

Sy e d A r a b i I d i d

# SCHOLARSHIP IN TRANSFORMATION

Syed Arabi Idid  
**SCHOLARSHIP**  
IN TRANSFORMATION

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Media and Democracy Research Group  
(Politics and Security Research Niche)

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## INTRODUCTION

A leader can be found in social systems that include family, society, organization, country and etc. In Islam, even among a group of travelers (a minimum of three people), Prophet Muhammad has encouraged them to select one person among them as a leader. These indicated that having a leader is necessary because the systems or a group of travelers could be managed properly. In doing so, what important is to have an effective leader. An effective leader is a part of other people, normally called group members or team members. Research has suggested that effective leadership is largely a function of either the traits possessed by individuals, or the patterns of behaviour they demonstrate (Geier, 1969; Bass, 1990).

This chapter tries to find out the attributes of political candidates that are looked upon by youth in making their decision during election process. Youth votes count. So, the objectives of this study are to find out (1) the proportion of youth who voted for candidate as compared to party affiliation, issues that are raised, and others; (2) perceived important attributes of political candidates, and (3) the attributes of political candidates that are decisively influencing voting preference among youth.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The leaders emerged from different ways. It depends on how we look at the processes of leadership formation. Two approaches to looking at leaders are from the attributes of the person and from the behavioral aspect.

There are many leadership theories that help explain the types of leaders and leadership styles. For example, A Great Person Theory posited that great leaders possess key traits that set them apart from most other human beings. Although not all studies confirmed what have been theorized, Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) after reviewing a large number of studies confirmed the theory that certain traits, together with other factors, are the elements that make them special. According to them, leaders do not have to be great men or women by being intellectual geniuses or omniscient prophet to succeed, but they do need to have the right unique traits that are essential for being leaders. The characteristics of successful leaders include drive; honesty and integrity; leadership motivation; self-confident; cognitive ability; knowledge of the business; creativity and flexibility.

Unlike the trait approach, an effective leader according to the behavior approach is explained by leadership styles: (1) autocratic versus participative leadership behavior and (2) person-oriented versus production oriented leaders. Autocratic style is the extent to which leaders permit subordinates to take part in decisions while participative style is the extent to which leaders direct the activities of subordinates and tell them how to carry out their jobs. According to Muczyk and Reimann (1987) none of the styles of leadership (directive democrat, directive autocrat, permissive democrat, and permissive autocrat) is best under all conditions and in all situations. Thus, situational leadership theory was developed.

A leader needs to adopt style that match with the needs of organization in producing effective leadership. Another leadership behavior that demonstrates a person as an effective leader is when the leader concerns with both production and people in the organization (Greenberg & Baron, 1995). Although the two dimensions are largely independent that a leader may be high on concern with people but low on concern with production, considering both people and production dimensions in leadership behavior have positive consequences on work-related attitudes and productivity of the organization.

The trait and behavioral approaches provide some theoretical background on effective leadership according to western perspective. Western theorists also came up with the concept of emergent leader based on popularity

the person concerned, where networking and linkages place an important role on the leader to being known. In political scenario, this type of leadership tends to exist.

In Islam, the concern is more on the role as a leader. All mankind are created to serve Allah and one of the responsibilities is to be a *Khalifah* on this earth. As human beings are given *amanah* to carry out the responsibilities to be a leader on this earth, this suggests that everybody is created by Allah with a tendency to be a leader. Another uniqueness of leadership in Islam is the question of accountability. Leaders are provided with divine guidance how to be a responsible leader in the family, society, organization, and country. Those leaders who transgress from *shariah* (Islamic Law) and bring followers away from the right path will be punished in hereafter. Thus, effective leadership in carrying the task to achieve fundamental objectives of the group is essential in order to manage the smooth running of the group.

Malaysia is an Islamic country, practicing both Islamic law and civil law. Many would like the leaders to have good attributes. This is because no religion encourages unethical behavior on the part of the leaders. So, a study was conducted to elucidate the preferred types of leaders by youth.

