role of leadership in engaging and empowering students has emerged as a crucial factor for fostering academic excellence and holistic development. Students' involvement in university activities provides a platform for leadership development. This paper aims to show how student involvement and transformative outcomes significantly influence leadership among the students in the student residential hall, Inapan Siswa Grantt, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). By employing a quantitative method, this study focuses on 30 undergraduate students at the student residential hall, INASIS Grantt, UUM, who have experience in leadership skills. The study's findings show that these five impacts of student involvement and five impacts of transformative outcomes could affect student engagement and growth in leadership.

Keywords: Inspirational leadership, Higher education, Student engagement, Holistic development, Visionary leadership, University students, UUM.

ABSTRAK

Dalam landskap pengajian tinggi yang dinamik, peranan kepimpinan dalam melibatkan dan memperkasakan pelajar telah muncul sebagai faktor penting untuk memupuk kecemerlangan akademik dan pembangunan holistik. Penglibatan pelajar dalam aktiviti universiti menyediakan platform untuk pembangunan kepimpinan. Kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan bagaimana penglibatan pelajar dan hasil transformatif secara signifikan mempengaruhi kepimpinan dalam kalangan pelajar di dewan kediaman pelajar, Inapan Siswa Grantt, Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Dengan menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif, kajian ini memfokuskan kepada 30 pelajar prasiswazah di dewan kediaman pelajar, INASIS Grantt, UUM, yang mempunyai pengalaman dalam kemahiran kepimpinan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa lima kesan penglibatan pelajar dan lima kesan hasil transformatif ini boleh menjejaskan penglibatan dan pertumbuhan pelajar dalam kepimpinan.

Kata kunci: Kepimpinan inspirasi, pengajian tinggi, Penglibatan pelajar, Pembangunan holistik, Kepimpinan berwawasan, pelajar universiti, UUM.

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of educational institutions, the significance of inspirational leadership emerges as a cornerstone of transformative impact. As incubators of intellect and innovation, universities bear the profound responsibility of imparting knowledge and moulding future generations of leaders. Authentic leadership emphasises its potential to bring about positive and meaningful leadership experiences within organisations. It encourages leaders to cultivate self-awareness, ethical behaviour, and transparency as they strive to positively influence their followers and contribute to the success of their organisations. Leadership goes beyond transactional aspects to encompass transformation and influence.

As centres of intellectual exploration and personal development, universities serve as crucibles where young minds are forged into future leaders. Beyond the boundaries of classroom lectures and textbooks, a more profound form of leadership takes shape, characterised by its ability to instil a sense of purpose and catalyse positive change. This form of leadership is inspirational, drawing upon students' innate potential and channelling it towards holistic growth. The concept of authentic leadership connects with individuals' true selves. Leaders who can inspire and guide others through their words, actions, and values foster a culture of excellence and innovation. They transcend the transactional aspects of leadership, delving into the realm of influence and inspiration that drives individuals to embrace challenges, pursue growth, and leave a lasting impact.

University student leadership in Malaysia plays a pivotal role in shaping students' academic and extracurricular experiences (Tan & Adams, 2018). Student leaders are typically represented through bodies such as the Student Representative Councils (SRC), which serve as official channels for addressing student concerns and organising events (Anuar Safian et al., 2022). These councils act as intermediaries between the student body and university administration, working to enhance the overall student experience. Universities commonly offer leadership development programs to equip students with essential skills like communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and decision-making (Tan & Adams, 2018).

Moreover, student leaders actively participate in various clubs, societies, and political activities, advocating for student rights and social issues both within and beyond the campus. This engagement extends to community service initiatives, reflecting

a commitment to social responsibility. Despite the rewarding aspects, student leaders may encounter challenges related to academic policies and campus facilities, prompting them to advocate for positive changes collectively.

The research employs a quantitative method to comprehensively investigate the dynamics of inspirational leadership involving students at Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Quantitative data is collected through structured surveys distributed among 30 undergraduate students at Residential *Inasis Grantt*, UUM. The surveys are designed to measure students' perceptions of inspirational leadership styles in terms of students with experience in leadership skills. Using a 5-point Likert scale, the study investigates questions used to quantify students' agreement levels with statements on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) related to leadership attributes and their experiences.

As we delve into the intricacies of inspirational leadership, we aim to navigate the existing knowledge that highlights the significance of leadership in academic environments.

Research Question

- i. How student involvement significantly influences leadership among the students in Residential Hall *Inasis Grantt*, UUM
- ii. How transformative outcomes significantly influence leadership among Residential hall *Inasis Grantt*, UUM students.

