



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**A COMPARISON OF GENDER ON LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ITS
RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

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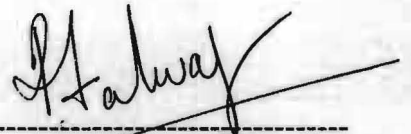
**A COMPARISON OF GENDER ON LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ITS
RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT**

TING SIEW MING

**This project is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Science with Honours
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The project entitled '*A Comparison of Gender on Leadership Styles and Its Relationship towards Organizational Commitment*' was prepared by *Ting Siew Ming* and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (*Human Resource Development*)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgement	i
Table of Contents	ii-iv
List of Tables	v
List of Figures	vi
Abstrak	vii
Abstract	viii
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION	
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of Study.....	2
1.2 Problem Statement.....	4
1.3 Research Questions.....	5
1.4 Research Objectives.....	6
1.4.1 General Objective.....	6
1.4.2 Specific Objectives.....	6
1.5 Hypothesis of Research.....	7
1.6 Conceptual Framework.....	8
1.7 Definition of Term.....	9
1.7.1 Glass ceiling effect.....	9
1.7.2 Transformational Leadership.....	9
1.7.3 Transactional Leadership.....	10
1.7.4 Organizational Commitment.....	10
1.7.5 Affective Commitment.....	10
1.7.6 Continuance Commitment.....	11
1.7.7 Normative Commitment.....	11
1.8 Significance of Research.....	12
1.9 Limitation of Research.....	13
1.10 Summary.....	13

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0	Introduction.....	14
2.1	Concepts Related to The Study.....	14
2.1.1	Concept of Leadership.....	14
2.1.2	Concept of Transformational Leadership.....	15
2.1.3	Concept of Transactional Leadership.....	16
2.1.4	Concept of Organizational Commitment.....	17
2.1.4.1	Components of Organizational Commitment.....	17
2.2	Theories and Models Related to the Study.....	18
2.2.1	Social Role Theory.....	18
2.2.2	Contingency Theory.....	18
2.2.3	Full Range of Leadership Model.....	20
2.2.4	Middle-affective Dependence Theory.....	22
2.3	Previous Studies Related to the Study.....	22
2.3.1	The relationship between transformational and transactional leadership styles...22	
2.3.2	The relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment.....23	
2.3.3	Leadership styles of men and women.....	25
2.3.4	Preferred leadership style.....	25
2.4	Summary.....	26

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0	Introduction.....	27
3.1	Research Design.....	27
3.2	Research Location, Population and Sample.....	28
3.3	Research Instrument.....	28
3.4	Pilot Test.....	30
3.5	Reliability and Validity.....	32
3.6	Data Collection Procedures.....	33
3.7	Data Analysis.....	34
3.7.1	Descriptive Statistics.....	34
3.7.2	Inferential Statistics.....	34
3.8	Summary.....	36

CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.0	Introduction.....	37
4.1	Results.....	37
4.1.0	Demographic Characteristics of Respondents.....	37
4.1.1	Position of Respondents.....	38
4.1.2	Gender of Respondents.....	39
4.1.3	Race of Respondents.....	40
4.1.4	Academic Qualification of Respondents.....	41
4.1.5	Respondents' Length of Service.....	42
4.1.6	Respondents' Income.....	43
4.1.7	Respondents' Marital Status.....	44
4.2	Hypothesis Testing.....	44
4.3	Summary.....	56

CHAPTER 5 - SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.0	Introduction.....	57
5.1	Summation of Study.....	57
5.2	Implications of Findings.....	59
5.2.1	Contribution for the literature review.....	59
5.2.2	Contribution for the leaders.....	59
5.2.3	Contribution for the HR Practitioners.....	59
5.3	Recommendations.....	60
5.4	Future Research Direction.....	60
5.5	Limitation of Study.....	61
5.6	Conclusion.....	61
	References.....	62
	Appendix.....	66