#### METHODOLOGY

The study made use of survey research design method. Data were collected using interview schedule. It was conducted from 2 - 5 October 2007. A small number of youth residents were chosen to represent the youth population in each location. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the youth of Parliament and DUN locations. Respondents took around 30 to 40 minutes to answer the questions. The respondents were selected based on the strata given to the enumerators. A total of 978 respondents were randomly selected, stratified using race and gender, from four states, namely, Penang (Kepala Batas and Bukit Bendera), Kelantan (Kota Bharu and Machang), Selangor (Gombak and Serdang), and Kuala Lumpur. The data were analyzed using SPSS WIN 12.0. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for the study. For descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used while for inferential statistics, one-sample t-test, independent t-test, and discriminant analysis were used. Factor analysis and reliability test were also used for exploring the items used for the study.



**Reliability Test and Factor Analysis**

Table 1 presents the reliability test for the 20 items used in determining important attributes of political candidates that are suitable for national leadership characteristics considered for this study. Results reveal that two factors emerged where F1 consists of 12 items and F2 comprised of 8 items. Factor 1 is labeled Personality Attributes while Factor 2 is labeled as Demographic Characteristics. Factor 1 has an Eigen Value of 5.872 with Percentage of Variance Explained of 29.357 and its Alpha Cronbach value of 0.8962. Factor 2, on the other hand, has an Eigen Value of 3.269 with Percentage of Variance for 16.343 and Alpha Cronbach value of 0.777. Both Factors are distinct and orthogonal in nature and the items fall under each factor are reliable measures of the factor concerned. No items were deleted for the study.

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Factor Loadings of Attributes of Political Candidates

No.	Attributes of Candidates	Mean (SD)	F1	F2	Communality
<b>A</b>	<b>Personality Attributes (F1)</b>				
1	Friendly	3.31 (0.70)	0.442	0.300	0.483
2	Keep to promises	3.58 (0.56)	0.668	0.194	0.480
3	Able to voice out opinion diligently	3.56 (0.56)	0.670	0.175	0.489
4	Liked by people	3.55 (0.54)	0.678	0.173	0.540
5	Have a lot of useful ideas	3.62 (0.51)	0.730	0.083	0.495
6	Visionary/far-sighted	3.64 (0.51)	0.703	0.031	0.555
7	Fair	3.65 (0.49)	0.745	0.016	0.481
8	Just	3.58 (0.51)	0.691	0.061	0.510
9	Credible	3.63 (0.51)	0.712	0.055	0.475
10	Mature	3.60 (0.53)	0.684	0.084	0.475

11	Ethical and morally sound	3.67 (0.49)	0.720	0.086	0.526
12	Trustworthy	3.67 (0.53)	0.694	0.105	0.492
<b>B</b>	<b>Demographic Characteristics (F2)</b>				
13	Highly educated	3.40 (0.77)	0.179	0.360	0.160
14	High income	2.69 (0.86)	-0.044	0.476	0.228
15	Same race as you	2.47 (0.92)	0.177	0.793	0.660
16	Same religion as you	2.48 (1.00)	0.247	0.755	0.631
17	Same gender as you	2.06 (0.80)	0.029	0.718	0.516
18	Same political ideology as you	2.65 (0.91)	0.168	0.654	0.456
19	Same state as you	2.22 (0.84)	-0.075	0.631	0.404
20	Religious	3.29 (0.86)	0.367	0.379	0.274
	<b>Eigen Value</b>	-	<b>5.872</b>	<b>3.269</b>	-
	<b>% Variance</b>	-	<b>29.359</b>	<b>16.343</b>	-
	<b>Alpha Cronbach</b>	-	<b>0.896</b>	<b>0.777</b>	<b>0.861</b>

#### Demography Characteristics of the Respondents

Slightly more than half of the respondents are male (53.4%) while the rest (46.6%) are female (Table 2). The respondents consist of mainly Malay (52.8%), followed by Chinese (41.5%) and Indian (5.7%). The proportion of the overall youth decreases as their age increases. The respondents comprise of an almost equal number belonging to single (48.3%) and married youth (51.7%). More than one-third of the respondents (39.8%) were educated with STPM/HSC. More than half of the respondents (53.9%) are Muslim. Almost half of the respondents (49.7%) belong to the RM500-RM2000 income bracket. Almost half of the respondents (49.7%) come from family having income between RM2000-RM4000 income brackets.