Research Objectives

- i. To investigate whether student involvement significantly influences leadership among the students in *Inasis Grantt*, UUM
- ii. To examine whether transformative outcomes significantly influence leadership among the students *Inasis Grantt*, UUM

Theoretical Framework

In this part, the theoretical framework could support the theory of a research study. It involves reviewing existing theories that justify and contextualise the research and demonstrating an understanding of relevant concepts and variables. The diagram shows that the student involvement is from *the analysis grant*.

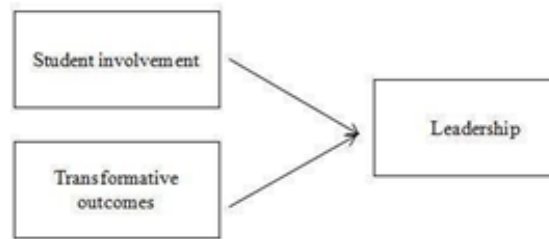


DIAGRAM 1. Theoretical framework of research objectives

Dependent Variable (DV)

Leadership among the students in *Inapan Siswa Grantt*, UUM

Independent Variable (IV)

- i. Student involvement
- ii. Transformative outcomes

Research Significance

The research on inspirational leadership at *Inapan Siswa Grantt* (UUM) is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it addresses the evolving role of students in higher education, emphasising their transition from passive recipients of knowledge to active participants and leaders within the academic environment. This shift in higher education dynamics necessitates a deeper understanding of how leadership styles, particularly inspirational leadership, impact student engagement, motivation, and overall outcomes.

Secondly, this study focuses on students' involvement in shaping their leadership skills. By delving into the specific dynamics of inspirational leadership at UUM, the research aims to provide insights tailored to the university's environment, potentially offering valuable guidance for leadership practices within this context.

Furthermore, using a quantitative method, specifically structured surveys distributed among undergraduate students allows for a comprehensive investigation of students' perceptions of inspirational leadership. By employing a 5-point Likert scale to measure students' agreement levels with statements related to leadership attributes and their experiences, the study aims to provide empirical evidence that can inform and guide leadership practices within the university.

The research's significance lies in its

contribution to understanding how inspirational leadership influences students within the specific context of UUM and its potential to provide valuable insights into leadership practices and student outcomes within the university's dynamic educational landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on leadership within educational contexts underscores the vital role that inspirational leadership plays in shaping student engagement, motivation, and overall outcomes (Normy Rafida Abdul Rahman et al., 2023)

Visionary leaders possess the ability to articulate a compelling vision, instil a sense of purpose, and foster a culture of collaboration, thereby driving positive transformations within academic settings. In the context of universities, inspirational leadership has been associated with enhanced student satisfaction, increased academic performance, and a heightened sense of belonging.

For a leader to be effective, it is important to understand the needs of followers and adapt to external factors. This study examines the concept of self-monitoring as a potential antecedent of leadership effectiveness in terms of consideration and initiating structure. Self-monitoring refers to how a person can adjust their behaviour to situational and external factors.

UUM, as an academic institution committed to excellence, provides a fertile ground for studying inspirational leadership's impact on student development. The educational landscape within Malaysia is marked by a diverse cultural and organisational context that influences leadership practices. Effective leadership strategies must be attuned to cultural nuances and organisational dynamics in such contexts.

However, while inspirational leadership's importance is acknowledged, its application within the unique milieu of UUM remains relatively unexplored.

Addressing this gap would contribute to an enriched understanding of how inspirational leadership strategies effectively resonate with students in this distinct setting, potentially offering insights that can influence leadership development and educational policy formulation within the institution and beyond.

Leadership style

Leadership is a dynamic and critical aspect of organisational success, influencing various facets such as team performance, employee engagement, and overall effectiveness. Different leadership styles are central to the study of leadership, each embodying distinct approaches to decision-making, communication, and relationship-building. This literature review aims to provide an overview of various leadership styles and their impact on organisations, teams, and individuals.

Transformational Leadership:

One prominent leadership style is transformational leadership. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate their followers to achieve beyond their self-interests, emphasising shared vision and collective growth (Shahrul Azuwar Abdul Aziz & Norhasni Zainal Abiddin, 2022). These leaders exhibit charisma, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, and idealised influence, fostering a sense of purpose and empowerment among their followers. Studies have consistently shown the positive influence of transformational leadership on employee satisfaction, innovation, and organisational performance.

