

Self-Leadership Among Undergraduate Students: A Descriptive Study

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ABSTRACT

Leadership, in particular self-leadership, plays an important role for individuals, including undergraduate students. Consequently, research on self-leadership needs to be conducted to understand how they lead themselves while studying. This research study describes to what extent there is self-leadership among undergraduate students. Data was collected from undergraduate students attending a public university. Random sampling was used to determine the number of participants who were involved in this research. A questionnaire, the Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire (ASLQ), was used as the instrument for collecting data. In addition, a descriptive analysis has been employed to understand the level of self-leadership among undergraduate students. The result of this study revealed that 23% of undergraduate students had high self-leadership, 58.6% of undergraduate students had average self-leadership, and 18% of undergraduate students had low self-leadership. This study indicated that leadership development is crucial for undergraduate students studying at religious educational institutions.

Keywords: *self-leadership, undergraduate students, university, leadership*

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is not just a status or position given to someone; it is also about the ability to influence others to be directed. Syahril (2019) stated that leadership is an activity to influence the behavior of others so that they want to be directed to achieve certain goals. Moreover, leadership is defined as the ability to mobilize or motivate a number of people so that they simultaneously carry out the same activities and are directed towards achieving their goals. Leadership is also the process of moving a group or groups in the same direction without coercion (Syahril, 2019). According to Mattayang (2019) (2019), effective and efficient leadership will be accomplished if it is carried out based on defined functions and objectives. Meanwhile, according to Usman Effendi (Syahril, 2019), the function of leadership is to guide, build, motivate work, direct the organization, establish a good communication network, provide efficient supervision, and bring followers to the goals to be achieved in accordance with targets and planning.

Leadership style is the way that a leader leads his subordinates, which aims to influence members or subordinates to achieve a goal (Lande et al., 2022). Leadership is also the ability to influence and motivate people to achieve common goals. In addition, there are several factors that influence the leadership process in an organization, according to Komang Ardana and Ni Wayan Mujiati (Charis et al., 2010), including;

1. The leader's personal characteristic that is very prominent is intelligence. Generally, the leader will have a higher level of intelligence than the led. In addition, there are other characteristics such as intelligence, courage, and the ability to motivate others to do something.
2. The group is being led. The collection of personal characteristics of a leader as described above does not mean anything; before he uses it as a tool to interpret the goals that must be achieved by him, the leader must first be able to see how the group he will lead will behave.
3. Situation. Every leader will function in a situation, which is a human, physical, and time situation. Each change in situation requires a change in the type of leadership ability. With the understanding that each situation is unique, each situation requires a specific and flexible leader to deal with the overwhelming situation. Where the leader must be able to adjust to every condition in the group being led.

In other words, leadership is a person's ability to direct other people and groups to do something that has a good impact. This leadership concept can have a big impact on everyone who wants to be led. However, the target of leadership itself is not only other people but also oneself. A person can be said to have a leadership spirit if he is able to first emphasize the concept of leadership in himself, because this self-leadership is the basis for a person to be able to lead and direct others.

Before a person can lead others, she or he must be able to lead himself or herself in advance. It takes sincerity and honesty to recognize, greet, accept, interpret, direct, control, nurture, measure, reform, transform, celebrate, appreciate, and live oneself. That is the deepest meaning of self-leadership (Barus, 2022). Fundamentally, a person who is able to be a leader for themselves will have self-confidence, good knowledge of themselves, and the ability to reflect this in their behavior (Barus, 2022). Self-leadership is the self-leadership of a person who has proactive and creative habits and a humble attitude to respect all other forces that exist outside the self. Self-leadership enables individuals to have enthusiasm for seeing every difference and diversity with patience. In the context of higher education, self-leadership is a process in which students influence themselves to build self-direction and self-motivation, a humble attitude, respect for others, and the ability to process themselves in doing their tasks as students (Barus, 2022). Marthaningtyas (2016) as cited by Laili and Nisak (2022) mentioned that self-leadership is an effort to influence oneself to be able to mobilize oneself more in order to work better. Self-leadership means the ability possessed by each individual to influence, direct, supervise, and motivate themselves in order to achieve the expected goals.