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics

No.	Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1	<b>Gender:</b>		
	Male	522	53.4
	Female	456	46.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>100.0</b>
2	<b>Race:</b>		
	Malay	516	52.8
	Chinese	406	41.5
	Indian	56	5.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>100.0</b>
3	<b>Age (yr):</b>		
	21-25	299	30.6
	26-30	291	29.8
	31-35	220	22.5
	36-40	168	17.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>100.0</b>
4	<b>Status:</b>		
	Single	455	48.3
	Married	487	51.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>942</b>	<b>100.0</b>
5	<b>Highest Education:</b>		
	UPSR/Primary 6	17	1.7
	PMR/SRP/LCE	62	6.4
	SPM/SC	387	39.8
	STP/HSC	55	5.7
	Certificate (Polytechnic/etc)	105	10.8
	Diploma	184	18.9
	Degree	162	16.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>972</b>	<b>100.0</b>

6	<b>Religion:</b>		
	Islam	527	53.9
	Christian	122	12.5
	Buddhist	252	25.8
	Hindu	67	6.9
	Others	10	1.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>100.0</b>
7	<b>Individual Monthly Income:</b>		
	No Income	168	17.2
	RM1-500	46	4.7
	RM501-1000	173	17.7
	RM1001-2000	286	29.3
	RM2001-3000	199	20.4
	RM3001 and more	105	10.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>100.0</b>
8	<b>Family Monthly Income:</b>		
	Less than RM1000	80	8.3
	RM1000-2000	160	16.6
	RM2001-3000	257	26.6
	RM3001-4000	223	23.1
	RM4001-5000	119	12.3
	RM5000 & more	126	13.1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>965</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Election Status of Youth

Table 3 presents youth election status. More than three-quarters of the respondents are registered voters (77.9%). Those who are not registered yet claimed that they are busy (21.9%) and not interested in politics (12.4%). However, they claimed that they intend to register (65.2%). From the 768 registered voters, 72.7% had gone for election at least once (39.6%). More than one quarter of the respondents (27.0%) has yet to go for election. Almost two-thirds of the respondents (61.8%) are not interested in politics.

Table 3: Youth Election Status

No	Election Status	Percentage	Total
1	<b>Registered Voter:</b>		
	Yes	77.9	768
	No	22.1	210
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>978</b>
2	<b>Reason for not registering:</b>		
	No interest	12.4	26
	Wasting time	2.9	6
	No time to register/busy	21.9	46
	No change	1.0	2
	Lazy	3.8	8
	Never go for election	5.7	12
	Others	8.6	18
	No response	43.8	92
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>210</b>	
3	<b>Had gone for election:</b>		
	Yes	72.7	558
	No	27.3	210
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>768</b>
4	<b>Intend to register:</b>		
	Yes	65.2	137
	No	34.8	73
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>210</b>
5	<b>No. of times gone for election:</b>		
	0	27.0	207
	1	39.6	304
	2	16.7	128
	3	12.0	92
	4	4.6	35
	5	0.3	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>768</b>

<b>Interested in Politics:</b>		
Yes	38.2	374
No	61.8	632
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>978</b>

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study are presented according to the objectives of the study.

#### Factors Influencing Voting

Three major factors do influence voting during a national primary election. Table 4 reveals that one-third of the respondents feel that candidate plays an important role in deciding what to base on for their voting decision. It is found that almost one-third of the respondents would vote based on candidate attributes. Almost half of the respondents (46.5%) would vote for party regardless who the candidate is, while almost two-fifths of them would prefer to vote based on issue raised during campaign period.