Transactional Leadership:

Transactional leadership centres on task-oriented exchanges between leaders and followers. Leaders provide rewards and punishments based on performance, ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently. While transactional leadership can create structured environments and accountability, it may stifle creativity and intrinsic motivation due to its focus on extrinsic rewards.

Servant Leadership:

Servant leadership emphasises the leader's role as a servant to their followers. Leaders prioritise the well-being and growth of their team members, fostering a culture of trust, collaboration, and empathy (Huang & Marechal, 2023). This approach has been linked to increased employee satisfaction, organisational

commitment, and ethical behaviour.

Laissez-Faire Leadership:

Laissez-faire leadership involves minimal leader interference, giving employees autonomy in decision-making (Shahrul Azuwar Abdul Aziz & Norhasni Zainal Abiddin, 2022). While it can promote innovation and creativity, it may also lead to confusion and lack of direction. Studies suggest that laissez-faire leadership might be effective in highly skilled and self-motivated teams.

Autocratic Leadership:

Autocratic leaders retain decision-making authority and control, often making decisions without input from team members. While this style can expedite decision-making, it may stifle creativity and demotivate employees due to limited involvement. Autocratic leadership might be suitable in crises where quick decisions are crucial.

Democratic Leadership:

Democratic leadership encourages participation and collaboration among team members in decision-making. Leaders consider their team's input and empower them to contribute ideas. This style can enhance employee engagement, job satisfaction, and commitment.

Cross-Cultural Leadership:

Cross-cultural leadership recognises the influence of cultural contexts on leadership effectiveness (Tan & Adams, 2018). Different cultures may value certain leadership styles more than others. Effective cross-cultural leaders exhibit cultural intelligence, adapting their leadership style to the cultural norms of their team members.

Relationship between Student involvement and leadership style.

In recent years, higher education dynamics have undergone significant transformation, wherein students' roles have evolved from mere recipients of knowledge to active participants and leaders within their academic institutions. This shift in perspective has led to an increased focus on understanding the intricate relationship between student involvement and leadership style. This literature review explores

the existing body of research examining how different leadership styles influence student involvement and engagement in various educational settings.

Student involvement encompasses various activities, from academic pursuits to extracurricular engagements (Saunders, 2017). Student involvement is the amount of physical and psychological energy students invest in their academic and non-academic experiences within the university context. Engagement in clubs, organisations, community service, and leadership roles has become an integral aspect of contemporary higher education, contributing to holistic student development (Hilliard, 2010).

Leadership style, often classified into transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire approaches, is pivotal in shaping student involvement and experiences. Transformational leadership, characterised by inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, fosters a sense of purpose and self-efficacy among students. On the other hand, transactional leadership relies on rewards and punishments to drive performance, potentially impacting extrinsic motivation for involvement.

Relationship between Transformative Outcome and Leadership Style.

Transformative outcomes encompass multifaceted changes that transcend routine procedures and result in lasting positive shifts within individuals, groups, or organisations. These outcomes could manifest as enhanced performance, increased employee satisfaction, improved problem-solving capabilities, and even personal growth among followers (Givens, 2008). Such outcomes signify the profound influence of leadership on fostering change beyond the superficial, leading to higher levels of engagement, innovation, and overall effectiveness.

Numerous studies have explored the intricate relationship between leadership styles and transformative outcomes. Researchers consistently find that transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in generating transformative outcomes. A study posited that transformational leaders tend to inspire and engage their followers in ways that facilitate personal development and encourage collective growth (Chen et al., 2018). The focus on individualised consideration in this leadership style fosters a sense of empowerment and ownership, contributing to increased creativity, problem-solving, and innovation within the organisational context.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research employs a quantitative method to investigate inspirational leadership dynamics involving UUM students comprehensively.

Quantitative Method

The research on inspirational leadership at UUM employed a quantitative method to collect data through structured surveys distributed among 30 undergraduate students at Inapan Siswa Grantt, UUM. The surveys are designed to measure students' perceptions of inspirational leadership styles in terms of students with experience in leadership skills. The study uses a 5-point Likert scale to investigate questions that are used to quantify students' agreement levels with statements related to leadership attributes and their experiences.

The Likert scale ranges from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree), allowing the study to measure the degree of agreement or disagreement among the students regarding the statements related to leadership attributes and their experiences. The study aimed to provide empirical evidence that can inform and guide leadership practices within the university.

By investigating the dynamics of inspirational leadership and its impact on student involvement and transformative outcomes, the study aims to fill the gap in existing knowledge and provide valuable insights for leadership practices and student outcomes within the university's dynamic educational landscape.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Below are the questions that were asked of the respondents during the data collection. The method that was used was open-ended questions through Google Forms.