The Nature of Self Leadership

Leadership is an aspect of psychology as well as a human trait, but not all people possess this trait (Rahayu & Agustina, 2022). According to Sutikno as cited by Rahayu and Agustina (2022), there are three types of leadership, namely:

a. Autocratic Type

This type of leadership considers that leadership is his (the leader's) personal right, so he does not need to consult with others and no one else should interfere.

b. Free Control Type

This type of leadership is the opposite of the autocratic type of leadership. In this type, the leader usually exhibits passive behavior and often avoids responsibility. A free-control leader tends to choose a passive role and let the organization run according to its own tempo. The nature of leadership in the free-control type seems invisible; the leadership is carried out by giving full freedom to the people led in making decisions and carrying out activities according to their will and interests, both individuals and small groups. Here, a leader has the belief that by giving the widest possible freedom to subordinates, all his efforts will quickly succeed.

c. Democratic type

The democratic type is the type of leader who is democratic, and not because the leader is democratically elected. The type of leadership in which the leader is always willing to accept and appreciate suggestions, opinions, and advice from staff and subordinates, through a forum for deliberation to reach an agreement, to achieve organizational effectiveness, the application of several types of leadership above needs to be adjusted to the demands of the situation. This is what is meant by situational leadership.

Strategies for Improving Self-Leadership

A leader is someone who can organize himself well. His attitude is not just based on his habits. There are several ways to foster leadership, one of which is by building self-confidence (Dewi, 2022). A strategy that a leader can use is to have a vision (visionary leadership), which is a leader who has the ability to create and articulate a vision that is realistic and trustworthy (Isnaini, 2020). Furthermore, he is a creative leader who can drive vision, spawn new ideas, design diverse methods, and produce innovative outputs. In addition, a creative leader can serve as a catalyst to drive beneficial change in the ecosystem through explosive, innovative change. In addition, future leaders are innovative leaders who are able to collaborate, interact with their employees, support a good level of teamwork, provide opportunities to share innovations, build an innovative culture by valuing employees' ideas, and involve employees in

decisions that are important to them and the organization, as well as be able to work closely with stakeholder officials (Isnaini, 2020).

If a person has self-leadership, that person will have a sense of optimism about his work, be able to manage himself in order to achieve the goals set by the organization and believe that if he does a good job then he will get good work results as well (Putra & Sintaasih, 2018). Improving self-leadership is very important especially for students. Through awareness and improvement of self-leadership, a student is able to control himself, motivate himself and direct himself to follow learning and direct himself to carry out all regulations consciously without the influence of others. This can be shown through the behavior and actions taken by students as a form of increasing leadership over themselves.

This study aims to determine the level of self-leadership ability of university students and how this affects their academic performance. The results showed that the majority of students have moderate and low self-leadership, which means they still need further development in this aspect.

METHOD

This study used descriptive quantitative research to investigate self-leadership among undergraduate students in a religious education institution. Descriptive research provides an account of the characteristics of individuals, groups, or situations that may form the first stage of more complex designs. The overall aim is to ‘discover new meaning, describe what exists, determine the frequency with which something occurs, and categorize information (Carson, 2005). Moreover, descriptive research, which is designed primarily to provide static pictures (Asamoah, 2014). Descriptive research allows the researcher to study and describe the distribution of one or more variables without regard to any causal or other hypotheses (Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019). Hence, this study describes the distribution of self-leadership variables.

In this study, there were 87 undergraduate students involved, of whom 29.9% were male and 70.1% were female. Those participants were chosen using stratified random sampling techniques. Data was collected by a questionnaire, the Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire (ASLQ), that was developed by Houghton et al. (2012). The Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire (ASLQ) consists of three dimensions, including behavioral awareness, task motivation, and constructive cognition. Moreover, each item of the instrument was measured on a Likert-type scale, which is from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). After calculating, the reliability of ASLQ was assessed by Cronbach's alpha, which is .753.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, 87 respondents' undergraduate students were involved. Moreover, collected data using questionnaire Likert scale with choice answers, such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, no agree, and strongly disagree agree. An instrument, The Abbreviated Self-Leadership Questionnaire (ASLQ), which has three dimensions consisting of behavior awareness and volition having tree items, task motivation having tree items, and constructive cognition having tree items. Based on the results of data calculations about self-leadership, the distribution of self-leadership variable is displayed as Figure 1.