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Five-point Likert Scales	29
Table 3.2 Alpha Coefficient for Each Section in the Questionnaire	30
Table 3.3 Cronbach's alpha and its internal consistency	33
Table 3.4 Interpretation of the Correlation Coefficient, r	35
Table 3.5 Summarization of statistical method used	36
Table 4.2.1 Relationship between genders of leader possessed transformational leadership styles and its impact on organizational commitment	45
Table 4.2.2 Relationship between genders of leader possessed transactional leadership styles and its impact on organizational commitment	46
Table 4.2.3 Relationship between transformational leadership styles and gender of leader	48
Table 4.2.4 Relationship between transactional leadership styles and gender of leader	49
Table 4.2.5 Relationship between transformational leadership styles and organizational commitment	51
Table 4.2.6 Relationship between transactional leadership styles and organizational commitment	52
Table 4.2.7 Relationship between followers and leadership style preferred	53
Table 4.2.8 Relationship between genders of respondents and preferred gender of leader	55

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework	8
Figure 2 Contingent Model	19
Figure 3 Full Range of Leadership Model	20

ABSTRAK

PERBANDINGAN ANTARA JANTINA DALAM GAYA KEPIMPINAN DAN HUBUNGANNYA TERHADAP KOMITMEN ORGANISASI

Ting Siew Ming

Gaya kepimpinan adalah satu komponen yang sangat penting bagi sebuah organisasi untuk mencapai matlamat dan daya saing mereka serta memaksimumkan modal insan. Pekerja boleh memilih gaya kepimpinan yang berbeza dan jantina yang berbeza untuk menjadi pemimpin mereka dalam organisasi mereka. Objektif utama kajian ini adalah untuk membandingkan gaya kepimpinan pemimpin lelaki dan perempuan serta melihat gaya kepimpinan yang berbeza sama ada mempunyai kesan terhadap komitmen organisasi. Kajian keratan rentas telah digunakan. Kajian ini merupakan kajian kuantitatif yang dijalankan di sebuah pusat membeli-belah di Kuching, Sarawak. 40 responden telah dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik persampelan bertujuan untuk menjawab soal selidik. Satu kajian rintis telah dijalankan sebelum kajian sebenar dijalankan. Instrumen yang digunakan boleh dipercayai. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan pada perbandingan jantina dan kepimpinan gaya dan kesannya kepada komitmen. Didapati bahawa pemimpin lelaki yang mempunyai gaya kepimpinan transformasi mempunyai lebih berkesan terhadap komitmen organisasi daripada pemimpin wanita. Selain itu, lelaki dan perempuan mempunyai kedua-dua gaya kepimpinan transformasi dan transaksi. Di samping itu, terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara gaya kepimpinan dan komitmen. Berdasarkan dapatan kajian, kebanyakan pekerja lebih suka pemimpin wanita dan juga gaya kepimpinan transformasi. Kesemua penemuan dalam kajian ini turut disokong oleh kajian-kajian sebelum ini yang berkaitan mengenai topik ini. Sebagai kesimpulan gaya kepimpinan yang dimiliki oleh pemimpin-pemimpin mempunyai kesan yang besar terhadap komitmen organisasi.

Kata kunci: jantina, perbandingan, gaya kepimpinan, hubungannya, komitmen organisasi

ABSTRACT

A COMPARISON OF GENDER ON LEADERSHIP STYLES AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Ting Siew Ming

Leadership styles are a very important component for an organization to accomplish their goals and competitiveness and maximize human capital. Employees may prefer different leadership styles and different gender to be their leader in their organization. The main objective of this study was to compare leadership styles of male and female leaders and to see different leadership styles whether have a significant impact to organizational commitment. Cross sectional study was used in this research. This is a quantitative study which was conducted in a hypermarket and department store, Kuching, Sarawak. 40 respondents were chosen by using purposive sampling technique to answer the questionnaires. A pilot study was done before the real study was conducted. The instruments used are reliable. The results showed that there is a significance relationship on the comparison of gender and leadership styles and its impact to organizational commitment. It was found that male leader who possessed transformational leadership style had more effectual towards organizational commitment than female leader. Besides, male and female possessed both transformational and also transactional leadership styles. In addition, there is a significant relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment. Based on the findings, most followers prefer female leader and also transformational leadership styles. All the findings in this study had been supported by the previous studies which related on this topic. It is concluded that leadership styles possessed by the leaders had a significant effect towards organizational commitment.

Keywords: gender, comparison, leadership styles, relationship, organizational commitment

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Leadership is a most crucial role in which influences minds of followers to commit in an organization and helps the organization move forward to achieve the identified goals. Effective leadership is a key factor in the life and success of an organization.