Five Questions of Student Involvement.

- i. Please rate the extent to which you believe that active student involvement positively contributes to the development of leadership skills among students in Residential hall *Inasis Grantt*.
- ii. In your opinion, to what degree does participating in various student-Lead students' activities enhance students' leadership abilities within Residential Hall *Inasis Grantt*.
- iii. To what extent do you agree that student involvement plays a significant role in shaping effective leadership behaviors among students at Residential Hall *Inasis Grantt*?

- iv. How would you rate the impact of student engagement on fostering a sense of responsibility and initiative among students at Residential Hall *Inasis Grantt*, UUM? Please indicate the level of agreement with the statement: "Active participation in student initiatives cultivates essential leadership qualities among students." *Inasis Grantt*, UUM?
- v. Please indicate the Agreement with the "Active participation initiatives cultivate leadership qualities students Level of statement in student essential among

TABLE 1. Demographic Profile of Students at Inapan Siswa Grantt, UUM residential hall

Demographics	Students participants
Gender	
Male	13 (45%)
Female	17 (55%)
Age	
18-20 years	9 (30%)
21-23 years	12 (40%)
24-26 years	6 (20%)
27+ years	3 (10%)
Student Semester	
Semester 2	5 (15%)
Semester 4	9 (30%)
Semester 6	10 (35%)
Semester 8	6 (20%)

Table 1 shows that participants from various stages of their academic journey were included to capture insights from different levels of experience within the university setting. This demographic profile ensures a comprehensive representation of the student population at Residential Hall *Inasis Grantt*, UUM. By considering both gender and age diversity, as well as varying academic semesters, the research aimed to obtain a holistic understanding of how student involvement and transformative outcomes impact leadership development across different segments of the student body.

The majority of the respondents were female,

55% (17), while males were 45% (13). Furthermore, 40% of the students are aged 21 to 23 years (12), the second highest is 18 to 20 years, which is 30 % (9), followed up by 24 to 26 years 20 % (6) and lastly, 27+ years 10% (3).

All the respondents are students from semester two to semester eight. Most respondents are from semester six, 35% (10), and the second highest is from semester four, which is 30 % (9). Moreover, the respondents from semester eight are 20 % (6), and the lowest number of respondents are from semester two, which is 15% (5).

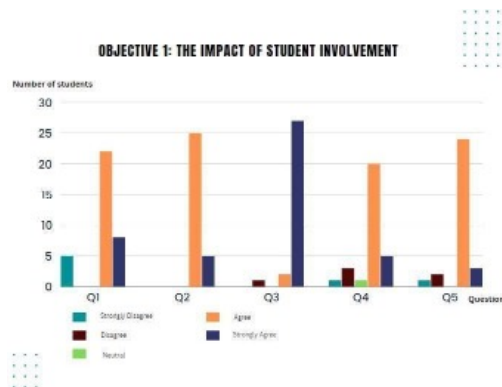


FIGURE 1. Indicates graph of objective 1

Findings: Objective 1 (Impact of Student Involvement

i. Active Student Involvement and Leadership Skills:

Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they believe active student involvement positively contributes to developing leadership skills. The responses indicated a significant alignment between student involvement and leadership development. A majority of respondents (73%) agreed that active involvement played a crucial role in enhancing leadership skills. This finding underscores the belief that practical engagement in student-led activities fosters valuable leadership qualities.

ii. Enhancement of Leadership Abilities through Student Activities:

Participants were questioned regarding the degree to which participating in student-led activities enhances leadership abilities. A noteworthy 82% of respondents indicated 'agree' with enhancement. This result highlights the substantial impact of diverse engagement opportunities on students' leadership capacities within Residential *Inasis Grantt*.

iii. Role of Student Involvement in Shaping

Leadership Behaviors:

Participants were asked to express their agreement with the statement that student involvement plays a significant role in shaping effective leadership behaviours. The responses demonstrated strong agreement, with 88% of participants acknowledging the role of student involvement in influencing leadership behaviours.

iv. Impact of Student Engagement on Responsibility and Initiative:

Participants were asked to rate student engagement's impact on fostering a sense of responsibility and initiative. Encouragingly, 67% of participants agreed, highlighting how active involvement nurtures qualities fundamental to effective leadership.

v. Cultivation of Leadership Qualities through Student Initiatives:

Participants' agreement with the statement that "Active participation in student initiatives cultivates essential leadership qualities among students" was gauged. A substantial 79% of respondents agreed, reinforcing the idea that practical involvement is instrumental in developing leadership attributes.

