Holistic Leadership: The Islamic Characteristic of Malaysian Gifted Learners in Pusat Genius

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Abstract: Leadership is a crucial characteristic that empowers Gifted Learners (GL) to understand responsibility. This study is a qualitative study which aims to explore the Islamic leadership characteristics’ levels among Malaysian GL during the presentation of their assignment by grouping. Researchers selected 10 participants to lead a group and, conducted an interview session after they have done their presentation. This article is aimed to distinguish the component of Islamic leadership outlines amongst Malaysian GL and how they show their responsibility in their task accomplishment of Islamic Education. This study contributes by helping GL to build confidence and nurture their leadership potential as future leaders.

Keywords: Islamic characteristics, leadership, Gifted Learners (GL), task accomplishment

1. Introduction

A society’s civilization development lies in the quality of generation steering the country’s leadership. The effort to build the quality of youth leadership, teenagers, is crucial. They are the assets that will fill the needs of national leadership for the continuity of future development. Society’s attention towards the quality of youth leadership, which focuses on gifted and talented (GL) learners, indeed needed (Bisland, 2004). The issue is following society’s awareness of the need for having leaders who are ready to assume the responsibilities of leading the nation.

GL learners are found to have the ability to be excellent leaders because they are said to be able to encourage and influence other students around them (Karne & Stephens 1999). Moreover, Robert (2013) puts forth that leadership is a must for GL learners. He further emphasises that as how students that have talent in the field of visual arts and sports, students who demonstrate talent in leadership is a necessity to build his leadership skills as well. The potential of leadership must be identified; in fact, their talent must be nurtured and given opportunities to be developed in various settings. For that, The National Association for Gifted Children (2010) suggested that institutions involving GL learners must provide an environment where they can nurture leadership characteristics through involvement in various communities and societal activities. What is more important is that GL learners must be allowed to identify and be aware of their potential to allow them to contribute to society. If the leadership talent is not extracted and well-nurtured, the individual who perhaps born gifted, may not develop to make him someone who is sufficiently talented (Gagné 2009).

GL are known as individuals who possess high intellectual ability and have competency in solving problems. Gagné (2009) defines gifted students as individuals who have a natural ability or potential, and this ability can be developed into becoming talent through the environment and other factors. The gifted individual’s natural ability includes a mental ability that covers the intellectual, creativity, socio-affective, and perceptual, as well as physical ability that includes sensory-motor aspects. Leadership is one of the natural abilities found as talent in communication aspects, which involves the ability for empathy, creativity in using persuasive ability to influence others. The ability and talent are parallel with the leadership definition by Terry (2006). It states that leadership is the activity of influencing others so that they voluntarily collaborate to achieve the group’s purpose.

About ability, Renzulli’s (1978) mentioned gifted and talented students’ behaviour; they are usually able to set three primary groups of their natural human traits. The three groups are the portrayal of above-average cognitive abilities, huge task commitment, and realization of high-level creative ability in areas of their interest. Moreover, students who possess great leadership skills are seen as great individuals. They can share global leadership characteristics such as managing groups, driving and motivating others, solving critical problems creatively, using practical communication skills and grasping opportunities in a relationship. Meanwhile, flexible in thinking and acting, quickly understanding fuzzy concepts, efficient in structuring goals and objectives and evaluating group process to achieve a particular objective is also the positive attitudes which
consider as a credibility leader (Bisland 2004, Feldhusen & Bleiss 1994, Karnes & Bean 1996). Previous studies also linked GL students' leadership traits with the competency in managing emotions, the ability to use intelligence, creativity in making critical consideration when solving problems (Chan 2003, Karnes & Bean 1996). In short, almost all GLs' traits listed are primary qualities that become the foundation in constructing the personality of a leader.

According to Phillip (2009), indeed, the issue of leadership among GL is lack of concerned due to their attitude. The problem which is common to GL is the way they isolate themselves in the group activities. Perhaps, the issue of gifted is seen by most people as brilliant individuals that do not require guidance and advise. Kamis et al. (2019) mentioned that the cognitive perspective for GL is needed to be guided from both sides, parents and teachers. Otherwise, the future developments for GL appeared as a failure for the rest of their life. The guidance of leadership needs to be focused in the context of cognitive thinking. Perhaps, the teacher cannot observe their cognitive thinking. However, the reflection of the cognitive thinking appears as the attitude in learning. For example, as the leader in a group, presenting the task or the social interaction with friends. This situation appears while discussing in the classroom and others related behaviours which influenced individual personality to accomplish group assignment such as presenting the lesson in front of the classroom. The information from every person in the group needs to be gathered in one presentation. According to Gagne(2009), the GL are depend on the effort of teacher and parent to nurture their attitude and guide them well. The ability to realize the self-potential can develop leadership talent that can then influence other individuals or groups to achieve their goals (Roberts, 2013).