Nowadays, the topic of gender and leadership has become popular issue in the workplace. The number of working women is continuously rising and also taken leadership roles in almost all of sectors including education, medication, government, business, the nonprofit community, and social movements (Northouse, 1997). It is not the glass ceiling effect that prevents women achieving senior leadership roles. They can successfully struggle to prove their worth in the workplace by balancing both motherhood and career commitment.

With this dramatic increasing of women in position of leader in the workplace leads many researchers had ensued those questions whether women and men leaders differ in their behavior and leadership style (Stanford, Oates, & Flores, 1995). Besides, many researchers also conducted their studies about interrelation between leadership styles and organizational commitment.

1.1 Background of Study

In the past years, many studies related to the leadership had been conducted by various researchers because leadership had always become the main focus by parties such as human resource practitioners and management. Generally, leadership is an extremely adored and valued commodity. According to Sani and Maharani (2012), leadership plays a key role and made vast changes in overall organization to support organization to accomplish their goal. Without reflecting the gender, individuals who possess leadership ability should take precedence recruited by every company because employers believe that these people can give unique property to their organizations.

There are many sights of leadership styles including transformational style, transactional style, charisma style, directive style, supportive style, participative style, achievement oriented style, autocratic style or democratic style. Bass's study had mentioned the theory of transformational and transactional leadership has evolved since the mid-1980s (as cited in Rowold, 2013). Transformational and transactional leaderships are commonly used by many researchers as a leadership paradigm in determining the leadership styles possess in different gender of leader and also the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment.

For the purpose of this study, transformational and transactional leadership styles become the central focus to compare the gender on leadership styles and its relationship towards organizational commitment. As the characteristics of these two leadership styles are greatly different, it is interesting to find out the followers' preference on gender of leader possess leadership styles that may influence their organizational commitment in an organization.

In America, women are now holding 5.0 percent of Fortune 500 CEO positions and 5.3 percent of Fortune 1000 CEO positions based on the list of women CEO (Catalyst, 2014). Apart from that, Grant Thornton's International Business Report (IBR) shows that the percentage of women in senior management in Malaysia is still in the top 10 economies. Russia comes out as the country with the highest percentage of women in senior management (46%), followed by Botswana, Thailand and Philippines (all 39%) (Grant Thornton International, 2012).

A lot of researchers had debated on gender-leadership issues since there is dramatic rising women-led in the community, political and economy. Gender with different traits, social behaviors, and stereotypes may result in possessed different kind of leadership styles. Different leadership styles will influence the organizational commitment.

“Transformational leadership refers to a leader who stimulates and inspires (transform) followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes” (Robbins & Coulter, 2012, p.498). According to Northouse (2010), he stated that transformational leadership is concerned with values, emotions, standard, ethics, and long-term goals. It will treat their followers’ as full human beings, motive them, satisfy their needs by listening carefully and stimulate followers to be creative and innovative which can figure out the things on their own. It can influence more followers to achieve more than what is usually expected on them.

In contrast, transactional leadership differs from transformational leadership. Transactional leadership does not focus on their subordinates’ personal development and their requirements. Based on Burke and Collins (2001), transactional leaders have two factors which are contingent reward and management-by-exception. Contingent reward is an exchange process between leaders and followers. Leader will promise in which follower will receive reward if their performance is good (or punishments contingent on poor performance). Leaders who use management-by-exception involve negative feedback, negative reinforcement, and corrective criticism. They will always identify errors and implement disciplinary action for poor performance.

In an organization, organizational commitment is one of the prominent issues mostly confronted by managers. “Past literature has emphasized the significance of retaining committed employees as an aspect of survival for organization” (Messmer; Walker; Das as cited in Lo, Ramayah, Hii, & Songan, 2010, p.79). Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-Lamastroalso stated that “organizational commitment has attracted considerable attention in theory and research because of its attempt to understand and clarify the intensity and stability of employee dedication to work organizations” (as cited in Keskes, 2014, p.27).

Furthermore, Swanepoel *et al.* stressed that leadership styles that inspire employee commitment are important for an organization to successfully carry out effective strategies,

accomplish their goals, obtain competitive advantage and maximize human capital (as cited in Lo *et al.*, 2010). Thus, organizational commitment becomes the dependent variable of this study. Meyer and Allen (1991) had classified that three divisible components of organizational commitment are the desire (affective commitment), the need (continuance commitment), and the obligation (normative commitment). Many researchers showed that there is a relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment. Therefore, it is significant to find out whether different gender of leader that possessed different leadership style will influence follower's organizational commitment especially in the context of Malaysia culture.