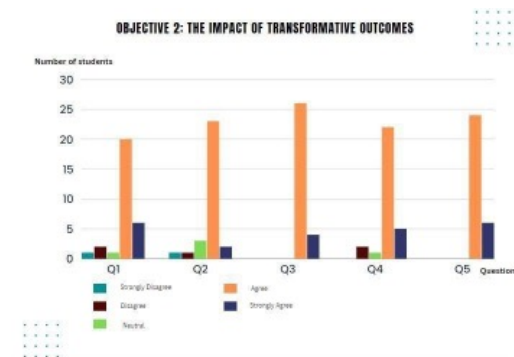


FIGURE 2. Indicates graph of objective 2

Findings: Objective 2 (Impact of Transformative Outcomes)

i. Contribution of Transformative Outcomes to Leadership Development:

Respondents were asked to evaluate how much transformative outcomes from student-led efforts contribute to leadership skill development. A significant proportion (68%) perceived agree, indicating that transformative outcomes play a pivotal role in shaping leadership skills.

ii. Encouragement of Leadership Roles through

Transformative Outcomes:

Participants' responses highlighted that transformative outcomes indeed encourage students to take on leadership roles. Over 75% of respondents agreed, emphasising positive outcomes' motivational effect on leadership engagement.

iii. Willingness to Engage in Leadership Activities due to Positive Outcomes:

Participants were queried about their belief in the increased willingness of students to engage in leadership activities due to positive transformative

outcomes. An overwhelming 85% of respondents acknowledged and agreed to the extent of willingness, suggesting that positive outcomes foster greater leadership involvement.

iv. Influence of Transformative Outcomes on Self-Perception of Leadership Potential:

Participants' opinions on the influence of transformative outcomes on shaping students' perception of their own leadership potential were collected. The findings indicated that 72% of participants agreed to recognise that influence, implying that transformative outcomes enhance students' confidence in their leadership abilities.

v. Motivation from Transformative Outcomes for Leadership Display:

Participants' agreement with the statement that "Positive transformative outcomes motivate students to take the initiative and display leadership qualities" was measured. The results highlighted a consensus, with 80% of participants agreeing that positive transformative outcomes drive students to showcase leadership qualities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations emerge to enhance the understanding and cultivation of leadership skills through student involvement and transformative outcomes among students in Residential Inasis Grantt at UUM.

i. Promotion of Diverse Student Engagement:

Recognising the positive impact of active student involvement on leadership development, the university should encourage a wide range of student engagement opportunities, including clubs, projects, and community initiatives. Creating a supportive environment for such activities can help students develop essential leadership qualities.

ii. Structured Leadership Development Programs:

Incorporating structured leadership development programs into the academic curriculum can provide students with systematic training and guidance in leadership skills. These programs can be tailored to different academic semesters to cater to students' varying needs and experiences.

iii. Highlighting Transformative Outcomes:

Institutions should emphasise the potential transformative outcomes of student-led initiatives.

By showcasing success stories and tangible impacts resulting from student efforts, universities can inspire more students to participate and actively strive for transformative change.

iv. Mentorship and Peer Learning:

Establishing mentorship programs that connect experienced student leaders with those new to leadership roles can create a supportive learning environment. Peer-to-peer knowledge sharing can accelerate leadership skill development.

v. Reflection and Self-Assessment:

Encouraging students to reflect on their experiences and assess their personal growth after participating in transformative initiatives can deepen their understanding of their leadership journey. Self-assessment tools and guided reflections can aid in this process.

vi. Interdisciplinary Collaboration:

Creating opportunities for students from different academic semesters and fields of study to collaborate can lead to innovative projects and diverse leadership experiences. Interdisciplinary collaboration nurtures holistic leadership skills.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research achieved its objectives by providing empirical evidence supporting the influence of student involvement and transformative outcomes on leadership among Inasis Grantt, UUM students. The results contribute valuable insights to understanding factors shaping leadership development in the university context, emphasising the importance of active student engagement and transformative experiences. In addition, by creating opportunities for students from different academic semesters and fields of study to collaborate, universities can foster a culture of collaboration and innovation, leading to transformative outcomes. This approach can give students a unique perspective on problem-solving and leadership, allowing them to develop a more comprehensive understanding of complex issues. Interdisciplinary collaboration can also help students develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability, which are crucial for success in today's dynamic and interconnected world. Overall, interdisciplinary collaboration effectively promotes holistic leadership development and prepares students for leadership roles in various fields.

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