2. Problem Statement

The character of GLs' leadership is often connected with the personal characteristics of the students themselves. Some of the characters that catalyse the quality of GLs’ leadership, according to Karnes and Bean (1996), as an GL, they prefer the challenging life, either in the situation of learning outside the classroom or in the situation in the classroom. GL are also willing to prepare themselves as discipline learners and obey their teacher in the classroom. Although it has been recognised that producing leadership intelligence within the GL is required, Sternberg (2004) found that studies related to GL often disregard especially in this viewpoint. Chan (2003) mentioned that the attitude of GL needs to be planned carefully, especially related to the accomplishment of completing the task in the classroom in the learning session.

The results of leadership research among GL are found to focus on personality elements that include the characteristics of the energy and the motivation of the leaders that can provide to the interests of the leadership group (Staw & Basade 1993). Individuals who have personality traits characterised as positive affective, for example, positive mood control, high energy, and impulsive power. The competent in interpersonal relationships and contribute more to group activities. The ability to explain the power of a strong leadership personality enables individuals to successfully incorporate fun and energy into group activities (Staw & Basade 1993). Leadership qualities are also associated with other qualities. Such as, the ability to understand others, interact easily with others, demonstrate high social skills, ability to identify the purpose of a matter and express it clearly, the ability to listen to others, the ability to give clear and adequate instructions, to exercise and to be a responsible leader and to coordinate the work of several individuals.

There are other gifted abilities, people who can make decisions and support their team members when needed, some of them can give their views and suggestions, bold new things, and a tendency to control their friends in any situations (Aliza & Hamidah 2009 and Rosadah, Noriah & Melor, 2009). Those who are high in positive affectivity are more likely to search for happiness in a life of meaning and pleasure than those who are not. In short, individuals with positive affective traits and characteristics are more likely to engage in effective leadership behaviours. Thus, informing the GL to the advantages of these features can build self-confidence and be a catalyst for potential growth in their leadership.

According to Duke (2011) and Sisk (2000), leadership characteristics can be developed. One approach to develop leadership skills and drive leadership competency among GL is to start with the awareness of leadership qualities among students, followed by various activities to help inculcate leadership quality. This approach is in line with Karnes & Bean's (1996) view that the process of building quality leadership needs to be continued through a variety of exposures and experiences of the curriculum at every developmental stage. Duke (2011) further emphasizes this kind of effort does not lie in the position of the chief or leader, but rather in the formulation and implementation of the curriculum. Besides, Duke (2011) stresses that the key toward developing student leadership potential lies not only in the leadership posts or leadership ranks. Still, the experiences being involved in planning and executing the planned activities.
3. Conceptual Framework

Based on Figure 1, this study looked at the behaviours of GL during the group-task accomplishment of the presentation in the lesson of Islamic Education. According to Rifki (2000), the Islamic leadership is based on Al-Imamah Taklif Wa La Tashrif which means that leadership is conducting an order that follows the guidelines of Al-Quran and As-Sunnah without abusing power. As a leader, the person of GL needs to give orders equally to his group. He must be a humble person, and as well as a trustful person to lead his group in presenting the group assignment. Starting with the attitude of humble, positive involvement and deeply and widely shared beliefs and values. He will ensure that every person in his group receives a parallel task in the accomplishment of the group assignment.

4. Research Objectives

The present study intends to identify the Islamic characteristics or potential of Islamic leadership during the accomplishment of presentation Islamic Education by group. The objectives of the present study are; a) to explore how the distribution of task is given to every member of the group is fair based on leadership efficacy; b) to understand the concept of working relationship in presenting the lesson of Islamic Education.

5. Leadership Construct Literature Review
To understand more clearly regarding the present study. The researchers mention literature review that related to leadership construct such as the following:

Table 1. Leadership Construct Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Elaboration</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Efficacy</td>
<td>This feature demonstrates the ability to successfully influence one's decision/someone's work productivity. The individual has a strong internal belief that he can achieve success in the tasks he performs. This internal trust is associated with a high degree of confidence in the areas of knowledge, skills and ability to lead. (Sherer, Maddux, Mercandante, Dunn, Jacob, &amp; Rogers 1992)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Relationship</td>
<td>This attitude indicates that an individual has the ability to build good working relationships with others in achieving the same goals. These good working relationships are rendered through active participation and commitment in completing tasks together with others. (Meyer, &amp; Alen, 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Motivation</td>
<td>Qualified individuals are energetic and diligent, and tend to aspire and appreciate the virtues of social power and influence, to achieve their vision or goals. They also demonstrate the ability to develop networks and alliances to gain the cooperation of others, resolve conflicts in constructive ways, and to influence others by example and lessons. (Chan &amp; Drasgow. 2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>These individuals influence others by using rational thinking to develop performance and satisfaction among followers. Their goals are achieved through convincing skills, exchanging of ideas, demonstrating skills in favor of others, unifying, inspiring, and consulting. (Yukl &amp; Falbe 1990)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Behaviour</td>
<td>These individuals engage in three different types of leadership behaviors, (1) supportive leadership that is involved in making others feel valued, (2) leadership that emphasizes the importance of the goal of engaging in a determination to achieve the group's goals or achievements, and (3) supervision of engaging in behavior facilitates the achievement of goals through activities such as scheduling, coordinating, planning, and allocating resources such as tools, materials, and technical knowledge. (Burke, Stagl, Klein, Goodwin, Salas &amp; Halpin. 2006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>These individuals can be trusted because they reflect the trustworthiness, integrity, honesty, justice and concern for the well-being of others (McAllister 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiality</td>
<td>These individuals have a strong sense of teamwork. They provide support and cooperation in creating peace and harmony within the team. (Matsumoto, Weissman, Preston, Brown, &amp; Kupperbausch 1997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesiveness</td>
<td>These individuals demonstrate the ability to work closely with others. They have a high level of concern. There is a sense of cohesion in working relationships that creates a comfortable working environment (Pearce 2004)</td>
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Table 1 shows that there is something lack that should be concerned about the issue of leadership here, which is the issue of holistic of Islamic leadership among the GL in Malaysia. None of the studies mention of Islamic leadership. Based on those issues, the researchers intend to explore this investigation by employing the research methodology that will be explained in the next section.

6. Research Methodology

The present study employed a qualitative study, with an interview as an instrument to collect the data. The Muslims participants for the interview consist of 10 persons. According to Yin (2011), there is no limit of selecting the participants for the interview, as long as the data-saturated. Before conducting the interview, the researchers selected randomly ten persons from 45 individuals who have done the test of character in leadership. Table 2 shows the 14 characters in leadership.

Table 2. The test of character in leadership

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The researcher conducted interview session for 10 participants. This interview is aimed to achieve the objectives of the present study; a) to explore how the distribution of task is given to every member of the group is fair based on leadership efficacy; b) to understand the concept of working relationship in presenting the lesson of Islamic Education. The 10 participants are allowed to lead group of presentation in Islamic Education. Every leader needs to do the task based on the check list as shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. The check list of tasks for every leader and members of the group.](image)

Every participant needs to lead a group, and a teacher will observe the process of presentation. The teacher possesses a checklist. The checklist includes; the tasks of every leader and the task of every member of the group. This checklist is to ensure the group task is accomplished and completed. After the presentation is completed well, the researcher conducted an interview session for every leader of the group.

7. Result

The result of the finding indicates the presentation task or the assignment of the group can be done by the empowerment of the leaders, which is humble that have Islamic characteristic in leadership (Rifqi, 2000). Regarding the first objective, the Islamic leadership plays a prominent role in the empowerment of the group, this factor related to leadership efficacy because this factor influences the work productivity. The participants, as
leaders confessed that they could manage and conduct their group to achieve the target in the presentation. This finding supports Sherer et al. (1992) that mentioned in the previous section. This suggestion is in line with Kamiset al. (2019) that the GL can make social interaction with friends and, they as GL can influence their group and they have skill and knowledge to lead the group.

Meanwhile, to fulfill the second objective of the present study, which is; to understand the concept of working relationship in presenting the lesson of Islamic Education. In this second objective, from the interview conducted by the researcher. This finding shows that a working relationship is needed to achieve the goal of the group. Every leader of the group agreed with this concept, and this result supports Meyer & Alen (1997) that a working relationship is needed to improve the achievement of the group. The ability to realize the self-potential can nurture and develop leadership talent that can then influence other individuals or groups to achieve their target. This opinion supports the view that leadership is a must for GL as they serve as role models to other students in their environment (Roberts, 2013).