Table 4: Factors Influencing Voting

Factors Influencing Voting	Frequency	Percentage
Party	455	46.5
Candidate	323	33.0
Issue	175	17.9
Others	25	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>978</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### Perceived Important Attributes of Political Candidates

In most cases, the chosen political candidates will become national leaders. There are important characteristics of the leaders that are aspired by youth to rule the nation. As such 20 attributes of leaders are posed to the youth to rate in terms of their importance to them from 1 as 'not very important', 2 as 'not important', 3 as

'important' and 4 as 'very important'. Table 5 presents the results whereby certain attributes are found to be important to the youth. It is found all the personality attributes are perceived to be important for political candidates who in turn will be leaders, once they are chosen by the people to represent their constituency. Such attributes, according to perceived importance, are ethical and morally sound, fair, trustworthy, visionary/far-sighted, credible, have a lot of useful ideas, just/firm, mature, keep to their promises, liked by people, can voice opinion diligently, and friendly.

The two demographic characteristics of the political candidates that are thought to be important by the respondents are highly educated and religious. Other attributes are perceived as not important (Table 5).

Table 5: Perceived Important Attributes of Political Candidates

No.	Attributes of Candidates	Mean (SD)	Overall Percentage	t*	df	p
A	<b>Personality Attributes</b>					
1	Friendly	3.31 (0.70)	82.75	13.445	953	0.000
2	Keep to promises	3.58 (0.56)	89.50	31.406	953	0.000
3	Able to voice out opinion diligently	3.56 (0.56)	89.00	30.784	953	0.000
4	Liked by people	3.55 (0.54)	88.75	30.980	953	0.000
5	Have a lot of useful ideas	3.62 (0.51)	90.50	36.539	953	0.000
6	Visionary/far-sighted	3.64 (0.51)	91.00	38.158	953	0.000
7	Fair	3.65 (0.49)	91.25	40.959	953	0.000
8	Just/firm	3.58 (0.51)	89.50	34.600	953	0.000
9	Credible	3.63 (0.51)	90.75	37.811	953	0.000
10	Mature	3.60 (0.53)	90.00	34.598	953	0.000
11	Ethical and morally sound	3.67 (0.49)	91.75	42.092	954	0.000

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12	Trustworthy	3.67 (0.53)	91.75	38.627	953	0.000
<b>B</b>	<b>Demographic Characteristics</b>					
13	Highly educated	3.40 (0.77)	85.00	15.931	954	0.000
14	High income	2.69 (0.86)	67.25	-11.127	954	0.000
15	Same race as you	2.47 (0.92)	61.75	-17.604	952	0.000
16	Same religion as you	2.48 (1.00)	62.00	-16.030	953	0.000
17	Same gender as you	2.06 (0.80)	51.15	-35.684	950	0.000
18	Same political ideology as you	2.65 (0.91)	66.25	-11.614	952	0.000
19	Same state as you	2.22 (0.84)	55.50	-28.438	951	0.000
20	Religious	3.29 (0.86)	82.25	10.171	953	0.000

On a 4 point scale, where 1= not very important, 2=not important, 3=important, 4=very important

\*Test value=3.0

Table 6: Independent t-test between Candidates and Others in terms of Attributes of Political Candidates

No.	Attributes of Candidates	Variable*	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
<b>A</b>	<b>Personality</b>							
1	Friendly	1	312	3.25	0.76	-1.726	952	0.084
		0	642	3.34	0.69			
2	Keep to promises	1	312	3.53	0.62	-1.764	952	0.078
		0	642	3.60	0.54			
3	Able to voice out opinion diligently	1	312	3.52	0.62	-1.506	952	0.132
		0	642	3.58	0.53			