1.2 Problem statement

In this modern era and competitive business environment, organizational commitment is importance to ensure an organizational survival. According to Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van, Wyk, and Shek (2000) indicated that leadership styles are the most influence on encouraging the employee commitment. Leadership styles are known to have the great impacts on various levels in an organization, including affecting the followers' commitment on organization. We can specify that different gender of leader with different leadership styles will bring different effect to employees' job satisfaction and commitment. Thus, it is very important to let the leaders know their leadership style will bring much impact whether positive or negative on their employees' commitment.

Based on the past studies, many researches had carried out on the topic of "The Relationship between Leadership Styles and Organizational Commitment". A lot of past studies showed that there are positively significant interrelations between transformational leadership style and organizational commitment (Bučiūnienė and Škudienė, 2008; Lo, Ramayah, Hii, and Songan, 2010; Aghashahi, Davarpanah, Omar and Sarli, 2013; Wang, Ma and Zhang, 2014).

Nonetheless, there are some confusing findings related to this topic. "Hayward *et al.* mentioned that transformational leadership has moderate positive correlation with affective commitment; and also low correlation with normative and continuance commitment. But, no correlation was found between transactional leadership and affective, normative and continuance commitment" (as cited in Keskes, 2014, p.38). Nevertheless, "Meyer and Allen suggested that there is a relationship between transactional and continuance commitment. AL-

Hussami in his study had concluded that there is a positive relationship between transactional leadership styles and organizational commitment” (as cited in Lo *et al.*, 2010, p. 85).

In addition, based on the topic of gender and leadership styles, the findings are also contradicting. Some researchers showed that mostly women leaders had possessed transformational leadership styles than men (Rohmann & Rowold, 2009; Singh, Nadim, & Ezzedeen, 2012; Appelbaum, Shapiro, Didus, Luongo, & Paz, 2013) whereas men leaders possessed the transactional leadership style (Yaseen, 2010). Yet, some investigators found that women score higher on transformational leadership than men and engage more in contingent reward behaviors as a component of transactional leadership (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen, 2003; Yaseen, 2010). In addition, a study had shown that female manager and male manager normally like to use transformational leadership style (Emery, College, Barker, & Fredonia, 2007).

Existing literature on leadership is mainly based on manufacturing, food store or banking. Comparatively fewer researches on leadership have been undertaken in context of supermarket and department stores in East Malaysia. In order to revise and to generalize the results of the previous studies, gender on leadership styles and its relationship toward organizational commitment were conducted in supermarket and department store. In addition, there is no notorious research study on this topic. In response, this study aims to identify the different gender of leader possesses which kind of leadership style and its relationship toward organizational commitment.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the research questions below:

1. Do man leader and woman leader possessed different leadership style?
2. Do genders on leadership styles have any relationship with organizational commitment?
3. Man leader or woman leader is preferred by followers?
4. What leadership style is most preferred by followers?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

The main intention in this study is to compare gender of leader on leadership styles and also to investigate whether different gender of leader possessed different leadership styles have a significant impact on organizational commitment.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The specific goals for this study are

1. To determine which kinds of leadership style possessed by woman and man leaders
2. To investigate the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment.
3. To study which type of leadership styles is most preferred by the followers.
4. To identify gender of leader that preferred by the followers.

1.5 Hypotheses of Research

There are five hypotheses for this study. The hypotheses of this study are shown in the below:

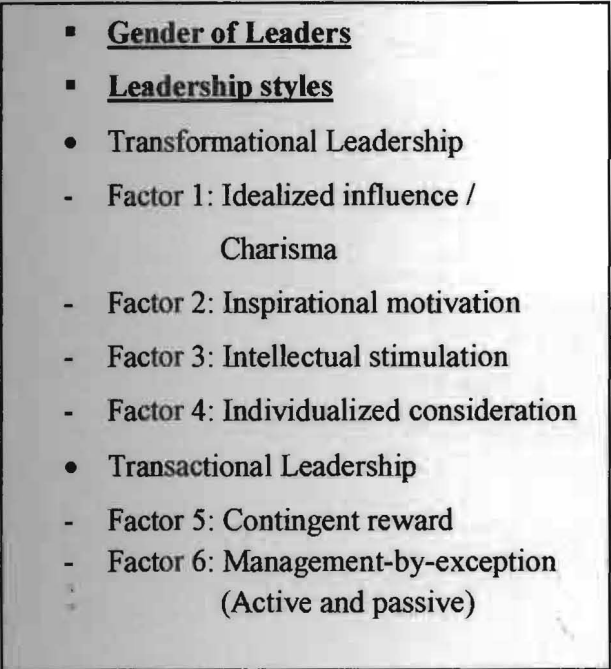
No.	Hypotheses
H ₀₁	There is no relationship between gender of leader and transformational leadership styles and impact on organizational commitment.
H ₁₁	There is a relationship between gender of leader and transformational leadership styles and impact on organizational commitment.
H ₀₂	There is no relationship between gender of leader and transactional leadership styles and impact on organizational commitment.
H ₁₂	There is a relationship between gender of leader and transactional leadership styles and impact on organizational commitment.
H ₀₃	There is no relationship between transformational leadership styles and gender of leader.
H ₁₃	There is a relationship between transformational leadership styles and gender of leader.
H ₀₄	There is no relationship between transactional leadership styles and gender of leader.
H ₁₄	There is a relationship between transactional leadership styles and gender of leader.
H ₀₅	There is no relationship between transformational leadership styles and organizational commitment.
H ₁₅	There is a relationship between transformational leadership styles and organizational commitment.
H ₀₆	There is no relationship between transactional leadership styles and organizational commitment.
H ₁₆	There is a relationship between transactional leadership styles and organizational commitment.
H ₀₇	There is no relationship between genders of follower and preferred gender of leader.
H ₁₇	There is a relationship between genders of follower and preferred gender of leader.
H ₀₈	There is no relationship between followers and leadership style preferred.
H ₁₈	There is a relationship between followers and leadership style preferred.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research’s objectives and literature review are shown in the *Figure 1* below. The conceptual framework of this study was developed based on the previous researches done by some researchers. The independent variables for this conceptual framework are gender of leader and two leadership styles which are transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles, while the dependent variable is organizational commitment.

The conceptual framework for the gender of leader and leadership styles which are transformational and transactional leadership styles is based on the previous study done by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003). Moreover, the conceptual framework that shows the relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment is based on the work of Bučiūnienė and Škudienė (2008).

Independent variables



Dependent Variable

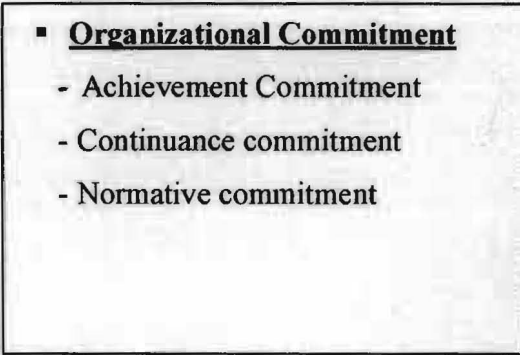


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

1.7 Definition of Term

1.7.1 Glass ceiling effect

Conceptual definition:

The glass ceiling effect is the invisible, yet indestructible barrier that retains minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the commercial ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements (Cotter, Hermsen, Ovadia, & Vanneman, 2001).

Operational definition:

Glass ceiling effect is an unacknowledged barrier or unfair system which prevents women from obtaining upper position regardless of their qualifications or achievements.

1.7.2 Transformational Leadership

Conceptual definition:

“The process of transformational leadership would result in highly motivated and dedicated followers, improve a vision that is able to alter the organization and increase followers’ idealism and values apart from than inculcating feelings of justice, loyalty and trust” (Mullin as cited in Jamaludin, Rahman, Makhbul, & Idris, 2011, p.77).

Operational definition:

In this study, transformational leadership style focuses on motivation, teamwork and cooperation with subordinates at different levels of an organization to achieve better transformation. Transformational leaders give the opportunities and push their subordinates to higher performance levels.

1.7.3 Transactional Leadership

Conceptual definition:

Transactional leadership proposed to increase followers' obedience to the leader and to the organizational regulations; an engagement of an exchange process will occur in between the leader and the followers (Yukl, 1998).