8. Discussion

A quote by John C. Maxwell, a famous American author on leadership, says that "A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way and shows the way." Hence, the implications of this finding on the quality of leadership of Muslim youths are enormous, especially in the aspects of personality development. Adolescents are the generation who will inherit leadership responsibilities in various fields in the future. The tremendous or severe regarding civilization for the most country depends on leadership. Indeed, Malaysia as well lies in the direction of the younger generation. Therefore, the GL, in particular, Malay (Muslim) students, need to be aware of the importance of building quality leadership to meet the needs of future leaders. The strengthening of leadership qualities among Malay (Muslim) students is necessary as it is a claim in Islam, whereby every human being born on this earth acts as a Caliph or leader. (Surah al-Baqarah verse 30). The need for an Islamic approach in leadership is best described in a hadith reported by Abdullah ibn Umar: The Prophet Muhammad said, "Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock." (Sahih al-Bukhari 6719, Sahih Muslim 1829). (Amin, H. 2018) Moreover, the GL have been rewarded with high potential for intelligence (IQ), enabling them to think critically and to deal with complex issues. (Chan 2003, Karnes & Bean 1990). That ability goes beyond the limits of the average student or teenager's thinking ability, which is an essential quality in a leader. Therefore, they need to realize that the high IQ gift is an award that should be polished and empowered through involvement in various social activities.

In this regard, leadership character development needs to be nurtured with a sense of responsibility. For the quality of this leadership to be reflected in every field or activity involved. This ongoing leadership development effort is aimed at elevating the dignity of Islamic youths among the GL, a quality national asset, to fill the country's leadership's future. As a matter of fact, "leadership in Islam is a trust from Allah" (quran.com/6/165) as stated in the Holy Quran (6:165), Surah al-An'am, verse 165, whose English translation is as follows.

"And it is He who has made you as successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful."

Therefore, efforts to cultivate these leadership qualities must start from the beginning of education. In the context of education in schools, this needs to be integrated into the school curriculum so that the intellectual development and personal development of the GLS' leadership can go hand in hand. The GLS education management through the Guidance and Counselling Unit, in particular, should be committed to providing intervention programs to educate Malay (Islamic) students on leadership responsibilities and accountability. The program should start from the early stages of entry into the educational program and continue throughout the educational process. The process of building is in line with the views of Karnes & Bean (1996), who stated that the process of building quality leadership must continue through various exposures and experiences of the curriculum at every stage of development.

Also, the academic committees need to play a role by integrating leadership components in each subject. The integration of leadership characteristics and skills in each of the subjects and co-curriculum activities through a leadership-across-curriculum approach should be implemented commercially in the GLS education program. The process of generating experience in developing this leadership identity also needs to balance the involvement of male and female students and the composition of the various ethnicities. This process is to enable the GL students to learn and emulate their various partners' character and leadership skills via observation throughout their involvement in activities. The importance of emulating others' success via observations known as vicarious
learning (Bandura 1994) has proven to have a profound effect on the quest for self-efficacy (trust/self-confidence), which is one of the characteristics of a leader's character. Even the leadership role of the Malay students and the male students should be highlighted. This situation was followed by findings showing that Malay students were still at a moderate level and those female students outperformed boys in almost all leadership positions.

To that, the management needs to provide ample opportunity to build the charismatic character of the GLs’ leadership. These efforts can be made through the encouragement of various co-curricular activities from the local (school, district, national) to the international level. A flexible learning environment and broad exposure to experience, such as involvement in national and global community service programs, can drive GL’s excellence in generating leadership qualities, as Duke (2011) has noted. In the effort to build leadership qualities rather than residency, on the other hand, the experience of being involved in designing and executing planning is crucial in developing student leadership potential.

Generally, as a contribution to society, the results of this study can be used. Perhaps, as a guide by youth organisations by improving the effectiveness of leadership in their organisations. Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia or Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) and Program Rakan Masjid can be a platform to train these youngsters so that they have the knowledge, skills, and high moral values. This kind of training programs can improve the interpersonal skills of these Muslim GL youths. Hence, these Muslims youngsters will be motivated to use their creativity and innovation to meet the needs and solve the problems faced in their everyday life.

Overall, the findings of this study show that GL have strengths and weaknesses in the aspects of leadership study. The advantages they possess need to be recognized and strengthened while their shortcomings need to be fixed and improved. Build-up and upgrades efforts need to be planned through smart and talented education programs. All educational programs at all school levels, especially character development programs or student identities, need to focus on planning activities towards building a lead character. The planned activities should leverage leadership talent, provide opportunities to generate individual or group leadership responsibilities, and extend leadership involvement at various levels: school, district, state, national and international levels. An Integrated Leadership Program Model needs to be developed to meet the GLs' leadership development needs. This Integrated Leadership Program model should include leadership knowledge components, leadership skills, and competencies, as well as components of leadership development and attitude values. The implementation of the program should involve the application of theory into practice, where students can incorporate the knowledge and skills learned through the experience of leading a planned activity or program. They also need to be exposed to working with leaders in their chosen leadership (Leadership Program). Besides, the concept of 'One Student One Person' needs to be introduced as an effort to build self-leadership among GL. This study contributes to help GL to build confidence and nurture their leadership potential as future leaders.

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