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4	Liked by people	1	312	3.49	0.60	-2.268	952	0.024
		0	642	3.58	0.52			
5	Have a lot of useful ideas	1	312	3.58	0.53	-1.457	952	0.145
		0	642	3.63	0.51			
6	Visionary/ far-sighted	1	312	3.63	0.51	-0.069	952	0.945
		0	642	3.64	0.52			
7	Fair	1	312	3.66	0.49	0.409	952	0.683
		0	642	3.65	0.50			
8	Just/firm	1	312	3.59	0.51	0.154	952	0.877
		0	642	3.58	0.52			
9	Credible	1	312	3.64	0.51	0.462	952	0.644
		0	642	3.62	0.52			
10	Mature	1	312	3.61	0.54	0.507	952	0.613
		0	642	3.59	0.53			
11	Ethical and morally sound	1	312	3.69	0.49	0.875	953	0.387
		0	643	3.66	0.50			
12	Trustworthy	1	312	3.65	0.55	-0.559	952	0.571
		0	642	3.67	0.53			
<b>B</b>	<b>Demographic Characteristics</b>							
13	Highly educated	1	312	3.35	0.81	-1.431	953	0.151
		0	643	3.43	0.76			
14	High income	1	312	2.64	0.90	-1.136	953	0.251
		0	643	2.71	0.86			
15	Same race as you	1	312	2.48	0.99	0.345	951	0.731
		0	641	2.46	0.90			
16	Same religion as you	1	312	2.46	1.09	-0.466	952	0.641
		0	642	2.49	0.97			
17	Same gender as you	1	310	2.13	0.89	1.878	949	0.061
		0	641	2.02	0.77			
18	Same political ideology as you	1	312	2.57	1.00	-1.964	951	0.051
		0	641	2.69	0.89			

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Same state as you	1	311	2.21	0.90	-0.187	950	0.852
	0	641	2.22	0.82			
Religious	1	311	3.23	0.94	-1.250	952	0.211
	0	643	3.31	0.83			

\*1=Candidate, 0=Others

Further analysis reveals that only 55.2% of the attributes are able to be classified according to whether the respondents would vote for candidates or not. However, based on Table 7, the discriminating factors for deciding to vote for candidates are according to the following attributes, namely, liked by people, same ideology, friendly, same gender, keep to promises, have a lot of useful ideas, able to voice out opinion diligently, and highly educated. There is a mixture of personality attributes as well as demographic characteristics of the candidates that can be used in predicting the winning candidates.

Table 7: Structure Matrix for Discriminant Analysis between Candidates and Others in terms of Attributes of Political Candidates

No.	Attributes of Candidates	Function 1
1	Liked by people	-0.403
2	Same political ideology*	-0.346
3	Friendly	-0.327
4	Same gender as you*	0.326
5	Keep to promises	-0.308
6	Have a lot of useful ideas	-0.279
7	Able to voice out opinion diligently	-0.258
8	Highly educated*	-0.248
9	Religious*	-0.226
10	Have high income*	-0.191
11	Ethical and morally sound	0.139
12	Trustworthy	-0.101
13	Mature	0.081
14	Same religion as you*	-0.072

15	Fair	0.065
16	Same race as you*	0.056
17	Credible	0.050
18	Visionary/far-sighted	-0.033
19	Same state as you*	-0.017
20	Just/firm	0.005

\* *Demographic characteristics (F2)*

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that even though almost half of the youth would vote for party, one-third of them would also consider candidate as an important consideration when selecting a political candidate, who in turn would be national leader if he/she won the election for his/her constituency. Therefore, party and candidate play an important role in the nomination of candidate for each constituency.

Perceived important attributes of political candidates preferred by youth are more towards personality attributes than of demographic characteristics. All the personality items are considered important by the youth for the candidates to possess. Such attributes are in line with leader attributes of the Traits Theory and the Great Person Theory. Therefore, the candidate should be friendly, keep to promises made, able to voice out opinion diligently, liked by people, have a lot of useful ideas, visionary/far-sighted, fair, just/firm, credible, mature, ethical and morally sound, and trustworthy. The candidate is of an advantage if he/she is highly educated and religious, too.

The differentiating factor between those who would vote for candidate than those who would vote for party and issues is gender. The former would prefer candidate who is similar to him/her, that is, male youth would vote for male candidate while female youth would vote for female candidate. In addition, those youth who would vote for party and issues would also take into consideration political candidates who are friendly, keep to promises, able to voice out opinion diligently, have a lot of useful ideas, liked by people, highly educated, and have the same ideology to them.

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