Operational definition:

Transactional leadership is the leaders use penalizing power and arrange of reward to motivate employees to achieve at their best.

1.7.4 Organizational commitment

Conceptual definition:

“Organizational commitment may be viewed as an organizational member's psychological attachment to the organization. Organizational commitment plays a vital role in determining whether a member will stay with the organization and zealously work towards organizational goals” (Grimsley, 2014).

Operational definition:

Organizational commitment is the strength of feeling responsibility of a worker towards the organization.

1.7.5 Affective commitment

Conceptual definition:

According to Allen and Meyer, *Affective commitment* is an emotional regard to an organization in which an employee designates with and takes pleasure in membership of the organization (as cited in Bučiūnienė and Škudienė, 2008).

Operational definition:

In this study, affective commitment refers to employees' sense of belonging towards organization, involvement to organization, enjoying and satisfied with job, their loyalty to organization and their intention to stay working with organization.

1.7.6 Continuance Commitment**Conceptual definition:**

Bučiūnienė and Škudienė (2008) mentioned that Allen and Meyer had described the continuance commitment as a form of psychological attachment to an employing organization due to the high costs of leaving; individual encounters a feel of being locked in place. Employee made the decision to stay in the origin organization to save the cost.

Operational definition:

Continuance commitment occurs when a person evaluates the advantages and disadvantages of leaving your organization. People may feel need to stay in company to prevent experiencing more loss when leaving than the benefit might gain in a new role.

1.7.7 Normative Commitment**Conceptual definition:**

Normative commitment can be defined as an employee's sense of responsibility to continue staying in an organization. It is also described as an employee's moral commitment that obvious itself when an organization gives moral and financial support for the development of employee" (Bučiūnienė and Škudienė, 2008).

Operational definition:

Normative commitment occurs when a person feel a sense of responsibility to the organization, even if unsatisfied in the role or want to get better opportunities. The reason to continue staying in organization is that feeling organization has much invested time and money during training.

1.8 Significance of Research

The finding of this research is important for advance management and leaders' knowing on the most effective leadership style that will implant the sense of organizational commitment within the followers. It also assists the leaders in strengthening the leadership skills in order to meet the growing demands of employers.

Apart from that, this research may able to enhance the present theory particularly theories regarding leadership style such as contingency theory, transformational-transactional theory, and social role theory. This study will also able to assist enrich the sturdiness of literature used.

Besides, this study would promote towards the understanding and disseminate the right, chances or opportunities for women about their leadership in an organization. This research may act as literature of Malaysia context because most of the existing literatures are the studies on western leadership.

In addition, the findings of this research will be able to strengthen the social role theory on transformational and transactional leadership styles which may show that different gender of leader will possess different type of leadership style. This research will also increase the understanding on different impact on organizational commitment brought by different gender of leaders possessed different leadership styles. Moreover, this study able to support and clarify any contracting information relating to this research which gained from previously studies by other researchers.

Furthermore, it is an importance study for human resource practitioner to know that there is a directly relationship between leadership styles and organizational commitment. Thus, this will lead them to design and provide training programs for the managers, executives, and supervisors to improving their relationship or interaction with their followers and becoming a leader who are able to motivate their followers' commitment within the organization.

1.9 Limitation of Research

There are a few limitations in this study. Firstly, this study only looks into Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership about leader behaviors. Other leadership styles might also have important connection towards organizational commitment.

Besides, this research is done only within the scope of Kuching and focuses on the 40 employees in the hypermarket and department store. Therefore, it may not be precise in representing the generally employees' perception on gender of leader possessed leadership styles and its relationship towards organizational commitment throughout the other organizations in Malaysia.

In addition, the methodology used in this study is also one of the limitations. Researcher used quantitative method by distributing questionnaires to 40 respondents in the related hypermarket and department store. It is limited to obtain the honesty and co-operation from respondents to answer the questionnaire due to simply answered questions without understand the questions. Thus, when gathering the questionnaires, this will affect the validity and reliability of the data.

1.10 Summary

This chapter mentioned the background of study, problem statement, objectives for the research, developing of hypotheses and conceptual framework, and definition of key terms. This chapter also mentioned the significance of study for human resource consultants and leaders. Lastly, this chapter also stated limitations of research that would let future researchers be more concern on them.