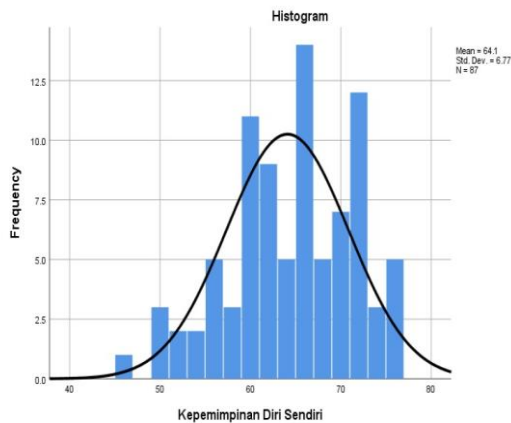


Figure 1. Histogram of Self-Leadership

The average (mean) score for "self-leadership" is 64.1. This indicates that, overall, the self-leadership scores of the sample tend to cluster around 64.1. The standard deviation (std. dev.) of 6.77 shows that there is a significant variation in self-leadership scores among individuals in the sample. The histogram indicates that the distribution of scores approximates a normal distribution (as seen from the black curve following the shape of the histogram). Most individuals have scores around the average, with fewer individuals having scores significantly below or above the average. The highest frequency peak is in the score interval of 60–65, indicating that many students have scores within this range. Scores range from approximately 40 to 80, with some individuals having very low scores (around 40–50) and others having very high scores (around 70–80). Overall, this graph shows that most individuals in the sample have a level of self-leadership around the average, with a distribution close to normal. There is some variation in scores, but it is not extreme, with most scores within a relatively narrow range around the average.

Categorization of self-Leadership ability levels of undergraduate students

After data analysis using descriptive categorical techniques, the results are presented in the Tabel 1. Based on Table 1, it was found that the majority, i.e., 51 students, or 58.6%, have self-leadership in the medium category, 20 students, or 23%, have self-leadership in the high category, and the remaining 16 students, or 18.4%, have self-leadership in the low category.

Table.1. Categorization of Student Self-Leadership

Kategorisasi	Aturan	Interval Skor	Frekuensi	%
Tinggi	$X > \mu + \sigma$	$X > 70.9$	20	23.0
Sedang	$\mu - \sigma \leq X \leq \mu + \sigma$	$57.3 \leq X \leq 70.9$	51	58.6
Rendah	$X < \mu - \sigma$	$X < 57.3$	16	18.4
Jumlah			87	100%

The study results show that most students have medium to low self-leadership. This condition aligns with existing problems where student leadership is low, as seen in poor time management, incomplete assignment completion, and a lack of timely submission. Additionally, there is a lack of courage among students to express opinions in class and other indications.

Student self-leadership is an important aspect of personal and academic development. Research conducted by Komives and Dugan (2014) found that involvement in student organizations and extracurricular activities emphasizing self-leadership development significantly enhances academic success and the personal skill development of students. This involvement not only builds leadership skills but also promotes better academic achievement (Komives & Dugan, 2014). Therefore, it is crucial for

students to enhance and develop self-leadership, which can be achieved through involvement in both internal and external campus organizations.

Additionally, applying individual self-leadership theories, where individuals manage their behavior and cognition well, makes them more capable of achieving set goals. Strategies such as goal setting, self-reward, and managing oneself for tasks that are not naturally motivating are essential parts of effective self-leadership (Shek et al., 2023). These strategies help students design effective study plans and stay motivated. This aligns with one indicator of self-leadership, which is the necessity to create and organize goals and targets to be achieved. Following this, having awareness, volition, and work motivation to achieve these goals and targets is essential. Thus, self-leadership is a key component that not only enhances students' personal well-being but also supports their academic achievement. Developing self-leadership can provide students with the skills needed for success in academic and professional life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that most students had low self-leadership, and only a few of them had high self-leadership. Accordingly, two suggestions are provided as the following:

1. To improve and develop self-leadership, undergraduate students studying on campus need to participate in both internal and external organizations.
2. University leaders may design activities or training programs to develop student leadership.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to those who contributed to this research, especially to the participants who provided valuable data. We hope that the results of this study may provide a meaningful contribution to science and society.

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